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Salas-SantaCruz, Omi

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Learning to Be: Trans*-Latinidad, Race, Indigeneity, and Inclusion

by

Omi Salas-SantaCruz

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Education

and dual Designated Emphasis

in

Critical Theory

and

Gender, Women, & Sexuality Studies

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in Charge:

Professor Kris Gutiérrez, Co-chair

Professor Cindy Cruz, Co-chair

Professor Lisa García-Bedolla

Professor Paola Bacchetta

Spring 2022

Abstract

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Professor Kris Gutiérrez, Co-Chair

By utilizing Indigenous, Black, and Latinx Feminist and decolonial methodologies, this dissertation reorients the epistemological, theoretical, and political commitments of trans studies in higher education. Through a critical phenomenology of what it is like to experience transgender inclusion in the University of California, Berkeley campus, I analyze how trans-Latinx graduate and undergraduate student populations from Afro-Latinx, Yaqui, and Purepecha Indigenous communities engage with and negotiate the range of programs, services, policies, and initiatives to mediate their academic and everyday lives. I draw from a range of qualitative Latinx and feminist research methods such as co-participant observations, *testimonios*, *pláticas*, focus groups, and *auto-historia teoría* to analyze the complexities of (learning) and navigating transgender inclusion on the college campus from the perspective of trans* Latinx populations.

Unlike recent studies on transgender college students' experiences that frame "transgender" as a discrete category of gender and ethnographic analysis, I problematize gender universality (Lugones, 2020) in gender equity research design and empirical studies focused on racialized trans subjects. In turn, I approach the study of trans* Latinidad as a resistant sociality from a Latinx and decolonial philosophy of ontological and existential pluralism (Anzaldúa, 1987; Lugones, 2007; Ortega, 2016) to analyze trans Latinx students' complex and multiplicitous trans* experiences of being, embodiment, and materialities (DiPietro, 2019) in their encounter with monocultural trans pedagogies structured by the university. In doing so, I advance a trans* of color critique centered on the participants' multifaceted perspectives on identity, Third Gender social organization, and Third Gender imaginations in response to the pedagogies of "learning to be" trans and Latina/o/x in the university under hegemonic conceptions of Western/Eurocentric identity models that structure transgender equity policies and services in the university.

My research reveals how the university draws from white-centric and colonial racialized-gender ideologies on personhood and identity. Gender equity and inclusion ideologies are a disciplining mechanism of the pedagogies of being and belonging through what I call the colonial-gender continuum. Through this concept, I describe the dynamics by which the university institutionalizes, normalizes, and includes trans people through an Anglo and white-centric understanding of trans care and embodiment that attempts to contain racialized gender variability and resistant sociality even when it depathologizes transgender personhood. The colonial-gender continuum explains how the university continuously disrupts and harms trans* Black, Indigenous, and other Students of Color via the discursive and colonial logics of third gender gendercide embedded within trans inclusion programs and services. I argue this form of

violence, harm, discomfort, and distress in a students' life is better understood as colonial dysphoria that results from the institutional approach to trans identity from the logics of absolute sameness. I show how organizing trans inclusion from the position of the "logics of purity" limits our understanding of complex, co-constituted, and relational constructions of trans*-Latinidad. To this end, I demonstrate how the current approach to trans inclusion effectively limits how trans* Latinx students can fully show up, be supported, and affirmed by the university. My work introduces a trans* of color critique as a research model attentive to the ongoing resistant imaginations that cultivate new forms of trans* belonging and wellness. Most significantly, I offer a nuanced approach to studying resistant sociality in education. Moving away from socio-cultural studies of resistance in education that rely on the agency of subjects, I shift towards Latinx philosophy (Lugones 2007; Ortega 2016; DiPietro, 2019) to theorize on the notion of *terquedad* as a resistant sociality that emerges from the oppressing⇌resisting relations in education that actively transforms the worlds of sense within the university.

Dedication

Dedicado a mi abuela, la Sra. Gloria Ernestina García de Santa Cruz.
Una mujer sin patria que me enseñó que el género no llega a viejo, que el hábito no hace al monje y que las cosas se hacen con amor y se hacen bien o no se hacen.

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Preface

This work is a queer dis-orientation of the university's affective, embodied, and material production on trans inclusion, belonging, and identity. My analysis uncovers a series of epistemic and ontological violence when dealing with the concept of transgender as a category of administrative inclusion, analysis, and social organization of power as structured under equity policies, remediation services, and knowledge. I demonstrate how the lived experiences and consciousness of being included as a trans person on the college campus present us with three areas of epistemic violence: 1) epistemic practice based on hegemonic discourses of the trans (knowing) Subject, 2) epistemic violence in the production of transgender knowledge, and 3) epistemic ignorance through an "arrogant perception" (Ortega, 2006) of matters related to trans* of color resistant imaginations.

As a whole, this dissertation unsettles the pedagogies of transgender inclusion to disorient (Ahmed, 2006) university practices and knowledge production into queerer possibilities outside trans sanitization and legibility. It makes visible the institutional complicity, the fraught violence of trans inclusion, and transgender equity as a socializing force and pedagogical practice that affects a student's sense of self and community. Through a commitment to counter coloniality in education research and colonizing methodology, (Patel, 2014; Smith, 1999) I have created a dissertation that queers its body of contents and the bodies of knowledge within.

In its totality, this project is about the love of learning and honoring different forms of trans* resistance and embodiments. This work is about uplifting and supporting the resistant practices and subjectivities emanating from an engagement with higher education institutions and their politics of transgender inclusion and exclusion. Is a study for and by all the active participants in the research study and all the trans* BIPOC students that helped me learn, navigate, and survive the university, as I too found myself to be in a precarious student condition due to institutionalized transphobia, academic harm and trauma in my time in the university. I hope that university administrators treat this document as a living testimony of the varied forms of violence experienced by trans* Black, Indigenous, and students of color and become aware of the university's complicity (including faculty and staff) in this violence. Due to time, space, and issues of scope, it will not be possible for me to discuss many issues and topics related to all my data and critical work for supporting trans* students of color. However, these will be published post-dissertation and are matters related to housing, time-to-degree, the politics of waiting for services, and faculty transphobia and transmisogyny under the shadow of academic freedom and tenure, power dynamics on campus among the police, trans students, staff, and visitors, lived name recognition policies throughout official student forms and declarations, and so much more.

"Now let us shift" (Anzaldúa, 2015).

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Introduction: Transing Pedagogy? Or is Pedagogy a Pretty Trans* Thing?

In the summer of 2014, a year after the United States Supreme Court ruled that same-sex marriage was legal, Time Magazine journalist, Katy Steinmetz, declared we had reached the “transgender tipping point,” where transgender people, those who identify with a gender other than the sex they were assigned at birth, were “emerging from the margins to fight for an equal place in society” (Steinmetz, 2014, para. 2). This equal place requires extensive new policies in all aspects of society, such as workplaces and schools. Indeed, right after this cultural turning point in U.S. transgender history, schools from K-12 to four-year colleges began to adopt trans inclusionary policies. Most LGBTQI+ leaders and community members, at least publicly, maintained that transgender recognition and inclusion was the way forward to secure transgender equity in education.

By the end of 2016, several high schools and over 150 university campuses had installed gender-neutral bathrooms and facilities. In California, universities began to adopt trans care medical options and were slowly moving toward lived-name recognition in school records, class rosters, and diplomas in response to trans student activism on the college campus. Schools, in general, became the physical grounds to fight over ideological positions over the meaning of sex and gender congruency and sex-based protections and discrimination under Title IX. The fight for trans equality and the accompanying policies, however, did not consider or address the epistemic dimensions, the productive elements of the category transgender (Valentine, 2009), and the accompanying institutional trans violence (Salomon, 2019) that results from organizing trans inclusionary policies and services from the standpoint of a particular ontological, existential, epistemic, and epistemological understanding of trans embodiment, materialities, and subjectivity. This dissertation “shifts¹” (Anzaldúa, 2015) to other genealogies, histories, vocabularies, and conceptualizations of identity and embodiment to trans- the pedagogy of trans inclusion research and practice. I interrogate the monocultural politics of transgender equity and inclusion and unpack its limitations toward racialized gender justice. This is not to argue against trans inclusionary practices, or knowledge of white trans life, but to account for how trans*-students-of-color populations—their experiences, knowledge, and imaginations, fit into a broader discussion of trans equity and justice and the ongoing colonial complicity embedded within university programs that structure the ongoing atmospheres of trans violence (Stanley, 2021) and antagonisms within the academic-industrial complex (Bacchetta et al., 2018).

In “Queering/Querying Pedagogy? Or, Pedagogy Is a Pretty Queer Thing,” Susanne Luhman (1998) addressed the potentiality of queer pedagogical imaginations in which the field of queer studies opened the possibilities as to where queering as a pedagogy could take us in education research. Were queer studies in education for and about queer students and teachers, or a queer space to address curriculum, pedagogy, research, and learning? Was it home for queer studies or a place for queer theory? (Luhman, 1998). What became of queer studies in education, however, is a field that replicated the pitfalls and logic of queer studies, where gender diversity was reduced to a discussion of sexual desire and the policing of sexual identity, ultimately perpetuating homonormativity and producing antipathy towards other modes of queer difference outside same-sex object choice (Stryker, 2004). Moreover, queer and trans studies and trans

¹ I Follow Anzaldúa (2015) notion of shifting to denote a cultural shift in understanding what knowledge consists of, how we come to know, and the knowledge we value. This is an epistemic shift away from knowledge that “colonizes our lives”, meaning, and purpose (p. 541).

studies in education research began to expound on trans subjugated knowledge without attending to the geopolitics of knowledge and the colonial difference (Mignolo, 2002), particularly the centrality of the colonial/modern gender system and the ongoing resistant sociality in its response (Lugones, 2003, 2007). Furthermore, trans* of color life histories, theories, and methods have been treated “as the belated arrival” to the white trans archive (Ellison et al., 2017), where scholars “trans-” epistemology without attending to ontology and the resistant practices to the ongoing project of the colonality of gender.

This dissertation considers critical pedagogy’s potentiality, its political possibility of reorientation (Ahmed, 2006), as the possibility of transing transgender knowledge production in higher education. Specifically, the knowledge production on trans subjectivity, identity, resistance, and understandings of equity and justice to ensure subjugated trans* of color knowledge, theory, and educational strategies are geographically, historically, and culturally grounded in specific worldviews to avoid discursive colonization “under Western eyes” (Mohanty, 2003). This move is not a shifting from which identity we collect data for knowledge production, usually conceived as a shift of standpoint or situated epistemology aimed at understanding trans* of color student experiences. Instead, this is a reorientation of where we ground the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of gender equity and inclusion and how we understand its “will to institutionalize” (Ferguson, 2012) trans subjectivity. Specifically, this reorientation commits to the conditions of trans critique to account for colonial violence and racial violence (Morgensen, 2016). Conditions of critique that have, up to now, been neglected in queer/trans studies in education research and how the university structures trans inclusion. An epistemology of ignorance in trans studies in education, or more precisely, an “arrogant perception” that produces ignorance about trans* of color theory and work at the same time that it proclaims to have both “knowledge about and loving perception” (Ortega, 2006, 61) towards trans* BIPOC students. As such, this works uplifts the pedagogical affordances of transing both Resistance Studies in Education and Trans Studies in Education by focusing on how U.S. Women of Color and decolonial scholars have employed productive analytics to understand the colonality of gender, particularly as it relates to the experiences and resistant social relations among trans* Latinx student populations.

In this work, transing- trans pedagogy invites us to revisit concepts of being and the self and account for intermeshed oppressions, resistant subjectivity, ontological and existential plurality, and multiplicity of the self (Anzaldúa, 1987; Lugones, 2003, 2007; Ortega, 2016) to attend to “trans*” as a polyvalent consciousness and embodiment (DiPietro, 2016, 2019, 2020) taking place outside Western gender/sex dualities and notions of a unitary trans(gender)self or subjectivity. Analyzing trans* phenomena through Latinx Feminist philosophy and concepts such as coalitional selves, impurity, self-mapping, and trespassing is to reimagine concrete and practical strategies for decolonizing the transgender imaginary (Boellstorff et al., 2014). Particularly, the hegemonic trans imaginary that structures how we incorporate trans people into the academy. The process of reorienting trans inclusion knowledge to study the colonality of gender is a pedagogical practice, a suturing of ideological and political commitments across time and space to bring a new consciousness. To trans- trans pedagogy and knowledge is thus a form of social trespassing into new forms of knowledge. Pedagogy is thus a pretty trans* thing, as new forms of thinking, consciousness-raising, and knowledge require we trespass those zones of proximal development as a social trespass. In other words, we must remember that BIPOC populations have always/already have actively trans- knowledge as to disrupt, rearticulate, and learn as a crossing – a trespassing of epistemic violence. Particularly, Indigenous, decolonial,

and U.S. Women of Color scholars have done such transing of knowledge to account for historical and political configurations of the social and how these operate subjectively to sustain the ongoing structures of colonial power and settler colonialism (Fanon, 1952; Combahee River Collective, 1977; Anzaldúa, 1987, 1990; Spillers, 1987; Smith, 1999; Mohanty, 2003).

Dissertation Overview

The format of this dissertation is an experimental suturing to trans-transgender inclusion research and knowledge to account for alternative genealogies, methods, conceptualizations, and possibilities that exist outside, within, and peripheral to (Western) feminist projects of trans inclusion. I begin with the transing of method in doing gender equity research. This is a requirement for the transing of trans-pedagogy and its relation to Gender, where gender as a meta-category is not assumed (Lugones, 2020), nor is this assumption preventing us from learning the actual relations, experiences, and cultural understandings of trans* as resistant embodiments and practices that go beyond the matter of individuality and the self. In this manner, a trans* of color critique emerges where methodologically, we look for resistance to the coloniality of gender and power rather than looking for Gender and gender variability. In other words, this dissertation turns to decolonial perspectives grounded in Indigenous, Black, and Chicana/Latina theoretical contributions to the study of social relations, embodiment, ontology, and epistemological views of the world concerning what is often reduced to multicultural and ethnic variations of trans existence. In this case, Trans* Latinidad is not an identity, but a social practice bounded by a queer ethos among people with shared and complicated histories of colonization, occupation, displacement, dispossession, and resistant tactics in the face of the colonial/modern gender system (Lugones, 2007).

To that end, this dissertation addresses various dimensions of epistemic oppression and violence by asking, how is trans student inclusion lived, experienced, and resisted? Specifically, how do trans* Latinx student populations negotiate monocultural transgender inclusion on the college campus in their engagement with the university's trans curriculum, programs, and student services? What techniques of governance emerge from these forms of trans inclusion in the university? What kinds of violence and resistant practices do these frames of trans intelligibility produce? How do trans* Latinx students engage, reject, or work through dominant structures of trans subjectivity on the college campus?

Throughout this dissertation, I take a feminist decolonial approach to examine trans* Latinx student experiences under institutional politics of transgender inclusion. Specifically, I work on the intersections of Latinx and decolonial feminism (Anzaldúa, 1987; Alarcón, 1990; Lugones, 2003; Alcoff, 2008; Ortega, 2016), Queer/Trans* of Color Pedagogies (Cruz, 2013b; Aguilar-Hernández and Cruz, 2020; Hames-Garcia, 2014), and trans* of color frameworks to understand the biopolitics of queer/trans* of color inclusion and recognition under the state and its institutions (Spade, 2015; DiPietro, 2019; Haritaworn and Snorton, 2013; Haritaworn, Kuntsman & Posocco 2013; Bacchetta, 2017; Bacchetta et al., 2018).

Seeing Coloniality in (Trans) Equity & Justice in Education Research

The first paper, "Whatcha Gonna Do? Abolish, Decolonize, Queer, or Disidentify Gender in Education," looks at how transgender equity and justice are envisioned in trans studies in education research and how other fields of knowledge in and outside the field of education have conceptualized gender equity and more broadly, justice. In other words, I experiment with transing a literature review where instead of providing literature on trans inclusion, bound to

understandings of a unitary (and intersectional self), I turn to bodies of knowledge that conceptualize trans* embodiments, being, and justice in more complex ways without relying on rights-based politics, recognition, and views of gender equity tied to the State's formal equality paradigm (Spade, 2015). As a suturing of ideal and material visions of trans* justice, this paper serves to map the divergent conceptualizations of both gender queerness and justice. Methodologically, it is a transing of literature to avoid epistemic violence when one only focuses on specific epistemological and ontological understandings of trans as a category based on an "ontological separateness" (Valentine, 2007) of gender, race, and sexuality that is always/already dependent on the "light side" (Lugones, 2007) of the category human (Spillers, 1987; DiPietro, 2020b; Ellison et al., 2017).

As a transing of the knowledge structure on trans bodies, identities, and embodiments, this paper directly addresses Hortense Spiller's question (2007), "whatcha gonna do?" concerning uplifting Black and Women of Color critiques of the human, gender, and social relations. As such, I begin by addressing the issue of epistemic ignorance and violence in the formulation of transgender equity and educational research. I lay the political investments in the human, neoliberalism, and visibility within transgender equity practice and move to map the divergent conceptualizations of educational justice from decolonial and abolition perspectives that exist unintelligible to trans equity and inclusion projects in education and universities. I do this by providing short overviews on how subaltern groups conceptualize gender justice and establish a trans* of color critique as a method of remembering subaltern bodies of knowledge that have been dismembered by ideological Eurocentric and Anglo violence.

Finally, this transing of the literature on trans/ gender equity introduces trans* of color critique as part of a decolonial methodology that refuses to colonize research (Tuck & Yang, 2014) through the method of remembering (Alexander, 2002, 2015) and not "re-discovering" (Spillers et al., 2007) what has been there all along. *Re-membling* in this project is both a politics of citation and a political act that negates imperial and colonial designs of the modern trans self. By using the method of *re-membling*, we commit to doing our homework in education research (Aguilar & Cruz, 2020) and center on the theoretical contributions of decolonial, Indigenous, and U.S. Women of Color Feminists. I argue that a trans* of color critique in education begins by working against canonical violence by mapping the divergent projects and genealogies for trans* justice in education. Mapping the crisscross and tangents between trans* of color historicity and hegemonic understandings of transgender identity, embodiment, and politics promotes educational criticism (Leonardo, 2016). Despite the incommensurability across projects, it also serves as a space for coalition mobilizations (Tuck & Yang, 2018).

Trans*ing knowledge on gender equity, transgender education research, policy, and practice, through a trans* of color critique, provides practitioners the foundations to think through what is at stake in research and equity design and the possibilities that emerge when we teach from and about specific worldviews on the self/selves and identity in relations to gender divergence and complexity. Overall, this first paper is a conceptual mapping of different genealogies of trans* imaginations as a means to justice and not its end. Finally, the mapping of political entanglements clarifies the precise points of convergence and divergence through what Gutiérrez and Jurow (2016) describe as the ecological, historical, and time scales of equity design and the diverse conceptualizations of equity in its inception, implementation, and outcome.

A Phenomenology of Trans(Gender) Inclusion in the University

Using student *testimonios* in the form of conversations, notes on students' group conversations, and field notes that emerge from my co-participation in "trans* Latinx" programming and events, I explore the community of practice that emerges from what Haritaworn, Kuntsman & Posocco (2013) call "murderous inclusions" that exist within the politics of trans-specific services and programs. The second paper unpacks the lived experiences of trans inclusion and how students experience trans belonging at the subjectivity and intersubjectivity level. Using a trans* of color critique, I unpack how students navigate discourses of self, race, gender, location, and belonging within the landscapes of the University of California, Berkeley. In "The University & The Politics of Purity: Understanding the Experiences Between Learning to Be Trans ⇔ Cultivating Trans* Wellness," I return to the university's role (and complicity) in structuring the pedagogies of trans being for the colonial/modern gender system. I discuss how the university relies on specific medico-juridical discourses, specifically Gender Dysphoria, to structure trans care and programs related to "knowing" trans identity. This is an institutional pedagogy where the students learn to understand the "*trans self*" through programs and services that attempt to answer the question "who am I?" through pedagogies of *self-integration* via inclusion and belonging. Mainly I show how, in an alignment with the modern/colonial gender system, as a system of knowledge, the university structures trans being and trans care in extremely narrow Western, Eurocentric, and Anglo views. Alternatively, I analyze how trans* and Latinx student populations re-think trans and Latinidad to formulate a trans*-Latinidad, through the notion of cultivating trans* wellness in response to forms of "murderous inclusions" (Haritaworn, Kuntsman & Posocco, 2013) demanded by university cross-cultural spaces on campus. The notion of trans* wellness is achieved through students' "loving praxis for illegality" as a form of infra-political ethics of *illegal/illegal love* where trans* wellness begins with land and communal relations. These communal relations begin with the question, "Where am I?" to structure a form of relational being that actively refuses the logic of being trans as structured under the colonality of being, gender, and knowledge (Lugones, 2007; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Mignolo, 2002; 2010).

Doing Trans* of Color Critique to Understand Resistant Sociality in Education

The final paper, "Terquedad as embodied resistance and resistant sociality, "is an example of resistant subjectivity and research in education when taking a trans* of color critique approach to understanding trans* students' engagements grounded in decolonial, Indigenous, and U.S. Women of Color feminist analysis. This paper presents a mapping of how ontological violence plays out within graduate student professionalism and the different perspectives we gain from understanding oppression and colonality as an ongoing and incomplete project that is actively resisted in the material, the psychic, and the spiritual in the process of reimagining identity. This paper discusses the tension of how a graduate student talks about her multiple selves and resistant subjectivity as *terca* versus what others (institutional/departmental actors) "see them" as being and doing. Specifically, I use six years of *cara a cara* and synchronous conferencing *pláticas* (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016) with Quiahuitl, a Two-Spirit Chicana graduate student. The *pláticas* served as a strategy to collect data and theorize resistance practice at the level of gestures. In this context, *pláticas* are a form of "organizational gossip" (Hafen, 2004), a process of information and knowledge sharing that attempts to manage and engage with organizational regulation and resistance. Our *pláticas* became infra-political hangouts and rich sites of knowledge production (Cruz, 2011, 2013b; Lugones, 2003).

Terquedad is discussed from two frames: resistance in education and (decolonial) resistant sociality. Under critical (socio-cultural) studies of resistance, *terquedad* is simply an organizational identity rejected by professors and graduate student colleagues. It is made sense through an oppressive logic attached to the deficit framework of the incompetence of the agentic subject “*terca*.” *Terquedad*, however, is also an embodied resistant sociality, a relationality of active subjectivity, by which trans* Latinx students use their bodies to “talk back” (Cruz, 2011) and resist Eurocentric grammars of the institution on matters related to the professionalization of women of color, their comportment, affect and learning to be a junior female researcher and scholar. *Terquedad* is also how Quiahuitl brings multiple selves into the academy and confronts the limitations of her inclusion guided by multicultural understandings of identity. Instead, I read *Terquedad* as an embodied refusal of the pedagogies of Gender (the legacies/continuum of the modern/colonial gender system) within the academy. I demonstrate how studying trans of color* resistant praxis without assuming Gender as a universal division of power and hierarchy (Lugones, 2020) enables us to grasp coalitional and healing projects within the academy.

I conclude with “Dealing with Colonial Dysphoria in the Academy” by proposing Trans* Ethnic Studies as a field attentive to trans* resistant sociality and Trans* Color Critique in Education as an analytical method to understand how BIPOC populations conceptualize the self, relationality, embodiment, materiality, and knowledge. This field and the analytical frame get us closer to attending *los sustos*, *la loqueria/the crazies*, and *schizophrenia* (Anzaldúa, 1987; 1990; Lugones, 2003; Ortega, 2016) that occur in the fracturing of the self and give rise to colonial dysphoria in the academy. This form of colonial dysphoria and inadequacy are made apparent through feelings of exclusion, attempted spirit murdering (Revilla, 2021), and an array of academic harms and violence experienced by subaltern populations in the academy.

Together, these three papers cover epistemic violence at the ontological, institutionalized, and interpersonal violence and offer a theoretical intervention for understanding the lived experiences of institutional transphobia in the process of how trans inclusion and trans* of color abjection play in contemporary politics of transgender belonging and inclusion. In its totality, this work provides new directions in trans* of color studies and points at the challenges of trans-normative complicities in attending to the healing work necessary against institutional violence. My research findings offer implications for how we imagine gender and racial justice in higher education and, more broadly, provide insight into how non-dominant communities interpret and seek to influence the organizational culture, policies, and structures of colleges and universities. Overall, my project makes visible epistemological, ontological, cultural, (inter)subjective, and interpersonal violence as it is lived, experienced, and resisted by trans* Latinx students in their engagement with college life, programs, and services.

“Too White:” The importance of shifting from Looking for Gender to Seeing Coloniality

“When you do not see the plurality in the very structure of a theory, what do you see?”-Maria Lugones (2003 p. 75).

I have been part of the University of California, Berkeley, for over a decade. I have been a student (undergraduate and graduate), researcher, employee, and community member who, at various points, has been hailed and recruited under many identity categories for programs or services under the organizational structures of diversity and inclusion. Some of these identity labels include transfer, first-generation, returning student, a woman of color, lesbian, independent, low-income, system impacted, queer, trans, homeless, honors, domestically

partnered, spouse to a staff member, survivor, and lastly, a trans* & non-binary person. While my transitions are constant and related to all aspects of my identities, I socially and physically began a gender transition during heightened trans visibility and antagonism that directly increased political and personal attacks on trans students. At the federal level, transgender was being “defined out of existence” (Green, Benner, & Pear, 2018) under the 45th administration, and trans students became the primary targets of abuse and sneering under the banner of freedom of speech and academic freedom (Pearce, 2021) where UC Berkeley became “ground-zero” for racist and transphobic speech, protest, and police mobilization, including my own set of transphobic experiences from faculty members.

These experiences gave me a unique perspective on how transgender student inclusion and discourses of trans being, personhood, and care play out in the academy. While this work is not auto-ethnographic, being part of the university’s conversations, programs, and processes under the purview of trans equity gave me a privileged insider-outsider position that makes this work possible. My positionality provides insight into institutional practices and knowledge on trans inclusion as the former graduate student representative to the Chancellor Advisory Committee on LGBTQI Communities at Cal. My status as a transgender student provides me with an understanding of the processes of formal and administrative issues related to trans inclusion, and at times, my gender identity led me to experience or encounter, among more vulnerable young undergraduate students, the physical and emotional violence in various aspects of a students’ life. While I discuss a handful of issues of what it is like to be included as trans among trans* Latinx student populations, I have chosen to focus on discourse on trans personhood and knowledge production on trans identity and care to discuss the theoretical possibilities when we take a decolonial approach to study trans* of color imaginaries.

As a critical scholar, I claim that neither objectivity nor neutrality is possible or desirable. I follow the work of US Third World Feminists that ascribe to the notion that the deeper we go into ourselves, the wider we go into society (Chen, 1992). Rather than “speaking about,” I speak “near-by and with” other trans* Latinx students. I am myself navigating gender as a personal, political, cultural, and institutional practice and see it as a central component to the way students narrate and co-construct a politic out of learning to be trans* Latinx in the academy. I thus follow Fine’s (1994) reflexive stance in which any inquiry into a social process or phenomenon is also an inquiry into one’s self. Moreover, my epistemological grounding, as a critical scholar, means that my identities are always already personal and political (Anzaldúa, 1980; Lorde, 1984) and thus I use my gender identity and position as a trans* doctoral student to co-construct and challenge discourses and knowledge about trans* inclusion, trans-violence, and trans*latinidad by actively engaging with institutional and student-led organizations. My relationship with the participants as an insider also enables me to build community and take responsibility for this community-based research approach by helping co-participants access resources or mobilizing resources (economic, mental health, housing, and other services) using my positions of power as a Graduate Student. Throughout the research process, I have been continuously informing participants of my progress and invited them to take part in the development of the dissertation, the research instruments, working papers, as well as the analysis of my findings. My data emerges from a five-year institutional ethnography that consists of ten pilot interviews, 200 hours of participant observations, four testimonies of students’ experiences with Title IX adjudication processes, five years of annotated *pláticas* with trans* student leaders on campus, two focus groups of five participants each, and a 2019 survey of trans* Latinx student population use of campus space. Of importance in this survey is that 75% of participants stated they had

socially transitioned as trans or non-binary during their time as students at the university. Of those who socially transitioned as a gender different from the one assigned at birth, 100% said they had felt or experienced forms of trans exclusionary violence and had actively participated in at least one trans-student-led event, and eventually rejected “official” queer and trans-led programming and student spaces on campus. A hundred percent of respondents wrote in a variation of “too white” as their reasoning to disassociate with trans-specific programs, events, or remediation processes.

Strictly speaking, in terms of social identities and student population data, this research is necessary given that 91% of California State Universities (CSUs) and 66% of the Universities of California (UCs) are designated as “Hispanic Serving Institutions,” (HSIs) with the remaining campuses expected to follow suit. In 2018, the University of Chicago’s “GenForward Project²” reported that Latinx millennials are less likely to identify as cisgender or heterosexual and more likely than other ethnic groups to self-identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ), or non-straight. The GenForward survey found that 22% of Latinx millennials identify as LGBTQ, compared to 14% of African-Americans, 13% of whites, and 9% of Asian-Americans. Gen Z, specially Genz Latinx individuals, are expected to be the best-educated generation and are less likely to identify as straight or cisgender in comparison to earlier generations. Lastly, roughly half of Gen Zers (50%) and Millennials (47%) think that society is not accepting enough of transgender individuals (Pew Research Center, 2021). The intricacies between these data points show that to become a Hispanic Serving Institution, student affairs officials, policymakers, and educational practitioners must adequately attend to the lived experiences and cultural practices of trans* Latinx students as they draft trans inclusionary policies, programs, services, and manage relations between trans students and university offices. Therefore, for aspiring HSIs, it is crucial to understand the complexity of trans* Latinx student life from the knowledge and perspectives of their cultural practices and not white-centric paradigms of transness.

At the institutional level, this research expands and steers the organizational planning process to account for how the university can be responsive to the knowledge and experiences of the people they seek to serve and include through diversity and inclusion models. In 2015, the University of California, Berkeley committed to becoming a leader and inspiration of “catalysts for change.”³ As an organization committed to transformation, the goal was to move away from diversity crisis models, where institutional violence was simply addressed through immediate reaction without continuity and focus (such as firing key organizational actors), to proactive via diversity and inclusion models and practices. At the University, this institutionalization of diversity and inclusion is guided by the “Pathways to Excellence Plan⁴,” which consists of three core strategies: 1) Responsive Research, Teaching, and Public Service, 2) Expanded Pathways to Access and Success, and 3) Engaging and Healthy Campus Climate. This dissertation addresses the violence within the institutionalization of diversity and inclusion through the ways trans knowledge, identity, the self, and health are conceived, imagined, and operationalized in these

² GenForward June 2018 Report on Millennial Attitudes on LGBT Issues: Race, Identity, and Experience. <https://genforwardsurvey.com/download/?did=135>

³ Catalysts for Change, UC Berkeley
https://diversity.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/berkeley_catalystsforchange_web_0.pdf

⁴ UC Berkeley Strategic Plan for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity
https://diversity.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/speid_final_webversion.pdf

three core strategies. By accounting for how violence plays out in the engagement with trans knowledge, access, and care, we can begin to address and transform the ongoing “intimate terrorisms” that arise from the same discourses of inclusion and belonging. As a model campus for the state and nation, this dissertation provides an opportunity to remediate the violence against trans* BIPOC students and provide a better and more robust vision for transformation.

While this dissertation is based on extensive data collection, I found it was necessary to focus on the aspects of knowledge production concerning the discursive trans imaginations of being, the self, and personhood that structure transgender inclusion in matters related to knowledge, access, and care. This focus is essential to discuss the appropriate analytical methods to make sense of the data, and the lived realities of what it means to be included as a trans person from the specificity of trans* of color peoples’ knowledge, cultural repertoires of practice (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003), and views of the world, identity, and sense of self. Failure to do this work would only be a story of how intersectional and compounding realities of power and oppression (Crenshaw, 1990; Nash, 2017) affect students’ engagement with trans student programming. While this is an important task, this dissertation is focused on how power relations, specifically the geopolitics of knowledge in terms of how the modern/colonial capitalist World-System (Grosfoguel, 2002) and the Coloniality of Gender (Lugones, 2007) along with its lingering heteronormative discourses of settler-colonialism (Smith, 2010; 2015) structures trans equity research, knowledge, and inclusion programs, particularly the pedagogies of trans belonging, visibility, and well-being.

Given the recent explosion of research on transgender subjectivity, ontological conceptualizations of identity and the self, become a critical site of intervention to understand the experiences of trans* Latinx student populations as they encounter and engage with trans-specific pedagogies, programs, services. While the heightened visibility that leads us to the cultural “transgender tipping point” (Steinmetz, 2014) has created waves in the reshaping of the university, it has made invisible the “decolonial difference” (Lugones, 2020) or the social relations, selves, embodiments, and materiality among trans* communities of color in the U.S. “Seeing coloniality” (Lugones, 2020) is a critical decolonial framework that allows me to conceptualize the double-bind of transgender (in)visibility and inclusion, where I shift from an examination of the promises of inclusion to an analysis of its deadly logics. In other words, what gets to count as trans subjectivity capable of being included in the university depends on a regulatory frame of biopolitics premised on trans of color death and normative sex/gender configurations of trans subjectivity while simultaneously ignoring or failing to see the colonial difference of those who resist, undo, and produce new social relations and meanings in their engagement with the modern/colonial gender system (Lugones, 2003; 2020).

Despite the growth of empirical studies on trans students in higher education (Schoenber, 2010; Seelman, 2014; Nicolazzo, 2006; Nicolazzo et al. 2017; Beemyn, 2019; Rankin, et al., 2010; Beemyn & Rankin, 2011; Effrig et al., 2011; Rankin & Beemyn, 2012; Gravey et al., 2019), there is no research that specifically focuses on the experiences of college students who identify as both trans* and Latinx, or with a focus on trans knowledge production. Few empirical studies under the LGBTQ umbrella tend to focus on the ways students experience marginalization and harassment based on their sexual or gender identity and the relationship of this identity to other oppressed identities (Misawa, 2010). This research centers on gender and sexuality and describes how marginalization exacerbates depending on the student's other salient identities such as race, class, ability (Peña-Talamantes, 2013; Jourian, 2018; Eaton & Rios, 2017; Rios & Eaton, 2016). While these scholarly contributions are necessary to comprehend the

experiences of students who identify as queer people of color (QPOC), the research has not centered on the experiences of trans* Latinx students, nor the unintended consequences of trans-affirming policy orientations. Most importantly, this scholarship relies on inclusion as the means of intervention and treats the category of gender, race, and sexuality as intersecting identities (Crenshaw, 1990) yet “ontologically separate” (Valentine, 2007) rather than accounting for intermeshed complexities and assemblages of power (Lugones, 2003, 2016, 2020; Puar, 2007).

Moreover, the literature has not included trans* of color individuals who refuse to engage with or avoid LGBTQ-specific spaces. My work helps uncover the tensions and responses that emerge from trans essentialism and intervenes by asking, how can “seeing coloniality” produce new ways to transform programs, services, and policy for trans* students of color? What can the hidden conditions of power in the relationality of “brownness and transness” (Galarte, 2021) teach us about what constitutes a trans* of color livable life? What does trans* Latinidad, as praxis, illuminate about power relations within inclusionary spaces, services, and programs? How would we understand matters of trans* inclusion or trans* assimilation if we approach these questions from a conception of selfhood through the notion of “multiplicitous subjectivity”? (Ortega, 2016). I enter this conversation by a method of “remembering,” a decolonial approach to refuse the colonial research practices and to provide what Bacchetta (2017) describes “as models for oppositional and non-oppositional liberation-oriented resistance and modes of life” (p.157).

Much of my data must remain outside the scope of this dissertation and what the university should know to protect the lives and integrity of trans* students of color, some of whom have indeed been murdered or made to disappear (implicitly and explicitly) by academic violence, harm, and trauma. Such an example is the life story of Pablo Gomez, who has since been found not guilty of murder by reason of insanity and sentenced to a state mental hospital for 39 years to life for fatally stabbing Emilie Inman during a psychotic break post a *Dia de Los Reyes* event in the university student housing. As expected from living within the atmospheres of violence of trans of color inclusion, Alameda County Judge C. Don Clay responsabilized Gomez’s friends (most of whom were UC Berkeley trans* Latinx students) for “failing” to act “the day before the attack, despite signs of danger.” Who is to blame when students cannot access needed medication and care due to financial aid holds or institutional restrictions on how many times one can see a therapist? How do trans* students of color become responsible for the violence against them as they process the violence of their inclusion into the university?

As a trans* and Latinx person engaged in the processes of trans inclusion at the university and living through its antagonism, I position myself as an insider who, along with others, learns and resists monocultural approaches to trans inclusion in the university. I co-produce knowledge with my participants and engaged in a processes of writing self-knowledge in my encounter with participants and the data. According to Pitts (2016), writings of self-knowledge or *autohistoria-teoría* is a methodology that informs us how knowledge practices are social and relational. I use my notes and journals, public comments, and photojournalism to think through the collected data and write personal essays that theorize (Anzaldúa, 2015a, 2015b). AnnaLouise Keating (2002) describes Anzaldúa’s process of *autohistoria-teoría* as a method that includes both life stories and self-reflection and writes that those who engage in this method “blend their cultural and personal biographies with memoir, history, storytelling, myth, and/or other forms of theorizing... and create interwoven individual and collective identities” (pp. 241–242). According to Pitts (2016), *autohistoria-teoría* is “crucial for theorizing how an individual’s subjectivity or conception(s) of self (selves) may be affected by structural patterns of ignorance”

(p. xxx). Through my writings, I reflect on and expose the institutional patterns of ignorance in matters related to the practice of transgender knowledge and inclusion via notions of trans care, and how it differs from the conception of trans* Latinx student populations notion of both selves and wellness.

Keeping Queer a Trans* Horizon

Despite a growing number of equity and diversity initiatives to attend to the needs of non-dominant student populations in terms of race, gender, and sexuality, little is known about how transgender inclusion (Nicolazzo, 2016), hegemonic trans discourses (Enke, 2012), and institutional transphobia (Salamon, 2018) figure into the repertoires of practice regarding student inclusion and belonging. The growth of empirical studies on transgender students in higher education has promoted the need for trans equity initiatives without accounting for the needs or experiences of students who identify as both trans and Latinx or research that focuses on the intended effects of trans-inclusionary policies on students of color, nor taken seriously decolonial and Trans* Black, Indigenous, and Latinx theoretical frameworks and study as to formulate trans critique, curriculum, and theory in education (Beemyn & Brauer, 2015; Jourian, 2017; Nicolazzo, 2016, 2017b; Nicolazzo et al., 2017; Nicolazzo Marine, & Galarte, 2015; Rehr & Regan, 2020).

Outside the representational mandates of visibility within identity politics, I am interested in what Puar (2018) describes as the terrorist assemblages that investigate “the predominance of subjecthood itself” as a mode of circumventing neoliberal mandates of identity politics (Puar, 2018, p. 206). My work follows the impetus to decolonize transing methodologies (DiPietro, 2016) by centering U.S. Women of Color feminist’s critiques of feminism as an oppositional project, understandings of the relationships among coloniality, gender, and the human, and theorizations of multiple subjectivities, being, and knowing that can more accurately speak on trans* of color diasporic subjects in their “co-constituted multiplicities of relations of power in context” (Bacchetta et al., 2020, p. 578). In this manner, I move away from taken-for-granted permutations of queer bodies as something that can be known and included, and shift into a constant state of queer becoming—a transing of entanglements that keep queer a trans* horizon, fleeing capture, and governmentality.

For researchers, this means my findings will provide new orientations and analytical frameworks for investigating the effects of gender diversity policies on racialized subjects, cultural identities, educational choices, and the unintended effects, consequences, and limitations of gender equity inclusion when approached from identity ideologies and discourses. For policymakers, findings might reframe the current approach to the category trans as a monolithic social praxis and one that requires a robust understanding of power, coloniality, and gender complexity. Lastly, for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion management, the data offers ways to better support trans* BIPOC by understanding the limitation of current identity discourses on race and gender and academic trauma and harm. Furthermore, critical theorists and scholars in education can find crucial foundational evidence on trans* Latinx students’ practices and meaning making as they confront Eurocentric pedagogies that (violently) attempt to hail, fracture, and capture students’ sense of being within higher education systems. In this manner, my analysis critiques the structural dynamics and pedagogies of gender coloniality within the multicultural university. It provides a reconstruction, new visions, or horizons of what it could mean to keep trans* education theory and practice a queer potentiality.

Paper 1: “Whatcha Gonna Do?”: Abolish, Decolonize, Queer, or Disidentify Gender in Education

Studies on gender complexity, non-dominant genders, and dissident genders can be grouped as offering ideal types of justice-based projects in education. These projects consist of variations on the meaning of identity and specific worldviews on the self and embodiment. Depending on which worldview one understands social relations and organization, the meaning of trans* justice varies from notions of equity, sovereignty, abolition, and even disidentification with oppressive and normative education protocols. These conceptualizations emerge from distinct frameworks on the social and whether or not gender is conceived under theories such as social constructionism, performativity, bio-diversity, coloniality, and anti-Blackness. Together, these various fields and approaches provide an expansive view of trans*/ gender justice in education. Each approach can be understood as emerging from unique and interdisciplinary fields such as Transgender Studies, Women of Color Feminism, Two-Spirit & Queer Indigenous Critiques, and Queer of Color Critique. Each analytical approach offers a nuanced critique against normative projects that include but are not limited to matters of the reproduction of homonormativity, whiteness, the valuation of modern/settler gender and sexualities, and the role of anti-Blackness and settlement in binary forms of thought, identity, and embodiment. Moreover, these intellectual fields not only contribute to debates on gender complexity in education research, but they also challenge methodological practices and assumptions made about bodies and what can be known when we recognize students’ capacity to occupy a multiplicity of genders/selves and allow dissident embodiments to be recognized as a practice of criticality, where the body is not only political, but a politic of refusal of the settler state, the colonial/modern gender system, and anti-Black systems of gender and sexual knowledge.

Re-membering as Trans* of Color Critique

Re-membering a trans* of color critique is a methodological project towards trans* equity and justice. What traditionally counts as “trans-” is materially determined in the interplay of power and knowledge (Currah & Stryker, 2015). In education, what counts as transgender and gender-expansive education research, policy, and practice (Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2018) is a matter of transgender intelligibility that carries political and social implications for projects on trans* and gender equity, inclusion, and justice. According to Hames-García et al. (2011), who took on the call of remembering from Alexander (2002), the method of remembering maps the “coalitional body that has been *dismembered* by a history of ideological violence” (p. 4, my emphasis). This method, they argued, requires us to piece together, name, suture, and repopulate the knowledge and forms of criticism that have been denied in queer, or in this case, transgender theory and knowledge. In this sense, the method of *re-membering* is a trans* of color critique that recognizes the bodies of knowledge on trans*ing genders and sexualities, its practices, methods, and goals.

Re-membering the body of knowledge that trans* of color criticism offers requires us to map the divergent genealogical conceptualizations of gender and sexual dissidence and complexity outside queer theory and transgender studies to suture a complete body of knowledge that has been dis-membered by white, Anglo queer theory. *Re-membering* is thus an act of criticism and a political commitment to center trans* of color people, forms of oppression, knowledge, and resistance through decolonial feminist frameworks. A project that gender-equity policymakers, to date, have left outside trans education politics and research.

First, a trans* of color critique in education is a method to uncover and grapple with colonial investments in categorical logics of identity in gender equity design by pointing out the Eurocentric knowledge about transness that frames policy, curriculum, and practice. Second, trans* of color critique offers a critical genealogy for modern transness and transgender identity by centralizing the complexity of BIPOC life, bodies of knowledge, expansive embodiments, and trans* figurations. Third, it makes central the pedagogies of resistance and coalition among trans* of color and other non-dominant groups. It offers forms of educational criticism that emerge in response to the grammars of settlement, anti-Blackness, and other colonial wounds experienced within schools and education systems, past and present (Ellison et al., 2017).

By *re-membering* the work of trans* of color critics throughout Turtle Island, or what is commonly known as North America's unceded Indigenous lands, this paper's underlying goal is to map the theoretical, epistemological, and political goals towards trans* justice. As such, trans* of color educational projects are centered on gender variance and complexity while simultaneously not being all gender-related or gender-specific when idealizing and materializing anti-oppressive education. This first paper is not a summary of research about the alternatives to gender equity as a binary system of classification but an act of *re-membering* the various epistemological and methodological concerns across dissident genders and sexualities outside white-centric queer and transgender theory in education or assuming all cultures organize society in gender terms or through gender hierarchies. Moreover, the act of *re-membering* is both a pedagogical praxis and a requirement for relationality, recognition, cross-identifications, and engagement with critical Indigenous and U.S. Women of Color Theory (Alexander, 2002). In this matter, a trans* of color critique actively creates political possibilities by unsettling investments in colonizing forms of Western thought and addressing the limits of transness and transgender identity as a category of analysis and politics when they are dependent on legibility and visibility through state biopolitics and other ethnocentric views on gender queerness (Ellison et al., 2017; Gill-Peterson, 2018). Through the act of remembering a trans* of color critique, we highlight the productive conjunction of the many intellectual and political projects towards gender equity and justice in education.

Conceptualizing Distinct Approaches to Trans* and Gender Equity and Justice

What kinds of anti-oppressive education projects emerge through the distinct theoretical approaches and commitments of decolonial feminist thought, Two-Spirit/Indigenous Critiques, Latinx/Joteria Studies, Black Trans* and Queer of Color Criticism? While these fields employ intersectional approaches to their studies and modes of analysis, studies on gender complexity, dissidence, and variance can be conceptually grouped into ideal gender equity and justice visions that offer pedagogical and methodological tools to materialize such visions. These projects vary in accordance to worldviews, the conceptualization of identity, the site and scalar politics of intervention, the role of gender in structuring convivial and communal life, experiences that inform how the operations of gendered structures in schools impact a student's life, and the type of research that standpoint epistemologies engender. For example, trans* and gender justice projects may focus on the function of the colonality of gender in education research (Patel, 2014), the relationship between modern gender and settler-colonialism (Driskill, 2004), the multiple feminist-queer-trans of color theories and practices (Bacchetta & Haritaworn, 2011), trans* and queer of color space making within the academy (Bacchetta et al., 2018), the role of gender in transformative social change (Bañales, 2014; Rodriguez, 2012; Wesley, 2015), or the

role of anti-Black abjection in equity policy to provide alternative models toward anti-oppressive education and policy (Brockenbrough, 2015; Calderon, 2014; Dumas, 2018; Kumashiro, 2000).

Divergent conceptualizations of trans* and gender equity in education may entail moving away from understandings of gender through the lenses of social constructionism, discursive construction, performativity, or biodiversity. Instead, the underlying framework in trans* of color critique is guided by the colonality of gender or what Maria Lugones (2007) describes as the colonial and modern gender system. At the core of this framework, and despite differences across epistemological, methodological, and pedagogical concerns, there is an underlying commitment to interrogating the structures of power and knowledge that govern the politics, history, and social lives of gendered bodies and the institutional regulation of their resistance. For example, U.S. Women of Color Feminist thought and Two-Spirit/Indigenous critique center the notion of the erotic and the brown body as pedagogical tools and means to knowledge, healing, decolonization, and wholeness (Cruz, 2001; Cruz & McLaren, 2002; Driskill, 2011). Despite differences in theoretical and ontological commitments, the divergent spaces of trans* justice in education share an unrelenting critique of (cis)gender education research and policy for their complicity in reproducing compulsory heterogenderism (Nicolazzo, 2017a), structural genderism (Seelman, 2014), and whiteness (Enke, 2012) in education research, policy, and practice. Moreover, the academic fields discussed hereafter challenge methodological practices and assumptions made about bodies, embodiments, and what can be known when we recognize and uplift students' capacity to reject, occupy or disidentify with a multiplicity of genders (Cruz, 2001, 2013; Cruz & McLaren, 2002; Driskill, 2011, 2015; King et al., 2015; Robinson, 2017; Smith et al., 2018).

Transgender Studies in Education: Envisioning Gender Identity Justice

Research on gender variance in school contexts uncovers the various and overlapping normative gender discourses in school geographies and how creating "hidden" gender-based barriers affect the well-being of gender complex students in various facets of their learning experience. Most cultural studies of gender variance in education research are centered around the complexity of trans student identity and communities. In this strand of inquiry, the knowledge of the speaking trans Subject (Stryker, 2006. p. 12) has contributed to the proliferation of trans specific education, research, and policy intending to provide gender-inclusive curriculum, programming, classrooms, and spaces (Blackburn, 2007; Luecke, 2011; Walters & Rehman, 2013). When it comes to studies on transgender personhood in schools, scholars have focused on transgender student experiences, modes of self-fashioning, survival, precarity, and how trans actors challenge dominant discourses and practices of masculinities and femininity. For example, Jourian (2017) has focused on trans masculine students understanding, defining, and adopting a masculine identity that is informed by various intersecting and salient identities such as race and class to form an array of racialized masculinities such as: "trans* masculinities of color, Black trans* masculinities, and white trans* masculinities" (p. 256).

In this work, racialized trans* masculinities are constituted through gender, and the changing character of masculinity depends on how they intersect with race and class. The production of knowledge on queer/transgender subjectivity in schools provides insights into how hetero-sexist ideology and genderism shape the everyday of schools (Bilodeau, 2005; Blount & Anahita, 2004; Pascoe, 2003; Talburt, 2004) to which then educational scholars propose alternative forms of curriculum and classroom practices capable of mitigating violence,

hierarchies, and other oppressive dynamics within the school system (Bilodeau, 2005; Blackburn & Miller, 2017; Hill & Willoughby, 2005; Pinar, 1998; Sears, 1999).

Moreover, this strand of research unpacks the tensions with sex-gender-sexuality essentialism and their relationship to epistemologies of queer/ trans embodiment, meanings, and experiences (Blackburn and McCready, 2009; Catalano, 2015; Fredman & Schultz, 2015; Jourian & Simmons, 2015; Mayo Jr., 2013; Nicolazzo, 2017a; Palkki, 2016; Rhoades, 2012; Singh et al., 2013). Through this work, scholars have focused on how the schools' sexual and gender hidden curriculum denies and subjugates non-normative and creative gender identities and embodiments (Malatino, 2015; Miller, 2016, 2018; Nicolazzo et al. 2017) and, in response, scholars offer curriculum interventions. This type of research serves as a critique of the pervasive culture of school violence against gender variant students that stems from the structural manifestations of bigenderism, cisnormativity, and compulsory heterogenderism in pedagogy, curriculum, and everyday institutional practices and arrangements (Bilodeau, 2005; Miller, 2017; Pascoe, 2007, 2009; Woolley, 2019). Marine and Nicolazzo (2014) look at the organization and impact of naming queer identity-based centers on transgender student development and feelings of inclusion and belonging. They find that even when sex and gender-based centers use the term "LGBTQ" as an umbrella term, these do not focus on concerns, issues, and needs of transgender communities within systems of higher education. While this work is important for its implications on programming and hiring practices it relies on discourses of neoliberal diversity recognition (Feguson, 2012).

The argument is based on the idea that the school/university culture creates a series of social stigmas, violences, and erasures when trans* students interact with the organizational practices and norms.

While the literature on trans phenomena in schools continues to be limited in scope, this area of research captures the range of experiences, identity development, forms of expression, and needs of trans students in various educational contexts. With the use of personal narratives, this literature looks at the tension between bi-genderism in education and allyship accommodation practices (Enke, 2013). Particularly, this literature highlights how gender complex students navigate the gendered microsystems of the school, such as gendered physical structures, official records, policies, curricula, and classroom practices (Bilodeau, 2005, Burns, 2011; Rankin et al., 2010), the choices students make regarding gender self-determination and identification (Nicolazzo, 2017), and perceptions of group belonging and affiliation based on gendered microsystems (Catalano, 2015; Jourian, 2018).

Most importantly, the sociocultural analysis of gender variance in schools makes visible the incidence and prevalence of sexual harassment that excludes and even exposes gender-variant students to biases, oppression, and even death (Catalano & Griffin, 2016; Goldberg et al., 2018; Jourian et al., 2015; Meng & Hansen, 2013; Nicolazzo, 2015; Nicolazzo & Marine, 2015; Seelman, 2014, 2016). Centering on an intersectional analysis, these cultural studies of gender variance in schools document the multiple forms of trans student oppression and heightened vulnerabilities for trans people of color (Derieg et al., 2017; Grant et al., 2011) and how these oppressions overlap with other salient identities such as class, and ability. In particular, intersecting identities shape the distinct issues and needs towards achieving gender identity justice in schools. Centering a critical trans politics (Spade, 2015), educators address the double bind of formal education that excludes, rejects, and harms trans people while simultaneously uncovering schools' potentiality as spaces of possibility that allow transgender and nonbinary students to imagine different futures.

Moreover, this work also documents the limitations and frictions that arise in the implementation of trans awareness training (Nakamura, 1998) and performative “cis” allyship practices that leave unquestioned the inherent whiteness in the formulation of cisgender and transgender identity and policy initiatives (Enke, 2012). In doing so, scholars document the myriad of ways trans actors resist becoming “undone” by the normatively gendered logic in education institutions. Trans students are seen as agents of resistance. Thus scholars have focused on how trans students deploy modes of self-fashioning (Jourian, 2018), survival tactics, and kinship formations to challenge dominant discourses, mitigate oppressive dynamics, hierarchies, and discourses of cisgenderism as they manifest in matters related to schooling, learning, and pedagogy (Nicolazzo et al., 2015).

Justice scholars offer a praxis toward gender identity and propose alternative forms of literacies, curriculum, and classroom practices to mitigate violence, hierarchies, and other oppressive dynamics within the school system (Miller, 2019; Wolley, 2015). Joining trans identity research and data with studies on “trans-phenomena,” the intention is to generate institutional and social transformation by centering the embodied knowledge held by trans students as actors and agents. Discussed by Rodriguez (2012) as a pedagogy of trans generosity, the “queer imaginative body” becomes an embodied site of resistance since it is also the site that constitutes how “normative” gendered and sexed lives are lived out. However, the discourse of plasticity in the queer imaginative body is highly attached to Western biomedicine and ideas of gender self-determination that have historically denied trans-affirming care to trans* people of color (Gill-Peterson, 2018).

Overall, this work relies on a combination of theories of gender performativity, constructionism, and biodiversity to produce frames of intelligibility on how trans students, and to an extension, administrators and educators, respond to and affirm gender complex identities. This research relies on a distinction across gender identity, gender expression, and embodiment, wherein gender identity is conceived as internal and gender expression and embodiment as an outward cultural form of “doing gender” (Nicolazzo, 2018). However, this approach to gender complexity in education research relies on humanist understandings of the self as existing in an internal-external duality. This distinction is essential as gender identity justice projects are predominantly built from spaces of trauma and violence and heavily rely on peer education to make trans* lives visible and, by extension, livable.

Black & Decolonial Feminism on Trans* Ontological Questions

The knowing brown body is central to trans* gender equity design and social transformation. Invoking the displacement of subjectivity across multiple discourses and positions, Cindy Cruz (2001) grounded her work in U.S. Women of Color and decolonial feminist “theories of the flesh” (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983) to unpack the limitations of categorial logics of identity (Alarcón, 1994; Lugones, 2003, 2007) and embraced the sociality of the body, in its contradictions and multiplicity, that becomes elusive and absent in educational research. Throughout her work, Cruz (2001, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2019) has explored the theoretical and pedagogical affordances of creative forms of storying the brown body that sutures the fragmented body to account for ontological multiplicity. Working against the body’s containment is a central concern of decolonial feminist research in education. It demands attention to the transness of brown body epistemologies in their intermeshing sociality and multiple oppressions.

By analyzing queer Chicana knowledge production, Cruz (2001) established queer brown feelings and desires as central to radical imaginations and critical languages to mediate, reconfigure, and transform social institutions and practices. Cruz exemplified this process through Christine Soto's poetic meditations on being and occupying multiple positions outside the confines of the "norm" as a Chicana, a fat person, and neither male nor female (Soto, 2000). Through her poetry, Cruz (2001) explained Soto critiqued racial, and gender discourses of dominant cultures and simultaneously celebrated ambiguity, where Soto can exist as a whole, "Simplemente Una Mujer en traje de hombre con chi-chis y/Orgullo" ["Simply, a woman in a man's suit, with breasts and pride"] (p. 11). The queer brown body, as a site of trans*ing methodologies, reconfigures, reconstructs, and breaks away with humanist and positivist significations of a unitary speaking subject towards a trans* ontology that is multivalent, polyvocal, and intermeshed. This ontological position yields new understandings of gender complexity by placing its complexity outside gender identity, an ontological position that complicates categories of gender, sex, and sexuality as understood and imagined in queer and transgender studies (Galarte, 2014a). Galarte (2014a), for example, traced the affective strategies of resistance that transgender and gender non-conforming Latinx people use in order to survive harassment, institutional neglect, and violence. He demonstrated how the storying of the racialized trans* body, through artistic self-making, create discursive, social, and institutional transformation (Galarte, 2015). The trans* ontological resignification of the queer brown body is thus at the center of ideal and material mappings of gender equity and justice that demand anti-oppressive education to center and uplift the queer brown body's knowledge's capacity to navigate, be, embody and travel capacious intra- and inter-subjectivities.

This process of recognizing all relations of power is evident in newer Black Trans* studies such as the work Kai Green "Troubling the Waters" (2016) "The Trans*-Ness of Blackness, the Blackness of Trans*-Ness" by Marquis Bey (2017), Dora Silva Santana (2017) "Transitionings and Returnings," and Riley Snorton's (2017) book, *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity*, that provide a critical foundation for Black trans studies by exploring how the intersections between anti-Blackness and transness produce the epistemological and ontological foundation for understanding gender as a mutable category outside the modern human. Bey argues that the relationship between transness and Blackness is an "original lawlessness that marks an escape from confinement and a besidedness to ontology" (Bey, 2017; p.xx). Through the use of African-American slave archives, Snorton shows a transness to be found not just in changing gender but in Black experience in relation to questions of fugitivity, or fungibility, what he calls transitivity and transversality. "Trans-" according to both Snorton and Bey, is a primordial operation to produce the modern human. Models of gender and sex are haunted by ideologies of racial slavery and anti-Blackness, where the science of sex and the science of race are collateral genealogies, what Snorton describes as "transversal" genealogies and as a way of thinking about how transness was deployed as a strategy of gender for fugitive maneuvering (Snorton, 2017). That is, "gender" does not map to a sense of sex or anatomy but rather, as in Hortense Spillers (1987) "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," gender becomes a territory for cultural and political maneuver.

Similarly, in *Aberrations in Black: Towards a Queer of Color Critique*, Roderick Ferguson (2004) opens his book with a scene from Marlon Riggs's film *Tongues Untied* to describe how the figure of the Black drag-queen prostitute unsettles canonical Sociology regulation of Black culture and offers a trans* figure, "in the pleasure of her existence" as a critique of the state, capital, and the social sciences and not as evidence of the dysfunction of

capitalism. Ferguson explains how the analytical frames within Black Nationalism and Sociology would argue that the life of a Black drag-queen prostitute is the outcome of personal and social dysfunctions. As such, she can't be representative of revolutionary agency. Using the theoretical subject of Women of Color Feminism (Alarcón, 1990) and the notion of disidentification (Muñoz, 1999) with the dominant conceptualization of the neoliberal Subject, Ferguson gives us the figure of Black drag-queen, sissys, and bulldaggers as possibilities to think of an otherwise of agency.

Jotería Studies: Disrupting the Regulation of the Queer Brown Body

Understanding the brown body's ontological regulation within Eurocentric thought is fundamental in developing radical transformation and decolonization projects. Therefore, disruption and vulnerability become central pedagogical commitments to unsettle regulation and containment of the trans* ontological brown body. Jotería is a noun, adjective, and coalitional term that describes dissident practices of gender and sexualities among Latinx, Chicanx, and Indigenous people in the Southwest and *mestiza/o* subjectivities and practices (Hames-García, 2014; Pérez, 2014). According to Bañales (2014), Jotería studies emerged as a decolonizing project to challenge the coloniality of power and colonial legacies that regulate and contain gender and queer of color embodiments, spirituality, and relationality. As a coalitional term, *jotería* becomes a decolonizing political project that attempts to reconfigure the negative connotations imposed onto joto identity, embodiment, spirituality, practices, and sociality (Bañales, 2014). Additionally, Joto epistemologies offer a space for reflection on the movements and geographical discontinuities where *jotería* (queer bodies and sexualities + Latinidad) exists in resistance to discourses and practices of regulation and containment by the coloniality of gender.

Jotería studies have responded to a decolonial impetus through the method of listening, which Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) invoked in asking “to listen to what your *jotería* is saying” as means to center the political and artistic language of *los atravesados*, “those who cross over, pass over, or go through the confines of the ‘normal’” (p. 3). For example, Jose Esteban Muñoz (2006) turned towards *jotería* to forge a critical language of hope capable of propelling queer futurities through what he described as feeling brown. A structure of brown feelings (Muñoz 2000) enables a disidentification with dominant logics of identity and subjectivity and serves as a survival strategy capable of individual and social transformation.

Jotería's research and praxis turn to brown feelings and the affective specificity of queer Latinx lifeworlds as part of the intercultural labor—the ways of knowing, sensing, and feeling otherwise (DiPietro, 2019) that is necessary to begin the political commitment and process of decolonization. Moreover, a pedagogical commitment to brown feelings moves us away from what DiPietro (2019) calls “benevolent violence,” or the violence that emerges from Eurocentric and white-centered trans theory and politics the moment researchers colonize transing embodiments, subjectivities, and realities through the process of understanding the category transgender and trans* embodiments through the lens of “certainty, simplicity, and agreement” (p. 208). In this manner, Jotería Studies can help us understand what DiPietro (2019) described as “impulses to indignation” and claims to knowing, feeling, and identifying with trans* of color violence while simultaneously creating the conditions of trans violence, just as Black Crit helps us understand anti-Black racial justice discourse in education that reproduces and re-inscribes Black suffering (Dumas, 2018).

Furthermore, listening to *jotería* is a methodological approach that employs knowledge, art, and activism to politically remain accountable to Indigenous peoples, lands, and decolonial struggles. It confronts and heals from the epistemological contradictions inherent in the coloniality of gender (Bañales, 2014). As an analytical structure and methodology, *jotería* praxis drives education scholars towards an epistemic shift necessary to acknowledge resisting relations. For Alvarez (2014), *Jotería* pedagogy instills “a process of decolonization of the mind, body, and spirit” (p. 218). This process of decolonizing the mind, body, and spirit is exemplified in the various educational projects that use *jotería* as a framework or method to theorize resistant socialities. These include the Joto-Historia, the writing and storying the self (Revilla & Santillana, 2014), trans *jotería* pedagogy (Caraves, 2020), and *Jotería* cyborg activism (Lizárraga & Cortez, 2020). Entries of *jotería* research underscore the importance of accounting for resistant practices of mind, body, and spirit while simultaneously taking note of the distribution of opportunities, resources, and social supports to create inclusive and transformational pedagogical spaces—a process of building a critical awareness through *jotería*.

Two-Spirit and Queer Indigenous Studies: Unsettling the Erotic as a Trans* Methodology

Following the centrality of the knowing body and the method of storying the self towards wholeness (Cruz, 2001), queer Indigenous and Two-Spirit scholars turn to affect and Indigenous methodologies to confront gender identity development in schools and the historical and present-day structures that permeate Indigenous and non-Indigenous life and institutions with heteropatriarchal violence. Driskill (2011) defined queer Indigenous studies as a decolonizing method that consists of a broad political agenda toward Indigenous well-being, cultural remembrance, and self-determination.

A main pedagogical concern is a process of “circling back” that consists of making whole the lives of Indigenous people through practices of reclaiming, re-inventing, and re-defining lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer, and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ/2S) Indigeneity that was and is shattered through Indian boarding schools and their contemporary legacies in the educational system (Evans-Campbell et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2018). The process of storying, testifying, or “coming-in” is a means to justice and a process towards being fully present as both Indigenous and LGBTQ/2S people and as a redress against hegemonic narratives of knowing and coming to know one’s gender distinct from Western conceptions of gender and sexual queerness. As a new pan-Indian term, Two-Spirit knowledge is also a pedagogical refusal and dis-identificatory terminology to interrupt colonial authority over knowledge of Two-Spirit, queer Indigeneity by centering tribal-specific worldviews and critiques of colonial heteropatriarchy, gender, and sexual modernity, and the appropriation and conflation of Two-Spirit genealogies (Driskill, 2004, 2010).

While not all LGBTQI Indigenous people identify with the term, the term was first proposed by elder Myra Laramee, who proposed its use during the Third Annual Inter-tribal Native American, First Nations, Gay and Lesbian American Conference held in Winnipeg in 1990. The term is a translation of the Anishinaabemowin term *niizh manidoowag*, two spirits, and it's used as a pan-Indigenous coalitional term pushing toward cultural and language revitalization. As a coalitional term, it impels Indigenous peoples to use specific words and language to understand and make sense of LGBTQ/2S life and social roles. For example, it demands we follow tribe-specific worldviews (Pyle, 2018) to understand how each tribe understands and socially positions two-Spirit people. As a coalitional term, Two-Spirit describes the wide-ranging systems of genders and sexualities across tribal affiliation and organizing and

helps build alliances among Indigenous peoples as they resist institutionalized homophobia, transphobia, and sexism within the settler-colonial society and its systems of knowledge production.

Through the articulation of intellectual sovereignty (Warrior, 1992), Indigenous LGBTQ/2S people make claims to (a)/gender(s), (a)sexualities, and cultural identities as part of the process of Indigenous belonging and cultural continuity, and not as an oppositional or minoritized identity politics found in queer theory and politics (Driskill, 2010, 2011). Indigenous LGBTQ/2S methodologies are conceptualized as capable of Indigenizing academic spaces and confronting the institutionalized legacies of the settler-colonial heteropatriarchal regimens that create gender inequities given the centrality of sexual violence in Indigenous genocide and the structures of settler colonialism (Smith, 2015).

Along with its interdisciplinary approach to knowledge, the relationship among self, community, spirit, and land enables Indigenous LGBTQ/2S people to articulate tribe-specific critiques against colonial heteropatriarchy. Simultaneously, LGBTQ/2S worldviews open the space to reflect and make sense of the numerous and complex gender systems in dis-harmony with Indigenous identity and spirituality. For example, Driskill (2015) has documented how Indigenous LGBTQ/2S people describe the notion of transing, gender transition, or spiritual fluidity as corresponding to cosmological or ecological shifts, such as land and water transitions fluidity, or regeneration. Indigenous scholars have argued that a significant decolonizing gesture of reclaiming the erotic emerges in Two-Spirit literature as a resistance and transformation site for all Indigenous people. The erotic play a vital pedagogical function as a survivance practice, and it may facilitate retention, success, and engagement among Indigenous LGBTQ/2S students (Mayer, 2008). Unsettling the erotic is central to organizing pathways toward Indigenous decolonization, and LGBTQ/2S persons play a pivotal role in this process. Indigenous LGBTQ/2S knowledge, worldviews, social roles, desires, needs, and kinship formations are valued and leveraged by queer Indigenous studies and serve as critical points of intervention in articulating Indigenous sovereignty (Driskill, 2010).

The importance of “coming-in” stories on identity, body, and gender self-determination become critical to challenging school complicity with Indigenous genocide and how LGBTQ/2S students make sense of and navigate urban schools, the school-to-prison pipeline, settler-colonial curriculum, and transgender cultural visibility (Jacobs et al., 1997; Miller, 2018; Wesley, 2015). Additionally, storying sovereign erotics provides educational scholars with teaching strategies and literacies that center on Indigenous gender systems and worldviews on decolonizing the curriculum (Everett et al., 2013). Coming-in, or wholeness pedagogies, have also helped Indigenous LGBTQ/2S people “call-in” to decolonize the politics of transgender knowledge production and the ongoing investments in whiteness among theorists of gender and sexual variability through their appropriation of Indigenous third, fourth, fifth, and fluid genders and sexualities (Driskill, 2004, 2011). Specifically, Queer Indigenous scholarship questions investments in queer whiteness and equity projects that make legible modern trans* identities by eliminating the native in their deployment of settler temporality as means to multicultural inclusion and belonging.

To work against the elimination of Two-Spirit, queer Indigeneity from transgender knowledge production, scholars continue to use Indigenous poetry and literary criticism to unpack the settler coloniality inherited in multicultural education and transgender cultural production and as a means to “speaking truth to power” (Sium & Ritskes, 2013). Indigenous storytelling also accounts for how Two-Spirit youth understand, use, and make sense of

transgender identity, Two-Spirit roles, and transing as concepts that exceed gender malleability (Hunt & Holmes, 2015). Indigenous scholars also question settler time to examine trans* temporal kinship methods rooted in Indigenous worldviews on temporality, belonging, accountability, and ownership (Pyle, 2018; Rifkin, 2014). The focus on present-day Indigenous LGBTQ/2S lives and worldviews challenges colonial terminologies and understandings of sexual and gender formations related to white queer and trans life experiences.

Moreover, the naming and reclamation of queer genders and sexualities is part of the broader path to decolonization that centers on Indigenous LGBTQ/2S people as leaders in troubling heteropatriarchal logics around desire, embodiment, and kinship (Rifkin, 2010, 2014). Unsettling the legacies of colonial desire thus requires schools to center and grapple with Indigenous LGBTQ/2S student perspectives on queerness, fluid identities, gender violence in school, and the increased global trans visibility among school-age children in order to structure the schools' intimate relationship with sexual violence, settler coloniality, and complicity with Indigenous erasure. The project of decolonizing education via erotic sovereignty centers on Indigenous Two-Spirit people as key knowledge holders in the transformation of knowledge and institutions, pressing on models of equity design that rely on historical and timescale assumptions of settler-time, Indigenous genders, and Two Spiritedness, and equity discourses that (re)structure ongoing settlement.

Gender-sovereignty is not oppositional or antinormative but is integral to honoring Indigenous worldviews and practices (Driskill 2010). Instead, it allows 2Spirirt people to determine the characteristics that define a person's social role and spiritual gifts as they strive to correct western misconceptions of Indigenous knowledge (Anguksuar, 1997). Two-Spirit artists examine the historical relationship of race, gender, and power on material culture, contemporary self-expression, and art. Two-Spirit artists work to confront heteronormativity brought on by colonialism by exhibiting shifts in gender roles across cultures and time and embodying the values of community organizing, storytelling, and survival. Two-Spirit critiques see theory practiced through poetry, memoir, fiction, story, song, dance, theater, visual art, film, and other genres.

Women of Color Feminism and Native Two-Spirit critiques offer education scholars the tools to imagine ongoing decolonial projects that seek alliances as a practice of survivance (Powell, 2004) and to shift queer/trans critique into consciousness on how modern genders, such as trans identities in schools, are entrenched and dependent on the modern/settler-colonial state and its institutions of education. While gender-identity justice is a project that shares Two-Spirit critiques challenge to heteropatriarchy, bi-genderism, and policing and control of the gender-expansive bodies, Two-Spirit scholars in education use a double-weaving articulation (Driskill, 2010) to bridge gender identity justice with Two-Spirit gender-sovereignty by emphasizing the role of schools as a colonial project that requires the ongoing policing of bodies through colonial sexual and gender configurations.

Most recently, the specificity of Native histories, politics, and decolonial struggles are uplifted to understand how gender-variant/ Two-Spirit students deal with white-dominated trans* student narratives. This work re-centers the importance of rhetorical and intellectual sovereignty (Lyons, 2011; Warrior, 1992) in decolonial projects seeking gender sovereignty. While tribal-specific Two-Spirit experiences exist alongside European constructions of modern gender variance trans* embodiments and expressions, most 2S knowledge does not rely on modern medicine to construct trans personhood (Gill-Patterson, 2018). Instead, 2S is rooted in struggles for sovereignty, land redress, and cultural continuance. Sexism, homophobia, and transphobia are

understood as colonial tools, and heterosexism and Gender regimes are manifestations and tools of colonialism and genocide. The notion of sovereign erotics is a Two-Spirit tactic for historical healing trauma and a tool in decolonial struggles. Traditional Two-Spirit teaching has the potential to impact students' conception of gender roles, Indigenous histories, multiple expressions of gender, and other queer(ed) topics that fall within the purview of social studies.

Mayo and Sheppard (2012) postulated that students' exposure to Two-Spirit individuals' nuanced worldview challenges Western binary thinking as Indigenous Ideologies do not mix. They argue that the Western sense of self is an individualistic concept, whereas the self is always a collective for Indigenous people. 2S scholars call to decolonize race, gender, and sexuality discourses and decolonize educational curriculums via land rematriation. The goal is to challenge Western dichotomies and binary thinking and educate young Native people about historical injustices against 2S people and the ongoing detrimental repercussions.

Queer of Color Critique: Disidentifying with Discourses of Queer of Color Impossibility

Queer of Color Critique (QOCC) in education emerges as an alternative genealogy to index the interplay between hegemony and resistance within queer of color communities (Brockenbrough, 2015). Throughout this scholarship, queer of color denotes non-white, same-sex desires, and gender identities and expressions marked deviant from heteronormative power structures. According to Brockenbrough (2015), QOCC deploys an analytic lens with three key affordances:

1. It names and contextualizes the marginalization of queer of color difference by interrupting hegemonic knowledge production. This is achieved mainly by focusing on queer of color agency and disrupting discourses of queer of color victimhood.
2. QOCC maps the intersectional and collective resistance strategies that benefit queers of color and anti-oppressive educational scholarship.
3. Queer of color analysis unpacks the affordances and constraints regarding queer of color (in)visibility and the strategies used by queers of color that work with and through hegemonic processes in educational contexts.

In this manner, queer of color analysis in educational contexts is an epistemological disidentification on two fronts. First, it works through hegemonic assumptions to break from U.S. and Eurocentric research in queer and LGBTQ studies in education and the corresponding failures to address racial abjection's centrality in gender and sexual student marginalization and oppression discussions. Second, it shifts discursively towards queer of color resistance epistemologies (Brockenbrough, 2015). This double gesture accounts for neoliberal investments in queer of color marginality and cultural absorption of "minority culture" (Ferguson, 2012) in projects related to diversity and inclusion. Moreover, queer of color analysis opens the space for creating queer of color-specific criticism against equity projects that leave unchallenged the racialized heteropatriarchy in school contexts.

Following Cruz (2001), queer of color embodied knowledge is seen as a source of anti-oppressive knowledge production. Students critically interrogate material and ideological systems of domination that diminish queer of color possibility (Brockenbrough, 2015). By centering queer of color sociality and moments of resistance, this field uncovers the various strategies LGBTQ youth of color deploy against neoliberal commodification of queer of color identities and subjectivities and the diverse resistance methodologies and pedagogies that youth employ to navigate multiple and intermeshing oppressions (Cruz, 2013; Grady et al., 2012; Love, 2017). In this manner, queer of color analysis pushes against long-established hegemonic

conceptions of knowledge production and methodological assumptions on representation, visibility, and what can be known when we displace crisis-oriented discourses and center agentive efforts against domination, abjection, and the contradictions between heightened surveillance and invisibility. Given the incidence of queer youth of color dropout rates and disengagement with school communities, queer of color research moves beyond formal educational spaces. Moving outside the confines of formal schooling, QOCC focuses on how queer of color youth create educational opportunities and literacy practices capable of mobilizing poignant critiques of anti-Blackness and white queer complicity in the institutional racialization of heteronormative school practices; practices that foreclose and delegitimize the existence of queers of color in academic spaces (Love, 2017; McCready, 2010).

The mapping of diverse methods and tools to contest reductive discourses on Black and brown embodiment makes queer youth of color-critical players organize expansive learning practices. The development of subversive methodologies considers how queer of color students and teachers work together to reimagine educational spaces and build social supports needed to address queer of color exclusion. Moreover, by documenting queer of color agency and resistance, educational scholars are aware of the capacious practices of self-determination and survival that point towards the centrality of race to modern queerness and transness. Lastly, centering race in discussions of queer subversive methodologies that deliberately resist anti-Black gender and sexual binaries open up a space to depart from trans* and gender equity and justice projects as mere “scenes of subjection” that spring from but exceed Black suffering (Dumas, 2018; Dumas & Ross, 2016).

Towards Trans* of Color Critique in Education Research, Policy, and Practice

In the *Transgender Studies Quarterly* inaugural issue, “Postposttranssexual Key Concepts for a Twenty-First-Century Transgender Studies,” Francisco Galarte (2014b) posed the question, “What might . . . a transpedagogy encompass?” According to Galarte, critical trans* pedagogies should aim to produce stratagems of oppositional praxis in which teaching and learning about trans* phenomena takes place across a spectrum of social practices and locations as we shift through available frameworks to understand, describe, and address the intermeshing social realities of trans* subjects. As a coalitional concept (Muñoz & Garrison, 2008), trans* pedagogies must keep up with shifting theoretical, ontological, and epistemological understandings of gender, transness/trans*ness, and the liberatory ethics they engender.

In education research, policy, and practice, trans* of color pedagogies, rather than being indexes of additive student marginality, are productive cultural meaning-making sites where the meaning of gender equity and justice is re-worked and contested. However, the production of knowledge on transgender phenomena in schools remains a category of analysis that relies on unproblematized (and often uncritical) uses of intersectionality theory as we engage with issues of difference, divergent conceptualizations of ontology, and the trans* subject through the notion of intermeshing oppression. In this paper, Trans* of Color Critique became a practical analytical framework to map the divergent conceptualizations, epistemological, and political commitments across a broad range of trans* and gender equity and justice projects. Attention to trans* of color criticism enables coalitional practices across trans* communities and other communities of difference as it accounts for the politics of knowledge production and the centrality of anti-Blackness and settler colonialism in transphobia in schools, assumptions made about gender complexity and diversity, and assumptions about experiences, production, reproduction, and resistance of trans* phenomena inside and outside schools.

Re-membering a trans* of color criticism entails actively working against hegemonic discourses that reproduce western epistemic dominance, power, privilege, and white-centric conceptualizations, theories, and modes of transing bodies and embodiment. At the same time, understanding the epistemological and political commitments behind trans* and gender equity and justice projects serves to document the multiplicity of trans* counter-publics, literacies, and praxis. Each field then engenders the possibilities of forging contingent collaborations across trans* and gender difference. Centering trans* of color theories and pedagogies is a crucial trans* pedagogy since it not only creates new opportunities for teaching and learning but also enables us to negotiate power and subordination relations in the proposal and implementation of gender equity policy and practice.

Paper 2: The University & The Politics of Purity: Understanding the Experiences Between Learning to Be Trans ⇔ Cultivating Trans Wellness

The University of California, Berkeley campus knows that transgender students of color report a higher incidence of violence, stress, dissatisfaction, microaggressions, and alienation, among other issues, despite being a leading campus in terms of LGBTQ equality. But does it know how this violence is lived? How does one begin to write about the atmosphere of violence, “the structuring antagonism of violence levied against trans/queer and gender-nonconforming people” (Stanley, 2022) within trans equity programs and trans inclusion services?

As I look through my notes on “violence,” I begin to notice the violence of fragmentation in the organization of student life around hegemonic and dominant understandings of self, community, and belonging. Many of the students’ conversations in response to incidents of violence turn to the violence that is felt in the encounter with official (social, linguistic, and subject formation) discourses in the university around Latinidad, transness, and the self. Specifically the tension between the culturally specific sense of self, community, and trans materialities and the official discourses of Latinx and trans identity inclusion. Particularly, the violence of learning to be trans for the university often contradicts, separates, or denies a student’s understanding of simply existing as trans. In this paper, I will discuss the notion of learning to be trans as an ideological hailing, forms of discursive and epistemic violence necessary for the inclusion of particular trans subjects in the organization of the university. Through students’ discussions of “trans care” services and programs, I show how the university requires the unification of trans identity via hierarchal ordering and fragmentation while ignoring or misrecognizing students’ knowledge of existing as trans. Using theories of the flesh to show how students narrate and organize “self* knowledge,” to “cultivate trans wellness” via complexity polyvalence and land stewardship. These practices constitute resistant sociality working through what I call the “colonial gender continuum,” as the apparatus for the production of gender coloniality and the driver of institutional racialized gender violence in the university that produces what I describe as the greatest source of antagonistic “self*” violence: colonial dysphoria.

Testimonios: Narrating Self*-Knowledge

Using student *testimonios* in the form of conversations, notes on students’ group conversations, and field notes that emerge from my participation in “trans* Latinx” programming and events, I explore the community of practice that emerges from what Haritaworn et al. (2013) call “murderous inclusions” that exist within the politics of trans-specific services and programs. Specifically, I discuss the testimonios of three undergraduate students and how they experience trans inclusion and its effects on their sense of “self” and understanding of who they are as part of Latinx trans populations. In their testimonios, I look for the dominant frames of trans inclusion under transgender care services and programs and the kinds of violence these frames of trans intelligibility produce.

Methodologically, I attend to the embodied and affective dimensions of organizational knowledge about trans inclusion and violence through a “multi-sited sensibility” (Vossoughi & Gutierrez, 2014) that accounts for students’ learning self-discipline and governance across multiple contexts (Critchley, 2010; Foucault, 1970) of a student college life. Utilizing

Chicana/Latinx Feminist narratives of self-knowledge practices such as *testimonios* (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012), *pláticas* (Fierro & Delgado-Bernal, 2016), and *autohistoria-teoría* (Anzaldúa, 2002; Keating, 2002; Pitts, 2019) I reveal how trans* Latinx students apprehend the unitary subject (Alarcón, 1990) of transgender inclusion in their engagement with trans inclusionary policies, programs, and services. I use “theories of the flesh” narrative methods to unpack how trans* Latinx BIPOC students live, experience, and contest hegemonic discourses of trans identities, materialities, and embodiments and learn to leverage trans* Latinx repertoires of practice to reflect, act, and organize against a white-centric hegemony on trans bodies and other forms of epistemic, institutionalized, and everyday racialized gender violence on campus. These narratives not only unpack how coloniality, race, gender, location, and ethnicity are tied to how one experiences and lives one's gender, but they offer a phenomenology of how gender equity and trans inclusion are lived, negotiated, and used in students' engagements with the university.

I use *testimonios* as an intercultural approach to critique discourses surrounding marginalization, oppression, and resistance. Specifically, *testimonios* are a form of collectivist discourse that create “new understandings about how marginalized communities build solidarity and respond to and resist dominant culture, laws, and policies that perpetuate inequity” (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012, p. 363). Avant-Mier and Hasian (2008) identify four key discursive functions of *testimonios*: 1) a sense of autobiographical truth; 2) a sense of solidarity and potentiality for alliance-building; 3) a supply of discursive materials for historical remembrances, and 4) as a counter-hegemonic device (p. 330). As a genre, *testimonio* exposes the violence, disrupts silencing, and builds solidarity among marginalized communities living in the in-between spaces of the dominant culture (Anzaldúa, 1990; Delgado Bernal et al., 2012). Within the field of education, *testimonio* is taken up as a pedagogical, methodological, and activist approach to social justice. *Testimonio* involves the participant in a critical reflection of their personal experience within particular socio-political realities. Of importance is the idea that *testimonio* engages with personal and collective aspects of identity formation (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012; Latina Feminist Group, 2001) and aligns with feminist theorizing from the flesh, where the brown body bears witness to both oppression and resistance (Anzaldúa, 1990; Cruz, 2006; Lugones, 2003; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983). *Testimonio*, according to Delgado Bernal et al. (2012), “is a process (methodology), product (inclusive of text, video, performance, or audio), and a way of teaching and learning (pedagogy)” that becomes a bridge between the knowledge of the brown body and the pedagogies in educational spaces (p. 363).

Throughout this institutional ethnography, I approached students' understandings of situations, and *testimonios*, through a resistant sociality lens (Lugones 2003), where students ascribed and negotiated formal discourses of trans identity and its inclusion (subjectification) while simultaneously imagining possibilities of a trans* Latinidad (active subjectivity) that emerged in the oppressing↔resisting relation. During my initial survey call to invite research participants for interviews and to engage in their day-to-day activities, I included a mapping of “breathing spaces” on campus. It is through the main “breathing spaces,” the Multicultural Community Center, that I was able to witness faithfully (Cruz, 2011; Lugones, 2003) the meaning-making practices of students in their encounter with the pedagogies of learning to be trans within the university and their active resistant practice of simply existing as trans, and how such space becomes a “breathing” ground.

From Re-search to Research on Institutional Trans Violence

As I look through my field notes, observations, interviews, and memos on student *testimonios*, I come across various parent codes, theoretically informed, top-down, bottom-up codes, relationships, definitions, and examples of forms of violence in the university. I asked in my reflections, “Which index of violence is more relevant, or perhaps, more violent? Does it matter how one experiences them?” In retrospect, I had encountered the dirtiness and violence of “re-search” (Smith, 1999) in the process of codifying the layers, variations, and complexity of what gets to count as “trans violence” in the academy. I could not choose where to begin. Instead, I began to write this open letter to my participants, potential readers, and myself. A form of collective *testimonio* that bears witness to the atmosphere of violence that engulfs trans life in the university. I offer the letter as points of entry, or interventions, without assuming one is more pressing than the other. I offer this mediation to avoid putting forms of violence into hierarchies and divest from coloniality in research.

Dear participants, friends, comunidad:

Where do I begin to describe the personal yet collective experiences of institutional trans-violence? Do I begin with students’ narratives of mentally and physically preparing themselves to enter the campus to avoid transphobic hacklers on Sproul Hall who can freely antagonize trans students under the name of free speech? Or how there is no accountability for visitors on campus and the numerous student interactions with non-student guests on campus who claim to know a student’s gender, impose their cis-normative ideas onto students’ spaces, and feel empowered to attack trans Latinx students for being in the restroom?*

Do I begin by narrating the fear or emotional drain to access a gender-neutral facility or even the inaccessibility of finding the gender-neutral restrooms that are either located on the top floors of a building or in the basements usually next to the university’s trash and recycle compactors? Maybe I should focus on the many tagging and graffiti telling trans students they are sinful and wrong? Or how students feel in gender-neutral stalls that are covered from floor to ceiling, causing more distress in fear someone may enter and attack them in full privacy, or how students discuss fearing they may have an emergency and can’t be seen dead or passed out on the floor. Do I begin with students’ discussions of timing and planning of collective bathroom or classroom breaks in fear of being confronted in all public areas of campus? Do I provide an account of the daily discussions on racialized transphobic microaggressions from peers, faculty, and staff? Or do I discuss the microaggressions that come from the curriculum, opinions, and choice of pedagogical material? Maybe perhaps I begin with a discussion of the role that laughter and jokes play in a student’s mental health and sense of belonging whenever peers and professors uncritically use films, images, or content depicting trans-violence? Or how tired students are of having to become the expert in the gender-specific courses or the one-off week that includes gender diversity, or having to intervene in conversations on transness to validate their existence.

Perhaps I begin by giving an account of how students negotiate ongoing, daily, and intentional/unintentional deadnaming, gender-specific insults, and even unsolicited endearment gendered comments? Or should I focus on the myriad ways university offices

disregard lived-named recognition policies, such as when campus police disregard the school's trans-affirming documentation in the name of legality? Or perhaps how the registrar's office operates similarly to campus police in manners related to diplomas and transcripts for trans students? Or the multiple disparate student systems that create a trail of dead-naming incidents (with preset email names, names on student directories, names on transcripts, names in applications for advanced degrees, housing, medical, graduations, department scholarships, fellowships, and ongoing deadnaming despite students changing their names in the student "central" platform? Or perhaps I begin with how tiring it is to be constantly misgendered despite having your pronouns listed in the email signature and in the Bcourses (Canvas platform)?

Perhaps I should focus on the daily apprehension among students to rush into those spaces labeled as trans of color spaces? But this means I have to provide an account of the over-policing of queer and trans of color student spaces. The same overpoliced spaces with either no windows, wifi, or cellular service that many of you have described as a small jail cell than a study space. Should I begin discussing the spatial planning failures of the "Marsha P. Johnson Room" for trans students of color, its emptiness, the expired food pantry, its freezing temperature, its lack of accessible furniture or furniture adapted for student study, or its placement just above the transphobic free speech hacklers? Do I begin by pointing out the inability to enter "trans-of-color" specific rooms unless a white and cisgender student opens the door for you? Or do I begin with a discussion of the numerous signs telling trans students of color that any illegal activity will be reported to the police?

Do I open with the late or early text messages from you all seeking emergency interventions to prevent hunger, suicide, overdose, and even murder? Perhaps I focus on the conversations among trans Latinx student populations on how tired they are of receiving the same trans care for all when they are not white, not born this way, and not gender dysphoric? Do I begin with an explanation of how equalizing and capping counseling and psychological services (CAPS) for all students puts trans students of color at a disadvantage in seeking care, or do I address how having to see any first available counselor creates a problem for trans students to access the care they need? Or how many of you discuss having mental health enrollment tied to financial aid and university enrollment puts trans students at risk because it causes breaks in gender-affirming care and counseling support? Do I focus on how even programs such as Path to Care and Restorative Justice on campus can't accommodate trans* Indigenous students' paths to healing and justice? Or how are students made to wait prolonged times to find proposed sound therapy and other alternative healing methods after being violently attacked on their walk home? Or perhaps I focus on students' discussions of how Indigenous and alternative medicine is unavailable for Indigenous trans* students? Perhaps I begin to discuss how this gap in care leads to student self-experimentation with traditional medicine and substances triggering violent episodes of self-harm and harming others and the community? Or do I discuss how the university polices substance abuse among trans* Latinx students coping with academic harm and trauma rather than taking a harm reduction approach across campus?*

Perhaps I should begin with physical assault. From being stabbed by strangers to provoked attacks and sexual harassment in the walk from and to the classroom to student housing? Or the ongoing sexual assaults on non-binary and trans students from peers

within university housing and dormitories and the lack of resources to appropriately address the issue outside the purview of Title IX? Or the politics of waiting and how emotional and psychologically exhausting it is for students to wait for Title IX investigations, medical and psychological care, and services, grades, reports, IDs, earned diplomas, letters, or to secure DSP services? Do I begin with the procedural violence in Title IX investigators and co-op housing board meetings that demand trans students produce a legible trans identity to begin making claims of harassment, sexual assault, and gender violence? Or the problematics of carceral language such as “probation and extended probation” when dealing with academic remediation?

Do I discuss housing inaccessibility and how the university system, like all other systems within, privileges the (State endorsed) nuclear, monogamous, cis-heteronormative kinship arrangements for housing priorities leaving single and polyamorous trans caregivers and kinship outside affordable university housing? Should I begin with how most of the study participants either skipped meals for lack of funds for food, how they rationalized or shared medications and hormone replacement therapy because they could not afford the numerous co-payments (“the tax on trans students”), or how most of the trans-Latinx folks in this study were house insecure due to peer to peer violence, parent's inability to support them financially, or willful parent revocation of financial and emotional support for coming out as trans? Or how equal co-op work shifts puts neurodiverse, trans, and undocumented students at a disadvantage?*

Do I begin by pointing out the lack of trans and Latinx affirming faculty, research, and academic counselors' availability? Or with a discussion of the lack of trans-specific programs and services for undocumented, disabled, and neurodiverse trans students who a therapist has never seen? Or how undocumented students' services have no programming to support trans students, and the trans services have no services tailored for undocumented students? Or perhaps how the Latinx student services and programs mostly focus on hetero and cisgender student populations, or how Gender and Trans Studies courses and programs leave trans* Latinx populations feeling attacked, unseen, or invalidated? Do I discuss how the university will not fund trans* students' dreams unless these visions can be operationalized for reporting purposes? Or how students feel excluded and violated when they see the same Latinx staff, faculty, and peers that hurt them on a constant basis be actively rewarded and validated by the university for their mentorship and support of other cis and straight Latinx student populations while they are the same people constantly exploiting their labor, alienating trans students, and causing academic harming? Or a discussion of how some students will need to walk away from this violence with no degrees, but all will have to be in debt after this experience. Or how perhaps when students confront staff on their transphobia, staff members will claim the university does not pay staff “to read or buy books to be up to date on trans stuff.”*

So if I may, and you trust my world-traveling into the worlds of the academy, I will present to them a theory of colonial dysphoria as a central source of antagonistic institutional violence for trans BIPOC student populations. In doing so, I will explain that at the core of all of these issues of violence lies the notion that we are not “born in the wrong body” but experiencing colonial logics of extermination and the violence, discomfort, distress, and unease that emerges from assuming an absolute sameness. The*

lived realities of experiencing colonial dysphoria in the academy. Its academic harm and trauma.

In solidarity,

Omi

The Colonial Gender Continuum: The University as an Apparatus for the Production of Trans(Gender)

As part of the ideological state apparatus (Althusser, 1970), the university plays a privileged role in dividing and controlling bodies and pleasures (Foucault, 1979). When it comes to trans student inclusion, universities turn to the clinical rubric of Gender Identity Disorder in Children, now known as Gender Dysphoria (GD), for a series of normalizing techniques to structure trans care but also define trans identity and inform programs on how to be inclusive. These normalizing techniques are not just how one becomes legible for trans inclusion programs and services, but whose gender-queerness is excluded and protected under Title IX school protections. Being trans for the university is attached to a pedagogy of becoming in a biomateriality grounded in existing knowledge of gender dysphoria.

In many areas within the organizational structures of trans inclusion in the university, the aim of trans student services is to mitigate gender dysphoria as part of a practice of equal opportunity that enables trans students to access appropriate services in relation to gender identity. These services heavily rely on medico-juridical avenues that conform to normative trans bodies and materiality. Trans inclusion, while not explicitly discussed by administrators in such ways, relies on Harry Benjamin's (1967) "born in the wrong body" discourse on transsexuality that continues to mediate what constitutes transgender biomateriality, trans student recognition, and its subsequent inclusion. The discourse of "being born in the wrong body" or even the notion of "having gendered brains" is contrary to socio-cultural understandings of gender as an effect of discourse, of power. In the case of transgender student inclusion, however, medical evidence becomes the cornerstone of trans rights determination (Spade, 2015), relinking gender to nature. This appendage of gender identity to innate biological sex, while not endorsed by queer and trans equity managers and directors, is what ultimately grants transgender students' sex-based protections under Title IX and how the university arranges trans services and programs. These services are related to legal or lived name/gender changes, transgender health services, housing, recreational, athletics, intramural sports, and "academic life." These administrative forms of trans inclusion, from ID changes to access to endocrinology and surgeries that will make one look masculine or feminine, voice therapy, etc., requires students to establish a particular form of being transgender. A being that is managed through the university health system operating under GD guidelines, which keeps the university, its facilities, and knowledge production an apparatus to produce gender, specifically the coloniality of gender.

Categories not only describe but also produce the very phenomena they try to describe (Foucault, 1990). Transgender as a category of identity and analysis emerged in the early 1990s through specific histories, politics, and practices (Stryker, 2006; Valentine, 2007). Through Anglo, US, and white-centric knowledge production on *being* along with the recruitment of the medico-juridical system, the university is a major producer of trans genders. As a producer of trans discourse and knowledge, the university draws from colonial racialized-gender ideologies on personhood, through a process that I describe as the colonial-gender continuum. The colonial-

gender continuum is the university's modern iteration of producing neoliberal trans subjectivities bound to racialized gender discourses of identity, being, and materialities. Through this continuum, the university conceives, organizes, and recognizes trans students through specific forms of trans materialities rooted in white Eurocentric and US-centric forms of trans being and embodiment (DiPietro, 2019, 2021), and Western medicine acts as the body police of who becomes legible as a trans or non-binary person. Legibility that ultimately grants recognition under Title IX protections.

Through this logic, the colonial gender continuum continuously attempts to domesticate new forms of nonconformity while simultaneously disregarding subjugated third Gender knowledge and counter-histories. Through institutional forms of trans inclusion, the university facilitates the emergence of a new history proper attempting to bring the counter-history of (decolonial) transgender struggle under the purview of the university and the State, first with Anglo and white-centric trans studies and theory and, second by incorporating specific forms of trans embodiments, (usually male-to-female or female-to-male Subjects). In this case, a new history of transgender personhood/identity buries and distorts narratives of trans* as politics, coalition, and resistant socialities that emerge in the oppression⇌resistance (Lugones, 2003) tension under the coloniality of gender (Lugones, 2007) making the university an apparatus of trans Subject formation. In other words, the university, through the production and dissemination of knowledge on trans Subjects and their inclusion, perpetuates the coloniality of gender via epistemic violence and erasure. Considering that coloniality is always/already an incomplete (oppressive) project what becomes the critical task in the face of such apparatus of trans inclusion programs is to analyze how the colonial gender continuum operates in the university at the ontological, epistemic, subjective, and intersubjective levels as to uncover the university's complicity in the legacy of gendercide both through institutional forces and personal and communal violence.

The Politics of Purity and The Production of Colonial Dysphoria

The university, through its inclusionary practices, aligns with what Women of Color Feminists (Alarcón, 1990; Hull et al., 1982; Lorde, 1983; Minh-ha, 1990; Alcoff & Mohanty, 2006) and Latina Feminist philosophers (Anzaldúa, 1987, 1990; Lugones, 1990, 2003; Ortega, 2016) have described as the limits of (white) feminism and identity politics. In a discussion on the politics of purity, as a process of domination under the coloniality of gender and power, Maria Lugones (2007) describes that the social world is structured to unify, fragment, homogenize, and order hierarchically. This process, she describes, dominates by reducing collectivities through representational practices that fragment both communities and subjects at the ideological and material while arranging people's lives and psyches (p. 127). While social identity does political work, this form of identity politics is at the expense of difference and the multiplicity of the self that distorts "what exists at the intersection," such as the violence experienced by trans* Latinx student populations and how this violence reveals the inadequacy of restricted categories of trans being. According to Hames-García (2011), "the multiplicity of the self becomes restricted in a way that reduces people's 'identities' to those aspects of themselves with the most political significance at a given time in a given context. People understood exclusively in terms of their race, gender, or sexuality are only understood in terms of the most dominant construction of that identity" (p. 8). When it comes to trans inclusion, programs operate from the presumptions that identities will "intersect" rather than operating from the mutual constitution of how trans Latinidad and indigeneity mutually constitute the

trans* Latinx student experience, body, and materiality. The imagined subject at the center of trans inclusion is a white trans subject that simplifies histories, geographies, and the meaning of transness and dysphoria.

As an “arm of the settler state—where logics of elimination, capital accumulation, and dispossession are reconstituted” (Grande, 2018, p. 47), the university conceives, structures, and organizes trans inclusion, or “recognition-based reforms” (Kelley, 2016) through the violence of an absolute sameness (Alcoff, 2006; Ortega, 2016). That is, the university oversees the construction of a “trans subject” that is to be included in the organization of the university; a subject whose legibility is made specifically through the coloniality of gender or the assumption that gender, as an ontological category, is at the core of trans embodiment, materiality, and being. Moreover, the legible trans Subject determines which aspects of the *self* must be “murdered” for the sake of its inclusion (Haritaworn, Kuntsman & Posocco, 2013). The discourses of how such trans Subjects come to be not only structure how the university responds to everyday trans violence but the solution it presents to the problem of trans exclusion and violence. Solutions that are guided by what the university assumes and establishes as trans personhood in the first place. These further compounds intimate and lived violence in the approach to trans violence redress as services are already limited by forms of epistemic trans* violence. That is, the discourses on trans being and the remediation against trans violence are stuck in universalist, white-centric imperatives of identity and belonging that together produce “dysphoric” selves as a form of violence in the learning to be trans for the university.

As students gather to discuss the tension between official and self-understandings of transness, it becomes clear how the university produces colonial dysphoria in the process of oppressing $\Leftrightarrow$ being oppressed and the active subject resisting $\Leftrightarrow$ oppressing the logic of trans inclusion. Luz is a twenty-six-year-old Afro-Latinx trans* femme student who was experiencing anxiety and housing insecurity due to her time at the university and her social transition. She describes this tension as follows:

I don't mean this in a selfish way, but I can't help but feel no one is having as hard of a time as me. I am homeless. Extremely depressed and hypervigilant. What happened to the ambitious college person that I was? Trying to finish up? All I am doing now is lying here, terrified of everything. And I smell. God, do I smell. Do I really need medication? I've been on 23 medications in 3 years. I don't know if I actually need it anymore. I know I am severely depressed, and it is not my gender. It's them. The world. This university has made me lose my sanity. (FN #20, 5/3/2018. MPJ Room).

For Luz, her depression, according to her medical provider at the university, is tied to Gender Dysphoria, which in turn leads her into cycles of mental health instability. Luz, however, describes her depression, not as something internal or attributed to her gender but as the “world,” a world of sense within the “university” that has made her lose her sanity. Luz then redirects her mental health issues to institutional violence and points at the physical structures of trans inclusion, specifically the floor-to-ceiling gender-neutral restrooms or the unconventional path to them that triggers her hypervigilance. She comments:

Sometimes I have to hold on from going to the restroom, but I can't. The bathrooms give me a lot of anxiety. Either I feel I am about to be a victim of a serial killer walking past the trash compactors in the basement, or I will be jumped in the single stalls. Since the Antifa and MAGA folks are targeting trans folks on campus, I have to wait and wait and wait. I have a lot of anxiety about being caught in there by myself. I often make plans to go with either Rita or Mel, but sometimes I just got to go. The bathrooms look like

holding cells, and what if you get jumped, and no one can see you? (FN #20, 5/3/2018. MPJ Room).

It is important to mention that a year prior, on Feb 1, 2017, Antifa supporters wearing black clothing and bandanas or masks over their faces hurtled metal police barricades and entered the MLK Jr. Student Building. They were protesting the Berkeley College Republican's "Dangerous Faggot Tour" event by Milo Yiannopoulos. These violent events happened just below the trans of color student space on campus. Antifa had set fire to a lighting rig, and flames leaped several stories into the air near the Marsha P. Johnson "trans students of color" space. That day everyone was asked to leave the building. While Luz's fears are grounded in real, tangible, and past experiences of actual violence against trans students, her depression, hypervigilance, and inability to come out of hardships get tied to gender dysphoria and not the collusion of institutional trans violence in the arrangement of what constitutes "free speech," the gender-neutral physical space of the university bathroom, and medical and psychological services treating the university's antagonistic violence as personal dilemmas. When Luz exclaims, "This university has made me lose my sanity," she is confronting what I am calling the violence of colonial dysphoria, or the uneasiness, discomfort, and anxiety of navigating the university's approach to minoritized students' inclusion.

This type of dysphoric colonial violence experienced by trans* Latinx student populations contains parallel methods of social extermination employed during "the extermination of the *joyas*" in Ohlone land (Miranda, 2010). According to Miranda, gendercide is the attempt to eliminate Third Gender relationality in which any practice of "doing gender" outside cisnormativity is tied to the medical and psychological field. In describing the mechanism of gendercide, Miranda (2010) gives us the brutal disciplinary methods that allowed specific populations of Indians to live, albeit cruel punishment, marginalization, and the shame of others. These mechanisms included a series of violent events that disciplined new forms of being gendered and new relations among Indigenous people. The fear of death or fear of being murdered with the use of mastiffs propelled an internal deculturation of third gender relations and spirituality in which one segment of the Indigenous population sacrificed third gender embodiments, practices, and the *joyas* to save others. The biopolitics of gendercide that attacked queer Indigenous communities was one strategy of the more extensive eliminatory logic to replace Native and Indigenous ways of life.

Similarly, I argue the colonial gender continuum follows the logic of extermination (and deculturation) via Subject formation and explains how the university, as a colonial institution, organizes the arrangements of bodies and power, trans embodiment logic and practices, and ways of being and knowing for trans individuals. This colonial gender continuum is rooted in the legacy of colonial (sexual/gender) violence and the elimination of Third Gender social practices. As a pedagogical structure that socializes and produces particular trans Subjects for the university, the notion of the colonial gender continuum helps us explain why trans* Latinx student populations, despite having more access to resources than other trans* Latinx populations outside universities, continue to experience "self" and physical violence in all aspects of their life. Ultimately, physical, ontological, and epistemic trans* violence impacts students' sense of well-being, their lives, and relations eliminating forms of Third Gender relationality. This is not to say gendercide practices are the same today as in the colonial period.

Instead, the colonial-gender continuum describes the epistemological discontinuity⁵ in the forms of dismembering, punishment, regendering, and shame that accounts for the inclusion of modern trans identities and bodies within the university's space at the expense of other trans* life, materialities, and embodiments.

Moreover, through its current model of trans inclusion, the university replicates mechanisms of control that normalize and contain modes of relating to one another, contributing to the extermination of social relations and a deculturation among trans* individuals and their communities. Student services from affinity groups to mental health and housing services rely on western Anglo and Eurocentric logic as means to achieve "diversity and inclusion" and thus organize services in ways the discursive "I" can belong. From classroom content on trans history or identity to trans-inclusive housing accommodations, trans* Latinx student populations must learn to fit into the discursive space of the "I." The "I" of trans identity is included in the university if the students learn to be trans in an extremely narrow way. This learning is codified in the type of services and remediation programs trans* Latinx students encounter. This becoming "I am a trans Subject worthy of recognition and remediation services" determines how one is to belong both in the academy and as part of the trans population in general. Mateo, a twenty-two-year-old who is a Yaqui Indian from Sonora and sees themselves as trans* and masculine of center, captures the relationship of a pure "trans Subjectivity" and trans recognition.

Mateo: Hi, Omi. Guess what? I started using Mateo and changed it on Cal central.

Omi: Oh, hi! Yes, Mateo. I love it. Congratulations! Will you continue to use they/them pronouns, or which pronouns should I use?

Mateo: yes, they/them. Can I tell you something?

Omi: Yes, of course.

Mateo: So, I've been using they/them pronouns for two years, and people in Chavez still use she. And call me *mija* this, *mija* that. Like everyone.

Omi: I am sorry. How can I support you? Have you spoken to folks in Chavez about this?

Mateo: I have. I am not the only one. Segun que ahi somos familia..I mean most Latinx *familia* are problematic and violent towards queer and trans folks, so I guess that kind of *familia*.

Omi: What do you think will make it click for them? How can I intervene? Also, if it's ongoing and you said something, you can always escalate and report. It won't do much, but at least it is known.

Mateo: I don't know if it will click. I feel they expect you to look a certain way for that to happen. I can't look like a white trans dude. I am Yaqui, my hair looks like this [long hair], and my responsibilities are with the flower people. I look this way because I have my responsibility. If you don't "look" queer or trans, then there's no respect for you. I mean, they can't catch up with pronouns. Imagine asking folks that I would like them to acknowledge the land, name their responsibilities, and their relationships because that's how we actually introduce ourselves as Yaqui, not just name and pronouns.

(FN # 43, 2/3/2019 MCC Building).

⁵ I use discontinuity to denote a break in colonial social practices but not a break with coloniality. For a theory on the archeology of knowledge see Foucault, M. (1994) *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. Vintage; Reissue edition.

As Mateo describes, the “I” trans subject worth of trans inclusion practices or trans recognition, such as staff and peers’ use of correct name and pronoun, or for Mateo to experience a gender-neutral engagement from staff and peers, also produces discursive materiality on trans bodies and embodiment. Not only does the student need to learn to be trans in certain ways, but this learning also includes trans materiality that serves as a visual for the university to properly engage with you. Hegemonic white-centric discourses of trans subjectivity and materiality compound to exacerbate feelings of inadequacy of “not being trans enough” (Catalano, 2005). Moreover, as Mateo brings up, the practice of introductions is caught in white-centric forms of respectability politics. We have not considered the myriad of ways proper introductions confer a sense of belonging and respect for all students, particularly those who are trans* and Indigenous and feel only one aspect of themselves is to be recognized if they follow normative protocols of who is to be included and how.

Given that the subject of trans inclusion heavily relies on knowledge production on trans bodies and materialities, all the students in the study have enrolled in gender or trans-specific courses. Students, particularly trans students, find an interest in gender-specific courses as a means of “self-exploration” and alternatives to the pedagogies of being within trans inclusion. However, because trans services always/already depend on discursive knowledge on transness and trans subjectivity/materiality, students discuss becoming “disappointed” in their encounter with epistemic violence in the taking of gender courses. Where most syllabi that include trans knowledge or trans people experiences continue to introduce “trans identity” through humanist frameworks grounded in Western and Anglo philosophy. The history of the “Speaking trans subject” in the emergence of Trans Studies is rooted in white-centric conceptions of the “I” of trans social identity (Stryker, 2006). Students find these courses as added “epistemic acts of violence” leaving trans* Latinx student populations dealing with the intimate terrorism of knowledge production and of hegemonic trans culture.

Ultimately the totality of experiences from classroom content, engagement with care, and logic of purity within affinity centers leaves students in states of harm through the logic of trans inclusion. This form of monocultural trans inclusion is part of the atmosphere of violence that does not translate into meaningful interventions for the survival, enjoyment, and thriving of trans* Black, Indigenous, and other students of color populations, as these interventions mostly serve white trans students whose image, experience, and understanding of the *self*, engulf trans knowledge production and consequently trans student inclusion. To assume all trans Subjects need the same care or want hormone replacement therapy for the same reasons is a form of benevolent violence that assumes all forms of gender transgression occur within the parameters of white-centric forms of being and embodiment while denying and assuming trans of color notions of self, embodiments, and practices (DiPietro, 2020).

Notes on Multicultural Trans Inclusion & The Spaces to Breathe

However, not all spaces in the university are organized through the logic of purity. One of these “breathing” spaces for trans* of color student populations is the Multicultural Community Center (MCC). This space is not a Latinx, Indigenous, undocumented, or queer/trans-specific space on campus, yet it is recognized by many of the participants as one of the only two breathing spaces on campus, the other “being in nature by the Big C.” What makes the MCC a breathing space for Trans* Latinx student populations, who belong to the aforementioned social groups, is the notion that students are not “contained” into identity

categories where a single attribute of personal identity (Latinx, undocumented, Indigenous, or trans*) pre-determines interaction.

In the Fall of 2019, the university became “concerned” that a soon-to-be Hispanic Serving Institution had no active queer/trans-Latinx student group. Student groups in the university usually come together on their own accord and file bylaws and membership status with the student union. Before January 2017, UC Berkeley had various iterations of queer/trans-Latinx student groups such as Familia de UC Berkeley (years), Young Queers United for Empowerment (YQUE!) (2008-2014), and Queer and Trans Latinidad de UC Berkeley (2014-2017). As mentioned earlier in this dissertation, the primary student leader Pablo Gomez Jr., a participant in this study, had gathered with other students to celebrate *Dia de los Reyes* the night of Jan 6, 2017, at one of the many university co-ops. Gomez Jr. was one of many trans students who were unable to secure financial aid and had a lapse in care through the university health care insurance. That night, Gomez Jr. had a psychotic break after consuming mushrooms. According to public testimony, student accounts, and court records, this was an attempt to self-medicate and participate in a spiritual ceremony in the absence of university health insurance. Gomez Jr. was unable to secure financial aid or adequate funds to receive care despite their continuous student labor and organizing in Casa Mora and Latinx-specific centers on campus. That night, Gomez Jr. consumed “magic mushrooms” to treat their depression in alignment with their ancestral/Indigenous knowledge.⁶ Under the influence of mushrooms, Gomez Jr. began to run through Berkeley’s streets. It was later found that they had fatally stabbed Berkeley resident Emilie Inman and injured another trans* student, both of whom have ties to the University of California community. Gomez Jr. was found not guilty of murder by reason of insanity and sentenced to a state mental hospital for 39 years to life.

The university, however, never addressed the impact of this violence or offered services or support to the group of students who collectively experienced distress from such events. As a result, the trans/queer Latinx student group dissolved. Additionally, conservative media such as Breitbart News Network used Pablo’s trans identity, pronouns, and major (Ethnic Studies) to paint an image of UC Berkeley as a breeding ground for “radical self-hating, confused trans, & anti-American immigrants” in which College Republican junior Jonathan Chow stated, “I think you give away your right to make a demand [the use of correct pronouns in media reporting] like that when you are arrested for killing somebody”⁷ (Elias, 2017). Due to ongoing media requests to speak to “friends of Pablo” and the pending legal case at the time, the group dissolved. Before this incident, the student organization, its by-laws, and practices within the queer/trans Latinx student groups were passed down intergenerationally. By the Spring of 2020, The Latina/o Student Center and the Gender Equity Center were invested in “reviving” a queer/trans-Latinx student group. This institutional investment came in actual financial support to get a group of

⁶ According to NPR News “Western medicine is catching up with Indigenous Knowledge and natural medicine for depression.” A recent study shows “magic mushrooms” as an adequate treatment to relieve symptoms of major depression. Davis AK, Barrett FS, May DG, et al. Effects of Psilocybin-Assisted Therapy on Major Depressive Disorder: A Randomized Clinical Trial. *JAMA Psychiatry*. 2021;78(5):481–489. doi:10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2020.3285 or <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/fullarticle/2772630?resultClick=1>

⁷ Elias, Paul. Associated Press. “Berkeley killing again ignites debate over gender pronouns” https://www.smdailyjournal.com/news/world/berkeley-killing-again-ignites-debate-over-gender-pronouns/article_b24c6ed1-25ce-5fd7-956a-0a956900695d.html

queer/trans-Latinx students to work with the MCC to establish and put together a new student group. The lack of trans/queer Latinx student groups was described as “an embarrassment” by a senior director who asked, “How do we, a soon-to-be Latinx majority campus, not have a queer and trans-Latinx student group?” to which I responded, “You know why” (Personal communication, FN #61 2/3/2020).

By February 28, 2020, the MCC Assistant Director and a group of trans* and queer Latinx students had been meeting and organizing to make the group possible. In the “meet us” event, a new generation of trans, * non-binary, and Latinx students had come together as “DeColores.” According to one of the student leaders, this new group requested organizational and planning support from the MCC and received financial assistance from the Gender Equity Resource Center. At the time, DeColores had no official ASUC group status for funding purposes. In the discussion of why DeColores would be a good fit for MCC programming, the students established the possibility of creating programs grounded in the complexity of trans and queer beings rather than identity politics. The choice of the student group name “DeColores” did not name an identity group such as previous iterations of “trans/queer Latinx *familia* or Queer/Trans Latinidad.” Instead, “DeColores” was chosen to organize and ground themselves in the values of the MCC, where DeColores emphasized a coalitional practice and could mean many things in relation to race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and ability (FN, #63 2/28/2020, MCC).

In terms of identity politics or identity as a set of social categories, the MCC is the only center on campus, up to the time of this research⁸, that had an all-BIPOC queer and non-binary/trans staff. The identities of the staff, however, are not the determinant elements regarding trans* Latinx student populations' sense of belonging or “capacity to breathe,” specifically as two other affinity centers on campus also have an all queer and trans of color staff yet are named as “violent & unbreathable” spaces by trans* Latinx student populations. However, what is different is that the MCC staff actively grounds their work in the legacy of the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF) of the 1969 student activism on campus. A grounding that is actively shared every time someone “new” enters the space and whenever they host or collaborate with university events. This grounding transcribes as part of the “everyday” work in the MCC’s programs and services as a deep interest in productive relational politics characterized by non-excluding coalitional work through their five core values in all of their programming and day-to-day engagement, communication, and even conflict resolution. These core values are student-led (where students are affirmed as knowledge holders of what they need), anti-oppression, sustainability and wellness, social justice, and cross-cultural solidarity.

Through these relational politics, students find a space to breathe, critique, and envision new forms of existing as trans-Latinidad outside the confines of trans and Latinx-specific resource centers that continuously exclude hegemonic assumptions of race, culture, gender, and sexuality. This practice is explained (posted), affirmed, and discussed in every MCC event, at the opening of the space, mid-day, and whenever anyone new enters the space. The MCC is composed of four full-time staff, affectionately referred to as “Quad Pod” which includes the Director, two Assistant Directors, an embedded Psychologist/Wellness Coordinator, and 20-25

⁸ As of 2021, the university created two new positions within the Gender Equity Resource Center and has hired two trans*/non-binary full-time staff to lead its student programs and the LGBTQ+ Advancement & Equity. As of May of 2022, the MCC and GenEq are the two only spaces on campus with an all queer and trans* BIPOC staff.

student interns per semester. Student interns select the committees they want to work with and take turns as greeters during their shifts. As greeters, students make sure everyone in the space knows what the “MCC is all about.” In a student opening during an official DeColores trans*/nb speed dating event, Tito, a twenty-one-year-old non-binary & Indigenous Nicaraguense, expressed the following:

Thank you all for coming. We are gathering for our first speed-dating. We gather here [in the MCC] because we want you to bring all of who you are. In other places on campus, you only get to be one thing. In GenEq you are just queer/trans/nb. For me, for example, there’s no engagement with the fact that I am Nicaraguense. At the Latinx Center or even in CAFE [Central Americans For Empowerment], you are just either mostly Salvi, Nicaraguenses, or Guatemaltecos, but pretty much everyone is straight and cis and discussing politics. And if you want to date me or other trans* and non-binary Latinx folks gathered here today, well, you have to get to know all of who we are. So please, be your full self and have fun. (FN #67 3/9/2020).

Existing as Trans: My Pronouns are Fuck ICE

One key feature of the sociality of the MCC is having a kitchen. Students envisioned this kitchen as a free and accessible student pantry (before the universities’ official student pantry) and as a space to cook and harvest with the fruits of its garden, usually producing “de-stress” teas, fire cider, and other herbal and medicinal supplements. The MCC kitchen not only provides a space for interns to access the center’s supplies but is the site of informal check-ins and unexpected outbursts of pain, frustration, and even joy. On numerous occasions, Trans* Latinx student populations of various racial backgrounds, experiences, abilities, and citizenship statuses shared frustrations with the subjectification process both in terms of being Latinx and trans on the campus. One of those conversations about the inability to access trans-affirming care among Glo, who is an Afro Latinx sophomore from Southern California, and Toni and Mars, who were 5th-year students both Indigenous and undocumented from Central American countries, went as follows:

Glo: Gurl. I am tired. I am not here for the born this way bullshit. Can I just have my estrogen? I didn't sleep yesterday, and I don't have the energy to fight “YT” people.

Toni: I know, girl. This place is fucked up. What happened?

Glo: Well, you know. It's like they want me to give this sad girl story, and I am not that. Being trans is dope. I am a gift.

Toni: Yaaaas girl, you are. Like I am not sad about it. I am E-C-S-T-A-T-I-C!

Mars: I feel you. They want us to be like, “Oh I am trans; please help me.”

Glo: Also, why do they want us to update our name if you are going to deadname at the pharmacy? TANG [medical services] is fucking horrible.

Mars: I feel you. They [the university] have millions for the police but can't pay to do a software update. Like no, girl, I am not “Juan” that's my homie from elementary school; she is cute tho. And no, she is not dead. White people love killing folks. Juan, she is there in my past, sometimes giving me advice, but they [the university] do not get to invoke her. Just me.

Toni: Mhm. My pronouns are Fuck Ice, and my childhood dysphoria is crossing the damn border.

Mars: for reals (snaps).

Glo: Yes, your anti-Blackness makes me dysphoric. It's you, not me. Yo! But For reals tho, I can do both, I love my dick, and I am a woman, so what? Omg, sorry, Omi.

Omi: You are fine. I support you.

Glo: Like, why do I have to hate my body? Can I enjoy and love my body? Do yt [white] trans folks really hate themselves? I love being trans and love everything about me. My body is magic, my transness is something else and they can't comprehend. I love being trans. The university is making me dysphoric. They want us to be in this particular way, and even if we do it, then we still get a big fuck you. You just never win.

Toni: Mmhm. Cal totally gives me dysphoria.

Mars: Same. Being here makes me so uneasy and restless that you never know who will attack you today, a random person on Sproul, folks at Chavez, CAPS [Counseling and Psychological Services], or your well-intended liberal in the gender studies class. Now that is some high-level distress I can talk about. Can I get my diploma and some titties?

Toni: Titties and citizenship. Don't forget we need both.

They all laugh.

(FN#55 10/17/2019)

As the student conversation above shows, students' sense of dysphoria and inadequacy is related to how the university structures trans being, trans care & health, the classroom engagements, and the heightened awareness of having to navigate/walk on campus defensively. This notion of dysphoria shifts feelings of "inadequacy" from the clinical standpoint of gender identity dysphoria to the coloniality of gender within organizational discourses of inclusion. That is, the "feeling of schizophrenia" (Lugones, 2003, p. 86) or *loquería*, the crazies (Anzladúa, 1987, p. 20) experienced by non-dominant trans* Latinx student populations, emerges in the tension of how trans* Latinx student populations conceptualize trans materiality, and trans and Latinx social identity different from the hegemonic discourses of Latinidad, gender identity dysphoria/transness, and "self" that are integral to being included and students' understanding of existing as co-constituted within relations of power. What trans* Latinx student populations describe in moments such as this one is the possibilities of trans* as horizons of coalitional possibility. In a discussion on "the paradox of identity," Weir (1996), Lugones (2007), Alcoff (2008), Ortega (2016), and DiPietro (2019) have discussed the role of understanding identity through the logic of domination, in which an appeal to identity rules out the difference, multiplicity, and relationality.

In the case of trans* knowledge as structured in the university, this appeal to trans, as strictly a gender identity category, demands that students learn the discourses of the modern trans Subject, one which is commonly understood as a biological and innate identity confirmed through the discourse of a trans childhood, "born this way" narratives, and sameness in experiences related to gender dysphoria that facilitate and provide access to transitional care such as hormone replacement therapy. What becomes clear in this student conversation is the resistant sociality in the meaning-making process when students engage with trans inclusion services or discourses. Access to trans-inclusive services requires an alignment with modern white-centric trans experiences of the self, as evident in the statements: "I am not here for the born this way bullshit," "The energy to fight yt [white] people," and "Sad girl narrative." These statements point to the restrictions of a "pure" trans subjectivity to access trans care and the curdling logic that emerges from the multiplicitous trans* self, the "curdled beings" that account for and attend to multiple "worlds of sense" (Lugones, 2007).

For Lugones (2007), resistance against the logic of representation and purity intervenes at the level of meaning against categorical separations. She does not argue in terms of binaries, that between pure/impure subjectivity, but the act of curdling as a refusal to abandon the split-separation of the abstract being that prevents us from theorizing coalition with others (p. 128). In the case of trans* Latinx student populations' engagement with trans inclusion programs, the impure subjectivity navigates the various "worlds of sense": the white-centric trans medical, industrial complex as part of the university's health care programs, the realities and politics of citizenship, and the reality of legibility through body materiality. This curdling is apparent in the statements such as "My pronouns are Fuck Ice, and my childhood dysphoria is crossing the damn border," "Can I just have my estrogen?" and "Titties and citizenship. Don't forget we need both." In these statements, it's clear how students negotiate the tensions of desiring bodily modifications through hormone replacement therapy that emerges from western medical conceptions of "alignment with one true gender" and the tension to reject all other logics of humanism within that world of sense as students demand titties and citizenship with the pronouns "Fuck ICE." In a follow up with Toni on their use of pronouns "Fuck ICE," they describe the notion of learning to be trans as distinct from the notion of existing as trans as follows:

Existing is to honor and see my complexity. To be able to say my gender is fuck ICE and my pronouns are prison abolition, I don't need to just be trans in how the university imagines me as being trans. I am trans because I am here occupying this land while my people continue to be caged. I am only trans because settlers can't handle the truth and the fact we are what they have been trying to destroy for over 500 plus years, and they just can't get rid of us. I am trans because the gender binary hurts my people and ruptures the relationship between the land and the sky. I am trans because why would anyone continue to choose to be cisgender, knowing what we know today? (FN # 4 10/20/2016)

While the university conceives trans identity and care as a matter of achieving particular forms of trans materiality, Latinx BIPOC students organize to honor the complexities and the experiences of all BIPOC populations living under coloniality, which they describe as "the cultivation of trans wellness." While students who hold multiple identities such as trans,* queer, Latinx, Afro-Latinx, Indigenous, undocumented, and neurodivergent can't find a place to belong within affinity centers, as each affinity center reproduces hierarchies and unifies particular experiences through the logics of domination and homogeneity in matters related to identity. Where every Latinx group or service is set up to serve hetero, and cisgender Latina/o students, and every trans service is meant to serve white students, leaving those who want "titties and citizenship" completely scattered or out of the programs and services of the university.

Given that colonial dysphoria is directly tied to epistemic, institutionalized, and everyday racialized gender violence on campus through a series of discourses historically grounded in colonial racialized gender formations that frame and demand that students become what Maria Lugones (2007) describes as the fundamental problematic and violent nature of the normative system of western logic: that of purity, unity, and split-separation. That is, colonial dysphoria is tied to the ongoing tension between having to learn and respond (and foreclose) the demand to answer the question "Who am I and which center do I belong to as a trans subject?" for the promise of belonging and accommodations within the university.

Cultivating Trans* Wellness

Trans* Latinx student populations organize trans* wellness around the notion of cultivation. The Trans Student Wellness Initiative (TSWI) is a student-led program housed within the MCC and focused on “the magic of community building and affirming resources” for trans and gender non-conforming students of color and community. Through a collective of a majority trans Latinx student populations as organizers, TSWI directly asks trans students for their needs and produces gender-affirming drives and programs that close the “services” gap, such as guided meditations, rest, and health activities guided by and for trans people, introducing students to healing crystals, how to care for and heal with plants and tinctures, what it means to indulge as self-love, and the use of art to “manifest a future where trans and non-binary people are free, safe, loved and well” (TSWI). In partnership with the MCC, other student committees, such as the “Decolonizing Wellness Committee,” students organize around the notion of “land as body” to reclaim and decolonize “from colonial forms of spirituality, gender, and medicine” for trans & queer Indigenous People of Color. Following a trans* poetry event, Ari, a twenty-two-year-old trans* Latinx woman, stated the following during the closing ceremony:

Thank you all for coming. I am a 4th-year student now, so that makes me really old on campus. It is really sweet to see the new queer and trans folks coming to campus who are like, you know, coming into your new identities, and you know, becoming yourselves on campus. Because this is where I became myself, so it's really sweet to see you all speak yourselves into existence. Oh, and I have one more thing to say, you are all poetry, and I adore you. - Ari (FN #71, 2/3/ 2022).

In this student closing reflection, Ari anticipated the queer becomings that are possible through complexity. While the process of learning to be trans creates a violent experience for trans* Latinx student populations through its denial of complex and multiplicitous existence as trans,* students’ meaning-making in the curdling between oppression⇌resistance tension creates new possibilities of becoming. One of these is poetry and the gift of transness as beauty and intensity of emotion. While the pedagogies of being trans for the university produce a sense of shame and inadequacy, it also creates higher vulnerabilities for students as it limits care and well-being into forms of white-centric assumptions of what it means to be well.

Upon entering the MCC Garden + Wellness Committee corner, you will find a printed map of Northern California. On top of their communication board, the question, “Where are we?” points to the University of California, Berkeley campus located in the heart of Ohlone land. Below this mapping, the students drew a Venn diagram to establish a series of relationships among land, well-being, trans existence, and knowledge. Cultivating wellness is defined as: “Divesting from colonial practices of medicine and acknowledging familial/ancestral practices.”

This question “Where are we?” is a direct shift from the Anglo/Eurocentric orientation that structures trans care and programming under the question “Who am I or how am I?” The difference between *being transgender* and *being a settler in Ohlone land* shifts the types of services created to address wellness. On one side, university-sponsored programs and services attempt to help students navigate gender self-determination as a matter of essentialism, dealing with the question of gender identity as a matter of “an internal self” that is mediated through gender dysphoria-approved treatments and care. On the other, the students reorient care towards the land, where land recognition initiates the cultivation of trans*s wellness. This shift moves away from gender essentialism to intercultural modes of knowing and being-in-resistance. For trans* Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) student populations, cultivating wellness requires disinvestment from colonial medicine practices and acknowledging familial and ancestral practices of being and relating to one another. This is not to say that trans* BIPOC

students reject available medical and legal resources for gender self-determination. Many do initiate social and medical transitions. Instead, however, trans* wellness is understood as care work that goes beyond medical intervention and legal recognition and inclusion. Care work is part of a caretaking relationship across healing justice, bodily autonomy, land stewardship, and food sovereignty.

Most importantly, the cultivation of trans* wellness is the attempt to tackle colonial dysphoria and its effects that cause extreme forms of physical violence, student self-harm, substance abuse overdose (from “hard drugs” to improper ways of using peyote, mushrooms, and prescription medicine), and physical violence experienced by queer and trans Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color Communities. The notion of cultivation is related to the centrality of land for the healing practice. Using a student-run “MCC Healing and Learning Garden,” trans* Latinx students in this study also participated in the “Garden + Wellness Committee” and made decisions as to what they will harvest and offer for medicinal purposes.

In a student conversation with the former assistant director of the MCC, the students discussed the renaming of the committee from what was initially the “Decolonizing Wellness Committee.” Toni described the goals and reasoning of the MCC Garden and Wellness committee as follows:

I think renaming is appropriate as we move from metaphors to action. Joining the wellness and garden committee works for us as the goal of this new committee is to build a new relationship with the land, learn how to garden, and reconnect with ancestral practices as a healing practice. These two are not separate. (FN #17, 4/5/2016, MCC)

As students discussed the purpose of the newly established committee, it became clear how land cultivation is the central approach to decenter Western ideas of wellness in the student-led programs. The other goal was to provide resources to the community, as what is planted by students in the garden is given back to the local community and to students.

The student committee also takes courses from Hood Herbalism⁹, an autonomous and community-based herbal education project focused on unlearning and decentralizing colonial ways of understanding plant knowledge. This project, which now serves the local community, was envisioned¹⁰, and created by previous generations of queer/trans* BIPOC MCC student interns. Through these courses, current trans* Latinx students learn the properties and benefits of what they seed. As a student collective, they come together to harvest, cook, and offer elderberry syrup, fire cider, and tea mixes for “de-stressing,” allergies, anxiety, and concentration. The goal of the Garden + Wellness committee is to center Indigenous and familial knowledge into trans* wellness practices. The institutional violence of fragmentation and the colonial dysphoria it produces is recognized in relation to the absence of trans* Latinx and Indigenous knowledge and approaches to wellness that center on spiritual connection, cooking, *plantitas*, and trans* as resistance grounded in culture, land, and relationality.

The failure to account for more expansive understandings of trans* wellness was evident to students with the case of Pablo Gomez Jr. and many other study participants who, while receiving CAPS treatment or were denied treatment, sought alternatives on their own, leading to

⁹ Hood Herbalism <https://hoodherbalism.com/meet-our-team>

¹⁰ As an imaginative practice, each cohort envisions the type of offering they would want in this space and within the university. The embedded Psychologist/Wellness Coordinator and the garden was envisioned by previous MCC cohorts. Each new cohort imagines new possibilities of what can be possible in the university.

overdoses, physical assaults, and even murder. Trans* wellness includes producing what students call a “mini-archive,” where they add notes and files and pass down knowledge on natural remedies and plant medicine in the absence of institutional support for the hiring and retention of land and spiritual takers.

At the epistemic level, the cultivation of trans* wellness centers Indigenous trans and Two-Spirit stewards' knowledge can facilitate the exploration of medicine and knowledge systems sought by the students who feel a sense of disconnection to their culture, land, and communities. Through these initiatives, students attend to the complexity of trans* embodiments, selves, and knowledge where a politics of location begins to “self-map” and harvest new ways of trans* complexity outside the confines of Western knowledge.

In this manner, trans* Latinx student populations shift from the organization of trans (medical/psychological) care from the logic of being trans to organizing trans* wellness around the notion of existing as trans, where existing accounts for trans “issues” related to land settlement, migration and borders, anti-Blackness, and Indigenous knowledge and culture revitalization and reclamation. According to student conversations during committee planning meetings, the notion of existing is grounded in “complexity, ‘illegality,’ peer, and land accountability.”

Conclusion: Trans* as a Coalition of Illegality

Cultivating trans* wellness is also about honoring the complexity, community-based existence, and relationality of those living in a world that marks their bodies under logics of illegality. To this end, students' queer-space-making consists of keeping each other alive through “illegalxillegal love”¹¹ that materializes in purchasing harm reduction kits, ongoing mutual aid campaigns, creating housing spaces within student offices, and honoring peoples' complexity even in the absence of trans intelligibility markers. It is where trans* issues are about seeing coloniality, the ongoing occupation, and dispossession of all the bodies marked as “illegal.” Trans*Latinx student populations thus focus on trans wellness as a form of survival and without shame of being illegal. A group of *sin vergüenzas* pushing back against the ongoing violence of imperialism on the psyche of all colonized people. In other words, trans* wellness is coalitional work to resist and survive gendercide as structured in the organizational practices of trans inclusion in the academy. The practice of trans* wellness thus includes addressing all forms of border-crossings that mark peoples' *being* as illegal. A student note in the archive reads, “*And when your feet are tired of crossing borders, migrate home to me. Illegal x illegal LOVE.*”

Trans* wellness is then a form of cultivating caring relationships from the position of illegality. It is about treating colonial dysphoria and the series of violence that results from living under settler-colonial occupation that makes all aspects of trans* lives as illegal. For students, this means attending to an array of issues such as chronic homelessness, alcoholism, chronic pain, and other substance abuse without pathologizing students who try to numb colonial violence, ongoing punishment, and shame. Trans* Wellness includes offering guides to safely self-

¹¹ “Illegalxillegal love” is a playful way to denote a preference or love/desire towards your kin. Usually in trans subcultures t4t “trans for trans” or “trans loving trans” is a term that is used to refer to transgender individuals who are either exclusively attracted to other trans people or non-cis individuals, or who prioritise their attraction to other trans individuals so that they can better relate to their partner.

medicate for pain, providing appropriate training and resources to prevent an overdose, and organizing mutual aids to take each other out of ICE detention, prevent family homelessness, and support all forms of border-crossings, not limited to gender transitions. While most students have access to health, the system of trans care, as described earlier, not only promotes one way of being trans but pathologizes social troubles as personal troubles without providing actual relief to alleviate trans BIPOC student homelessness, unemployment, food insecurity, and violence by and from faculty, staff, and peers.

As organizers, students also create student-led curriculum and pedagogy committees that envision a new university grounded in the Third World Liberation Front (twLF). By addressing knowledge production, curriculum, and pedagogy, trans* Latinx student populations organize to promote subjugated trans* of color knowledge as means to prevent ongoing gendercide and push back the mechanism of trans normalization under the structuring of the colonial-gender continuum, or the institutionalized form in which trans of color and queer bodies and materialities are continuously policed, misrepresented, and harmed by institutions adopting monocultural approaches to transgender identity and embodiment. For Afro-Latinx, Yaqui, and Purépecha Indigenous students, this has meant that trans* embodiments are a tactical strategy between subjects against the distorting effects of colonial education under the colonial-gender continuum.

Paper 3: Terquedad as Embodied Resistance and Resistant Sociality

What happens when we take a trans* of color approach on the multiplicitous trans* self to analyze resistant research in education? Grounded in decolonial, Indigenous, and U.S. Women of Color feminist analysis, I offer this paper as a mapping of how ontological violence plays out within graduate student professionalism and the different perspectives we gain from understanding oppression and coloniality as an ongoing and incomplete project, that are actively resisted in the material, the psychic, and the spiritual in the process of reimagining identity. Quiahuitl is a Two-Spirit Purépecha student who has been dismissed from graduate education at UC Berkeley after complaining of sexual harassment and sexual advances from peers and faculty.

This paper discusses the tension of how a graduate student talks about her multiple selves versus what others (institutional/departmental actors) “see them” as being and doing. I use six years of *cara a cara* and synchronous conferencing *pláticas* (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016) as a strategy to collect data and theorize resistance practice at the level of gestures. In this context, *pláticas* are a form of “organizational gossip” (Hafen, 2004), a process of information and knowledge sharing that attempts to manage and engage with organizational regulation and resistance. Our *pláticas* became infra-political hangouts and rich sites of knowledge production (Cruz, 2011, 2013; Lugones, 2003). Terquedad, or “stubbornness” in this paper, is explored as an organizational identity rejected by professors and graduate student colleagues as it is made sense of through an oppressive logic attached to the deficit framework of incompetence. *Terquedad* is also an embodied resistant sociality by which trans* Latinx students use their bodies to “talk back” (Cruz, 2013) to the Eurocentric grammars of the institution. In this case, the professionalization of women of color, their comportment, affect, and learning to be junior female researchers and scholars. Ultimately, *terquedad* is how Quiahuitl brings her multiple selves into the academy and confronts the limitations of her inclusion guided by multicultural frames. Here I offer the concept of Terquedad not as an identity or simply as an act of stubbornness when one refuses to comply. Instead, Terquedad is an intersubjective embodied refusal of the pedagogies of Gender within the academy. I demonstrate how studying trans of color* subjectivity and intersubjectivity without assuming Gender as a universal division of power and hierarchy enables coalitional projects within the academy.

Trespassing “Worlds” of Terquedad

Anzaldúa (1987, 1990, 1981/2015a, 2015b) has made a crucial theoretical contribution to studies on the relationship among multiple subjectivities, survival, and resistance, a relationship central to personal and institutional transformation when confronted with the ongoing material, emotional, spiritual, and cultural violence of imperialism. In *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987) and her writings in the co-edited collection *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981/2015a,b), Anzaldúa demonstrates a unique concern with the plurality of consciousness that emerges in the borderlands as the basis to contest the meaning, location, and source of knowledge production. However, instead of expanding the theory of consciousness in Cartesian terms, Anzaldúa makes the body a central concern to Brown epistemologies, both as the source of knowledge and a battleground over asserting decolonial agency (Anzaldúa, 1987; Cruz, 2001; Villenas, 2010). I offer her texts as a way of listening to her body. I look for Anzaldúa’s moments of *terquedad* to

uncover its pluralist use as she navigates between, across, and within an imposed colonial/modern identity, a resistance and survival praxis, and as the embodiment of liminality.

In *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Anzaldúa (1987) describes “movements of rebellion” as a resistant sociality that emerges through the constant *guerra de independencia*, a clash between the demands of the dominant culture, *la cultura que traiciona*, and the stubborn “Will” of a *mestiza consciousness* (p. 16). She writes, “La *mestiza* undergoes a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, an inner war” (p. 78). This inner war, I argue, is a war toward asserting multiple definitions, uses, and understandings of *terquedad*. Anzaldúa’s (1987, 1981/2015a) childhood memories are stories of her *terquedad* where the institution of the family, church, and school try to assert their Will. Anzaldúa (1987) described when *terquedad* became an identity, an ideological system of oppression capable of hailing her (Althusser, 1970) under the signs of rebellion for demanding her name be pronounced correctly and her uses of the Spanish language: “*hocicona*, *repelona*, *chismosa*, having a big mouth, questioning” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 54). In other words, *terquedad* became “*la seña*” (Anzaldúa, 1981/2015a, p. 199), and her growth was going sideways. She recalls:

At a very early age, I had a strong sense of who I was and what I was about, and what was fair. I had a stubborn will. It tried to constantly mobilize my soul under my own regime, to live life on my own terms no matter how unsuitable to others they were. *Terca*. Even as a child, I would not obey (p. 16.).

Anzaldúa as a *terca* is an attempt of the dominant culture to bring her under its Will, “to get rid of our accents” (1987, p. 54), a disciplinary subjectivity with the goal of re-orienting her growth by recruiting others to show her *las reglas* and guide her towards the grammars of the dominant culture. That is, to get rid of different ways of using *terquedad*. At this moment, the interplay between being made a Subject of *terquedad* and *terquedad* as resistance allows her to see beyond the ideologies of the dominant culture. She continues:

There is a rebel in me—the Shadow-Beast. It is a part of me that refuses to take orders from outside authorities. It refuses to take orders from my conscious will, it threatens the sovereignty of my rulership. It is that part of me that hates constraints of any kind, even those self-imposed. At the least hint of limitations on my time or space by others, it kicks out with both feet. Bolts. (p. 16).

In this statement, Anzaldúa navigates the externalization and multivalence of *terquedad* as she moves across the logic of oppression and resistance. She distinguishes between the ideologies of “my Will,” as the conscious Will of the dominant culture, and the “sovereign Will within” (p. 66) as a praxis of active subjectivity when she announces that “Wild tongues can’t be tamed” (p. 54). Here, *la terquedad*, the rebel that bolts, is a survival and resistance praxis against the cultural tyranny of patriarchy and the Anglo culture that tries to capture her under the one meaning of *terquedad*.

Unlike hegemonic notions of ideology, which establish ideology as the “like-the-unconscious” as a process of misrecognition by the subject (Leonardo, 2010, p. 200), Anzaldúa’s (1987, 1990, 1981/2015a,b) writing describes how she travels across and within the ideologies of the borderlands, in which *terquedad* does not fully exhaust her subjectivity if we consider her uses of stubbornness through a lens of resistance and transformation (Lugones, 2003). Anzaldúa’s heightened awareness of seeing herself as being thoroughly but not exhaustively “socially constructed in terms of power” (Lugones, 2003, p. 9) is reflected in her writings of *La Coatlicue*. According to Anzaldúa (1987), *La Coatlicue* depicts the contradictory: *el otro yo* (p. 47), another self that exists in the shadow of the representation of her as being

stubborn but that informs her experiences of stubbornness. On the one hand, her writing functions as a mirror of her identity, as the representation of the colonial imposition, *terca* (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 97). On the other hand, her writing ruptures “false mirrors” and announces she is not fully captive of the representation of herself. Her writing becomes a “seeing through” into her inner faces, *las caras por dentro* (Anzaldúa, 1990, p. xxvii). In other words, Anzaldúa’s (1987, 1990, 1981/2015 a,b) *terquedad* is not merely a reaction to oppression but an act of resistant meaning-making on behalf of the active subject (Lugones, 2003, pp. 13, 97). Given the propensity of the dominant culture to externalize stubbornness onto particular body parts, such as her stubborn/wild tongue, Anzaldúa shifts her *terquedad* to the act of writing as a performance of her Will.

In “Speaking in Tongues,” Anzaldúa (1981/2015b) evokes the trespassing the dangers of writing. She writes:

The hand is an extension of our will, it holds the pen, the brush, the lump of clay. It is both a symbol and a vehicle of communication. Without the hand the voice is helpless. When hand and tongue work together, they unite art and politics and attack the dominant ideology...Creative acts are forms of political activism employing definite aesthetic strategies for resisting dominant cultural norms and are not merely aesthetic exercises” (p. xxiv).

Anzaldúa’s aesthetic writing strategies function as a path toward transformation. Her writings exist as moments of *terquedad*, as a border tongue in which she develops the language of survival and resistance through “the path of red and black ink” (Anzaldúa, 1987, pp. 65, 69). For her, the spirit with no manners, *terquedad*, puts her in a state of psychic unrest, using sensory deprivation to imagine and desire otherwise. It is a form of writing that has an identity: stubborn, multiple, and contradictory, capable of changing her mind and body, belief system, and consciousness, the kind of performance work that manifests the same needs as a person, *a la que baña y viste* (p. 67). Anzaldúa’s writing is a modality of deliberate stubbornness as a praxis to resist the status quo. The art of *terquedad* is, therefore, an active subjectivity that is culturally and socially mediated with the intention of “making [new] meaning out of the experience, whatever it may be” (p. 73). The act of *terquedad* is an embodied creative process of becoming a subject of our own discourses through a process of disidentification (Alarcón, 1990), or in this case, a disidentification with one discursive theme of *terquedad* that serves as a “remaking” through her body and leads to “a path /state to something else” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 73). In other words, *terquedad* is a praxis of embodied refusals capable of transforming herself, the symbolic, and the material world.

Moreover, Anzaldúa (1987) conceives her stubbornness as a political body embedded with the cultural memory of *los atravesados*, a political body that is malleable, preserving, and waiting. She writes:

Los Chicanos, how patient we seem, how very patient. There is the quiet of the Indian about us. We know how to survive. When other races have given up their tongue, we’ve kept ours. We know what it is to live under the hammer blow of the dominant norteamericano culture... Stubborn, persevering, impenetrable as stone, yet possessing a malleability that renders us unbreakable, we, the mestizas and mestizos, will remain (p. 64).

Here, *terquedad* has social and cultural memory and is corporeally situated in charge of social, cultural, and spiritual survival. It is a form of survival and resistance through a series of political gestures, feelings, spirits, and images that have a history of resistance, from Aztec rites of

mourning as defiance, La Llorona's lament as means to protest, and Anzaldúa's (1987) choice to be queer as a conscious decision of being two in one body, a "half and half" with feet in both worlds (pp. 19-21).

Listening to *terquedad* is then an anticipatory "illumination of the not-yet-conscious" to understand and critique the present (Muñoz, 2009, pp. 28, 84). It is a listening to Anzaldúa's childhood memories of stubbornness/waywardness as a blueprint toward a new consciousness (1981/2015a). An attention to how Anzaldúa's *terquedad* is always at work, always in performance. Patient, quiet, proud, and even wild. Flawed but "infused with spirit" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 67). *Terquedad* has an aesthetic. It is messy, defiant, unbound, clumsy, porous, complex, and conflicted. It contrasts with what Anzaldúa (1987) describes as the sign of Western virtuosity and rationality (pp. 67-68). It drives Anzaldúa to dig deeper into her wounds, which forces her to grow up quickly, rough, and unyielding (Anzaldúa, 1987, 1981/2015a). It is imbued with transformative power as it drives the endless cycle of "making it worse, making it better" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 73.), a going "through the dangers" in hopes of not repeating the performance (Anzaldúa, 1981/2015b, p. 163). Finally, *terquedad* serves as a survival mechanism that allows political actions to be unnoticed, unrecognized, and non-threatening—yet it poses a constant threat as they are constantly misrecognized through the grammars of the oppressor as ignorance or self-sabotage. While *la terquedad* in Anzaldúa takes the form of writing, *terquedad* takes forms in many ways as one chooses the gestures of refusal and the creative acts in accordance with the worlds we may inhabit.

Plática as Organizational Gossip and Infrapolitical Resistant Hangouts

Quiahuitl is a Xicana queer woman who traces her roots to Indigenous pueblos of the Nahuatzen mountains of Michoacán. Currently, she is a doctoral candidate that engages in *terquedad* as a resistant praxis to navigate the demands of professionalism in her doctoral program. I employed a *plática* methodology (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016) to unpack her *terquedad*. According to Fierros & Delgado Bernal (2016), "*pláticas* move from method to methodology when they are embedded within the rich, analytical theory of Chicana feminism, engage contributors as knowledge creators essential to the meaning-making process, draw on life experiences, and provide a potential space for healing" (p. 115).

Quiahuitl and I have engaged in multiple *cara a cara* and synchronous conferencing *pláticas* about our doctoral program for the last six years. These *pláticas* served both as a strategy to collect data and theorize resistance practices at the level of gestures. In this context, *pláticas* served as a form of "organizational gossip" (Hafen, 2004), a process of information and knowledge sharing that attempts to manage and engage with organizational regulation and resistance. These *pláticas* are thus, in themselves, infrapolitical resistance hangouts and rich sites of knowledge and information production (Cruz, 2013).

In this study, I used dated and time-stamped transcripts and images of thirty-five one-on-one *pláticas* over five years between July 1st, 2015, and April 15th, 2020. Through a process of revisiting and discussing the themes and transcripts of our previous *pláticas*, Quiahuitl was able to theorize her lived experiences to co-construct knowledge pretraining to the pedagogies of professionalism as graduate students of color in predominantly white universities, procedural and institutional knowledge regarding degree milestones, petitions, appeals, and navigating faculty hazing and violence. The theme of *terquedad* as stubborn gestures of refusal emerged inductively as we discussed institutional demands and regulations.

The research agenda remained open and evolving as Quiahuitl read, approved, and provided feedback on this paper's drafts. As a co-participant in the production of knowledge, Quiahuitl shared two personal journal entries that she produced after reading the second draft of this paper and that I cite extensively as theorizing how and why she embodies *terquedad*. Moreover, Quiahuitl added photographic evidence that we decided not to include in these journal entries to protect her anonymity. Instead, I describe Quiahuitl's aesthetic choices to unpack how gestures are a resistance practice that offers concrete avenues of producing meaning in the academy. Finally, following *plática* methodology as a potential space for healing, our *pláticas* turned to ceremony, both spiritual and material, where Quiahuitl and I supported, uplifted, recognized, and remembered each other's complexity as the basis for coalition building.

Terquedad as Praxis of Institutional Transformation

When I asked Quiahuitl about her journey, "How did you get here?" she began to describe herself and her journey in academic terms. She is a first-generation college student and a McNair Scholar who graduated with honors distinction and cum laude from her undergraduate program. At the graduate level, she was admitted to top-tier research universities and considered at the top of the applicant pool, making her a recipient of some of the most prestigious multi-year and dissertation fellowships. When Quiahuitl stopped sharing her academic achievements, she found it compelling to say, "That is all to say, *que soy terca pero no pendeja*."

While the term *pendeja* has many colloquial definitions in the Spanish language, Quiahuitl was making an epistemological distinction about her *terquedad* as being different from willful ignorance or being "a dumbass" who lacks an understanding of the rules of the academy. Quiahuitl wanted to discuss her academic dismissal as having less to do with "academic deficiencies" and more to do with faculty incapacity to understand her *terquedad*. Quiahuitl describes her *terquedad* as an embodied way to make space for her complexity and multiplicity in the academy by refusing the grammars of professionalism and the culture of silence that demand a particular kind of subject. She explains:

[The Ethnic Studies Department] had an understanding of what Latinas ought to be and behave in higher education, especially in doctoral programs. I was the only Xicana in my cohort. To be a doctora in the academy, there is an expectation of being a good, quiet, firm, but soft-spoken Chicana. A cookie-cutter.

Quiahuitl explains this cookie-cutter persona as a gendered and racialized expectation that serves to discipline how students in her former department ought to behave and act. This ideal student functions to keep Quiahuitl's multiple identities outside the institution. Quiahuitl describes her aesthetic intentions as a strategic praxis to reclaim the meaning of professionalism. She describes her first day in the doctoral program:

I had these fiery red beaded earrings, and I also had gauges, so I just slipped the earrings in. I had half of my hair shaved with leopard print, and the other half was cut short in a melenita, and I think my hair was like a burgundy brown/reddish. My eyebrows were carefully drawn in and threaded, makeup done up, nails, and toes done.

Quiahuitl's decision to adorn her body, from earrings to her toes, is an awareness that every part of her body functions as a site of meaning-making.

Her aesthetic choices constitute a praxis of *terquedad* as an embodied refusal of Western notions of professionalization by actively challenging the university's docile body: good, quiet, firm, and soft-spoken. She continues to describe her intentionality:

I wanted to always be strategic with the way I dressed. Depending on what mood I was in and, or where I was going, I always thought about what statement I wanted to make aesthetically because, for me, it was a way of reclaiming space and also (albeit nonverbally) decolonizing the academy.

Quiahuitl understands that her body is capable of challenging the dominant notions of who is and who looks like a doctoral student, a refusal of institutional grammars made through gestures, vernacular, clothing, and aesthetic appearance in which she refuses to let go of her multiplicity through her body. She describes her embodied refusal to abide by this grammars of professionalism in the academy:

I like wearing dark lipstick. I just felt like it made my face pop. I look at dark and bright lipstick like war paint. Something about having a dark color gives me a little extra something, like strength or self-empowerment. As you know, I love falsies. I have big eyes, so putting on false eyelashes helped me accentuate the depth in my eyes. I had a gangsta-danzante-alayah-tomboyish-femme kind of steelo, you know? I could give you tomboy, ‘urban,’ the sweats and baggy sweater, and I could give you my *danzante* look. I feel like my aesthetic is also a manifestation of my spirit—*rebelde con causa*.

Quiahuitl sees herself as a rebel with a cause in which her aesthetic choices challenge the grammars of professionalism in higher education and engage in a politics of decolonizing the academy by reclaiming a space for her multiple selves in the institution.

For Quiahuitl, *terquedad* is a tactic to manifest her spirit when confronted with the expectations of becoming a doctora. For instance, Quiahuitl discusses a time she blurted out, “That is dope!” to refer to a research project she got excited about and to which a faculty member scolded her by saying, “You don’t have to use that language in the university to continue to belong to your community.” Quiahuitl sees her *terquedad* as rooted in what she identifies as Indigenous forms of resistance and self-care by summoning her various selves that are made to stay at the gates of the academy. *Terquedad* thus allows her gangsta-self, her spiritual *danzante*-self, the tomboy-self, and her femme-self to show up collectively and trespass into a space that is not meant for them.

Quiahuitl’s *terquedad* is a deliberate attempt to redraw the field of power of who belongs in the academy. However, some of her peers and faculty only perceive her aesthetic choices as detrimental, as a performance of ignorance and self-sabotage since her embodied refusals are grasped through the logic of oppression. They assume Quiahuitl unconsciously embodies the objective structures (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) that prevent her from enacting acceptable behaviors and comportment of professionalism for doctoral students. This reading, however, assumes what Lugones (2003) describes as the univocity of meaning, where Quiahuitl’s *terquedad* is (mis)recognized as a form of agency from the standpoint of liberalism and its unified, fixed, singular Self (Lugones, 2003, p. 86).

A reading of *terquedad* as resistance subjectivity, however, allows us to understand her actions in multiple ways, such as self-preservation or as both self-preservation and self-sabotage, given that an act of resistance, according to Lugones (2003), can be read and intended to act in both or numerous ways (p. 13). In this double-bind of oppression and resistance, Quiahuitl’s stubborn gestures become political performances embedded with endless possibilities for thinking and acting against oppression in worlds of sense that exist alongside academic worlds and can, therefore, undermine it.

In *Pilgrimages/ Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions*, Lugones (2003) describes negotiating and resisting multiple oppressions as a process of

trespassing (p. 8). That is, Lugones describes a “spatiality of resistances within and against the spatiality of dominations” (p. 8) in which an action like *terquedad* can operate under both the logics of oppression $\Leftrightarrow$ resistance. However, the point of an active subjectivity is to trespass the logic of oppression as a process of redrawing the field of power relations (p. 11). Of importance is Lugones’s (2003) notion of the “arrogant perceiver” that is unable to recognize either oppression or resistance and thus opens the possibilities for Quiahuitl to enact and experiment with new joys and meaning-making that go unnoticed and are capable of facilitating infrapolitical resistance spaces (Cruz, 2013) into which to practice new ways of being in the academy.

Quiahuitl’s enactment of *terquedad* is an enactment of multiple ways of being, which ultimately pose a threat to the academy, the moment various aspects of her body “talk back” (Cruz, 2011). In Quiahuitl’s view, *terquedad* mobilizes her body to make claims of belonging in the academy in her terms, “showing up in snapbacks, grillz, and dark lipstick.” In other words, the epistemological distinction of being “*terca, pero no pendeja*” announces Quiahuitl’s process of moving away from “practical reasoning” to *terquedad* as an action/intention that may not help her escape the oppressive structures of the university but allows her to critique its oppressive structure and can help her arrive at a consciousness leading to liberation in her other worlds of sense (Lugones, 2003, p. 55). Quiahuitl’s process of refashioning professionalism functions as a political gesture to refuse neoliberal intellectualism, coloniality, and arbitrary institutional grammars—a significant reclamation against ongoing acts of violence against non-dominant student populations.

Refusing Academic Violence

Quiahuitl’s family’s migration story, like many other families who migrate with young children, is marked by separation at the U.S./Mexico border. She recalls being six years old when her mother was taken away as they tried to cross the Tijuana–San Diego border. She tells the story:

I remember being in a blue van. At some point, some strangers opened the side of the truck we were in. I was fucking scared. I jumped onto my mom’s chest and bit her blouse so we wouldn’t get separated. She was taken away.

Quiahuitl describes this moment as a recollection of her *terquedad*. This memory of latching to her mother’s blouse, *con los dientes*, is when Quiahuitl’s stubborn Will confronted the Will of the State, a willful moment expressed through the clenching of her teeth. She shares this memory of *terquedad* to describe her journey in two doctoral programs and to provide us with a view of the uses of *terquedad* as a resistance sociality in academic “worlds.” Quiahuitl explains how this embodied memory, the inner impulse of *terquedad*, makes her latch onto things, leaving marks, even if what she is holding onto is taken away, a momentary taking as she finds her way back through her teeth marks. She recalls her experiences dealing with her academic dismissal:

I refuse to let any of these people break my spirit. They can tug and pull, but they can’t break me down. It’s in my blood. I recognize we come from warrior people. Even my homies who are locked up say it all the time. We come from a legacy of brilliance and fighters. I refused to get stomped down and kicked to the side. There is too much at stake.

Like many first-generation *mujeres* and queer-of-color scholars, Quiahuitl’s academic journey is deeply personal. She describes the moment that she received her acceptance into the university as the moment that also inaugurated the criminal proceedings against her younger brother, who was arrested and prosecuted for gang-related violence at thirteen. Quiahuitl shares this situation

as one of her motivations for pursuing a doctoral degree and focuses her work on Mexican and Chicano gangs in Southern California.

While this drive to write an otherwise of Chicano gang culture has been described as a stubborn pursuit “difficult to handle for a woman researcher,” the university’s creation of diversity programs and admissions expects this type of research from Quiahuitl as a legitimate person to theorize on race in the academy and gang culture in general (Bacchetta et al., 2018; Ferguson, 2012; Moallem, 2002). She was an expected multicultural subject until *la terca con dientes* showed up. She recalls her experiences:

When I think about my graduate school experience, I, for whatever reason, have been consistently confronted with struggle. I don’t even look for it—when I was at Y University—I actively tried to steer away from politics and drama and focused on my work because I knew/know my work is fucking dope. I know I have a ‘unique’ positioning, but somehow either whom I was associated with or something about my presence posed some kind of threat to some people. Unfortunately, regrettably for me, those people just so happened to be in positions of power, and I got to experience their wrath and exertion of it. I mean, I got pushed out of my doctoral program. I got forced out of an Ethnic Studies Department for voicing a complaint despite being told to be quiet.

Quiahuitl understands that her aesthetic choices and her body alone pose a threat. Her *terquedad*, beyond an aesthetic refusal, is an unwillingness to be silent and speak up against “her people,” what she describes as Chicano/Latino cisgender men who fail to recognize their power and read her *terquedad* as a provocation of violence. Quiahuitl describes a refusal to appease the social body of educational institutions through a culture of silence and respectability, a becoming *terca* for what she describes as “not selling her integrity and dignity” in exchange for belonging.

Quiahuitl explains she became *terca*, a *terca* understood from a logic of oppression, because, according to her peers, she didn’t know when to be silent or how to speak up. Quiahuitl was not silent when she experienced the most extreme cases of gender and racial violence and emotional abuse from colleagues and mentors. This speaking-up made her into “a rebellious, angry student” because she allowed her conscious Will to clench her teeth down tight and leave marks in the tenure portfolio of faculty of color. *Terca*, because she spoke against the machismo culture among Latino faculty men despite being advised the contrary, “given her record with academic issues,” *terca*, because she won’t pack and leave. *Terca*, because she appealed. *Terca*, because she applied to another doctoral program and continues her academic journey.

Terca, because she asserts her body as a confident Xicana scholar despite the experiences of violence to claim her identity, her body, and her voice(s). Intentionally *terca*, politically *terca*, she continues:

Colleagues and mentors describe me as a loudmouth, ‘always fighting some kind of war, and there is something wrong with me and in me.’ My colleague asked me, ‘does everything have to be a war?’ I felt that my colleague wasn’t empathetic to my struggle(s) traversing the treachery that is inherent in my journey in grad school as a working-class woman of color, you know? I felt like a sense of judgment on his behalf because here he is reading what I recognize as acts of defiance.

Quiahuitl recounts being disparaged by colleagues and faculty because they perceived her gestures as turning everything into warfare. She explained she knew she was at war, but she did not start in one, albeit she is willingly fighting back in one. Moreover, being hailed as the subject of *terquedad* also becomes the justification given to Quiahuitl to make sense of her precarious

conditions within the university when she describes her colleagues asserting, “There is something wrong with me and in me.” Her experiences are her fault for being mad and always fighting. It is her *terquedad* that places her in a constant war.

Terquedad, as described by her mentors and colleagues, is perceived as a full-frontal attack in Gramscian terms. Quiahuitl, however, conceives of this war as a *travesia*, a crossing the treacherous terrains that sustain the university. Quiahuitl is indeed in a war, an inner war between the Will of the institution and her Will to remain multiple and complex. She invokes her *terquedad*:

I don’t give a fuck if you are a professor. Why are we so afraid? We tell survivors of sexual assault and rape to name their rapists. Why aren’t we, as graduate students, name-dropping professors who cause us psychological, spiritual, and emotional harms and distress? Imagine what that would do? How it would force these motherfuckers to be accountable and to humble themselves down.

In other words, Quiahuitl understands her *terquedad* as a process that makes her peers and faculty uncomfortable. It is a becoming that makes others uncomfortable when Quiahuitl remains multiple: spiritually in tune, demonstrating a strong work ethic, and being outspoken; a queer body that destabilizes the distinction between object and subject of knowledge. One that requires Quiahuitl to “act professional” and not act as if she was part of a gang if she wants to be more than an object of knowledge. Quiahuitl understands her *terquedad* as a performance that produces a social space of resistance and survival among those who join her in reading her *terquedad* through a different frame of intelligibility. It is a stubbornness that creates a geographic area to be both object and subject of knowledge production. Quiahuitl states:

I have reached a point where I am like fuck that. Enough is enough. So what if I am always fighting? The reality is that I am! People like you and I are continually having to fight for our dignity. I know it’s not good for my health, and trust me, I work very diligently to balance all the poison I confront in these white treacherous academic spaces consistently thrown my way through yin yoga, running, the gym, reiki, *danza* Azteca. At this point, I do not give a fuck about how other people see me maneuver my way through grad school. I’ve had to create my blueprint.

Quiahuitl is conscious that her *terquedad* is creating a blueprint towards new geographies of meaning and a resistance sociality where we mutually recognize each other as *tercas*. “People like you and I” places me in this relationship of resistance subjectivity where I return to my childhood photos as a blueprint into my worlds of *terquedad*, a traveling that allows me to understand and write Quiahuitl *terquedad* as an act of survival and transformation.

A returning to *mi terquedad* is to collectively conspire, thrive, survive, and resist the damages caused by the university. A shifting into our worlds of *terquedad* to prevent the academic venom from spreading. A return to gestures of embodied refusal to find new paths of *conocimientos* and imagine new political fantasies that Quiahuitl describes as embodied “mermaid energies” with “gauged ears like the Aztecs” in which “the bigger the gauge, the bigger the vision.” Where we, *terca* scholars, envision, enact, and transform ourselves and institutions of education through the pedagogy of *terquedad*.

Conclusion: Dealing with Colonial Dysphoria in the Academy

The modern/colonial gender system requires a series of disciplinary and normalization pedagogies of being, embodiment, and materiality that are made apparent in how neoliberal trans inclusion takes shape on the university campus. That is, university programming around the notion of “trans belonging” forecloses forms of trans* selves and being that are co-constituted outside white-centric understandings of self/selves.

The current pedagogies of transgender inclusion are part of a colonial gender continuum that attempts to make trans identity, materiality, and embodiment a legible category of being and personhood by sanitizing and normalizing the parameters of trans identity. In its current configuration, trans inclusion expands the colonial/modern gender system to accommodate for gender variability without questioning the category of gender as a necessary category of existence or as organized politically in terms of power differentials. In this project, I made visible the intimate ways the university is complicit in the fraught violence of the modern/colonial gender system through its approach to transgender equity and inclusion. Trans equity and belonging is a socializing force and pedagogical practice that affects a student’s sense of self and community.

Through a commitment to move away from colonial methodology, I have created a dissertation that queers its body of contents and the bodies of knowledge within. That is, I accounted for trans knowledge, materiality, relationality, and selves resistant to and outside Western knowledge and paradigms. Moreover, I turned to decolonial feminism and Indigenous understanding of resistant sociality to account for decolonial resistance research in education that is absent in trans studies in education and much of the work within Chicana Latina epistemologies in education research. As an extension of the settler-state, the university is a major bio-disciplinary force that shapes how people and populations perceive themselves and the world. This process of normalizing the category “trans” further creates atmospheres of academic harm and violence that lead to constant feelings of “self-inadequacy,” distress, and discomfort, or colonial dysphoria in the encounter with the university and the knowledge about trans personhood and identity and for “not fitting” into predesigned spaces of inclusion/belonging. Subaltern people, however, have always resisted the disciplinary mechanisms within the institutions of the state. As a result, colonial encounters in relation to trans *being* also create new forms of resistant relationality. In education, this means that trans inclusion within the university opens the space to produce new forms of *being resistant* as “*tercas*” “*sin-verguenzas*” “illegal” and other modes of embodied refusals that are shaped in the constant struggle between oppression and resistance.

Attending to the violence of Gender within institutions of knowledge and education and its ongoing antagonistic structuring thus requires healing work that attends to colonial dysphoria. Multicultural inclusion, as a form of murderous (self) inclusion, can’t address trans* Latinx student populations, as the project of inclusion and belonging is bounded to universalist and disciplinary forms of colonization that normalize forms of expression, being, and embodiment in exchange of the ongoing dispossession of others. In this case, trans inclusion requires exclusion not only of other queer Subjects but the eradication of complex forms of being within the academy. Particularly the exclusion of trans* of color co-formations. What is needed is to first attend to the colonial dysphoria caused by the ongoing demand to produce essentialized bounded identities under liberal humanities and neoliberalism parameters. Colonial dysphoria ruptures our sense of self and being as it demands a logic of purity for our incorporation or recognition.

In this manner, colonial dysphoria, is the result of the structure of coloniality in manners related to subaltern students' inclusion. Attending to this form of ontological and epistemological violence requires that programming and services attend to the general state of unease, dissatisfaction, and inadequacy created by the university for structuring inclusion through the demands of identity purity from its Subjects. That is, for us to create affirming and welcoming environments for trans* Latinx populations, we need to move away from the identity-based projects and begin to attend to, support, and fund the healing and caring pedagogical practices produced through queer of color space-making. A starting point is to account for gender universality in policy research and equity design and to understand how we frame and conceive of being, the self, and identity to begin to address ontological, epistemological violence within the production of knowledge itself that continuously forecloses being and becoming.

While research in the fields of queer and trans studies has accounted for diasporic, racialized, and ethnic-specific understandings of gender variability and trans* of color identities and practices (Cornejo, 2014; La Fountain-Stokes, 2011; Ochoa, 2008), attending to trans* as a polyvalent and resistant praxis requires new visions, methods, and commitments to work with trans* imaginations. I thus move to propose Trans* Ethnic Studies (T*ES) as a field that explicitly addresses gender universality (Lugones, 2020), or the assumption that all racial groups and ethnic cultures conceptualize gender, gender embodiment, or gender variance in homogenous ways. A lack of attention to the assumed universality of gender further enables colonialism and imperialism (DiPietro, 2019) in programs and services. Thus the field of T*ES begins with the notion of *re-memembering* as a Trans* of Color Critique that enables a decolonizing transing methodology that converges analytical lenses such as decoloniality, U.S. Women of Color Feminism, Queer of Color Critique, and Trans studies to respond to globalizing and universalizing imperatives about the category “transgender” (Gill-Peterson, 2018; Haritaworn & Snorton, 2013; Valentine, 2007) and how we ultimately understand trans* beings, embodiments, and materialities within the university at the practice level and the production of knowledge itself.

As a field, T*ES should attend to racialized gender and sexuality through a decolonial lens but also trace trans* Black, Latinx, and Indigenous pedagogies and methodologies to attend to the diverse conceptualizations of racialized gender self/selves and to understand refusals and resistant sociality to specific modern identity categories. Specifically, T*ES research recognizes transing, transitions, and ecologies of the embodied difference occurring within trans-Atlantic migrations, in language, and in relation to land and culture (Galarte, 2021; Silva Santana, 2017; Tinsley, 2020). As an area of comparative study within Ethnic Studies, Trans* Ethnic Studies signals the centrality and place of the colonial/modern gender system to racial formation, wherein knowing how ethnic minorities negotiate and resist ongoing coloniality of gender and the self becomes critically important to understanding epistemological, communal, and power relations among minoritized ethnic and racial groups. T*ES is thus a field concerned with relations of power and fields of intelligibility in matters relating to ontology, of being, and how people come to understand gender, gender identity, and gender variance differently when they consider these categories as being ontologically complex or grounded in land, community, and indigenous self-determination (Driskill, 2015).

In other words, this is the field that attends to *el susto colonial* (Anzaldúa, 1987). It is a field that does not require us to translate our self(s) in legible terms to find “equivalences” to white trans experiences but one that requires us to intervene at the level of meaning and what we

mean by Trans Latinidad, or even Trans* of color coalitional work. Part of addressing, researching, and engaging with a critical approach to trans inclusion is recognizing that transgender research is a source of injury, dysphoria, and blood. It carries the pain, blood, and suffering of trans students of color due to the violent logic of inclusion in educational spaces. The academy is not for trans bodies, and in a stance of refusal, many trans* BIPOC do not want the academy as it is drenched in gender/sex/bodies/embodied normativity and is the pedagogical force for the continuum of gender coloniality. This dissertation is evidence of such an atmosphere of violence and how trans inclusion is integral to the continuous genocide against Indigenous peoples' way of life and trans* BIPOC complexity and sociality.

Trans* of color theory and methods, while allowing us to analyze trans cultural practices to address how the dominant field of trans education research continues to operate under a Western gaze, is not enough to sustain trans* life. Trans* as analytics, however, is a consequential and multifaceted theoretical application that helps us critique Western research and knowledge in their attempt to dominate and hegemonize discourses of Subject production that demand forms of murderous trans inclusions. Most importantly, trans* of color critique opens up the trans of color archive to recognize, remember, and account for the vast historical subaltern knowledge and trans* resistant sociality among BIPOC populations that have been made invisible in contemporary trans resistance and trans studies research.

The Importance of Decolonial Feminisms for Trans* of Color Critique

Given the recent explosion of research on transgender subjectivity, ontological conceptualizations of the “self” become an important site of intervention to understand the experiences of trans* Latinx people as they encounter and engage in trans-specific programs, services, and ideas of trans identity, inclusion, and belonging. The heightened visibility that leads us to the cultural “transgender tipping point” (Steinmetz, 2014) has made invisible “decolonial difference” (Lugones, 2020a) or the social relations, self/selves, embodiment, and materiality among trans* communities of color in the U.S. “Seeing coloniality” is a framework that allowed me to conceptualize the double-bind of transgender (in)visibility and inclusion. That is, what gets to count as trans subjectivity capable of being included in the university depends on issues of power, intelligibility, and normative sex/gender configurations of gender subjectivity under the modern/colonial capitalist gender system while simultaneously ignoring or failing to see the racialization of the modern Western gender system and the colonial difference of those who resist, undo, and produce new social relations and meanings (Lugones, 2003, 2020a, 2020b). Categories not only describe but also produce the very phenomena they try to describe (Foucault, 1976). Transgender as a category of identity and analysis emerged in the early 1990s through specific histories, politics, and practices (Stryker, 2006; Valentine, 2007). In “Imagining Transgender: An Ethnography of a Category,” David Valentine (2007) argues that “gender” that underpins the concept “transgender” is rooted in sexology, where gender is seen as an individual and internal identity. In other words, transgender “is another kind of social difference that is “structurally equivalent to but ontologically distinct from ‘sexuality’” (p. 59). Valentine reminds us that the ontological separateness of gender and sexuality institutionalizes a specific transgender imaginary that ignores the complexity of racial and class locations of different experiences and theorizations of gender and sexuality. This hegemonic trans imaginary leaves out contemporary senses of self among people of color, who do not rely on the gender/sexuality ontological distinction (pp. 61-65).

In “Decolonizing the Transgender Imaginary,” Susan Stryker and Paisley Currah (2014), as the general editors of the volume, describe the inescapability of colonialism as a framework in the institutionalization of transgender studies and the knowledge production that emerges from North American anglophone scholarly work. Ignoring Valentine’s (2007) intervention on what this Western transgender imaginary is, as being constituted by an ontological separateness of gender and sexuality rooted in sexology, they offer this volume and “pay homage” to Emma Pérez’s (1999) decolonial imaginary to ask, “What a transgender imaginary might be, how is it related to the process of colonization, and how—in theory as well as practice—it might be decolonized?” (Stryker & Currah, 2014, p. 304). For the editors, the volume offers strategies for decolonizing the transgender imaginary through autoethnographic trans-of-color writings and forewarns us of Lugones’ (2007) preemptive signaling “that every social encounter is a colonial encounter” (Stryker & Currah, 2014, p. 306). While the volume offers a productive intervention to understand trans* of color experiences, it does so through what Mariana Ortega (2006) describes as a “loving, knowing ignorance” (p. 56). That is, this volume is the only incorporation of subaltern decolonial voices within the journal history and ends up using Emma Pérez’s (1999) decolonial imaginary to legitimate white trans imaginaries, theories, and epistemologies (Valentine, 2007) and colonial logics of looking for transgender practices elsewhere, rather than “seeing coloniality” to avoid gender universalism and the logic of modernity/coloniality, its perceptions and imagination (Lugones, 2020). As such, “decolonizing” the trans imaginary as situated within transgender studies remains a metaphor (Tuck and Yang, 2012).

Instead, my work followed a decolonial approach to “decolonizing the transgender imaginary” framework by centering U.S. Women of Color theorization of multiple subjectivities, being, and knowing that can more accurately speak about trans* of color subjects in their “co-constituted multiplicities of relations of power in context” (Bacchetta et al., 2020, p.578). This is not the first time queer of color scholars have questioned whether queer, or trans studies and politics, among other canons, could give language to more precise ways of thinking about race, gender, and sexuality in terms of relations to power (Bacchetta, 2017; Bacchetta et al., 2020; Cohen, 1997; Feguson, 2003). Understanding, critiquing, and transforming different relations of power is a central imperative for decolonial work. In a roundtable discussion Bacchetta et al. (2020) highlight how “white queer theory,” and by extension, white trans theory, is characterized by “colonial-and-race-amnesiac” (p. 576). Bacchetta discusses how the notion of “forgetting” is a central component of queer theory as it overlooks “colonialism, racism, Islamophobia, capitalism, class relations and other relations of power, and thereby reproduces them inside the theory itself” (p. 576). Thus central to a decolonial approach to the trans imaginary is the act of remembering and historicizing women of color theorizing. Hames-García and Martínez’s (2011) take on Alexander’s (2013) call of remembering as the method of *re-membering* the “coalitional body that has been *dis-membered* by a history of ideological violence” (García & Martínez, 2011, p. 4, my emphasis). This method, they argue, requires us to remember, piece together, name, suture, and repopulate the knowledge and forms of criticism that have been denied in white queer and transgender theory and knowledge. In this sense, I use the method of *re-membering* as a trans* of color critique that recognizes all relations of power or what Bacchetta (2020) calls co-formations and co-productions of power as essential to decolonial politics across all subjects’ beings-becomings (p. 581). Bacchetta describes queer white theory not as an essentialist, morphological term of racial positionality or a body representation but a whiteness based on what it epistemologically produces: approaches, definitions, presuppositions, categories, logics, conclusions (2020; p. 576).

This is not the first-time queer of color scholars¹² have questioned whether queer, or trans studies and politics, among other canons, could give language to more precise ways of thinking about race, gender, and sexuality in terms of relations to power (Bacchetta, 2017; Bacchetta et al., 2020; Cohen, 1997; Ferguson, 2003). Understanding, critiquing, and transforming different relations of power is a central imperative for decolonial work. In a roundtable discussion Bacchetta et al., (2020) highlight how “white queer theory,” and by extension white trans theory, is characterized by “colonial-and-race-amnesiac” (p. 576). Bacchetta discusses how the notion of “forgetting” is a central component of queer theory as it overlooks “colonialism, racism, Islamophobia, capitalism, class relations and other relations of power, and thereby reproduces them inside the theory itself” (576).

In *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, Jasbir Puar (2018) urges us to understand the mechanisms of queerness as a regulatory frame of biopolitics, wherein queerness is an assemblage that is spatially and temporal contingent (pp. 204-206). Our goal, she argues, is to dismantle the representational mandates of visibility within identity politics and shift to an affective analysis of queer-becomings. That is, we must move from the “taken for granted presence of the subject and its permutations of content and form” and move to “an investigation of the predominance of subjecthood itself” (p. 206). In “Murderous Inclusions,” Haritaworn, Kuntsman, and Posocco (2013) interrogate the intersections between violence and feminist/queer politics of inclusion in a special issue that asks, “how can inclusions be murderous?” and urges us to shift the focus from the promise of inclusion to its violence (p. 445). Their goal is to examine “the deadly logic of inclusion” as it appears in forms of queer citizenships and political formations of sexuality and urges us to ask, “inclusion into what?” Through this conceptual approach to inclusion, we can decouple the links of queer politics, inclusion, and justice and examine forms of transgender citizenship that accompany violent regimes of coloniality, war on terror, criminalization, border enforcement, and neoliberalism. This conceptual creates a feminist and queer politics that is not premised on more queer and trans of color death (Haritaworn & Snorton, 2013).

In “Decolonizing Queer Pedagogy,” Kristin Smith (2013) reminds us that a key pedagogical challenge for decolonial pedagogy rests in analyzing how dominant cultural logics of normalcy have constrained notions of sexuality, sex, and gender in students’ lives, and our goal is to critically assess how we (students/teachers) might benefit from these logics at the expense of others. Smith aligns with queer and trans critiques of neoliberal inclusion and queerness as a form of biopolitics where rights and recognition depend on a “homonormativity” of settler colonialism (Duggan, 2003; Smith 2010). Decolonial queer pedagogies interrupt queer settler colonialism by challenging students to study how we inherit colonial histories and insist that we critically question the colonial institutions through which rights are sought. Part of this challenge is to test the limits of what can be possible within social justice and gender-equity frameworks. Therefore, the analysis of murderous inclusions via trans-normativity, complicity, and investments in coloniality are necessary analytical frameworks to make sense of racialized

¹² Queers of color scholars have continuously provided critical assessment of the methods and circumstances of incorporation. See for example Audre Lorde (1984) “Letter to Mary Daly” or Ernesto Martinez (2010) “On Butler on Morrison on Language” where he argues Judith Butler enlists Toni Morrison’s Nobel Lecture on Literature to support her thesis on linguistic vulnerability by distorting and discarding most of Morrison’s own theory of language and narrative.

trans* student experiences who do not make claims to respectability, belonging, and inclusion. Additionally, it helps uncover the violence of having to align with normative formations of transgender identity and the ongoing colonizing process this entails. Understanding how trans-normativity plays out in institutions of education allows us to understand the reproduction of cis-heterogenderism and heterosexist institutions, the social relations and practices that emerge in trans* Latinidad, and the bio and necro-politics that uses our gender(s) to terrorize racialized others.

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**COMMITTEE FOR PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS
OFFICE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS**

University of California, Berkeley
2150 Shattuck Avenue, Suite 313
Berkeley, CA 94704 -5940

(510) 642-7461

Fax: (510) 643-6272

Website: <http://cphs.berkeley.edu>

FWA#00006252

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

DATE: *February 17, 2017*
TO: *Lisa Garcia Bedolla, Education*
OMI SALAS-SANTACRUZ, Education
CPHS PROTOCOL NUMBER: *2015-09-7898*
CPHS PROTOCOL TITLE: *Trans* Latinx Education Research*
FUNDING SOURCE(S): *NONE*

A(n) *new* application was submitted for the above-referenced protocol. The Committee for Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) has reviewed and approved the application by *Full Review* review procedures.

Effective Date: *February 17, 2017*

Expiration Date: *March 18, 2026*

Continuation/Renewal: Applications for continuation review should be submitted no later than 6 weeks prior to the expiration date of the current approval. *Note: It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to submit for renewed approval in a timely manner. If approval expires, all research activity (including data analysis) must cease until re-approval from CPHS has been received.* See [Renew \(Continue\) an Approved Protocol](#).

Amendments/Modifications: Any change in the design, conduct, or key personnel of this research must be approved by the CPHS **prior** to implementation. For more information, see [Amend/Modify an Approved Protocol](#).

Ten-year approvals: Minimal risk, non-federally funded protocols that are not subject to federal oversight may now be given a ten-year approval period. Please see [Ten Year Approvals](#) for information about which protocols can qualify for ten-year approvals.

The addition of federal funding or certain modifications that increase the level of risk may require a continuing review form to be submitted and approved in order for the protocol to continue. If one or more of the following changes occur, a Continuing Review application must be submitted and approved in order for the protocol to continue.

- Changes in study procedures that increase risk;
- Addition of federal funds.

Unanticipated Problems and Adverse Events: If any study subject experiences an unanticipated problem involving risks to subjects or others, and/or a serious adverse event, the CPHS must be informed **promptly**. For more information on definitions and reporting requirements related to this topic, see [Adverse Event and Unanticipated Problem Reporting](#).

This approval is issued under University of California, Berkeley Federalwide Assurance #00006252.

If you have any questions about this matter, please contact the OPHS staff at 642-7461 or email ophs@berkeley.edu.

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2150 Shattuck Avenue, Suite 313
Berkeley, CA 94704 -5940

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FWA#00006252

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane Mauldron".

Jane MAULDON

Committee for Protection of Human Subjects