

EDITORS' COMMENTARY

Centering Native Women's Art with a Transborderly Feminista Editorial Praxis

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and Georgina Badoni

Now housed at New Mexico State University (NMSU), *Chicana/Latina Studies (C/LS)*, the journal of *Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social (MALCS)*, will be edited by a collective. The three of us, as “the incoming caretakers” of *C/LS* (Alemán 2022), will “tend and nourish the conocimientos produced by Chicana, Latina, and Indígena scholars” (Alemán 2022) with immense responsibility and commitment. When we proposed being the next home of the *C/LS Journal*, we envisioned building bridges between and across local communities and higher education institutions while enacting our transnational and transborderly feminisms. The late Ruth Trinidad-Galván (2011)--may she rest in power--wrote about transborderly feminism: the experience of living in-between and across borders. She asserts that our “history and experience” allows us to craft theories that reveal our “transborderly vivencias and relationships that underscore the interconnection of people, ideas, and places” (552). The three of us, Judith, a Mexicana, Manal, a Palestinian, and Georgina, a Native Diné (Navajo), illustrate this interconnectedness. While we are dedicated to maintaining the journal’s current vision, we are also committed to expanding the contributions of self-identified Chicana, Latina/o/x, Native American/Indígena and Palestinian mujeres and gender non-conforming creative and scholarly academics, artists, students, and activists.

We are intentionally grateful to Sonya M. Alemán for her incredible work as Lead Editor of *C/LS* for the last five years. We also wish to express gratitude

to outgoing Book Review Editor Larissa M. Mercado-López and welcome incoming editor Annemarie Perez. We salute Grisel Y. Acosta as the current Creative Writing Editor. Building on the editors' brilliant intellectual and emotional work of the past five years, we bring our transborderly feminist selves to carry on and expand the vision of *C/LS*. This is who we are. Judith is the daughter of Josefina and Vicente (QEPD/RIP). She is a border crosser. Born in Veracruz, Mexico, she was partly raised in Puebla, Mexico, and at the age of ten, she was brought to South Los Angeles, California. She is a first-generation college student and scholar. Manal is a second-generation Palestinian born in Jordan and engaged with the struggles of Palestinians. Living in linguistic exile and several borderlands, she is an Arabyya who thinks/feels/translates into/with Arabic and English. Georgina is an enrolled member of the Diné Nation (Navajo). She is Nát'oh Dine'é Táchii'ni (Mountain Tobacco clan), born for the T'ízi Łání (Many Goats). Her maternal grandfathers are Biih Bitoodnii (Deer Spring), and her paternal grandfathers are Kinyaa'aanii (Towering House). Georgina is from Tiis Yá Tóó or Blue Canyon. She is an artist.

This first issue out of NMSU comes at the heels of the 2022 MALCS Summer Institute, which took place on the Colorado State University (CSU) campus from July 27 to July 30, 2022. CSU sits on the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Ute Nations and peoples. After two long years of not hosting an in-person Summer Institute in person, MALCSistas met at the beautiful CSU campus. The site committee chose the theme, "*Cultivating Healing, Tending Our Roots, and Embracing Decolonial Love*," because it addressed and attended to "our current lived realities, which have been filled with uncertainty, pain, devastation, and loss heightened by the pandemic and recent Supreme Court rulings." They invited attendees to "consider the various ways through which embodiment, ancestral knowledge,

decolonial love, language reckonings, humanizing pedagogies, and our collective resistance can be used to foster our healing processes further.”

The summer gathering started with a pre-institute leadership training which Judith attended. This inaugural day-long event was organized by Nancy “Rusty” Barceló, Vanessa Fonseca-Chávez, Lupe Gallegos-Díaz, Aída Hurtado, and Rita E. Urquijo-Ruíz. It was powerful to learn from and with feminista leaders who walk their talk. Their leadership styles are not top-down or hierarchical but empathic, compassionate, and informed by legacies and practices of mutuality and solidarity. Participants were given a copy of Lorgia García Peña’s book *Community as Rebellion: A Syllabus for Surviving Academia as a Woman of Color* (2022). The book weaves Lorgia’s testimonio to offer us a process, “a meditation on creating liberatory spaces for students and faculty of color within academia” (n. p.). Like many of us in academia, García Peña’s book recounts an array of experiences with colonization, racism, classism, and violence perpetuated on college campuses. These topics also threaded throughout the Summer Institute presentations, workshops, and roundtables. With presentations such as: “In a Place Far from Home: Cultivating Survival and Resistance at our Predominately White Institutions,” “Rethinking Academia: How to Support Chicana Undergraduates Who Want to Pursue the Professoriate,” “Envisioning HSIs from a Chicana Feminist Perspective,” “Love in the Time of Tenure: Situating Ourselves and Our Identity on the Tenure Track,” “Cultivating Pedagogies of Love: Chicana Femtorship, Community Building, and Generational Healing in Higher Education,” and “Femtoring/Mentoring as a Wisdom Community”--a clear call for action was made. We must continue resisting academia’s colonialist practices that fracture the mindbodyspirit and envision or imagine new ways and processes of existing, surviving, and thriving in US higher education institutions.

The experiences we have in academia permeate, filter through and impact our bodies. A few particularly impactful panels were “Theories of the Panza: Healing Through Disrupting Pedagogies of the Home,” “Our Femtoring Trensa: Weaving Our Plática-Testimonio as a Pathway to Mend the Fragmented Self,” “Healing Heridas Abiertas: Enseñanzas, Secretos, y Testimonios on Surviving the Pandemic,” and “Listening to the Land, our Bodies, and Souls as Medicina.” The overarching theme was the importance of drawing from lessons learned at home and from our ancestral knowledges to bring Coyolxauhqui back together (Anzaldúa 1999).

The Summer Institute’s Tortuga Award dinner was filled with music, laughter, and recognition of our collective accomplishments. Martha P. Cotera was the recipient of this year’s Tortuga Award. As a scholar, community builder, organizer, and political activist, Martha P. Cotera is a leader in the Chicano Civil Rights and Chicana feminist movements in Texas. She and her husband, Juan Cotera, were among the founders of La Raza Unida Party (RUP), ensuring that feminism was brought into the political sphere as a co-founder of the RUP’s women’s caucus—Mujeres Por La Raza Unida—and by representing Chicana issues in the National Women’s Political Caucus. Her body of scholarship includes the seminal feminist text *Diosa y Hembra: The History and Heritage of Chicanas in the US* (1977), the first published history of Chicanas. Martha P. Cotera deserves the Tortuga Award for her countless contributions to Chicana/Latina studies and unwavering commitment to justice and liberation. Our return to the in-person Summer Institute did not disappoint. The transition of the *C/LS journal* from UT San Antonio to NMSU was made official during the business meeting, where the outgoing Editor, Sonya M. Alemán, was recognized for her phenomenal work.

Finalizing this fall of 2022 issue, we recognize Sonya for her diligent and creative work preparing the manuscripts as she was guided for five years by

Izapapalotl (Alemán 2022). She has determined most of the content of this issue, uplifting three essays that speak to/with/by Afro-Latinx decolonial feminists, Mexicana comedians *entremetidas* and *womxn* and queer *cumbia soniderx*. Specifically, “Dispatches from an Afro-Latinx Decolonial Feminism” by Caridad Souza and Karina L. Cespedes engages and connects Black and Chicana feminisms while honoring the distinctiveness of their foundational work. Souza and Cespedes seek to open roads towards a decolonial feminist praxis that makes room for a new articulation of feminism that is adjacent to but independent from both Chicana and Black feminism. In “Entremetidas: Women, Humor, Cine and Gendered Mexican Identities,” Nancy Quiñones weaves history and iconic actoras comediantes to examine how their iconic characters can be described as *entremetidas* or women who insert and express themselves without waiting for permission. Quiñones’ essay is imbued with notions of womanhood and *mujeres*’ performances on television that have challenged conventional notions of Mexican national identity and belonging. In “Dissonant Deejeys of Cumbia Sonidero: Cultivating Queer Vibes and *Mujerista* Mentorship,” Ramon Pineda theorizes the dissonant practices of sound makers of *cumbia sonidera* in California guided by a decolonial queer *soniderx* methodology. Pineda described a utopic potentiality shaped by transgressive queer, women, and non-binary dissonant *deejays*. He also names as sonic futurity generated by *vibe*—“collective and reciprocal, fostered through... mentorship and *convivencia* amongst dissonant *deejays*, a praxis that eschews a hierarchal relationality...[and] exhibits performative potentiality of queerness that is doing for and toward the future” (Pineda 2022, 91).

Indigenous women find empowerment through Spirit Lake Dakota/Diné artist Avis Charley’s representation of Native women. Avis’s artwork embraces Indigeneity generating self-esteem and confidence for women with Indigenous heritage. The cover image of Avis Charley asserts the strengths and beauty of

contemporary Native women who are grounded in the present by knowing the past of their ancestors and fostering a visual imagination for future generations. Both as a ledger (narrative drawing or painting on paper or cloth) and oil painting artist, Charley's other images illuminate the futurity of Native subjectivities "from pre-reservation period to the present day, from ancestral homelands to city life" (Charley 2022, 10). Charley visibilizes the "strength and resiliency derived from [her] Indigenous matriarchs, sisters, and daughters is what keeps us moving forward and inspiring others" (11). Georgina Badoni's invitation of Avis Charley to share her work in *C/LS* and with MALCS members signals our intention to showcase Native and Indigenous women artists from/on this borderlands.

In the creative writing section of this issue, Grisel Y. Acosta uplifts contemporary Latina/x playwrights Teresa Veramendi, Jenny Saldaña, Adriana Domínguez, and Michelle Elizabeth Navarrete. The books reviewed in this issue— *Letras y Limpías: Neocolonial Medicine and Holistic Healing in Mexican American Literature* (2021) by Jennifer Moran and *Voices from the Ancestors: Xicanx and Latinx Spiritual Expressions and Healing Practices* (2019) by Rebecca Mendoza Nunziato—highlight decolonial praxis of spirituality and curanderas' mindbodyspirit healing practices, both examples of feminist knowledges confronting coloniality.

As borderlands editors' colectiva, this issue marks the beginning of our commitment to uphold the vision of the journal, sustain a transborderly feminist editorial praxis, intentionally engage Native American/Indígena ways of knowing, especially through art produced in these borderlands, and finally, imagine ways of engaging Palestinian mujeres whose borderland existence has many parallels to the ones Chicana/Latina scholars repeatedly engage.

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