

SEXUALITY EDUCATION, LATINX ZINES, AND ANZALDÚAN THEORIES OF
CONOCIMIENTO

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Master of Arts

In

Sexuality Studies

by

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San Francisco, California

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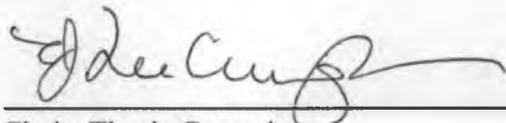
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SEXUALITY EDUCATION, LATINX ZINES, AND ANZALDÚAN THEORIES OF
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Christine Denise González
San Francisco, California
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Though an important intervention against rates of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections among young people, sexuality education routinely suppresses Latinx youths' claim to sexual subjectivity and deploys racialized, sexualized, and gendered discourses about youth sexuality as a social problem. Drawing on Gloria Anzaldúa's theory of *conocimiento*, a decolonial epistemology that recognizes the (re)generative capacity of creative processes, I analyze Latinx zines to rethink school-based sexuality education policies and practices. I apply Anzaldúan theories of the Coyolxauhqui imperative and the bridge in my analysis and find that zines support the development of sexual subjectivity as Latinxs contend with social inequalities. Zine-making has practical potential within sexuality education in its capacity to foster critical thinking about personal and social experiences of sexuality. Zines can help adult sexuality educators support youth through instruction that is committed to challenging racism, sexism, homophobia, and other social inequalities.

I certify that the Abstract is a correct representation of the content of this thesis.



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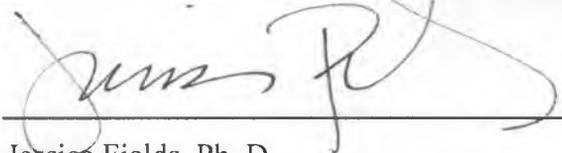
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CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

I certify that I have read *Sexuality Education, Latinx Zines, and Anzaldúan Theories of Conocimiento* by Christine Denise González, and that in my opinion this work meets the criteria for approving a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree Master of Arts in Sexuality Studies at San Francisco State University.



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“The revolution begins at home.”

—Cherríe Moraga

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Dedicated to all the people beginning revolutions at home.

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Introduction

I approached this project based on my personal and professional experiences with sexuality education. I am a Chicana, and I received school-based sexuality education. I remember my first encounters with sex ed and feeling excited and relieved to finally be able to talk about sex. At home, sexuality was silenced despite its obvious presence. I knew at an early age the liberatory potential of learning and talking about sexuality. As an adult, I became a sexual health educator in Los Angeles and taught classes with mostly Latinx students. As a student and educator, I experienced firsthand the implications of sexuality education for Latinx youth—notably, the disassociation of race from sexuality.

Throughout this study, I use a feminist of color style of writing and method of analysis. I write in the personal voice because, as Aida Hurtado states, “writing from a feminist perspective is personal...To avoid one’s perspective in clear and explicit terms is to hide” behind empirical data and theory (p. 35). Feminists and social constructionists have deconstructed the image of the “objective observer.” Notions of objectivity are masks that hide the researcher’s personal, political, and social influences. Thus as a Chicana feminist sexuality educator, my goal is to think critically about sexuality education as it affects how people come to understand Latinx sexualities and how Latinxs develop sexual subjectivity.

I use Anzaldúan theories to think about sexuality education. Gloria Anzaldúa was a Chicana feminist who wrote extensively and critically about race, class, gender,

sexuality, and health, as well as how colonial and capitalist politics affect queer women of color. Her theory of *conocimiento* guides me toward a radical imagining of what sexuality education can look like and the types of conversations that sexuality education can enable. *Conocimiento* is a decolonial, deep, spiritual, and intuitive way of knowing. *Conocimiento* is a “spiritual hunger” to understand, and encourages one to “transform perceptions of reality, and thus the conditions of life” (p. 540). In this sense, like sexuality, *conocimiento* drives the pursuit of knowledge (Gilbert, 2014). *Conocimiento* is critical of what we know and how we come to know, and thus seeks alternative ways of knowing that go beyond seemingly objective truths. “The passion to know, to deepen awareness, to perceive reality in a different way, to see and experience more of life—in short, the desire to expand consciousness” (p. 543) is the work of *conocimiento* and my work in this study. I am fueled by a desire to rethink, to *conocer*, sexuality education.

I analyze zines by Latinxs as a way of applying Anzaldúa’s theory of *conocimiento* to sexuality education. I purposely use the term Latinx with an *x* to be inclusive of the variety of genders and sexualities of people that identify with Latinidad—the history, culture, and identities that represent people of Latin American descent. The *x* in Latinx makes visible an effort to transcend the male/female sex-gender binary inherent in Spanish language as well as currently used names for people of Latinidad such as Latina/o or Latin@. Latinx is a subtle yet powerful reminder that Latinxs are also queer and trans.

The best way to begin understanding what a zine is would be to physically hold one. In a broad sense, “zines are noncommercial, nonprofessional, small-circulation magazines which their creators produce, publish, and distribute by themselves” (Duncombe, 1997/2008, pp. 10-11). Zines are countercultural, follow a proactive do-it-yourself aesthetic, are critical of convention, and offer alternative ways of being in the world (Duncombe, 1997/2008; Licona, 2012; Piepmeier, 2009). An ideal of zine culture is that anyone who would want to make a zine should be able to make one. The reality is that zines are bound by economic, time, and physical constraints. Despite these constraints, thousands of zines are in circulation each year (Duncombe, 1997/2008). Because of a wide circulation of zines, a zine culture emerges dedicated to democratic and social justice values.

The potential of zines in sexuality education can be understood through the theory of *conocimiento*. Duncombe states that zines offer alternative ways of “understanding and acting in the world that operate with different rules and upon different values than those of consumer capitalism” (1997/2008, p. 10). Capitalism, a result of colonization, is intricately tied to racial, gender, and sexual oppression. People who make zines as doing the work of *conocimiento*: they are dedicating themselves “to transforming perceptions of reality” and “the conditions of life” (Anzaldúa, 2002, p. 540); they use their “most painful experiences “to “transform them into something valuable, algo para compartir or share with others so they too may be empowered” (p. 540); and they use creative, spiritual, intuitive, alternative ways of knowing to challenge the status quo. Zines—

messy, cut-and-pasted hand-made publications—break down binaries. They take from here and take from there to construct an alternative, third-space site of inquiry (Licona, 2012). Zines link “the mental, emotional, instinctive, imaginal, spiritual, and subtle bodily awareness with social, political action” (Anzaldúa, 2002a, p. 542). Analyzing knowledge about sexuality in zines offers an opportunity to radically rethink sexuality education.

Sexuality education policies, whether abstinence only or comprehensive, routinely reinforce social inequalities (Fields, 2008). Latinas in public schools experience lessons about sexuality that privilege heterosexuality, whiteness, middle-class values, and hegemonic masculinity (García, 2012). Queer students, in and outside of sexuality education, are predominantly portrayed as victims; adolescents, especially girls, are at-risk of the “dangers of sex”; and young women receive mixed messages about sexual subjectivity and respectability (Fields, 2008; García, 2012; Gilbert, 2014; Tolman, 2002). Sexuality education needs a re-thinking—a recommitment to education meant to inquire, empower, and liberate.

I am hopeful about education. Though sexuality education policies may reinforce a specific form of heterosexuality—white, middle class—sexuality educators also exercise their agency to resist and challenge systemically-placed social inequalities (Fields, 2008). Just as important, students are also capable of questioning and challenging their sexuality education (García, 2012; Gilbert, 2014). If sexuality educators are to rethink sexuality education seriously, student learning would be one aspect of education to

take into account. So much emphasis is placed on teaching the “best” curriculum—whether that means medically accurate, feminist, safe for students and parents, or other—that student learning is neglected (Gilbert, 2014). Inquiring into how and what students actually learn can allow sexuality education to address social inequalities.

Since many of policies, debates, and lessons around sexuality education reinforce social inequalities, I focus my attention on what is possible in the ways that students can learn about sexuality and subjectivity. I turn to Latinx zines—zines produced by and about Latinxs— as a way to rethink sexuality education. Zines are sites of knowledge production, and Latinx zines—because they are about folks experiencing multiple intersecting oppressions—are capable of producing critical discourses on sexuality. My intention is to use Latinx zines as models for rethinking the structure of sexuality education. Although Latinx zines may appear relevant only to a particular ethnic group, the dynamic ways Latinx zines discuss power and sexuality are useful for all students and educators of sexuality education.

This analysis can help lead to a *conocimiento* of sexuality education. Underlying my application of *conocimiento* to sexuality education is a vision of education as an act and commitment to social justice. I follow the guidance of feminist educators such as bell hooks who “choose to educate for the practice of freedom” (hooks, 2010, p. 3). This kind of pedagogy demands the practice of critical thinking. The education in sexuality education should not be compromised out of fear about youth sexuality. I join others like Jessica Fields (2008), Lorena García (2012), and Jen Gilbert (2014), who argue sexuality

education can be a powerful space for learning by supporting youths' claim to subjectivity. In my application of *conocimiento* to sexuality education, I pay particular attention to issues affecting Latinx communities. In the following, I discuss how Latinx zinesters produce critical knowledge about sexuality using Anzaldúa's model of the Coyolxauhqui imperative, which helps explain how zines support the construction of sexual subjectivity and why narratives about sexual subjectivity are important in sexuality education. Then, I apply Anzaldúa's theory of the bridge in my analysis of a single zine made and used by a Latina educator and make a case for zine-making as a model for sexuality education practices.

Background

Sexuality education policies and practices are shaped by larger discourses about sexuality that maintain social inequities based on sexuality, race, and gender. For example, Mc Neill (2013) argues that state and federal standards for sexuality education reinforce heterosexuality as a norm, in part, by pathologizing homosexuality. Heterosexuality is promoted through an emphasis on abstinence and marriage. Homosexuality is pathologized when information about lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGTBQ) people is presented around anti-bullying campaigns and/or as stand-alone lessons, which further sets heterosexuality as normal. Jessica Fields' (2008) ethnography about sexuality education practices in North Carolina and Lorena García's ethnography about Latina youth sexual subjectivity in Chicago

demonstrate that sexuality educators regularly reinforce ideas about girls and students of color as sexually risky.

The scope of sexuality education is compromised when its primary function is to serve as an intervention for social problems—namely, rates of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among young people. The narrow focus on eliminating rates of pregnancies and STIs reinforces larger attitudes about race, gender, and sexuality. Rates of pregnancies and STIs mark the sexualities of young people, girls, people of color, and queer youth as risky (Fields, 2008). Girls are taught to protect themselves against boys, but, for fear that they will provoke boys and become pregnant, girls are not reliably taught about their own sexual subjectivity (Tolman, 2002). Statistics on teen pregnancy support a wider discourse about Latinas and Black girls as being uncontrollably sexual (Collins, 1990; García, 2012) and hyperfertile (Gutierrez, 2008). Furthermore, queer issues within sexuality education arise in the context of STIs or anti-bullying discourse that pathologizes queer youth (Demissie et al., 2013; Demissie et al., 2015). Thus, a focus on pregnancies and STIs within sexuality education discourse and practices mark the sexualities of youth, but especially girls of color, as the root of social problems.

Researchers and advocates advocate sexuality education as a way to address social inequities. Both comprehensive and abstinence-only instruction curricula abstinence, which functions to suppress, rather than encourage the development of sexual subjectivity in young people. The logic is that, if teen pregnancies and STIs are social

problems, young people must be taught to not have sex. However, some advocates argue that sexuality education can accomplish more by fostering sexual subjectivity in students. Sexual subjectivity is important for some contemporary sexuality education advocates. Sexual subjectivity, according to Lorena García (2012) is how a person forms “their sense of themselves as sexual beings” which then foregrounds “their sexual agency, which refers to the ability to make choices about one’s own body” (p. 6). By encouraging youth to think of themselves as sexual subjects, adults can encourage students to think about their embodiment, and how that embodiment is shaped by attitudes about race, class, gender, sexuality, and (dis)ability. The scope of sexuality education is expanded when educators support youths’ claims to sexuality across relational, social, cultural, and political landscapes.

Latinx youth have an ambivalent relationship to sexuality education. On one hand, they recognize the importance of comprehensive sexuality education (California Latinas for Reproductive Justice, 2010; ELAYO, 2014), particularly information about affordable birth control, and testing for pregnancy and STIs. On the other hand, Latinx youth express dissatisfaction with conventional sexuality education practices, including the assumption that Latinxs are heterosexual (García, 2012) and discourse that draws on sexual stereotypes about as (ELAYO, 2014) or that negatively frames young motherhood or sexual activity among youth (California Latinas for Reproductive Justice, 2010; ELAYO, 2014). Information about sexuality is important to Latinx youths’ personal, educational, and social justice goals. Latinx youth care about access to relevant sexuality

education as a necessary challenge to social inequalities affecting Latinx communities. Some institutionally-backed educators have begun to incorporate zines into their practices as a way to fuse social justice goals into their students' learning experiences.

Zines' political promise lies in their offering alternative social frameworks. Zines emerge as counter-cultural productions, material and ideological dissatisfactions, and responses to social contexts (Licona, 2012). As cultural products articulating alternative ways of being in the world, zines reflect the work of disidentifications, or the negotiations of a marginalized subject-person against dominant spaces that define the subject differently (Muñoz, 1999). Zinesters undergo psychic and material negotiations as they create zines that challenge some aspect of an existing cultural, social, or political order. As a creation of an alternative social order (Duncombe 1997/2008), zines reflect what Jose Esteban Muñoz (2009) referred to as "world-making": "We must strive, in the face of the here and now's totalizing rendering of reality, to think and feel a *then and there*" (p. 1). Zinesters refuse to settle down or accept the status quo. By creating zines, zinesters are ultimately creating alternative versions of what they consider to be better social orders, the *then and there* of society. The then and there is another way of being in the world that challenges existing social inequalities. Zines are blueprints of people's visions or expectations of society, and there are plenty.

Zines appear to be in tension with institutional culture due to zines' informal qualities; however, in practice, zines are very much present within academic institutions due to the presence of educators who value their capacity to promise social justice. Zines

have been a part of academia since the late 1990's, beginning with Stephen Duncombe's (1997) published research on zine politics. Feminist researchers have studied zines (see, for example, Licona, 2012; Piepmeier, 2009), and feminist educators from Women and Gender Studies to Social Work have incorporated zines into their praxis (see, for example, Creasap, 2014; Desyllas & Sinclair, 2014). Educators who use zines believe these texts offer multiple pedagogical promises, including participatory learning, critical thinking, and the linking of social thought with social action.

Methods

I analyzed six Latinx zines that discuss aspects of sexuality, such as gender, sexual identity, relationships, pleasure, reproduction, and representation. I define Latinx zines as zines produced by and for people who identify as Latinx. These six zines are not fully representative of a single Latinx population, as most are authored by Latinas or gender queer Latinxs.

I was able to access zines by purchasing them online. All zines were relatively affordable. Most were under five dollars. I located and purchased four zines analyzed in this thesis from Brown Recluse Zine Distro, an online store that lists and sells zines by people of color. Brown Recluse Zine Distro is based in Seattle, Washington. Two additional zines were purchased from *St. Sucia*, which is a zine, web store, and a collective of self-identified Latinas. *St. Sucia*, the zine, features submissions from Latinas across the country and is edited in San Antonio, Texas. The zines I analyze were

produced by Latinxs primarily from Texas, California, and New York—states with large Latinx populations.

As a Latina who reads zines, I am an member of the larger Latinx zine community. My insider status has given me the advantage of being culturally competent in Latinx zine culture, including knowing how to access, navigate, and speak the discursive language. According to Dorothy Smith (1990), “our analysis of texts finds in them only what we know how to read from them. Analysis therefore draws on our competences as members. The interpretive practices deployed in analyzing the text must be those which the text intends" (p. 121). Although I cannot make claims about intent without asking people directly, I can interpret texts by applying my knowledge of Latinxs and zine culture and identifying the discursive elements that shape the texts.

In my discursive analysis of Latinx zines, I treat zines as active texts (Smith, 1999). Dorothy Smith wrote about active texts,

... though deprived of the possibility of hearing and responding to us, [texts are] nonetheless present and active in 'speaking' to us as our reading animates them. Our reading operates the text; in our reading, it becomes active. The artifice of the text detaches it from the local historicity of living and activity, or seems to do so. But its making was work done in actual settings by one or more people and as part of a course of action... pp. 135-136.

Zines are unique texts that insist on their “local historicity of living and activity.” The physical, hand-made quality of zines is evident in the traces left behind by people who make zines, which include fingerprints, doodles, thank-you notes, photocopying marks, and other imperfections. Holding a zine makes one aware that someone, somewhere, made it with their hands with the intention that the zine would make its way to someone,

somewhere else. So, in my reading of zines, I am conscious of the fact that my reading activates the zines, and through this activation, someone is speaking to me. My analysis, thus, should not be taken as a reflection of what the speaker intended to say to readers. Instead, my analysis should be understood as a reflection of my capacity to interpret the zines based on my subjective and material experiences.

The coding method I used to analyze zines was focused-coding (Esterberg, 2002). This means that I purposefully coded for themes of sexuality such as sex, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, sexuality education, information about sexuality, reproduction, relationships, love, and pleasure. As I coded for these themes, I relied on background literature about sexuality education, Latinxs, and zines—the texts I cite throughout this manuscript—to create a narrative about Latinx zines and sexuality education. In my analysis, I applied Gloria Anzaldúa’s theories and other theories from women of color feminism to center the voices of women of color—a marginalized group in academic and sexuality education discourses.

Analysis

The Coyolxauhqui Imperative: Negotiations of Identity

Conventional sexuality education discourse, which sees sexuality education as an intervention against risks associated with sex, reduces knowledge about Latinx sexualities to rates of teen pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. In this section, I argue that Latinx zines can be seen as the work of what Gloria Anzaldúa called the

Coyolxauhqui imperative. Latinx zines construct and heal Latinx subjectivities contending with reductive representations of Latinxs in sexuality education discourse. Latinx zines, like Coyolxauhqui, work to create subjectivity and narrative after being subject to dismemberment.

Anzaldúa drew on the myth of Aztec goddess Coyolxauhqui to articulate a process of survival in the context of colonization. Dismemberment, healing, and transformation are central to understanding the story of Coyolxauhqui and what Anzaldúa called the Coyolxauhqui imperative. Coyolxauhqui was an Aztec goddess who plotted a rebellion against the threat of patriarchal violence imminent in the birth of her brother, Huitzilopochtli. Huitzilopochtli retaliated against the threat of his sister's rebellion by killing her and their 800 brothers. Coyolxauhqui was dismembered and exiled, but, through her creative and resilient power, she was able to heal her wounds and transform herself into the moon (Moraga, 1996). Representations of Coyolxauhqui show her severed body parts juxtaposed within the contours of the moon, which highlight her many parts rather than subsume them.

The capacity to create, heal, and sustain differences is what Anzaldúa refers to as the Coyolxauhqui imperative. She wrote:

The path of the artist, the creative impulse, what I call the Coyolxauhqui imperative is basically an attempt to heal the wounds. It's a search for inner completeness. Suffering is one of the motivating forces of creative impulse. Adversity calls forth your best energies and most creative solutions... All of life's adventures go into the cauldron, la oya, where all fragments, inconsistencies,

contradictions are stirred and cooked to a new integration. They undergo transformation. (Anzaldúa, Ortiz, Hernández-Avila, & Perez, 2003, p.18)

A full understanding of Latinx sexualities is compromised when sexuality education is framed as an intervention against the risks of sex, of teen pregnancies, STIs, and Latinx sexuality. Messages about feminine passivity and Latina excessiveness cut off Latina girls from a full understanding of their bodies and sexualities—a dehumanizing gesture.

St. Sucia is a series of zines edited by Isabel Ann Castro and Natasha Hernandez of San Antonio, Texas (Castro & Hernandez, 2014, December). The creation of *St. Sucia* exemplifies the Coyolxauhqui imperative. The young Latina women who compose *St. Sucia* integrate multiple and contradictory parts to heal incomplete representations of Latinas by creating a more complete narrative about Latina and Latinx feminine sexuality.

The Coyolxauhqui imperative entails a series of negotiations in the formation of identity. Because zines “respond in one way or another to dominant ideologies as experienced and understood by the zine authors” (Licona, 2012, p. 1), the people who make zines, *zinesters*, perform what José Esteban Muñoz (1999) called disidentification. Disidentification aligns with the Coyolxauhqui imperative as a psychic and productive experience entailing negotiations “between a fixed identity disposition and the socially encoded roles that are available for such subjects” (p. 6). Disidentification occurs when a marginalized subject fails to identify with the roles and meanings assigned to them in

social spaces and in this process, they create new ways of being in the world. In the case of *St. Sucia*, zine contributors and editors negotiate with gender and cultural roles assigned to Latinas to create a subjective narrative of what it is like to be a Latina. A sex-negative sexuality education in which sex, especially Latina sexuality, is seen as dangerous, suppresses sexual subjectivity (Fields, 2008; García, 2012; Tolman, 2002). Through a performance of sexual subjectivity, the zine series *St. Sucia* heals the wounds caused by a fear of Latinx sexuality—which sexuality education policy contributes to—and creates a more complete, dynamic, and engaged account of sexuality.

St. Sucia exemplifies an ambivalence about the dividing line that distinguishes good girls from bad. The name *St. Sucia* represents the racialized and sexualized embodiment of a Latina who is both a saint and a *sucia* (a term in Spanish used to shame women's sexuality, which means "dirty"). A *sucia* is expected to know and make visible her sexuality; a saint would be expected to silence her sexuality. Saint and *sucia* are two seemingly incompatible figures, as are good girls versus bad girls. However, *St. Sucia* is the result of integrating two polar figures of feminine sexuality into one entity.

The name *St. Sucia* also includes cultural markers of Latinidad. The cultural references to the Spanish language and saints reminds me of *La Virgen de Guadalupe*, who is known as the symbol of Latina sexuality (Castillo, 1996). *St. Sucia* is like *La Virgen* who embodies dualism, an ambivalence between opposites. To know *Guadalupe* as only a virgin/saint/good girl is inadequate. She is also a mother—a status incompatible with virginity. Many Latina artists and writers have reclaimed *Guadalupe*'s indigenous

roots, and consequently, her sexuality. Gloria Anzaldúa (1987/2012) wrote about *Guadalupe*'s indigenous past, which she argued was located in early Mesoamerican female deities who embodied dualistic powers of life and death. She argued that both male-driven Aztec and Spanish cultures divided the dualistic indigenous female deities and reduced them to the desexed, chaste figure of *Guadalupe*. "They divided her who had been complete," Anzaldúa stated (p. 49). The name *St. Sucia*, then, appears to reclaim Latina sexuality from the remnants of an indigenous past.

St. Sucia locates Latinas at the intersection of race and gender and speaks to the third-space Latina students occupy in sexuality education. The figure of *St. Sucia* embodies what Anzaldúa meant by living in the *borderlands* (1987/2012). To live in the borderlands means to be situated in close proximity to borders, including nation-state, cultural, racial, gender, and sexual borders. People who live close to real or symbolic borderlands and who never fully occupy either side of a border or binary relationship inhabit an ambivalent space in between. In sexuality education discourse, Latinas find themselves in a third-space between sexual and gender borderlands dividing good girls from bad girls. As girls, Latinas are expected to be good girls, but based on social attitudes about race and ethnicity, others easily categorize Latinas as hypersexual bad girls. *St. Sucia* reflects the sexual borderlands that Latinas navigate between good girls and bad girls. The knowledge produced about Latinx sexuality in the creation of *St. Sucia* goes beyond notions of Latinas as young mothers that draws from a collection of subjective experiences about Latina sexuality.

St. Sucia editors, Isabell Ann Castro and Natasha Hernandez, make conscious decisions in the curating *St. Sucia*, whose physical characteristics contribute to the creation of a narrative about Latina sexuality. The physical and visual qualities of zines help constitute their meaning (Piepmeier, 2008). On the cover of each issue of *St. Sucia* is the zine's slogan which reads, "St. Sucia: A zine exposing what it is to be a *mujer* [Latina woman] and dating in contemporary society." Each issue of *St. Sucia* captures a specific theme that reveals "what it is to be a *mujer*."

The first issue of *St. Sucia* is called *La Primera* [the first] (Castro & Hernandez, 2014, December). *La Primera* includes a sturdy cover with rainbow stitching along the spine, which, like Coyolxauhqui, symbolizes different narratives about feminine Latinidad being mended and pieced together. The stitching also makes reference to the many Latinas mothers, immigrants, and older women who work as seamstresses for long hours at low wages, or, like some of the women in my family, Latinas who create or mend clothes for their families, friends, or communities. The colorful stitching on *La Primera* says something positive about Latina bodies: they are creative, strong, and resilient. This message challenges shame that frequently accompanies Latina bodies.

The cover artwork provokes. Editor Isabell Castro's art is like an altar to the secrets, mysteries, and knowledge of the feminine, specifically the *mujer*: flowers in full-bloom and red lipstick form the base around a box and together emanate a rays of light, similar to the aura in traditional representations of the virgin saint, *La Virgen de Guadalupe* (Hurtado, 2003). However, in place of the virgin is a box with a closed lid.

The side of the box that faces the reader features a single black star layered over a red rectangle on a white surface. The color red evokes the Republican red-state status of Texas, where most of the entries in the issue are written. The star invokes the Texas nickname “Lone Star State” and the single star on the red, white, and blue suggests the Texas state flag. In this issue, Latina contributors’ discussions of reproductive rights, sex, and love challenge Texas’ heteronormative abstinence until marriage sexuality education (Texas Health and Safety Code, 2015), as well as the declining number of abortion clinics, which significantly affects poor women of color in Texas.

A brown banner floats underneath the altar on the cover of *La Primera* and reads “St. Sucia.” Underneath is the zine’s slogan, “A zine exposing what it is to be a mujer,” which exposure brings to mind the mythical story of Pandora’s Box. This, the cover artwork of *St. Sucia: La Primera* is provocative in that it speaks to a prohibition and a desire to know Latina sexuality. Reading *La Primera* can be thought of as symbolic of entering the forbidden. What starts on the cover as a closed box storing what remains to be exposed about Latinas, as the cover slogan promises, ends with a comic on the back cover that showcases objects in a Latina’s sexual preparedness kit: lemon and cucumber sports drink to stay hydrated, a variety pack of condoms “for...variety,” lubricant, cleaning cloth, sanitizer, toothbrush and toothpaste, clean underwear, and a “sucia bag: fully loaded for good times & the day after.” The creation of St. Sucia, including its physical and visual aspects, are part of a construction of dynamic understanding of Latina sexual subjectivity.

Entries in *St. Sucia* are the result of individual negotiations of Latina sexual subjectivity. Sexual subjectivity is important in sexuality education because the knowledge and pleasure of being in a body is shaped by social inequalities (Fields, 2008). Therein lies the potential: by fostering thinking about sexual subjectivity, sexuality education can encourage youth to question how society shapes their claim to subjectivity. Zines are central to this effort.

An entry in *St. Sucia: Issue III: La Dama* (Castro & Hernandez, Summer 2015) reflects opportunities for thinking made possible by a recognition of sexual subjectivity. “Paleta or Orange” is an erotically-charged poem written by someone under the pseudonym La Hocicono. *Hocicono* is a Spanish-language word meaning big- or loud-mouthed woman and is typically used to shame women from speaking. In “Paleta or Orange,” a young woman speaks from first-person voice and thinks about sexual moments from her childhood and adolescence and how her sexuality is shaped by social attitudes about girls and queerness. La Hocicono writes from Texas—a state whose sexuality education policy emphasizes abstinence until marriage and requires educators to “state that homosexual conduct is not an acceptable lifestyle and is a criminal offense” (Texas Health and Safety Code, 2015).

“Paleta or Orange” traces a young woman’s fluid sexuality. She recalls important moments in her sexual life which include: being called a “4 year old tramp” for imitating women on television by sitting too close to a boy and enjoying it; being known as “that one little girl who had 3 boyfriends...the 5 year old floozy” in kindergarden; and kissing

a girl in third grade who “slap-wiped it off, angrily turned and said ‘I ain’t gay!’”(La Hocicon, 2015). La Hocicon shows how the narrator’s sexual subjectivity is bound to social perceptions about girls and sexuality. Through others, the narrator becomes a “4 year old tramp,” “that one girl,” and “the 5 year old floozy” for expressing sexuality. The young woman’s claim to sexuality is compromised by social attitudes that shame girls’ sexuality through labels such as bad, other, tramp, and floozy. Hostility against homosexuality also shapes the narrator’s sexual subjectivity. A kiss placed on another girl’s body elicits an angry refusal to be considered gay: “I ain’t gay!” And these difficult personal experiences provide opportunities to think about the shaming of girls’ sexuality and homophobia.

The narrator confidently claims her sexuality, refusing to bow to negative attitudes towards young girls’ sexuality and same-sex affection. She states there are “perks” of being “the 5 year old floozy,” notably that she is able to transcend class boundaries. She originally has a small fleece blanket but after having boyfriends who share with her, she is able to gain more material resources. Near the end of the poem, at fifteen years old, the narrator takes pleasure in eating and eroticizing an orange and *paleta* (Mexican popsicle). La Hocicon describes the paleta and orange erotically by applying feminine- and masculine-like traits in their descriptions. She writes about eating a chocolate paleta (popsicle) as a sexual act: “I sit on the concrete back steps of our house/ and make love to a chocolate paleta/ I lick it in the sun/ The mota and heat and age make it orgasmic/ I am consumed by the ice cream/ and the feel of my tongue/ On its

rough, then melted smooth texture.” La Hociconna writes about more than just a pleasurable experience eating a paleta. Through the use of conventionally masculine characteristics, such as the phallic shape of a paleta and roughness, terms like licking and making love, and the temporal description of rough to melted smooth, ideas about oral sex can emerge. There is also a racial dimension in that the paleta is chocolate-flavored, invoking brownness. Stories about oral sex in conventional sexuality education discourse tend to lead to discussions about STIs. This, however, is a different story. The thing to note here is that the narrator finds it orgasmic and consuming to be in her body, the feel of her tongue. This story of oral sex is different because it is about female pleasure, bodily awareness, and sexual subjectivity. The important message to take from this narrative is that it is being told from the point of view of a young girl who expresses pleasure being in her body.

La Hociconna also eroticizes eating an orange, which can be read as a queer act. She writes, “But there were days, I sat in the same spot/ And felt all the bumpy hills/ Wet sweet of a half chewed whole orange/ My face sticky, tongue tired/ Wondering what it all meant.” In the same place where the feminine narrator playfully and erotically eats a paleta, she also enjoys eating a feminized fruit. She describes feeling the curvatures of the orange in “all the bumpy hills.” The curves and roundness of an orange are like common descriptors of women’s bodies as round and curvy. Her descriptions of the taste and feel of the orange as wet and sweet can also be associated with social descriptors of women’s bodies. But by emphasizing the wetness and stickiness of the orange, La Hociconna drives

the sexual element to women's sexual organs. In her self-description, the narrator describes herself as an active agent feeling the orange, her face sticky and her tongue tired from eating the orange. Through these different elements, La Hociconna queers the act of eating an orange.

In "Paleta or Orange" the narrator asks an important question that has relevance for sexuality education practices, *What does it all mean?* The narrator "wonders what it all meant" to be called a tramp at 4 years old, for a girl to refuse proximity to queerness, and for a girl to enjoy multiple erotic pleasures. Ultimately, these questions lead to a consideration of sexuality and society. In other words, what it all means depends on a person's relationship to socially-defined ways of making sense of the world.

Sexuality education policies and practices—typically reflecting dominant or hegemonic ways of making sense of the world— promote heterosexuality through emphases on abstinence and marriage. Even policies that are designed to be inclusive of queer students, in practice, normalize heterosexuality and pathologize queerness through stand-alone lessons (McNeill, 2013; Snapp et al., 2015). The queer figure in sexuality education discourse is distinguished from normalized heterosexuality as a disfigured *other* and portrayed as a wounded figure, a victim of bullying. Under these discursive practices, queer Latinxs represent sexual, gender, and racialized disfigurement, like Coyolxauhqui.

The Coyolxauhqui imperative is evident throughout the zine series *Transmission*, written by Daniel, from California. Visually, a sense of dismemberment, like representations of Coyolxauhqui, runs through *Transmission* (n.d.) and *Transmission: Part Two* (n.d.). Original and appropriated images of body parts including torsos, heads, and “mutilated tongues,” are positioned onto the pages of both zines. The body parts that are seen throughout the zines are normative (thin) and non-normative (trans, sexually ambiguous, fat) (Figure 1). Interestingly, of the few visual representations of whole bodies in the *Transmission* zine series, the first is a famous image by the Chicana artist Yolanda Lopez entitled “Portrait of the Artist as *La Virgen de Guadalupe*” (p. 2). Above the image, and the first text of the body of the zine, is a quote by Gloria Anzaldúa which reads, “Though we tremble before uncertain futures, may we meet illness, death, and adversity with strength. May we dance in the face of our fears” (Figure 2). The *Transmission* zine series is like Coyolxauhqui in that both symbolically reflect themes of dismemberment, trauma, and the ability to heal the severed self through fearless creative transformation. *Transmission* is distinctly about the strength and resiliency of queer and trans people of color as they navigate social spaces in which heterosexuality and whiteness are privileged.

Through the *Transmission* zine series, Daniel responds to socially encoded roles available for queer Latinxs. As a queer, trans, non-binary, Chicax, Daniel’s intersectional identity clashes with normalized white heterosexuality, which produces the pathologization of queerness and non-whiteness. According to Daniel, who uses



Figure 1. "...bodies...damaged by colonization"—from *Transmission*.

“Though we tremble before uncertain futures, may we meet illness, death, and adversity with strength. May we dance in the face of our fears”- Gloria Anzaldúa



Portrait of the Artist as the Virgin of Guadalupe, Yolanda M. Lopez

2

Figure 2. “May we dance in the face of our fears”—from *Transmission*.

they/their pronouns, zine-making is an act of healing and survival in the context of interlocking systems of racial, gender, and sexual oppression. In *Transmission*, they write,

This zine is for all the souls and the hearts capsulated in the bodies that have been damaged by colonization and oppressive structures used to uphold capitalism. Whether you're a womxn, or you're queer, of color, working class, disabled, trans, etc. this is for you...

I see you struggling, trying to be seen, validated, and reaffirmed. I see you struggling to survive. I am too. I'm here with you. Let's climb together. The revolution is in our hands. (p. 3)

The language Daniel uses, such as “damaged” and “struggling to survive,” parallels the dismemberment and regenerative negotiations Coyolxauhqui represents. The Coyolxauhqui imperative is down to heart and soul, where people find the capacity to challenge the pathologization of feminine, queer, and of color embodiment.

There are opportunities for sexuality education policies and practices to address the racial, gender, and sexual inequalities queer and trans Latinx youth encounter. Sexuality education policies and practices, even those that are meant to be inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans (LGBT) and queer youth such as California's FAIR Education Act, which requires schools to adopt LGBT-inclusive curricula (Snapp et al., 2015), can reproduce representations of LGBT and queer people as pathological. Abstinence until marriage policies and stand-alone lessons about queer or trans people implicitly normalize heterosexuality and mark gender nonconforming youth as other. The

Transmission series reflects Daniel's queer, trans, of color subjective identity in negotiation with the pathologization of LGBT, queer, and trans Latinx youth.

A section in *Transmission: Part Two*, entitled "Self Love as a QTPOC," reflects Daniel's confrontation with socially-encoded roles available to queer and trans people of color. Specifically, the section challenges the myopic casting and internalization of queer people of color as abnormal. Queer Latinxs are pathologized in various ways, including the marginalization of people of color in discourses that privilege white queerness, the portrayal of Latinxs as hypersexual, and the depiction of queerness as deviant from assumed naturalness of heterosexuality. Through self-love, Latinx and other racially-othered groups resist the effects of privileged whiteness and heterosexuality.

"Self Love as a QTPOC" reflects the emotional labor of fostering queer Latinx sexual subjectivity in the context of social inequalities. In the preceding section, Daniel writes,

Loving ourselves is a revolutionary practice. When you live in a society that basically tells you (us) that we shouldn't exist... They tell us that our bodies aren't beautiful, they're too bruised up too cut up, too broken to be worthy of anything other than violence. (8)

In the first issue of *Transmission*, Daniel identifies as a queer Chicax. In *Part Two*, Daniel is less explicit about a Latinx identity and more vocal about identifying as and sharing solidarity with queer people of color. Daniel's Latinx ethnic identity still remains important in *Part Two*, which can be seen in an art piece captioned "My Gender, My Sexuality, should not have to separate me from My People, Mi Cultura" (p. 7) (Figure 3).

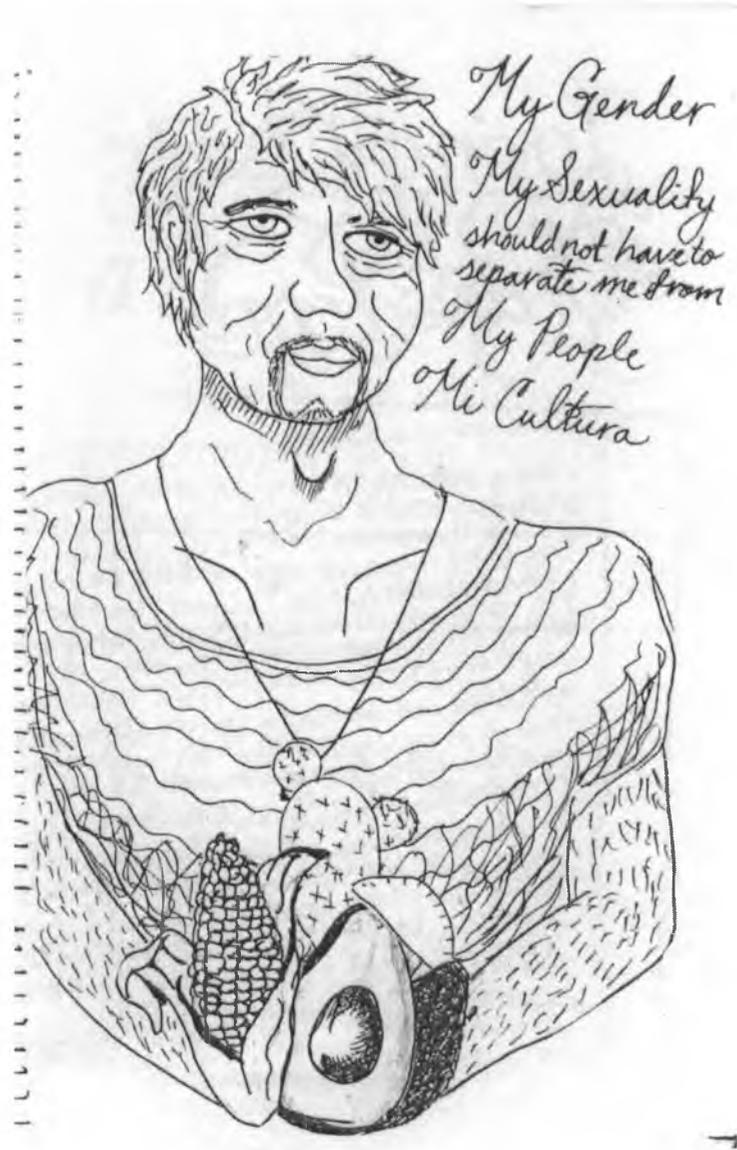


Figure 3. “My Gender, My Sexuality...My People, Mi Cultura”—from *Transmission:*

Part Two.

The caption goes back to Coyolxauhqui's theme of dismemberment, reflecting a queer Latinx experience of social pressures to separate their queer identity from their racial and ethnic identities. As a queer Chicana, Daniel is conscious of the multiple ways society attempts to separate racial, ethnic, sexual, and gender communities. Self-love as a queer person of color can thus be an alternative mode of survival, a challenge to discourses which pathologize queer people of color, and a way to resist social pressures to separate race from sexuality.

"Self Love as a QTPOC" includes four recommendations followed by three pages of visual examples for how to foster self-love as a queer and/or trans person of color. Number three reads: "Write all the ugly things people have said about you (or us) in pretty fonts. This helps me reclaim these hurtful words" (p. 9). In order to recover from "all the ugly things people say" about QTPOC, QTPOC must engage with those hurtful words in order to transform their meaning and reclaim them. Daniel draws an example of what it looks like to re-write and re-articulate words that are traditionally used to hurt queer people of color (p. 10) (Figure 4). The majority of the page is full of words or phrases typically associated with homophobic speech, which Daniel calls the "ugly things people say" and words Daniel is attempting to reclaim or transform so that queer people of color can resist society's heteronormativity. Some of the words drawn in "pretty fonts" are: tranny, faggot, queer, gay bitch, *maricon*, *marimacha*, and *tortillera*. *Maricon*, a feminized term for *maricón*, which means dyke in Spanish, is drawn in cursive with a heart dotting its "i;" letters composing the words *tortillera*, which literally means tortilla

maker, but is also a slang term for lesbian, are drawn like clouds, adding a sense of softness to the meanings; and *marimacha*, a feminine play on *macho* that means butch, is written in cursive hand-writing with other traditionally homophobic words in English and Spanish. The visual manifestations of these words are in tension with their traditional, “ugly,” meaning. The words are written with the intent to look “pretty,” which conventionally is understood as a feminine trait for the purpose of pleasing a male gaze. However, because these distinctly homophobic words are being reworked through “pretty” visuals, they are not meant to be pleasing to a white or Latinx heterosexual male gaze. Reclaiming these words is meant to interrupt homophobia in English-speaking or Spanish-speaking social spaces and as a way for individuals and society to heal from homophobia.

Self-love requires zinesters to name their racial, ethnic, and sexual subjectivity. Daniel writes that queer people of color can transform transphobic and homophobic words by reclaiming them. Naming is a politicized action that entails determining and normalizing inclusions and exclusions (Dimpal & Turner, 2012). To reclaim homophobic names is to make a political statement about the negotiations queer people undergo in the face of racial, gender, and sexual oppression. Reclaiming homophobic words also is meant to destabilize the normalization of heterosexuality or white homosexuality.

A challenge to the notion of reclaiming words takes place in the zine *Pata* by Rachel Hernandez (2014) from New York City. Hernandez identifies as a “mainland-

born-Puerto-Rican-New-York-Transplant-Dyke” (p. 1). In *Pata*, she problematizes the term “queer”:

I couldn't bring myself to say it until I was 20 or 21, and I did it more out of necessity than desire. The common refrain I heard was that it was “reclaimed” now, so it wasn't a slur anymore. But it sure as hell functioned as a slur in the town where I grew up...and who reclaimed it anyway? (p. 4)

Hernandez asks an important question reminiscent to what Joireman (2004) asked, “Who is it who decides what group a person is a member of, or who is included and excluded from a group? Is it the individuals themselves or someone else?” (p. 2). This question is important to consider in sexuality education since schools are attempting to become more inclusive of queer people (Demissie et al., 2013; Demissie et al., 2015). As sexuality educators reclaim queerness, what does this mean for gender and sexual nonconforming Latinxs as they navigate multiple social spaces, including families and neighborhoods?

Hernandez recognizes that words have different meaning in different social settings. Where queer may be a reclaimed term in certain spaces which people can take on as a name, queer can also continue to function as a slur in other spaces. She describes “the town where [she] grew up,” which is reminiscent of what Gloria Anzaldúa wrote, quoting a student, “I thought homophobia meant fear of going home” (1987/2007, p. 42). Saying more, she wrote: “...I too am afraid of going home. Though I'll defend my race and culture when they are attacked by non-*mexicanos*, *conozco el malestar de mi cultura*. I abhor some of my culture's ways” including the devaluation of women and homophobia (p. 43). Similar to Daniel, Rachel Hernandez, and other Latinx zinesters, Anzaldúa

believed it was important to have the freedom to “chisel [your] own face,” (p. 44) to have agency in claiming subjectivity as well as shaping society’s perceptions of sex, race, and gender.

Zines like *St. Lucia* and *Transmission* reflect the capacity of zines to support critical thinking about sexuality as Latinx subjects negotiate their racial, ethnic, sexual, and gender identities against multiple social inequalities. Zines reflect the work of the Coyolxauhqui imperative, which refers to the negotiations marginalized subjects undergo as a mode of survival. Coyolxauhqui is ultimately the story of a girl who knows herself as a girl in the context of a social order privileging masculinity. By knowing these things, Coyolxauhqui is able to critique, resist, and survive the gendered inequalities that she experiences as a girl. Coyolxauhqui is a helpful model for sexuality education practices aimed at equipping youth with the tools to think of themselves as sexual beings and the right to claim themselves as sexual subjects. By legitimating youths’ claim to sexual subjectivity, adults are able to support youth in their challenge to sexism, racism, and homophobia. Zine-making can be a way for students to visualize their constructions of sexual subjectivity as they confront social inequalities.

Zines and Sexuality Education: Making Bridges, Thinking Critically

Girl Power!: Lessons for Feminist Educators (2015) is an informational and pedagogical zine made and distributed by Brenda Montaña, from California. The first half of *Girl Power!* is a zine in the style of a syllabus that she distributes to her 4th-grade

class of girls in San Francisco to explore gender, identity, and social justice issues. The second half of *Girl Power!* is a zine with lesson plans for educators. Montaña writes that she included lesson plans because she recognized similarities between making a zine and making a lesson plan. She writes,

Lesson plans are annoying and seem to be written for everyone other than me. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that as educators we'd never sleep, eat, or do anything other than work if we couldn't Google search curriculum that we could copy, paste and tweek into our own lesson plans. (p. 10)

This description fits in with previous descriptors of zines as alternative frameworks (Duncombe, 1997/2008; Licona, 2012) and aligns with Gloria Anzaldúa's theory of the Coyolxauhqui imperative (2002a; Anzaldúa et al., 2003), a series of negotiations (deconstructions and reconstructions, or copying, pasting and tweaking) that marginalized subjects undergo as strategies for survival in the face of social demands. In this case, she has created a zine as an alternative lesson plan that she can be satisfied by as a Latinx and feminist educator. She also recognizes that in order for dissatisfied educators to do something "other than work" at creating lesson plans from scratch, the art of editing existing templates to fit their pedagogical goals is a mode of survival.

Montaña distributes *Girl Power!* "to encourage other educators/peoples to step out of the standardized box and introduce the next generations as early as possible to thoughts of feminism, of patriarchy, of gender equality, body shaming, of community, trust, power and love" (p. 10). Montaña challenges adults and educators to foster critical

discussions in young people. The “standardized box” may represent adult fears about youth thinking—about feminism, society, and inequalities. She encourages adults to step out of that fear, which reflects trust in their ability to cope with the risks adults associate with youth agency. *Girl Power!* imagines a bridge or alliance between youth and adults. This type of bridge work is necessary for sexuality education to foster critical thinking among students.

The bridge is a recurring symbol in the writings of Gloria Anzaldúa. Bridges symbolize the work of women of color consciousness: forming alliances, sustaining collective action, and recognizing differences in pursuit of social transformation. In *This Bridge We Call Home* (2002b), Anzaldúa reminds readers that one need not be a woman or of color to possess a women of color consciousness. Women of color consciousness is about creating and sustaining alliances between people as a way to work together towards a common goal of radical liberation. In Toni Cade Bambara’s Foreword to the first edition of *This Bridge Called My Back* (1981), she writes, “We have got to know each other better and teach each other our ways, our views, if we’re to remove the scales and get the work done...*This Bridge* can get us there. Can coax us into the habit of listening to each other and learning each other’s ways of seeing and being” (p. xxxi). Bridge-making requires one to cross over, meet, and learn about the person on the other side of the bridge. The bridge symbolizes a blueprint of a more equitable and just social order between people across differences. The racial, gender, and sexual divisions that persist in feminism are not inevitable.

As a model for education, bridge work offers the possibility of critical thinking to the task of liberation. Sexuality education can accomplish critical thinking among youth through a commitment to bridge work. Educators can insist their students to work together across racial, gender, and sexual differences to the task of critiquing how social inequalities affect their experiences of sexuality. Furthermore, as exemplified in *Girl Power!*, educators can go further by committing themselves to questioning the borders between youths and adults. A bridge between youths and adults is critical to a radical reworking of sexuality education.

Although a major concern of mine as a Latina sexuality educator and student is to improve sexuality education for Latinx students, I also wish to step back and account for all sexuality education students. In general, sexuality education policies and practices deny youths' claim to sexual subjectivity (Fields, 2008; García, 2012; Gilbert, 2014). All youth are affected by a culture which distinguishes adults from youth by denying youth their sexual subjectivity, especially when sexuality is considered a natural, human quality. The zines I have analyzed both envision and silence young people as sexual agents. Take for example a photograph of a young girl holding a birth control compact and bringing a pill close to her mouth (Garza, April 2015) or a photograph of a young girl attending a Women's Day March with her mother (Tierra, April 2015). Although these examples visualize youth sexuality, they are images submitted by adults to adult zine editors. The point of view is framed by adults.

Anzaldúa's bridge theory challenges adults to form bridges between themselves and youth, to travel across, meet youth on the other side of the bridge, and to see society from youths' point of view. Brenda Montaña attempts to use the student-made zine as a connection between youths and society. For example, she asks her students to create a collective zine as a final course project ("It will represent your ideas, opinion, art, and own words," p. 7). She writes that the purpose of making and showcasing a zine is "to connect everything we did with our loved ones. Each one teach one para siempre [forever]" (p. 18). The zine that students create is ultimately a bridge that adults can travel through to meet youths on their terms.

María Lugones articulates a map for this travel in her theory of loving perception (Lugones, 1987). Those who lovingly perceive see others as equals while recognizing that in doing so, they are challenging systematic inequalities. Traveling is the capacity to enact loving perception, to enter into another's perception of being in the world for the sake of breaking from individualistic, competitive, hierarchal perceptions. Bridge work in sexuality education requires adults to be willing to move across the bridge, to let go of their perception as adults and see things from the eyes of youth. The metaphors of travel and bridge have distinct meanings. To travel means to move from one point to another, and travel also connotes change. Bridges form links and connections between two different points, and they also make it easier to travel from one point to another. Travel helps us achieve the radical potential of bridges. After all, what is the point of building alliances with others if we are not willing to cross the bridge and see the world from

another point of view? Ultimately, our alliances are about working together to transform social inequalities. Thus, if we want social change, adults have to be willing to travel from one point to another. In sexuality education, that means adults have to let go of their arrogant perception of youth as young, naïve, underdeveloped risky populations. By letting go of a hierarchal perception, adults are capable of working with youth to question and transform unequal social relations. This kind of bridge work, or alliance between youths and adults can take sexuality education beyond “information, affirmation, or prohibition” (Gilbert, 2014, p. 28) to a space where youths and adults can challenge “the sexism, racism, classism, and heterosexism inside and outside the classroom” (Fields, 2008, p. 36).

Montaño attempts to use *Girl Power!* as an exploratory experience that demands students and educators to resist hierarchal perceptions in order to work together to challenge social inequalities. In “About Girl Power!,” a section of the syllabus-style zine she distributes to her students, she details the curriculum’s goals. She writes,

Girl Power! is going to be a place where we can figure out what and how you want to be without these external pressures. We are going to discover WHAT is pressuring us to be a certain way...Girl Power! continues a legacy of super awesome wombyn...from the past who have challenged the unfair treatment of wombyn and created new ways of thinking and being for wombyn of the future. Who do you want to be? Let’s find out! (p. 4)

Her language here reflects both care and promise. She sounds cautious about appearing to know youths’ subjective experiences. By being open to discovery, she is willing to resist any tendency to assume that as an adult woman, she knows what young girls want, feel,

or experience. The promise that is being communicated is a legacy of radical work by women in the past who have challenged social inequalities. The promise is that together, Montaña and her students can continue to improve social conditions for themselves and others.

Montaña encourages and validates her students' subjectivities by having them work on a collective zine throughout the seven-week course of *Girl Power!* Each week she uses a different lesson plan to explore topics such as friendship, gender, representation, and equality and has questions prepared in advance that may instigate critical thinking as they work on their zine. As an educator, her responsibility is to equip her students with the tools to think critically. She does this by having interactive activities and pressing her students to think about assumptions. For example, Montaña has her students look at a comic book and then asks them questions such as, "Do you agree with the images in this comic book? Which images seem true? Can you think of exceptions when the images aren't true? How would you change the comic book to make it reflect gender equality?" (p. 13); or her students are shown a video about a tomboy and are then asked, "Why does it matter whether someone is a boy or a girl? Do you feel like you have to be one thing only? How do you sometimes step out of your confined gender?" (p. 14). In doing these things, Montaña attempts to foster their sense of being in their bodies and to question social norms in the process.

Girl Power!, like the rest of the zines in my analysis, is written from an adult point of view. Brenda Montaña states that she felt uncomfortable distributing and selling

the student-made zine, *Our Voices*. Distributing *Our Voices* is up to the students who put in work to make the zine. Nonetheless, she gives *Girl Power!* readers a glimpse into what *Our Voices* might look like. On the back cover of *Girl Power!* is artwork which appears to be done by some of Montañó's students. Photocopied on the back cover are two hearts with writing inscribed inside of the hearts. The writing is done with a marker and the handwriting looks like the work of young people. Each heart has a version of the statement "Girl Power is..." One heart partially reads, "Girl Power to me is that I can tell the Girls in Girl Power like everything..." On top of this heart, and the reason why the text is partially readable, is because a second heart is layered over the bottom portion of the heart. The second heart reads, "Girl Power is sweet as a rose and powerful like a fireball. Girl Power rocks." It is not explicit whether these were done by Montañó's students or whether they were included in *Our Voices*. But the nature of the statements that complete "Girl Power is..." and the fact that the handwriting appears to have been done in a classroom are implicit clues that these were done by students. By including these images on the back cover, Montañó appears to be showing what her students were capable of creating. These two examples suggest that some of her students saw Girl Power as a space to identify as a girl, to talk openly about gender-specific issues, and as a space for girls' empowerment. In other words, the back cover hints at the link between sexual subjectivity and empowerment.

By validating and fostering their subjective experiences, Montaña sees that her students are invested in challenging social inequalities. In the process of making a zine, her students are engaged in thinking and she notes their progress. She states,

Don't get me wrong, it's not as though they started acting right 100% of the time. They still talk back, roll eyes and ignore me when they feel like it; but they also are quicker to apologize, more likely to tell me their family chisme [gossip]...and most importantly, are quick to check the boys when they act out on their male privilege and quick to check themselves when self-consciousness tries to strangle their freedom of expression. (1)

Her students' ability to suspend sexism or disrespect among themselves and others obscures the fact that they sometimes resist adult-defined notions of good behavior. The ability to demand an end to social inequalities is more significant and productive than "acting right 100% of the time." It is this kind of learning environment that I envision for sexuality education: a space where adults let go of hierarchal perceptions of youths, where adolescents are validated and encouraged to use their subjective experiences to think critically, and where adults and youths work together to challenge the unequal social conditions compromising our experiences of sexuality.

Conclusion

Gloria Anzaldúa's theory of *conocimiento* pushes me to claim Latinx zines as a way to rethink sexuality education and to seek new ways of knowing as a way to improve social conditions. *Conocimiento* captures this essence as a decolonial epistemology.

Conocimiento asks us to treat knowledge as something personal, spiritual, complex, creative, and powerful. As a sexuality educator, I hold sexuality education in high esteem and imagine it a space where *conocimiento*—critical, personal, and social knowledge—can happen.

With *conocimiento* in mind, I approached this project knowing the complicated relationship between Latinx students and sexuality education. On the one hand, the theme of teen pregnancy in sexuality education discourse, and a racialized discourse about sexuality, mark young Latina and Black women as social problems. In this instance, sexuality education discourse maintains a long-standing social stereotype about Latinxs as hypersexual. On the other hand, Latinx students see an opportunity to interrupt social inequalities through sexuality education, even when they experience inequalities in sexuality education practices. I wanted this project to lead to improvements in sexuality education as a space of critical thinking about sexuality.

Conocimiento asks us to look at alternative ways of knowing the world. For me, that alternative was in zine culture and its narrative accounts of Latinx sexual subjectivity and their experiences of social inequalities. The Coyolxauhqui imperative describes the process of negotiations marginalized and oppressed subjects deploy as a mode of survival; Latinx zines depict one instance of this work of constructing subjectivity in the face of social inequalities.

Brenda Montaña's adoption of *Girl Power!* in her classroom practices gives us a better understanding of the applicability of zines in sexuality education practices. This Anzaldúan bridge work forges alliances and allows educators and students to see things from a different point of view and move toward the transformation of social relations. Through her classroom practices a bridge emerges between youths and adults; the classroom is transformed. Students recognize their gendered subjectivities; a zine documents and teaches others what it's like to be a Latina girl in contemporary society; and Montaña fosters critical thinking among her students. Sexuality educators should take note. By fostering sexual subjectivity in youths, adults can equip youth with the tools to identify and challenge social inequalities that compromise their claim to sexuality.

As a sexuality educator, I would incorporate zines into my classroom practices. Since sexuality is a broad topic, I would have zines that focus on different aspects of sexuality available as resources for students. Like Montaña, I would have students make a zine as a final project. By creating their own zine, students can demonstrate how their embodiment of sexuality is shaped by various and competing social attitudes. If time is a factor, students can work on making a collective zine where each student would contribute a page in the zine. This also helps foster a sense of community and reduces competition.

Zines can help move sexuality educators away from "information, affirmation, or prohibition" (Gilbert, 2014, p. 28). For those of us who desire the promise of education, social empowerment and liberation, sexuality education should be no different. We must

envision a utopia in order to transform the reality of sexuality education. I take on what Jose Esteban Muñoz (2009) called world-making: mapping out a utopian framework of social relations which we can use to think differently about the present. My utopian vision of sexuality education entails a commitment to end racism, sexism, homophobia, and to treat youths as agentic beings capable of improving society.

As a *conocimiento* of sexuality education, zines show us that Latinxs create critical discussions of sexuality using their subjective experiences of social inequalities. To take us beyond notions of risk to notions of social justice, sexuality education needs to foster a sense of sexual subjectivity among students. By fostering a sense of self among adolescents, youths view themselves as having a personal stake in challenging social inequalities which impede on their sense of self. Zines are just one way of fostering this kind of critical subjective thinking. A *conocimiento* of sexuality education requires adults to welcome youths as participants in a larger social movement to transform sexuality education into a site of sexual, gender, and racial liberation.

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