

Dismantling the Imperialist Discourse Shadowing Mexican Immigrant Children

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The purpose of this paper is to dismantle the political, public, and private discourse that has led to a dehumanization of immigrants, specifically children of immigrants. Local examples will focus mainly on the state of Arizona and the Sonoran Desert and the plight of individuals crossing the border of Mexico into the Southwestern United States. The intention is to tear down fortifications with regard to the language used when discussing borders in order to create a new space/geography that is fluid and open to movement where borders are no longer necessary and where difference is welcomed as well as valued. How can I speak *sobre la inmigración*? *Yo*, the privileged academic who has not faced such challenges? *Porque yo soy mexicana y Americana*, the second generation of both Mexican and Irish immigrants.

Utilizing a bricolage of methodologies including Third World feminist theories, critical theory, and postcolonial methods, this paper will attempt to dismantle the imperialist discourse that currently overshadows Mexican immigrant children. The construct of immigration is not feminist in that it does not dismantle traditional ways of thinking with regard to gender and family (Goodman, 2004). However, feminist theories and particularly Third World feminist theories provide strength with

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International Journal of Educational Policy, Research, & Practice: Reconceptualizing Childhood Studies
Volume 7, 2006. ISSN 1528-3534. Copyright 2006 by Caddo Gap Press. All rights reserved.

regard to immigration research because both recognize multiple perspectives. A critical perspective is relevant in that one must address the power issues in the aforementioned methodologies and in order to recognize one's own limitations, call attention to them as frequently as possible.

Immigration cannot be separated from globalization and treated as if it were a singular concept unencumbered by outside influences. Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, immigration discussions on city, state, and national levels have increased exponentially. The creation of the Department of Homeland Security by the Bush administration has both heightened awareness and created fear of immigrants. Local, as well as national, political campaigns are driven by a myriad of global influences and in Arizona specifically by discussions of both legal and illegal immigration. The discourse that envelops this topic has led to the militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border and the criminalization of the migrants passing through this region.

Creating Borders: Producing the Power to Limit

Fluidity of human movement is common throughout the world, yet the Western world (specifically the dominant culture of the United States) has ascribed negative connotations to the terms immigrant and migrant when referencing the movement of people of color into the United States. When westerners pass between regions and relocate we say they are moving or traveling. However, as soon as the discussion changes from the westerner to the person of color the mover is seen as a migrant or immigrant. *Aquí esta el problema*, for from within this realm, issues related to power and class begin to arise clouding interpretations and judgments related to relocation.

The whole discourse of mobility is in and of itself an axis of power. The imposition of human reproductive theories concerned with watering down or the transference of impurities serve imperialist agendas while reinscribing and legitimating the 'need' to defend against those on the outside of the border. This outside is thus constituted as backward and even dangerous, while the insiders (those who create the borders) are assumed to be safe, legitimate, the 'ideal.' Borders are created to "define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them" (Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 25). Borderlands are spaces created by the emotions residing within that created fear of unnatural boundaries. However, it is always people of color who are placed in those borderlands *quien pertenece al otro lado* (Anzaldúa, 1999). The very ideals of citizenship and humanness are then redefined (Goodman, 2004) and the children of immigrants are pushed into new margins and silences. Dismantling this destructive discourse allows for critical exami-

nation of issues related to power, class and immigration. However, the question must be asked: how do we dismantle and reframe the discourse without creating power for ourselves and 'placing' immigrants in a position with even less power (Freire, 1971).

The driving forces of capitalism, technology, and transnational corporations have penetrated even the most remote regions of the world. While there is no one agreed upon definition of globalization (the veritable twin of capitalism), the basic tenets are not difficult to comprehend. The main idea involves the economic and technological forces of the world and more specifically the dominant countries of the world, commingling and impacting all social aspects of humanity around the globe. The magnitude and speed of change literally outstrip the ability of people and governments to control, resist, or contest change at all. National and local politics are thus impacted by the limits that globalization imposes on them (Held, 1999).

The discourse that envelops this topic has led to the militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border and the criminalization of the migrants passing through the region. As both countries continue to develop, the disparity becomes more apparent all the while increasing in magnitude. *No es posible para naciones como México* to be free from the interference of the United States. This impossibility lies in the fact that there is a shadow cast over Latin American countries by a "violent and sadistic superpower that is committed to domination and control," (Chomsky, 1999, p. 41) and has committed to securing the availability of resources in Latin America for its own purposes and disposal.

I would argue from a postcolonial perspective that the increased disparity between the U.S. and Mexico is what is central to the increased emigration of Mexican nationals to the U.S. Nortenos are migrants who begin their journey in northern Mexico and are pulled toward the United States by a promise of wealth in a large labor market and the push of a local economy that can promise little if anything. "Caught between failed local systems and the seduction of the United States, the Norteno fills a middle world that transcends borders but at the same time lacks roots in either Mexico or the United States" (Cohen, 2004, p.3).

The news media, politicians, and citizens refer to Mexican laborers as unskilled or low-skilled. One of my concerns with the discourse surrounding this classification is the notion that foreign workers, both female and male, are continually referred to as unskilled or low-skilled. Terminology such as this categorizes individuals based on Western ideologies of skill. Every human being young or old is skilled. Yes, there are a variety of skills possessed by humans and some are utilized or refined to different degrees in different cultural settings, but to mislabel

someone as unskilled is a colonizing action. Until the attitudes of policymakers and citizens alike change drastically, people will continue to be relegated to subaltern positions within the borders created by those who believe they have the 'right' to judge others.

Propaganda and Cultural Quarantine: Creating the Dangerous Other

The political and media discourses of documented and undocumented immigration have served a particular agenda within the U.S., a sort of quarantine on culture, and have successfully constructed a categorization of immigrants as a threat, terrorists, drug dealers, lesser, animalistic, and in need of correction and control as evidenced by the following announcement by the U.S. border patrol:

"Operation Be Alert" program, complete with billboards along major highways asking citizens to report suspicious activity to the USBP's toll-free number, 1-877-USBP HELP (872-7435). (*Sonoran News*, Apr. 6, 2005)

Despite the fact that Arizona's economy is at an all time high and the labor force is benefiting from migrant workers, the government and vigilante citizens are forcing people who are fleeing political and economic hardships to accept the label criminal. These human beings are seeking to join family members already established in Arizona or other parts of the U.S., or pursuing a 'better' life, are forced to employ illegal smugglers to lead them through a harsh, unforgiving desert between Sonoyta, Sonora and Nogales, Sonora in order to attempt to arrive at their desired destinations. Many times this borderlands region becomes a nightmare of crime, dehydration, and death for those attempting to find a better life. The nortenos are moving North due to "the slow disappearance of work, the growth of inequality, and the impoverishment of the Third World..." (Fox, 2001, p.26)

The immigrants themselves have been defined as the root of *el problema* which must be fixed, as they are falsely blamed for ruining our economic, educational, and social welfare systems. The *Arizona Republic* (main newspaper in Arizona) and the local media *continuamente referir a los inmigrantes mexicanos* crossing the Arizona Mexico border using the metaphor of a flood. Reporters, politicians, and citizens consistently reference the need to "stem the tide" of immigration (*Arizona Republic*, 2005) as if the state is experiencing a hurricane, tsunami, or tidal wave. The governor has declared a state of emergency with regard to illegal immigration, a condition that is typically reserved for natural disasters. This idea of a crisis is ideologically political (Chomsky, 2001). Just five days after

declaring the emergency, she and the governor of Sonora, Mexico met in August to discuss plans to “curb illegal immigration” (Arizona Republic, 2005). While the Arizona governor consistently comments with regard to stopping the illegal immigration by apprehending the human smugglers, she is careful not to discuss the immigrants themselves. Her focus has been and appears to continue to be on capturing the individuals who are smuggling humans for profit rather than making criminals out of the migrants. *Pero*, by declaring a state of emergency she is clearly speaking about more than just the smugglers. She is politically positioning herself so that her constituents feel she is handling *el problema*.

The media barrage is seen everywhere. The Santa Cruz county supervisor has said that “immigrants have hurt the county economy and budget because of crime and the county’s providing medical care and jail space” (Arizona Republic, 2005). The Coalition for the Future American Worker is currently running television commercials with “representative citizens” asking the president to do something to protect “their jobs”. The *Washington Times* on March 5, 2005 ran an article that stated the “Border Patrol is seeking help from the public” (Sonoran News, 2005). Representative Russell Pearce of Arizona is pushing to have a visible, physical wall/fence erected along the border. This desire to construct a visible structure reminds me of a great sea wall whose purpose is to ‘stem the flood’ (Kamman, 2005). The smaller and more ‘insignificant’ a country is deemed by the U.S., the greater and all the more dangerous the threat (Chomsky, 1999). “National (and perhaps racial and imperial) borders are reconsolidated at the same time as economic borders dissolve” (Mohanty, 2003, p. 187).

All of these discourses emanate from individuals and groups with power—power to infiltrate the minds of the community and allow its members to believe there is a “problem” and at the same time incite a sense of panic and fear of the “other.” The borders that exist are not just geographic but also physical, psychological, and social (Cohen, 2004).

Shifts in power and the reframing of discourse used by the various administrations that govern the US are visible yet subtle. As each administration locates itself politically, words are constructed, meanings are deconstructed, and policy issues that resonate with vast populations are used and misused to create positionings that facilitate particular agendas. (Ortiz, Miller, & Cannella, 2005)

Foucault discusses how knowledge and reality are created by language practices which directly impact what it is that we as humans think we know. The ways in which we view the world are inscribed into methods of communication as well as language practices themselves. “While no

identifiable individual or group creates a dominant discourse for themselves, the ascendance of particular language constructions creates conditions of power” (Cannella & Bailey, 1999, p. 13).

Vigilante groups like the Minuteman Project adamantly fight for tightening of borders. The meaning of tightening is strict, restraining, and severe. Since the horror of 9/11 and the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, the current administration has been given liberal authority with regard to ‘tightening borders’ under the guise of security and prevention of further terrorism. Many of the policies that have been implemented significantly impact both human and civil rights of non-citizens and have had a negative effect on the border region. The enforcement of policy emphasis in urban areas has relegated border crossings to dangerous territory. The impacts of these measures on civil rights must be analyzed!

Immigration policy revolves around the needs of the dominant culture to control as well as regulate people of color. Sassen states: “The numbers and kinds of political actors involved in immigration policy debates and policy making in Western Europe, North America, and Japan are far greater than they were two decades ago” (1998, p.8). The policies linked with immigration are now directly influenced by politicians and the various control discourses that would construct public opinion.

Borderlands: The Latest Theater of War

All of the technologies and human resources that are implemented along the border create a veritable war zone. It is as if the borderlands region is preparing for the Battle of Baston. When a country is involved in a war it focuses its military efforts on the front line in order to defend itself against the enemy. When one looks at what is being done by the United States to prevent migration, it appears as if the migrants are the enemy and the U.S. has called out the troops to reinforce the front line.

The United States Border Patrol daily intercepts 4000 people attempting to enter the U.S. illegally; more than 2000 of whom are entering through the Sonoran Desert region located between the states of Sonora and Arizona. There are no firm numbers on how many people successfully cross, and those who are successful have typically paid a smuggler. Many have families already established in the U.S. who have arranged for employment for their incoming relatives. If no employment has been secured, family is often able to provide connections to prospective employers. Once migrants reach the major metropolitan areas like Tucson and Phoenix they are at less risk of apprehension, but the fear of being caught continues to haunt them.

Migration prior to the 1990s was largely through the border crossings whether it was legal or illegal. Drastic changes in immigration policy and technology have led to changes in border surveillance. The new measures have driven those who are unable to obtain the appropriate paperwork to the Sonoran Desert region. In an effort to 'control' the situation of illegal immigration in Arizona the following measures both human and technological have been implemented at the state's border crossings: 1,517 permanent Border Patrol agents (an increase of almost 50%), close to 50% more anti-smuggling unit agents, both night vision and infrared scopes, portable and permanent lighting units (for surveying areas at night), underground sensors, mobile sky watch towers, television cameras, ATV's, fixed wing aircraft, additional helicopters, and unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs). These increased 'control' methods are being implemented to 'break the cycle of death' but, the actions bring to mind hunter's accoutrements and behaviors. The U.S. government and related agencies seem to be gathering for a hunt of humans.

The language *alrededor la frontera* is more than demeaning. The negative discourse causes the public to view illegal immigrants as animals, lesser, needing to be controlled, dangerous, and unequal. Western culture shames migrants into feelings of inadequacy and inferiority. We shift our feelings of discomfort and place the burden onto the immigrant in order to attempt to elevate our own status as well as dominance (Anzaldúa, 1999). Just as we have seen throughout history, people of color become 'savage' and they are pushed into a subaltern culture before ever entering *los estados unidos*.

Policymakers feel that workers neglect to consider the dangers of crossing the border illegally. They then place blame on the individual rather than the institutions that have forced them to cross without the appropriate documentation in the first place. This discourse of blame is perpetuated by the media and the general population. Migrant workers leaving Mexico are not ignorant individuals. Contrary to popular opinion they have weighed the costs and after considering the risks still feel that the potential dangers of being taken advantage of by a smuggling operation or facing peril in the desert are worth the gamble. Many take extreme risks to find a way to make a better life for their families whom they often leave behind until they are able to afford to bring them across.

Post 9/11: Immigrants as Terrorists

Since the terrorist attacks of September, 11, 2001, immigration has been in the political spotlight and the media headlines. The formation of the Department of Homeland Security has placed border issues at the

forefront of a range of discourses, inscribing immigration as both a national security concern and an economic crisis. Security chief Michael Chertoff on one hand says that he opposes citizen militias like the Minuteman Project but in the same breath states that the border is a dangerous place, not a place for amateurs (Lipton, 2005). Self designated militia may be problematized, but the use of the military because of inherent danger is not.

In March 2004, the Department of Homeland Security introduced the Arizona Border Control Initiative (ABC), and it was anticipated to cost more than ten million dollars before the end of fiscal year 2004. The program was developed to identify and deter illegal human trafficking as well as terrorist activities. The linkage within the initiative of terrorists to Mexican immigrants is disturbing. How can two so profoundly different groups be contained within the same document? The initiative is aimed at unifying local, state, tribal, and federal officers within the different agencies to come together and work collaboratively with more resources including; more officers, technology, and new forms of aviation monitoring. The goal is for the department to present a unified front, "one face" at the border so that the citizens of both Arizona and the nation are "safer" (DHS, 3/16/04). A policy aimed at creating a "safer" border implies that people passing through are a threat or intending to deliberately cause harm. ABC has also been implemented in order to reduce violent crimes, as well as the demand for social services in southern Arizona. Are people coming as criminals or workers? There are so many contradictions within agencies and their respective documents. The language used continues to be derogatory and slandering. How can the department present "one face" when so many agencies and their individual policies are involved? The agencies involved in this initiative include but are not limited to: the Department of Homeland Security, US Customs and Border Protection (CBP), US Customs Immigration and Enforcement (ICE), Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Department of the Interior, Tohono O'odham Nation, US Attorney's Office, Arizona Department of Public Safety, and of course local law enforcement agencies.

A segment of the ABC initiative seeks to provide "additional means to reinforce and secure the border. The provisions of SAFER (Securing America's Future Through Enforcement Reform Act) call for reduction in legal immigration by 20% which will lead to further militarization of the border. The increased militarization will in turn lead to increased illegal entry. The fine print of this act focuses on the elimination of immigration visas to extended family members" (USCCR, 2002, p. 8). This signification of war with immigration further places U.S. problems with terrorism on

the backs of immigrant families rather than on the individuals, world conditions, and ideologies that may actually be dangerous.

While government legislation establishes policies related to immigration, enforcement interpretation varies. Agencies and their respective departments often have discretion as to the manner and degree of implementation. The inability to present 'one face' quickly becomes apparent. Further, the fact that the U.S. government has placed people entering this country under the 'power' and jurisdiction of a department that was formed to primarily address security and the prevention of terrorist activities is disconcerting as well as problematic, and reveals a particular political (and ideological) agenda.

Free Trade: Imperialism Unmasked

'National security' issues are not about the nation, but rather the security of investors in the United States. They are the ones who have problems with security and the problems are not physical, but monetary. Corporations must be sure that they will be able to profit from their speculation in Mexico through what they call "trade." This notion of trade is purely theoretical because there is no trade occurring. Corporations place operations within Mexico to exploit the labor market there. They do so to be free of environmental and tax regulations, and then ship their own products back to the U.S. There is no trade involved here but the idea will continue to be exploited by U.S. corporations and the politicians whose campaigns they finance. The only threat that could possibly be occurring is to business arrangements and so CEOs cry that there are national "security issues" (Chomsky, 1999).

All of this is problematic because the creation of the Department of Homeland Security was 'intended' to 'protect' the nation from terrorists, not emigrants. The jurisdiction and power of the department, however, goes far beyond merely monitoring and investigating alleged terrorist activities. While some argue that the humanitarian issues are the main concern, I would argue that there is very little humane within the public conversation. The issue has to do with dominance, control, and power. It is important to look for what has been omitted from these propaganda campaigns. The concept of intervention as humanitarian is an orthodoxy; because we do it, we take for granted that it is humanitarian. The reasoning behind efforts is because our leaders say so and because of the assumed superiority of Americans as humanitarians. There is a long history of humanitarian intervention by the United States—in almost all cases where military force has been used, it has been described as humanitarian intervention (Chomsky, 2001).

Foucault associates fear of the other with fearing the loss of power

(Foucault, 1972). “The construction of immigration and nationality laws, and thus of appropriate racialized, gendered citizenship, illustrates the continuity between relationships of colonization and white-masculinist, capitalist state rule” (Mohanty, 2003, p. 66). Chomsky points out that those with power in the United States have not/do not consider themselves subject to international law. Laws are things to be implemented against those who are powerless (Chomsky, 1999). We live in an era of globalization which lays claims to borderlessness in the areas of technology, monetary spending, ways of governing, cross-national political movements, environmental wastes, etc. (Mohanty, 2003). When it comes to human beings coming into our country, particularly people of color, borders are immediately erected and enforced.

The juxtaposition of media campaigns with educational policies such as *No Child Left Behind* and English only laws helps to further cast a shadow on Mexican immigrant students. The direct contradictions reveal further inconsistencies and biases which continue to edify the illegal immigration superstructure. Derrida’s thoughts with regard to deconstruction are extremely relevant here. The construction of resident versus alien attaches a signifier to the immigrant as not being human like those in power. The language chosen by the media and the government serves an extremely powerful purpose in maintaining the status of the immigrant child as not *parte de este mundo, un animal*, worthy only of being “reported as suspicious,” unwelcome, and a threat. While some of the negative textual messages are not so recognizable initially, the message is ultimately clear that the immigrant is unwanted.

Fearing the Immigrant Child

What does this mean for education and specifically early childhood? Immigrant children are the most rapidly increasing segment of the United States child population. “One of the most demoralizing aspects of undocumented status is its effect on the educational aspirations of children” (Suarez-Orozco, 2001, p.34). Due to increased policy measures, economic downturn in Mexico, and the militarization of the border, many children are entering this country undocumented. They must then attempt to integrate in a very similar manner as a refugee into a society where they are treated as if they have no citizenship, no country, no name, no birth date, no culture, no language, and no history. Public officials, policies, and the media then create a discourse of fear related to immigrants dwelling within ‘our’ borders. We will then construct them as immigrants just as we have Hawaiians and Native Americans, thus erasing all that they are as human beings and rewriting their histories to “fit” in the appropriate part

of the social hierarchy that the dominant culture tries to force them into (Anzaldúa, 1999). They are involved in this conflict not by choice but by the representative regimes that govern them (Minh-Ha, 1991).

The discourse of fear stems from ideas with regard to who or what is safe or dangerous. Differences of color, culture, and language create panics which are about none of the above but rather power and control (Wiley, 1996). Ricento and Hornberger (1998) discuss the idea of deep values which are embedded within the national psyche which in turn directly affect societal ideas regarding immigration. Until individual consciousness is changed, we will not see change in the world around us. Gloria Anzaldúa sees this consciousness of the borderlands as being singular and plural simultaneously, located in a theorization of being 'on the border' and not just any border but a very specific one, the United States-Mexico border (Anzaldúa, 1987).

La representación de los inmigrantes mexicanos como inferior many feel is purely cultural. The U.S. education system attempts to eradicate this 'problem' by bringing children 'up to the Western standard.' This type of thinking constructs and maintains hierarchical positions, and of course whites are assigned the superior position. Quijano and Rios (2000) cite Su regarding barriers to positive school experiences of Latino students. School experiences that the students rated as negative were focused on their English proficiency, skin color, and the strength of their accents. The expectations that the teachers had for their students were often influenced by skin color as well as language characteristics. One way to provide equitable, culturally sensitive education to immigrant children is to recognize the power in the presence of minority teachers. Non Euro-American educators often bring a more critical and socially just orientation to their teaching. They own a consciousness that exists because of real, lived experiences in their own lives related to inequality. Native individuals are more willing to "work actively to dismantle the personal and institutional biases that they find in schools as well as to move toward culturally responsive school-based reform" (Quijano & Rios, 2000, p. 522).

Parents' optimism for a better life for their children lies within the educational system which is as steeped in anti-immigrant policy as the government. Research has repeatedly shown that an emigrant's faith in the system fades over time. The length of residence in the United States is directly correlated to negative impacts on achievement, health, and other aspirations. Adults are not the only dancers in the global performance. Children are directly affected and play major roles in these intricately choreographed pieces. Young immigrants are immediately racialized and marginalized as people of color. The shame is that they have no influence upon or critique of the script in which they are forced to participate.

There is not now nor will there ever be such a thing as homogeneity of experience. We are projecting a shadow over Mexico and refuse to admit that we are tied to her. Until individual consciousness is changed, we will not see change in the world around us.

We know how to survive. When other races have given up their tongue, we've kept ours. We know what it is to live under the hammer blow of the dominant norte americano culture. But more than we count the blows, we count the days the weeks the years the centuries the eons until the White laws and commerce and customs will rot in the deserts they've created, lie bleached. *Humildes* yet proud, *quietos* yet wild, *nosotros los mexicanos*—Chicanos will walk by the crumbling ashes as we go about our business. Stubborn, persevering, impenetrable as stone, yet possessing a malleability that renders us unbreakable, we the *mestizas* and *mestizos*, will remain. (Anzaldúa, 1999, p.86)

Education has become the main arena where politics and power operate to create spaces of asymmetry both socially and politically. The disconnect significantly impacts the lived culture of the individuals within the arena, specifically teachers and students (Mohanty, 2003). The power of language wielded by media, politicians, and school boards directly influences the languages used and thoughts generated by teachers and administrators. I recently sat and listened to a panel composed of prominent individuals within our community. Early Head Start, Migrant Head Start, Head Start, Community Resource and Referral, and the Early Childhood Block Grant Program were all represented. While each of these people are advocates for immigrant children, they continue to use language that constructs children and families as being the 'problem' and in need of 'fixing.' They accept (perhaps unconsciously) the hegemonic language that exists within our state and nation. One woman stated that during family training sessions she is able to "slip things in and they don't even realize they are getting it (the information of a White Western view that is considered to be that which they are lacking due to their culture/status/class)." This mindset and language directly influences young children in their classrooms.

Today's immigrants of color are seen by many as possessing traits that make them "unmeltable" and incompatible with modern American culture.... We argue that in facing such forms of symbolic violence, some immigrant minority children experience the institutions of the mainstream society—such as its schools—as foreign and hostile communities that reproduce the order of inequality. (Suarez-Orozco, 2001, p. 8)

"For every discourse that breeds fault and guilt is a discourse of authority and arrogance" (Minh-Ha, 1989, p. 11). When an educator or program director approaches an immigrant child as a problem needing to

be fixed, the act of imperialism has more than begun, whether the individual is consciously aware of it or not. Language is powerful, a tool that can be used to build or destroy. In the case of immigrant children, the shadow this negative discourse casts is dangerously broad and a sign of the building storm. “Children become the instruments of society’s need to improve itself, and childhood ... a time during which social problems ... either solved or determined to be unsolvable” (Hatch, 1995, p. 119). The flood discourse emerges from the expectation of a storm, a conflict that thunders, striking immigrants in the path of white, Eurocentric individuals who are unable to move beyond themselves. These dominant people seem unable to realize *que el mundo es* a colorful place filled with possibilities; they create dark shadows that surround—if they were only willing to open themselves to the *promesa* of more than they can be when isolated within their own storm system. However, the fact that there is a shadow alludes to the possibility that there is sunshine. If eyes, ears, and minds can be opened to turning the discourse around then *la sombra* will no longer be cast over *los niños jóvenes*. Young children and specifically Mexican immigrant children are the bright, shining lights able to illuminate the world if given the space, time, and opportunity.

The struggle is inner: Chicano, indio, American Indian, mojado, mexicano, immigrant Latino, Anglo in power, working class Anglo, Black, Asian—our psyches resemble the border towns and are populated by the same people. The struggle has always been inner, and is played out in the outer terrains. Awareness of our situation comes before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the “real” world unless it first happens in the images in our heads. (Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 109)

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