

Pedagogies of the Home in the Art and Narrative of Chicana/o Picturebooks**Lettycia Terrones****School of Information Sciences University
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ABSTRACT: This essay interrogates how mother-daughter type relationships in Chicana/o picturebooks function to transmit specific cultural values. It posits these acts of transmission as strategies of resilient resistance against normative modes of instruction typically found in school sites that perpetuate barriers to education through structural racism and economic injustice. The mother-daughter type relationships in these picturebooks and the home-centered strategies of education they offer, I argue, exemplify how cultural survival and resistance through the practice of pedagogies of the home can transform institutional spaces of instruction. Exploring the nuances of visual imagery and narrative of Chicana/o picturebooks in this way responds to the call for critical multicultural scholarship in children's literature. Moreover, it invites librarians and educators to learn from the funds of knowledges children bring with them into classroom and storytime spaces.

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Abstract

This essay interrogates how mother-daughter type relationships in Chicana/o picturebooks function to transmit specific cultural values. It posits these acts of transmission as strategies of resilient resistance against normative modes of instruction typically found in school sites that perpetuate barriers to education through structural racism and economic injustice. The mother-daughter type relationships in these picturebooks and the home-centered strategies of education they offer, I argue, exemplify how cultural survival and resistance through the practice of pedagogies of the home can transform institutional spaces of instruction. Exploring the nuances of visual imagery and narrative of Chicana/o picturebooks in this way responds to the call for critical multicultural scholarship in children's literature. Moreover, it invites librarians and educators to learn from the funds of knowledges children bring with them into classroom and storytime spaces.

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“The first time I saw an artist working [was] when my mother was making these *loteria tablas* to play for the American G.I. Forum. They did fundraisers to raise scholarship money for ... Mexican-American college students ... I saw my mother making these cards for the first time and I thought it was magic and I wanted to do the same thing.”

—Carmen Lomas Garza, “*Carmen Lomas Garza: Looking Back*”

Family Pictures and *In My Family* by Chicana artist Carmen Lomas Garza are widely recognized as classic examples Latino children’s literature.¹ And for good reason, as Garza’s award-winning picturebook both affirm the experiences of growing up Mexican American in South Texas, and serve to transmit cultural values that, as children’s literature scholar Rudine Sims Bishop notes, is a central function of children’s literature.² By centering on mother-daughter type relationships in Chicana/o picturebooks³—*In My Family* by Carmen Lomas Garza, *Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family’s Fight for Desegregation* by Duncan Tonatiuh, and *That’s Not Fair! Emma Tenayuca’s Struggle for Justice* by Carmen Tafolla and Sharyll Teneyuca, illustrated by Terry Ybáñez,—I identify specific cultural values transmitted in these relationships and posit these acts of transmission as strategies of resilient resistance against normative modes of instruction, typically found in school sites, that perpetuate barriers to education through structural racism and economic injustice.⁴ The mother-daughter type relationships in these picturebooks and the home-centered strategies of education they offer, I argue, exemplify how cultural strategies of resilient resistance against injustices can transform institutional spaces of instruction. Exploring the nuances of visual imagery and narrative of Chicana/o picturebooks in this way responds to the call for critical multicultural scholarship in children’s literature. Moreover, it invites librarians and educators to learn from the funds of knowledges children bring with them into classroom and storytime spaces.⁵ Our attentiveness to these transformative modes of instruction can help enrich our literacy practices in culturally

relevant ways and help us deepen our conversations about the evaluation and collection development of diverse and culturally rich literature for children.⁶

As a point of entry, I employ Dolores Delgado Bernal's theoretical framework, *Pedagogies of the Home*, which she developed in a 2001 study on the navigational strategies of persistence successfully used by Chicanas in their pursuit of higher education.⁷ Bernal's study describes how Mexican and Mexican American women transmit culturally specific knowledge, often inter-generationally, in informal teaching sites within the home and/or community. These pedagogies of the home occur outside of, and in spite of, traditional school sites or dominate instructional spaces attributed to the academe. Describing the function of pedagogies of the home, Bernal writes: "teaching and learning of the home allows Chicanas to draw upon their own cultures and sense of self to resist domination along the axes of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation" ("Learning" 624).

Important to this essay is how Bernal further situates culturally responsive pedagogies, including Chicana feminist pedagogies, as embracing of and building upon pedagogies of the home as a way to advance transformative teaching, which I also extend to librarianship practices. Surely, an understanding of how pedagogies of the home function and show up in Chicana/o picturebooks is important to librarians and educators invested in critical approaches used in evaluating culturally responsive books for children. To meet this aim, my analysis of Chicana/o picturebooks shows how strategies of pedagogies of the home are rendered through the collective experiences of community memory, commitment to communities and community knowledge. My analysis then shows how these strategies disrupt and transform institutional spaces of "official knowledge" found in the narratives. I conclude by speaking to the larger imperative of using pedagogies of the home frameworks to evaluate, read, and use Chicana/o picturebooks as

tools for engaging in critical transformative pedagogies that center cultural knowledge in our work toward creating inclusive and socially just places of learning.

Collective Experiences and Community Memory

Bernal defines Chicana feminist pedagogies as “culturally specific ways of organizing teaching and learning in informal sites such as the home,” where acts of storytelling and linguistic capital unique to Mexican and Chicana/o culture serve to communicate and preserve collective experiences and community memory (“Learning” 624). For a cultural insider, identification of community memory and recognition of collective experiences become readily accessible when seen in visual renderings and/or witnessed in behaviors. For instance, a child from East Los Angeles, El Paso Tejas, Pilsen in Chicago, or any number of traditionally working-class Mexican American neighborhoods in the U.S., and in particular, the southwest, will recognize the familiar scenes and characters illustrated in Carmen Lomas Garza’s *In My Family*. Her illustrations of children sitting in rapt attention listening to stories about La Llorona, observing tiny alters hanging from bedroom walls, hitting piñatas in the backyard during *carne asada* birthday parties, are all common experiences of Mexican American sociocultural life in the U.S.

In My Family captures these experiences by opening a window into Garza’s childhood memories about “growing up in Kingsville, Texas, near the border with Mexico” (n.p). Organized in a series of vignettes, Garza’s picturebook pairs descriptive narratives written in English and Spanish, with paintings of family pictures, what she calls *cuadritos*, to evoke personal memories of her life in a Mexican American household and community. She fills her paintings with family and community members cooking together, listening to stories, dancing and celebrating, making art, and healing and praying together. Art scholar Amalia Mesa-Bains

analyzes Garza's aesthetic, noting how these family practices combine to "create a cosmology of cultural values and identity" (15). In this way, Garza's *cuadritos* show her family in communion with the Kingsville community, and vice versa. The collective experiences of Garza's South Texas community rendered in *In My Family* further correspond to acts and behaviors of larger Mexican American communities in the U.S. as they depict how we organize family and community through linguistic and cultural capitals, and, moreover, how through these acts we teach, learn, and socialize to create Chicana/o culture.

For Garza, women are the cornerstone in constructing Chicana/o culture. She locates women at the center of instruction in the visual and narrative renderings of life in her Mexican American household and community. Throughout *In My Family*, Garza features her mother, grandmother, sisters, herself and community mothers, such as the neighborhood *curandera*, in prominent roles. As Mesa-Bains writes in her critique of Garza's artwork, women are "engaged in labor, teaching, healing, cooking and nurturing. There is no patriarchy positioning the women in these works. Instead we see a feminine lineage of power, nurturance, protection and productivity that is at the same time communal and domestic" (22). It is no wonder then that Garza counts her mother as her first art teacher. She credits how observing her mother paint *lotería tablas* was her first experience in witnessing an artist work. This moment of cultural knowledge transfer and deep instruction directly inspired Garza to become an artist.⁸

Garza's positioning of women as artist is evident in her painting "La Curandera," which illustrates women occupying preeminent space and roles as instructors and imparters of knowledge. Garza, in the accompanying texts, describes:

"This is Doña Maria, a *curandera* or healer. My mother asked her to do a cleansing on my youngest sister, Mary Jane, who had changed from a nice little pre-teen to a very

rebellious teenager. The *curandera* came every day for about two weeks. She would burn copal incense, read a prayer, and brush my sister with the branches from a *ruda* plant”

(n.p.)

Garza’s mother calls on the community mother, La Curandera, to help heal a rift between her and her daughter, Mary Jane. La Curandera, like the artist, uses the tools of her trade—incense, prayers, and medicinal plants—to craft a specific mode of instruction in the form of spiritual and family counseling in order to restore harmony between mother and daughter.⁹

In describing Mary Jane as changing from a “nice little pre-teen to a very rebellious teenager,” Garza alludes to the challenges of growing up and navigating social spheres outside of the home. Mary Jane’s rebellion signals a disconnect between these outside spheres and the home. Indeed, Garza recalls her experience of these fissures between the institution of school and home, noting one particular instance when at five years old, she witnessed her parents’ inability to seek justice after a teacher had struck her brother—himself, just a child in the first grade—for speaking Spanish at school. In the introduction to the catalog for her art exhibit, *Pedacito De Mi Corazón*, Garza writes: “The expression on my parents’ faces and their mute silence haunts me to this day. It must have been such a painful moment for them. How could they explain that the punishment was for racial and political reasons and not because he had done something bad?” (11). In offering up La Curandera as a restorative bridge between mother and daughter, Garza not only points to cultural strategies that help families mediate institutional spaces and the home, but also suggests a Chicana/o resistant agency against racist educational policies that underlie normalized violence and accepted norms of discrimination that she and her community have endured.

Garza speaks directly to the capacity of art to heal, describing her artwork as containing restorative properties, that like the *sávilá* medicinal plant, help “heal the wounds inflicted by discrimination and racism” (*Pedacito* 13). Here, Garza affirms Rudine Sims Bishop’s position on the cultural function of storytelling in children’s literature as being a “means to counter the effects of marginalization and oppression on children” (25). Garza’s words and images in *In My Family* show us how pedagogies of the home can successfully counter the effects of oppression carried out by institutional spaces of learning. Garza disrupts “official knowledge” by calling upon La Curandera who through application of household knowledges heals the family’s wounds inflicted by society. Moreover, the community receives the transference of household knowledges as well. Although, we witness these cultural strategies and acts of resilient resistance against injustices from inside mother’s bedroom, the restorative effect of La Curandera’s healing ripples out to the larger community. In the first circle, we have the intergenerational family rendered by the presence of sister, little bother and the hanging family portrait, who witness and participate in the ceremony. Radiating outward, the pulled back curtains and window screens framing the scene suggest a multiple function of intimacy and community by keeping the reader’s eye attentive to the activities of the room, while simultaneously acknowledging the larger community outside.

The community outside the windows, I argue, includes the reader. This visual cue of inclusion, combined with Garza’s listing of La Curandera’s tools, “copal incense, prayers, ritual brushing with ruda, a medicinal plant,” invite us to be part of the community by positioning the reader as learner. The act of reading performance inherent in picturebooks, furthermore folds in the reader/listener to participate and enact pedagogies of the home. Together through this praxis

of cultural signifying and reading performance afforded by the picturebook, we keep alive the cultural values and strategies of resilience which construct an aesthetic of Chicana/o culture.

In this way, just as La Curandera's instruction restores the Garza women and household, so too does her cleansing ritual affect the reader. Garza's visual and textual narrative, moreover, opens a space for the reader to share in a collective Chicana/o experience to also benefit from the transference of Chicana/o cultural knowledge. The collective nature of this space, and the authorial move produced by Garza's invitation into women-centered home knowledges and practices becomes important to educators in dominant spaces of instruction. Reading Chicana/o picturebooks with an understanding for how the mechanisms of cultural identity construction happen in Chicana/o households becomes an important asset in evaluating cultural relevancy in texts, especially as Chicana/o picturebook offer rich examples of practices and customs of cultural knowledge transference. For the educator, having an understanding of the emergence and vibrancy of household knowledges in Chicana/o sensibilities becomes an effective tool for selecting culturally relevant picturebooks. When paired with critical literacy strategies, competence in critical evaluation of culturally relevant picturebooks can also foster strategies for critically reading texts with children.

Indeed, the imperative toward effecting social justice through education, as evident in Carmen Lomas Garza's art, is a central attribute in the pedagogies of the home framework. Bernal names this strategy "commitment to communities," and describes its central imperative as giving back to the community by contributing to its well-being. Starting with a deep commitment to family, this strategy shows up in Chicanas' sense of responsibility to be role-models or "examples for their younger siblings," a duty which then extends to the community beyond the immediate family where "promoting education or ideas of social justice" serve to motivate

Chicanas' persistence in reaching educational goals ("Learning" 632). The lens of pedagogies of the home brings into focus the important function of reciprocity found in a commitment to communities strategies. Duncan Tonatiuh's picturebook *Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation* (2014) provides examples of women's commitment to communities and how their acts model and impart cultural values and strategies to resist political injustice.

Commitment to Communities

In *Separate is Never Equal*, Tonatiuh illustrates how commitment to communities strategies work. Tonatiuh tells the story of the 1947 case, *Mendez vs. Westminster [sic] School District of Orange County California*, which set precedent for the landmark 1954 U.S. Supreme Court case *Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka*. Tonatiuh brings to light an often erased and forgotten battle in the history of Civil Rights, as seen through the eyes of little Sylvia Mendez who endures racist taunts in the struggle for equal access to education. After leasing a farm in the Westminster community of Orange County, the local public school denies the Mendez family the right to enroll their children, and instead orders them to enroll at Hoover Elementary, the "Mexican School." Tonatiuh does not hide the shameful reality of structural racism upheld by education policies that construct a second-class citizenry. His words and images—the live electrical fences that surrounds Hoover Elementary, and the cows and flies that graze where children eat their lunch—open a space for children today to imagine Sylvia's school experience under segregation.

Tonatiuh renders a complex history of struggle against inequality and institutional racism by centering commitment to communities as a driving theme. The following scene sets the stage for the story's narrative arc, which goes on to show the Mendez family uniting with their local

and larger community, collectively building support for their lawsuit against the segregation of Mexican American children in public schools. Tonatiuh spotlights Aunt Soledad's response to the principal's secretary, who after approving the enrollment of her two light-skin daughters, refuses to enroll Sylvia and her brothers, stating: "They cannot attend this school ... They must go to the Mexican School" (8). The reader bears witness to the mechanism by which racist ideologies become institutionalized through school policies and are further legitimized through bureaucracy's forms and rules. Sylvia questions the "rules" masking the racism underlying this barrier to education. Internally, she asks: "*Why do we have to go to the Mexican school?*" when, in fact, she and her family are U.S. citizens (9). When Aunt Soledad angrily protests: "But we all live in this part of town!" the reader's eye is immediately drawn to the image of Aunt Soledad and the secretary squaring off (9). The imbalance of power perpetuated through structural racism is palpable here.

Together, Tonatiuh's words and images make tangible the unequal dynamic between the Mendez's and School as an institution. He contrasts Aunt Soledad's dark brown skin to the white secretary's blondness, her clothes completing the red, white, and blue color scheme of her surroundings. Fortressed behind a solid wood desk, the secretary transcends her individuality and becomes a figure of institutional authority charged with the power to enact policy. Tonatiuh symmetrically positions a typewriter and telephone on either side of the secretary's desk, further conveying the immovability and dominance of the policy she symbolizes and enacts. These machines not only clue the historical setting of the story, they also communicate the functions of technologies and the material apparatuses which support the operationalizing of racist policy. Viewed through this lens, the telephone and typewriter signal the policing of uncooperative behavior by creating "official" documentation and means of punishment via security. The

secretary has the power to police behavior by creating written documentation and by summoning security. Looking directly at the reader, the secretary's gaze suggests an affirmation of her position of power and authority over the family.

The reader understands the profound psychological impacts which structural racism effects through educational barriers. Clearly, we see and feel this terrible moment of awareness when Sylvia examines her own dark brown skin against her lighter-skinned cousins, whose French surname further allows them to pass for white. Rhetorically, she asks herself: "*Is it because we have brown skin and thick black hair and our last name is Mendez?*" (10). Tonatiuh accompanies this stunning image with the verbal sparring between the secretary and Aunt Soledad. When told that "[r]ules are rules" and that the Mendez children must go to the inferior Mexican school, Aunt Soledad declares: "'I will not be enrolling any of them, then' ... and she storm[s] out of the office, taking Sylvia and the other children with her" (11). Aunt Soledad asserts her dignity against oppression. Her example serves as a lesson to the children about the power of agency in the face of subjugation.

Here, Aunt Soledad claims her position as a mother, thus affirming her primary role as instructor. Through her example, the children learn the power of claiming one's dignity. And, moreover, how this power can motivate and sustain a fight for justice, for themselves and for their community. Indeed, the scene captures Bernal's description of commitment to community strategies as being a "source of inspiration and motivation to overcome educational obstacles" ("Learning" 632). Aunt Soledad exemplifies this cultural value of commitment and care for her community's well-being through an act of resilient resistance against racist educational barriers. Her actions teach the child to see their lives as directly related to the lives of their fellow community members. As such, they learn how their family's struggle for educational access

carries lateral benefits to the community. Tonatiuh foreshadows the wide reach of Aunt Soledad's protest which ignites the Mendez's Civil Rights struggle—a struggle which goes on to inspire solidarity between various national ethnic caucuses and civic leaders, including the NAACP, Governor Earl Warren, and Justice Thurgood Marshall, whose support of the Mendez lawsuit grounds the Brown vs. Board of Education ruling to desegregate schools nationwide.

The theme of commitment to communities and solidarity, emerging as a pedagogy of the home, is further extended when considering how picturebooks serve as primary sources for storytimes and classroom instruction. Recognizing this function, Tonatiuh writes in his author's note: "My hope is that this book will help children and young people learn about this important yet little known event in American history. I also hope that they will see themselves reflected in Sylvia's story and realize that their voices are valuable and that they too can make meaningful contributions to this country" (36). *Separate is Never Equal* resists cultural erasure by shining light on the history of Mexican American contributions to the struggle for equality and educational access. By inviting children to see themselves in and gain inspiration from Sylvia's story, Tonatiuh's picturebook, itself, enacts a commitment to communities. Indeed, the invitation towards solidarity extends to educators who, as authorities of normative learning spaces, can also embrace a commitment to their communities. As Gloria Ladson-Billings reminds us, culturally responsive pedagogy demands educators' awareness of the causes of inequities and, furthermore, their responsiveness toward creating socially and morally just worlds (477). By including stories and histories of students' diverse experiences and inviting their cultural funds of knowledge into the curriculum, educators can advance the political intentionality of social justice pedagogy.

Community Knowledge

Learning from one's community brings to the forefront the reciprocal aspects of commitment to communities practices. Carmen Tafolla and Sharyll Teneyuca's *That's Not Fair! Emma Tenayuca's Struggle for Justice* (2008) exemplifies how the community itself can assume a mother-like role in imparting cultural values that empower children with strategies for resilient resistance against structural racism underlying economic injustice. Illustrated by celebrated Chicana artists, Terry Ybáñez, *That's Not Fair!* tell the story of radical feminist activist Emma Tenayuca, who, among many social justice actions, led the historic Pecan Shellers Strike of 1938 in San Antonio, Texas, where over 12,000 predominantly Mexican American women workers organized and successfully won wage raises and better working conditions. The English and Spanish parallel text centers on the childhood experiences that plant the seeds of Tenayuca's labor rights activism. Establishing a narrative pattern, the opening pages demonstrate Emma's politicization process. We see nine-year-old Emma witness and reflect upon the ravages of poverty in her hometown of San Antonio, which in turn activates her use of available educational assets to right the wrongs she sees happening around her, in service to her community.

This witness, reflect and act schema begins with Emma's observation of hungry children eating pecan scraps next to a shivering mother consoling her crying baby in a dark shack. Pecan tree branches segment the double-page spread, emphasizing Emma's reflection. She is the sole image on the facing page, and the strong gaze of her black eyes flash indignantly as she looks upon the suffering mother and children. The Spanish text effectively communicates Emma's interiority and the disquietude of her awareness. Emma, "[s]uspiró profundamente y otra vez destellaron sus ojos" (3). Emma sighed deeply and again her eyes flashed. In the Spanish text, Tafolla and Teneyuca pair the verbs *destellar* and *relampaguear* (from the noun *relámpagos* or lightning bolts) to connote an illumination of consciousness in Emma, foreshadowing the

thunderous reverberation and impact of Emma's future activism. The following pages build the schema, showing Emma in her classroom joyfully receiving a new book to read from her teacher. Completing the schema, Ybáñez paints the next scene in into a red, blue, yellow primary color palette to convey harmony and balance. Emma wears a red sweater and blue dress throughout the story, and yellow will later figure symbolically, indicating Emma's politicization and activism.

Emma cannot enjoy her new book because, "she kept remembering the children she had seen that morning" (5). This disquietude clues us to the sense of agency stirring within Emma, which germinates in the subsequent pages after Maria interrupts her reading. Sitting on the broad steps of her front porch, the warm yellow walls of her home embrace Emma who sits squarely centered on the page. Her red sweater and blue dress balance the scene. Ybáñez uses line and space to focus the reader's eye directly on Emma, whose gaze rests on the open book in her lap, a contented smile on her face. Without the narrative cue, it is almost easy to miss Maria, a girl "about her [Emma's] age," who, inconspicuous in her green sweater, hangs off the side banister and interrupts Emma: "What are you doing?" (6-7). When Emma invites her to read the "wonderful book," Maria reveals she cannot read. However, her gift of storytelling disrupts her lack of normative literacy, and she launches into her story: "Last year, I was starting to learn the letters. But then, the weather began to warm, and the flowers began to bloom. And my family had to go far away, to pick onions" (8). She describes how her family must follow the harvest—picking strawberries, cabbage, cotton, beets—and how she missed a school term. When she returned to school after the picking season was over, she found her classmates had already learned to read. "I had missed it!" (10). Ybáñez expresses Maria's lament, painting her in downcast eyes and downturned mouth, defeated.

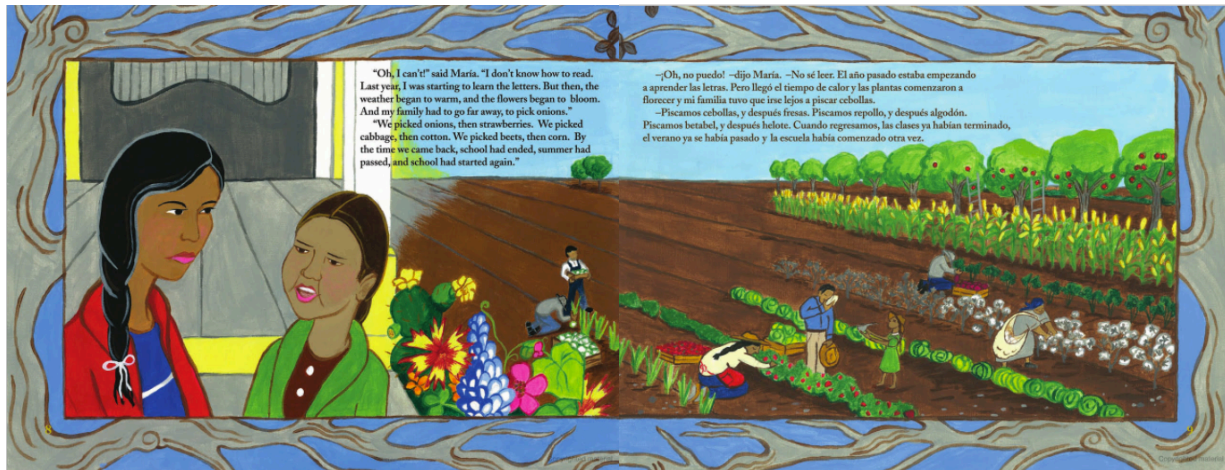


Fig. 1 Maria's story, *That's Not Fair!: Emma Tenayuca's Struggle for Justice*. (2008). Permission arranged with Wings Press, San Antonio, TX.

Ybáñez illustrates the scene in a panoramic style, rendering the compelling effect of Maria's storytelling by allowing the reader to visualize the imaginary space where Maria's memory lives (see fig. 1). To emphasize the living nature of this space and its capacity to spark Emma's empathy, Ybáñez paints a female figure bent over picking the harvest. Like Emma, she also wears red and blue. Thus, enveloped in Maria's memory, Emma puts herself in the farmworkers' shoes. The words and images in this scene capture Maria's *testimonio*, her act of witnessing.¹⁰ Emerging as a praxis in Latin American liberation movements, *testimonios*, as the Latina Feminist Group posits, "repositions Chicanas/Latinas as center to the analysis and reassigns agency to the oppressed" (qtd. Huber & Cueva 392). We see this agency at work in Maria's retelling of her experience, where the truth of her experience bears witness to the consequences of structural inequalities perpetuated by economic and educational barriers. Maria's *testimonio* both humanizes her experience and allows Emma to access it. This praxis activates Emma's resistance, made evident by her declaration: "'That's not fair!!'" (10). Maria's *testimonio* focalizes the community's voice by imparting knowledge through the lived experiences of its people. This community knowledge allows Emma to synthesize connections

between the hungry children she sees on her walk to school, Maria's story of the educational barriers faced by migrant workers, and later, the homeless family of nine who relate their story about being violently chased away from the farm after asking the boss for their pay.

The community continues to speak its truths and impart its knowledge onto Emma in the final scenes. Grandpa, recognizing Emma's indignation, helps her transform her anger into agency. He takes Emma on a walk around San Antonio and indeed the community speaks. This ground-up pedagogical approach resonates with Community Mapping, an inquiry-based ethnographic methodology that situates school-sites within the "socio-political historical legacies" of their communities (Ordoñez-Jasis & Jasis 189). Community Mapping practice embeds teachers and students in the community where, through observation and interaction with neighborhood spaces and people, the learner becomes aware of community needs and resources. In effect, the community imparts knowledge by speaking its truths. As Emma and Grandpa walk through San Antonio, the community imparts *testimonios*, revealing racial and class divides.

Ybáñez's illustrations show these divisions side-by-side, so that the "tiny shacks" of the Mexican neighborhoods stand in direct contrast to the broad mansions of the affluent white neighborhoods, each side taking up a facing page. Both brown and poor, rich and white community members "smiled and waved at them," conveying the ethnographic aspect of their observation (18). The community teaches Emma about the realities of racialized economic exploitation fueling this inequity. Emma sees how economic barriers perpetuate race and class divisions where, on one side of the page, Mexican American women walk into the "dark, dreary [pecan shelling] factories," in contrast to the adjacent page which shows the entrance and display windows of Frost, a historic upscale department store in San Antonio (20-21). Here, white women enter and stroll outside its doors. Ybáñez contrasts class and race divisions by giving

them each equal space, inviting the reader to observe the whole truth of inequality. Ybáñez illustrates Emma with her back turned to the reader, positioning the reader in the same witness role as Emma. We witness the community's *testimonio* from Emma's point of view, and like Emma, we in turn, can synthesize our own learning from the community's stories and knowledges. Like Emma, we observe and take part in this act of community mapping.

The community imparts its final lesson through an old folk singer, a troubadour, who sits outside a "five and dime" store (23). He sings a traditional Mexican farmworker's song, "Sol Que Eres Tan Parejo," whose function, I argue, performs pedagogies of the home strategies. Bernal, writes: "Community and family knowledge is taught to youth through legends, *corridos*, and storytelling" ("Critical Race Theory" 113). In "Sol Que Eres" the singer expresses the voice of the community. He exhorts the Sun to teach the boss how to be morally just, so that, like the Sun who distributes its rays equally and without discrimination, so too should the boss. Like a *corrido*, the old man's song tells a story contemporary to its time and expresses a point of view from "the proletariat, the common folk" (Castro 67). From this working-class vantage point, the song, like a *corrido*, "accurately reflects public values and the people's interpretation of their own history" (Merle Edwin Simmons, qtd Castro 68).

This positionality is important in examining the community's role as imparter of cultural values and resilient strategies for social justice, a theme clearly evident in the subtext of the troubadour's song. For Emma, this moment becomes a catalyst for her social awareness, and she embraces her agency. She also understands how people are capable of effecting change in different ways, thus, articulating the troubadour's contribution: "'And the old man. He helped, too ... by singing a song with the right words to make people understand.'" (Tafolla & Teneyuca 25). The warm yellow lamp, which sits center on the table when Emma makes this statement,

conveys a new illumination, suggesting her growing political awareness and activist impulse. Not only does she give an apple and a sweater to the hungry boys and shivering mother, she understands how to make a more substantial contribution to right the injustices that her community endures. Tapping into her assets—her books, her love of reading, and the safety of her home—Emma teaches Maria how to read. In this act, Emma assumes a mother-daughter type role by using the knowledge she has gained from both community and classroom, to nourish Maria's intellectual curiosity. Teaching Maria to read, Emma, in turn, helps heal Maria's pain of illiteracy. Compassion, agency and justice sit at the heart of this moment. Despite being depicted one step above Maria, as they sit on the porch, Emma's stature communicates tenderness. Ybáñez draws upon the harmonizing palette of primary colors, red, blue, yellow, to suggest a restorative balance. William Moebius reminds us of the capacity for picturebooks to "portray the intangible and invisible, ideas and concepts such as love, responsibility, a truth beyond the individual, ideas that escape easy definition in pictures or words" (146). *That's Not Fair!* accomplishes this by showing us, through words and images, the trajectory of Emma's journey as she comes to understand the power she holds, even as a child, to challenge the economic inequalities and barriers to education faced by her community. The community's role as knowledge imparter is responsible for her political consciousness. We see Emma return this service in reciprocity to her community when as a teenager she speaks at rallies, and then later, as a young woman of twenty-one, helps organize and lead the Pecan Shellers Strike of 1938.

The reciprocity of pedagogies of the home extends to a literacy praxis of picturebook reading. *In My Family*, *Separate is Never Equal*, and *That's Not Fair*, allow us to see the lived experiences of our communities from the eyes of the child. Through their eyes, we see our histories and relate to the familiarity of their sights and struggles, as indeed, these memories

mirror present-day struggles for equality, access and cultural affirmation. Children reading these works see the resilient strategies of pedagogies of the home at play in the stories. In turn, through their participation in classroom and library storytime spaces, where reading happens in community, children participate in pedagogies of the home as they create new collective memories and experiences through their engagement with these works. Picturebooks introduce children to literacy praxis by engaging adults in reading with children. As they form part of a family's literacy texts, picturebooks offer a way for bringing *pedacitos* of the heart and home into our classrooms and libraries.

Discussion

My close-reading of three Chicana/o picturebooks shows how mother-daughter type relationships transmit values of cultural survival and resistance through the practice of pedagogies of the home, as theorized by Dolores Delgado Bernal. As my analysis shows, pedagogies of the home instruct and impart strategies of resilient resistance against injustices. Chicana/o picturebooks, I argue, leverage examples of women-centered, home knowledges to challenge institutional sites of learning and push against normative modes of instruction available to the young protagonists in these works. The children in these stories learn lessons from their “mothers” which equip them to heal the wounds of structural racism and empower them to fight against barriers to educational access and economic injustice.

Certainly, not all picturebooks are invested in social justice themes, nor do they all specifically reference the capacity of mother-daughter relationships to impart home knowledges and healing strategies of resistance. However, pedagogies of the home, as a framework, does offer a rich lens for analyzing culturally responsive picturebooks. Many picturebooks by and about people of color deal with aspects of imparting cultural knowledge, expressing cultural

affirmation and championing social justice imperatives. For example, picturebooks created by the author-artists examined in this essay—*Magic Windows* by Carmen Lomas Garza, *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale* by Duncan Tonatiuh (and, arguably, Tonatiuh's repertoire of picturebooks), and Carmen Tafolla's *What Can You Do With a Rebozo?* — all offer different modes of imparting cultural knowledge. Wanda M. Brooks and Jonda C. McNair, in writing about picturebooks by and about African American females, examine specific cultural practices and transmission of Black Feminist Epistemologies that occur between African American mothers, daughters and sisters through the nurturing and bonding over hair. That picturebooks by people of color often mirror examples of cultural pride and insider knowledges, expresses an authorial intentionality to impart knowledge to our children, especially those most vulnerable to the epistemic violence of racism. Indeed, children's literature scholars express a similar imperative by calling for critical analysis specific to race, representation and cultural dynamics in children's literature.¹¹ My essay contributes to these efforts and supports the belief that this work “can filter down into our classrooms to feed our students and their students” (Capshaw 238). My analysis, in this way, also calls upon educators and librarians to accept the invitation to learn from the children we serve. Making meaning of words and images in Chicana/o picturebooks, as my close-reading demonstrates, taps into the skillfully ways our communities employ cultural capitals of community memory, community commitment and community knowledge. Applying this type of analysis fosters new ways for educators to welcome our children's funds of knowledge to co-create storytimes and classroom reading practices. Moll et al. offer educators insight into developing culturally responsive, inclusive curricula that embraces home knowledges. Chicana/o picturebooks can serve this bridge.

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Notes

¹ Carmen Lomas Garza's picturebooks have won numerous awards and honors, including recognition by the Pura Belpré Award, the Américas Award, and the Tomás Rivera Book Award. For scholarship on Latinx children's literature and Garza's picturebooks, see Clark et al.; Henderson; McMahon.

² Rudine Sims Bishop describes the capacity of children's literature to transmit "moral and cultural values" (25). This capacity holds particular importance in the storytelling of multicultural picturebooks, because, as Sims argues, "[w]hen a group has been marginalized and oppressed, the cultural functions of story can take on even greater significance because storytelling can be seen as a means to counter the effects of that marginalization and oppression on children" (25). The pedagogies of the home strategies, as explored here through the lens of Chicana/o picturebooks, carry the same imperative to heal the wounds of racism and oppression. Carmen Lomas Garza and Duncan Tonatiuh address the healing aspects of their works for children in the end matter of the picturebooks discussed in the essay.

³ Identification as Chicana/o/x signals a politicized cultural identity that not all Mexican American people may adopt. For those politicized as Chicanas/os, the term takes on further complexity, nuance and continued re-fashioning. For example, the Chicano Movement of the 1960s and 1970s indexes a politics of cultural identity often centered on nationalistic, heteropatriarchal narratives, which many Chicanas directly challenged and pushed back against during the Movement and beyond. Blackwell's *Chicana Power!*, and Espinoza et al.'s *Chicana Movidas* document herstories of resistance in the Chicano Movement. The term Chicana/x evidences contemporary political interrogation of Chicana/o/x identity. It signals a gender expansive orientation and a resistance to binary logics, as it also marks a decolonial, antiracist political imperative, and a dedication to cultivating mestiza consciousness that connects to indigeneity and embraces interdisciplinary critical approaches to investigate its epistemologies. In 2017, *Cultural Dynamics* published a special issue, "Theorizing LatinX" (vol. 29, no. 3), reflecting the debates around the use of the letter X in Latinx and Chicana/x. The essays interrogate cultural identity and modes of resistance against dominations effected through language. In particular, see Rodríguez's essay "X Marks the Spot," published in this issue, for an examination of the politics of identity labels and their power to render invisible the lives of those most vulnerable. Chicana/x, in my view, is also deeply influenced by the work of Chicana Feminist scholar Ana Castillo. In *Massacre of the Dreamers: Essays on Xicanisma*, Castillo theorizes Xicanisma, as being a Chicana feminist orientation "rooted in our culture and history," and specifically tied to our indigenous heritage and spirituality, transcendent of nationalism as it is of gender binaries (22). Xicanisma, Castillo offers, is "a way to understand

ourselves in the world, [and] it may also help others who are not necessarily of Mexican background and/or women. It is yielding, never resisting to change, based on wholeness not dualisms” (226). Just as the X in Castillo’s Xicanisma holds space for indigenous heritage beyond borders, and resists the domination of gender binaries and nationalism, the X in Chicana picturebooks signals a picturebook artform created by people who share the decolonial politics and radical identity articulated by Castillo. Chicana picturebooks are cultural productions created by Chicana and Latina people whose intentional decolonial moves show up in how they draw from marginalized knowledges to raise political awareness and inspire acts of social justice. In this spirit, earlier version of my essay on picturebooks used the term Chicana. However, ongoing conversations around the use of the letter X demand critical reflection and attention to how cultural labels can effect erasures in gender and cultural specificities through totalizing terms.

⁴ I use the term “resilient resistance” as defined by Tara J. Yosso’s Community Cultural Wealth theoretical framework, which describes the following six types of cultural capital held by People of Color: aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital. Yosso argues that cultural capital offers strategies and modes for active resistance against structural/historical racism and its various intersecting forms of oppression. Yosso’s Community Cultural Wealth describes resistant capital as the “knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenge inequality” and, moreover, include the transference of these knowledges and skills to youth and/or succeeding generations (80). Her examples from across marginalized communities show how resistant capital emerges from the direct experience of navigating different forms of oppression. She describes how Black and Latina mothers impart strategies of resistance to their daughters which help them to “assert themselves as intelligent, beautiful, strong and worthy of respect to resist the barrage of [negative] social messages, [while] learning to be oppositional with their bodies, minds, and spirits in the face of race, gender and class inequality” (81). Yosso’s analysis is harmonious with the work of Chicana Feminist approaches, such as Bernal’s pedagogies of the home, in that it positions Women of Color as holders and imparters of knowledge existent (resistant) outside of normative spaces of instruction, i.e. the school-site and academe.

⁵ We owe the term “funds of knowledge” to the work of Moll et al., whose ethnographic studies on household knowledges of working-class Mexican families in Tucson, AZ in the 1990s transformed critical pedagogy and classroom instruction, especially as it relates to bilingual education. Moll et al. argue that children come to our classrooms with “ample cultural and cognitive resources,” gained from their home experiences, which in turn offer “great, potential utility for classroom instruction” (134).

⁶ Gloria Ladson-Billings’ groundbreaking work on culturally relevant pedagogy informs my use of the term and position that visual and narrative interrogation of Latina children’s literature, as presented in this essay, directly supports the work of critical library youth services, especially considering the tradition of K-12 instructional methods adopted in library youth services. Ladson-Billings describes the political intentionality of culturally relevant teaching, writing: “Not only must teachers encourage academic success and cultural competence, they must help students recognize, understand, and critique current social inequities,” which necessarily requires educators to be responsive to “inequities and their causes” (477). As critical interrogation of visual and narrative codes in Latina children’s literature often uncovers decolonial discourses and interventions, this interrogative methodology, I argue, offers tangible heuristics for implementing culturally relevant programming. See also Gay’s work on culturally responsive teaching which complements Ladson-Billings.

⁷ Dolores Delgado Bernal’s study of over thirty Chicana college students examined how strategies they learned from home, specifically those learned from their mothers, served as resources to help the students successfully navigate higher education (“Learning”). Bernal defines various types of strategies acquired—bilingualism, biculturalism, commitment to communities, spiritualities—calling these “pedagogies of the home.” Bernal includes “pedagogies of the home” as an extension of Chicana Feminist pedagogies which refer to how Mexican and Mexican American women transmit culturally specific knowledge, often inter-generationally, and in informal teaching sites within the home or community, as opposed to traditional school sites, the academe, or otherwise dominate sites of “official

knowledge.” My essay adopts Bernal’s framework as a lens that illuminates how “pedagogies of the home” emerge in the words and images of Chicana/o picturebooks. Bernal’s scholarship has profoundly impacted research and policy-making in Chicana higher education. See also, Calderón et al.; Bernal et al., *Chicana/Latina Education*; Bernal, “Using a Chicana Feminist Epistemology”; Elenes et al.

⁸ Carmen Lomas Garza uses various platforms to honor her mother, often naming her as her first art teacher. End matter in *In My Family* includes a short Q&A where Garza answers student generated questions. To the question, “Which artists inspired or influenced you?” she responds: “My mother Maria was the first artist I saw paint. I was about eight years old and she was painting the *tablas* (picture cards) for *lotería* (a Mexican game similar to bingo) with pen and ink and watercolors. I thought she was making magic” (n.p.). Amalia Mesa-Bains’s essay in the catalog for Garza’s exhibit, *Pedacito De Mi Corazón*, at the Laguna Gloria Art Museum, discusses the importance of Garza’s mother influence. Severo Perez’s film *Carmen Lomas Garza: Looking Back*, includes footage of Garza and her mother, Maria, painting *lotería* *tablas* together and describes the shared approach they take in creating these artworks.

⁹ Scholarship on the practice of indigenous healing through *curanderismo* includes Ramon Del Castillo’s mental health research into *curanderismo* practices in Western psychiatry. Castillo argues that indigenous cultural practices relied upon by local Mexican communities gain credibility when woven into the “dominant psychiatric paradigm” (40). The study resonates with Garza’s meditation on La Curandera’s capacity to successfully counsel Mary Jane’s family.

¹⁰ For a discussion on *testimonios* as a methodology in Chicana Feminist and LatCrit scholarship, see Huber and Cueva’s research in Chicanas/Latinas in higher education centers, which uses *testimonio* “as a powerful methodological approach that uncovers systemic subordination of Chicanas/Latinas” in education (392).

¹¹ Calls for scholarship on Chicana/o literature for youth are gaining momentum, with Dr. Cristina Herrera’s (California State University, Fresno) upcoming edited book, *Nerds, Goths, Geeks, and Freaks: Outsiders in Chican@/Latin@ Young Adult Literature*; Children’s Literature Association’s 2018 Conference, *Refreshing Waters*; and the new open access peer-reviewed journal, *Research on Diversity in Youth Literature*. See also, Capshaw 237-57.