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RADICAL JOTERÍA-MUXERISTA LOVE IN THE CLASSROOM

Brown Queer Feminist Strategies for Social Transformation

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Introduction

This nation was founded upon the wounding of people, land, and relationships. Social justice educators and scholars have spent generations identifying these wounds with the hopes of healing them, particularly utilizing critical and holistic educational approaches. While people of color, women, queer and trans people, and other social justice advocates have been challenging educational atrocities and inequalities, K–12 schools are only now beginning to implement formalized ethnic studies courses and programs, along with various critical pedagogical approaches implemented by individual teachers and schools. Critically conscious teachers, amongst them Jotería and Muxerista educators, have always introduced topics of power, privilege, and oppression through their curriculum, but most often they have had to do so in covert ways and with the threat of being pushed out of their careers for doing this work.

The most accurate translation of Jotería is queerness. Yet, to translate our collective work as one that is encompassed by queerness undercuts the radical history of our existence. In this work, we use the term *Jotería* as a political gesture that acknowledges the continued struggles and sacrifices of our kin. Within and outside of education, Jotería educators and students refuse discipline and alignment with the status quo. Our struggles and practices are radical in that we seek transformation of systems of domination at the root. As Angela Davis (1990) states, “Radical simply means ‘grasping things at the root’” (p. 14). We take seriously the work of disrupting the violences of the K–12 school system and university. As Jotería-Muxerista educators, we work with our students to deconstruct the education system, but, more importantly, we undermine dominant educational hierarchies by radically altering our pedagogical approaches. We use liberatory pedagogies that teach our students critical thinking to arrive at their own “why” behind their pursuit of social transformation (hooks, 2010). We do so by utilizing language that once attempted to entrap us as “other.” We flip it on its head and carry it within our hearts as we move in-between our families, communities, and formal education. It is our hope that the Jotería-Muxerista pedagogies we provide in this chapter offer all educators new grammar, strategies, and understandings of teaching rooted in social justice and radical love.

In 2014, Michael Hames-Garcia edited a Jotería Studies dossier in *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies*. This dossier brought together the work of scholars who had been forging a movement to create the Association for Jotería Arts, Activism, and Scholarship (AJAAS) since the early 2000s.

While the organization was officially founded in 2011, we hosted our first joto-centered conference at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in 2007. Hames-Garcia (2014) notes that for him,

jotería studies is not something new. It feels old, continuous with years of organizing, reading, writing, and activism. In another sense, of course, it is new, so I have been trying to put my finger on exactly what is new about it. I think it has to do with its face-to-faceness. (p. 137)

In his telling of the Jotería genealogy, he remarks the following:

Enter a new generation of multigendered queer Chican@s and Latin@s, trained and nurtured by women of color feminisms and feminists. A new generation among whom trans* and cisgendered people of color have fought and loved in coalition, inclusion, and multiplicity. From these experiences, we have learned the limitations of identity categories, as well as their benefits, and we have worked out ways to relate to both. In our best moments, we curate spaces where Chican@, queer, trans*, and Latin@ are open and fluid categories that allow possibilities to flourish. In our worst moments, we practice what María Lugones (2003, p. 152) calls “horizontal hostility.”

(p. 138)

Indeed, the conflicts and tensions have been many, even in creating AJAAS as an organization and cultivating a community that continues to flourish and triumph. We are often called to practice forgiveness, empathy, and compassion with one another. This is a key aspect of Jotería pedagogy and praxis – we acknowledge that we are human beings, flawed and sometimes wounded, with a desire to thrive, heal, and create.

Our experiences and labor in and outside of academia have taught us that teaching transcends the classroom. The academy is not paradise. But learning is a place where paradise can be created. The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility, we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom (hooks, 1994, p. 207).

In this chapter, we offer theories, methods, praxis, and strategies to re-imagine the boundaries of education. We introduce the concept of a Jotería-Muxerista epistemology and expand on what that looks like pedagogically. We, as Jotería, have come together in the name of possibility. Our pedagogies are first and foremost strategies rooted in our collective realities and resistance. They are a byproduct of the experiences we share as authors, having to navigate the world as working-class queer Brown people.¹ We honor ourselves as students and educators by fully immersing in these unified strategies based on the ways we have come to understand learning and space-making via family, community, and the classroom. We offer advice and lessons from queer Brown feminist activists, more specifically, Jotería-Muxerista theorists, pedagogues, and practitioners in conversation with the scholarship of Black feminists, in order to expand our vision and knowledge of social justice in schools.

Conceptualizing Radical Jotería-Muxerista Epistemology

Daniel Enrique Pérez (2014) argues that Jotería epistemologies emerge from the unique standpoint of being Jotería. Jotería epistemologies can be described as conceptions of knowledge that take into account the jotox² subject as an arbiter of knowledge concerning the social locations and social relations that shape our identity and experience. Jotería takes a bold and intersectional approach as

it transforms a historically derogatory term to create an intentionally radical, decolonial, and oppositional form of empowerment (Pérez, 2014). Through his mapping of Jotería studies, Pérez offers us a meaning of Jotería where “one can engage in Jotería studies at multiple levels and in various spaces—academic and nonacademic, across real and imaginary borders” (p. 144). As such, humanizing research through personal narrative and human connection is essential to Jotería studies and the possibilities it offers within academia. Like Pérez, we understand that Jotería studies is an always dynamic and incomplete project. Nonetheless, scholars and educators connected to their Jotería have survived and thrived in hostile academic settings by showing up authentically to school, home, and work – always being activists, queers, and seekers and producers of knowledge (Revilla & Santillana, 2014).

Beyond developing our critical consciousness in relation to our academic studies, many of us came into consciousness as young activists and organizers in political movements. A Jotería identity is built upon the legacy of both Chicana/Latina/x feminism and the contemporary work of Muxeristas (Santillana, 2011). From her research with Raza Womyn, Revilla offers the following definition, “A *Muxerista* is a person whose identity is rooted in a Chicana/Latina feminist vision for social change committed to ending all forms of oppression, including but not limited to racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, and citizenism” (Revilla, 2010, p. 56). For Revilla, the definition of a Muxerista has always been organic and evolving. Her work since that time has led to a more expansive definition: Muxerista is a nonbinary, gender-fluid, gender-inclusive, trans, queer, and/or sexually inclusive Chicana/Latina (including people of Indigena, African, and Asian ancestry) identity that honors our multiple, intersecting identities and communities while uplifting our radical commitment to activism, organizing, personal and collective liberation, and social transformation.³ A Muxerista politic is embedded in our definition of Jotería identity/thought, and vice versa; a Jotería politic is embedded in Muxerista identity/thought. However, because this is not always a given for the reader nor for individual people who may identify as such, we hyphenate the two in this piece as a reminder that we are utilizing a specifically Chicana, Latina queer and feminist activist approach to understanding the world and classroom.

Positionality

As Jotería-Muxerista and feminist teachers, activists, and scholars, we believe positioning and identifying ourselves in relation to our work is a fundamental practice. Our positionality includes, but is not limited to our race, class, gender, sexuality, and citizenship categories. These aspects impact how we enter classrooms, engage as researchers, create community, and how we offer our knowledge to readers.

Anita’s positionality: I am a Chicana/Latina/Tejana, a fluid/queer muxer⁴ raised by a fierce single mother in extreme poverty on the south side of San Antonio, Texas. My childhood was marked by the death of my father when I was eight, the patriarchal violence we experienced in our home, and the fierce strength and survival of my mother who cared for us with all of her being. I went to the university with the primary goal of pulling my family out of poverty. That goal shifted and although I continue to work for the survival of my family and community, today I am more focused on our healing – my own, my family’s, and our communities’ healing. In 1999, I encountered a space that forever changed my life as an individual, as a student activist, and as a scholar. Raza Womyn de UCLA introduced me to a specific type of Chicana/Latina feminist praxis that we termed *Muxerista* (Revilla, 2004a, 2004b). It was intentionally activist, intersectional and queer. I took the knowledge and vision I gained from Raza Womyn to the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where I began working with and studying with local activists in 2004. Together, we transformed the face of Las Vegas with a distinct Muxerista praxis infused with a deep Jotería energy (Revilla, 2012). I spent 15 years in Las Vegas envisioning and building a radical Muxerista and Jotería community. In 2007, we embarked on a journey with colleagues and friends we met through the National Association

for Chicana and Chicano Studies (NACCS) to create the Association for Jotería Arts, Activism, and Scholarship (AJAAS) (Revilla, 2014). AJAAS is a national organization that is rooted in Jotería familia-making and Muxerista politic.⁵ Today, many of us have taken what we cultivated in Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Minnesota, and nationally through AJAAS, to continue to create new communities centered upon a Jotería-Muxerista epistemology, standpoint, and consciousness. Likewise, we are drawing upon Jotería-Muxerista concepts as teachers, students, social movement workers, and family members. This piece shares some of the ways that we are making that happen.

Sergio's positionality: My positionality as a queer Latinx graduate student, who currently resides in Los Angeles, and does queer and Jotería research, places me in a unique position as I approach this work. I became interested in studying what queer theory would look like for people of color, people like myself, during my master's program in education at USC. Leading up to an ethnography course I took in the fall of 2016, I immersed myself in whatever literature I could find exploring queer people of color when I came across Revilla and Santillana's 2014 essay, "Jotería Identity and Consciousness." Recognizing the authors, as I had met them and become friends with them only a few years earlier, I consumed their work and found myself connected to it in so many ways. With a theoretical framework that "is rooted in fun, laughter and radical queer love," I found myself visible within academia (Revilla & Santillana, 2014, p. 173). Jotería and Jotería studies, as Pérez (2014) describes, is more expansive and inclusive. Compared with the traditional notions of queer theory, Jotería identity and consciousness spoke to my essence and my existence within the oppressive structures known as higher education. It allowed me to see, as Alvarez (2014) describes, how my fragmentation from the heteronormative mainstream is acceptable, even useful, and that it can be a source of knowledge and a form of pedagogy.

José Manuel's positionality: The sunrises felt heavy on days that my *apa* took me to pick crops in the San Joaquin Valley. Every now and then, I'd accompany my parents to work during the hot summer weekends. Vivid memories surface as I recall sitting on the trunk of *apa's* 1981 Ford Courier truck gazing at the *Mexicanos* working the fields as sweat dripped down their faces. Men and women wore long sleeve flannel shirts and *paños* that covered half their faces to keep them from getting sunburned while they picked whichever fruit or vegetable was in season. Some of the women wore colorfully crafted bandanas that my *ama* made and sold to the *mujeres*. When my mother was not working in the fields, she was hustling selling clothes, *recuerdos* and tupperware. Since emigrating to the United States, my *familia's* survival depended on taking up multiple labor-intensive work. Their continual sacrifices and dignified work in the face of racial capitalism has been the foundation of my existence and critical in shaping the way I navigate institutions of education. More specifically, as a queer Xicanx from a working-class migrant background, I have come to understand education as founded and diluted by structures of violence that impact the daily lives of my community. Yet, through and beyond formal modes of education, those of us who have lived and confronted these violences have developed strategies to resist and transform them.

Joanna Nuñez's positionality: My journey as a Jotería-Muxerista activist (and now an activist teacher and scholar) was deeply influenced by my participation in the Las Vegas immigrant rights movement, beginning in 2004. As a 16-year-old organizer, I was schooled by a crew of radical Latinx and Chicana queer youth who were three to four years my senior. They refused to be silenced, marginalized, and have their labor co-opted in service of exclusionary patriarchal, homophobic, and transphobic/cissexist movements. I took note. Alongside this movement, Revilla became a friend, queertor,⁶ and teacher. I was educated through shared practices of accountability, calling one another in within movement spaces, and the creation of a nourishing community of feminist queer love and care. I became an organizer committed to an intersectional and unapologetic Jotería-Muxerista politic; having realized that as Black feminist lesbian scholar Barbara Smith (2014) states, "It is legitimate to look at the elements of one's own (combined) identity and to form a political analysis and practice out of it" (p. 54). Jotería studies for me is one manifestation of doing

just that, utilizing our experiences as queer Latinxs and those of our Jotx ancestors as a foundation for envisioning transformation.

Jotería-Muxerista Praxis for Social Transformation in the Classroom

Our Jotería-Muxerista pedagogies are intentionally rooted in relationships, friendships, and our humanity at their core. We are Jotería-Muxerista teachers, activists, and scholars, and we are also *amigxs* who have spent many hours having critical conversations about our experiences in and outside of education. Here we weave our experiences together to illuminate how theory and practice meets within our Jotería-Muxerista pedagogical praxis. We have organized the theories, methods, and strategies that speak most to our pursuit of social justice and radical love in the classroom into the following sections: healing in the classroom, radical accountability, Jotería home and space-making, and towards decolonizing education.

Healing in the Classroom

At times, educators become disconnected from their students' realities. We ask our students to become critically aware of themselves, but we may sometimes lose sight of who our students are in their entirety. We invite educators to not shy away from facing their students and their truths. True witnessing requires courage, "when we know each other [we] *see* each other" (Alvarez, 2014, p. 220). Jotx and trans teachers and students alike have fought against society, family, and friends who have rejected their authentic lives or negated their needs and desires. As described by Alvarez (2014), a Jotería pedagogy takes a holistic approach, one that acknowledges our students as whole human beings with sexual desires, dreams for the future (whether professional or personal), and a need to be seen and heard. Connecting with students is absolutely necessary and lifesaving. Without the intervention of Jotería-Muxerista pedagogies in the classroom, the ideology of compulsory heterosexuality permeates the classroom, mandating, forcing, and coercing our student into a heterosexual identity. Often, Jotería teachers and professors are the first people in students' lives who acknowledge that they are not heteronormative or cisnormative, and we affirm this fact rather than expect our students to ignore that key element of their lives.

Eddy Francisco Alvarez (2014) writes about his experience of going "deep" in the classroom using Chicana feminist Chela Sandoval's pedagogical method and process of Spoken-Word-Art-Performance-as-Activism (SWAPA). He beautifully outlines several of our collective practices in his essay, "Jotería Pedagogy, SWAPA, and Sandovalian Approaches to Liberation":

Jotería pedagogy is challenging but transformative, requiring innovative and brave efforts to facilitate nonhierarchical, vulnerable, and critical spaces of learning for both teacher and students. It is about enacting survival in the classroom, instilling a process of decolonization of the mind, body, and spirit. It is a way of teaching that addresses intersectionality, makes room for diverse perspectives, and validates the affective and emotional lives of students. It requires the teacher to share some of his or her own story, to become vulnerable, to be a translator and an architect of bridges between different worlds, as Anzaldúa suggests in the epigraph above. Practitioners of jotería pedagogy are *nepantleros/as*, shamans, scribes, and healers.

(p. 218)

There is little doubt in our minds and hearts that at the root of Jotería and Jotería-Muxerista pedagogy is the absolute urgency for a healing approach to social justice work. Many of us have experienced burnout, depression, and/or attempted spirit murder.⁷ William Smith, Yosso, and Solórzano

(2011) define racial battle fatigue as “the stress ensuing from racism and racial microaggressions” (p. 213). The stress can result in various symptoms including anxiety, sadness, and physical illness. The illness and impact are likened to the experiences of people in combat. For students of color who are also queer, trans, women, disabled, and/or poor, they are not only experiencing racial battle fatigue but rather a multidimensional battle fatigue. Patricia Williams (1991) describes a very similar impact on our spirits as a result of racism. She suggests that racism not only causes physical and legal damage in the lives of Black people and other people of color, but that racism further causes damage at our spiritual core, our essence. She writes:

One of the reasons I fear what I call spirit murder – disregard for others whose lives qualitatively depend on our regard – is that it produces a system of formalized distortions of thought. It produces social structures built on fear and hate, a tumorous outlet for feelings elsewhere unexpressed.

(Williams, 1991, p. 73)

Hence spirit murder is an added layer to physical murder. In this way, the act of racism is an affront and attack on our spirit that can result in a spiritual death and intentional individual and structural sabotaging of our dreams, hopes, and desires to live. Thus, Jotería experience multidimensional battle fatigue and multiple acts of attempted spirit murder and/or spiritual assault. We are often engaged in daily acts of resistance and multidimensional struggle (see Figure 3.1), and we must therefore seek spirit restoration and/or become spirit protectors in the classroom and in the community.⁸ At times,

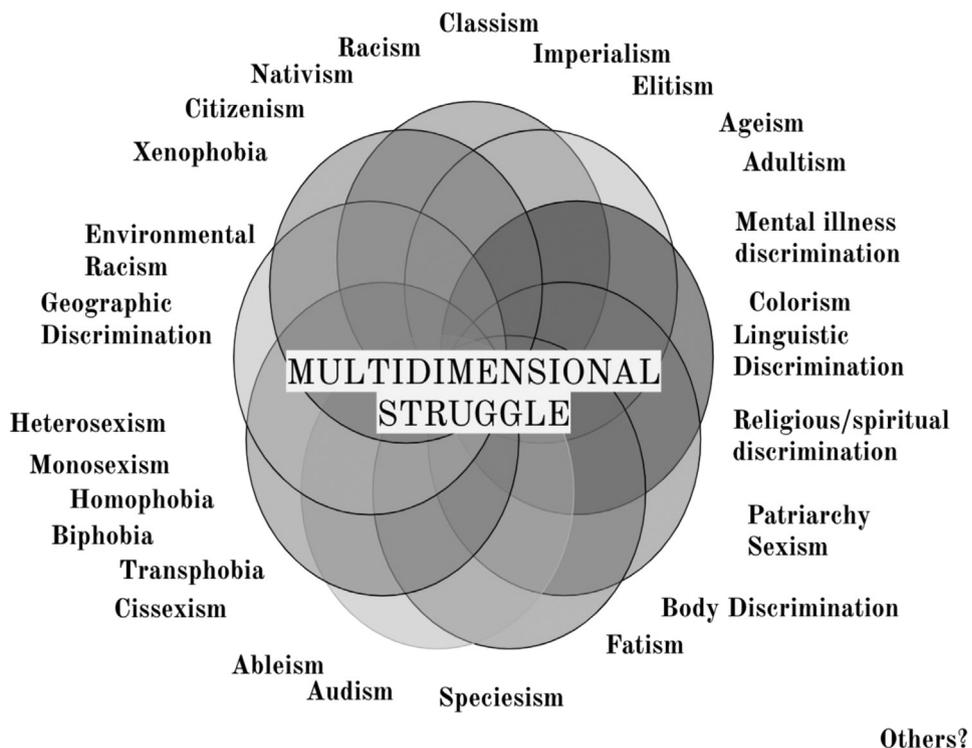


Figure 3.1 Multidimensional Struggle

Source: Created by Anita Tijerina Revilla.

we must even take a step back to restore and protect our own spirits. We keep this in mind with our students, especially queer and trans students of color from working-class backgrounds. For every added element of struggle, there is more to consider and learn about our students.

Alvarez (2014) tells us,

Jotería pedagogy . . . is about teaching students to rewrite their own mythology within these borderlands, contesting hierarchal, supremacist ideologies, and about finding love, dreams, desires, and trauma as internal archives that help students understand the world and sometimes heal in the process. Yes, jotería pedagogy is about also healing.

(p. 224)

All healing work must be rooted in love. Love guides this work. It has been said by other critical scholars, but Alvarez emphasizes that love is an integral tool in transformational teaching, “I argue that as liberatory praxis within the classroom, SWAPA propels us, as jotería professors and teachers, to question our approach to teaching, grounding it in an ‘ethic of love’” (pp. 216–217). Additionally, Sandoval (2000) characterizes love in the classroom as a “love that can access and guide our theoretical and political ‘movidas’ – revolutionary maneuvers toward decolonized being” (p. 140). In the same essay, Alvarez describes his pedagogical approaches, as well as those of Sandoval, Revilla, and Roque Ramirez, as examples of Jotería pedagogies. He writes that

Revilla teaches courses on radical love, feminisms, and jotería. Through her teaching and scholar-activism, she has created a sense of *familia* among her students. She integrates herself, her heart and her stories, into her teaching, joining students at immigrant rights marches, rallies, and conferences. In the past she has opened up her home as a means to extend learning beyond the classroom and create community with her students as part of the pedagogical process.

(Alvarez, 2014, p. 222)

The examples Alvarez describes in his article are useful for us as we attempt to offer more tangible ways to practice Jotería-Muxerista pedagogies that heal.

Radical Accountability

We must work to ensure that our curriculum and teaching practices are ever-expansive and growing in order to incorporate new dimensions of oppression that are being uncovered, often by our very students through either their experiences or activism. The mistake comes when we believe we have figured out all of the important “-isms and -phobias,” and we dare to stop reflecting and learning about the many ways that struggles are taking place for marginalized and disempowered students. As Pérez (2014) states,

Jotería voices and images materialize in multiple forms: cultural production, history, politics, and the everyday lives of individuals. The challenge to Jotería studies scholars [and teachers] is to find them, bear witness to them, and study them. We have much to learn from our Jotería – whatever that may be, and however they may express themselves. Each voice can contribute something important to our unique heritage and to a promising future. As Gloria Anzaldúa insists, “People, listen to whatever your *jotería* is saying.”

(p. 145)

Our students and youth make up an important part of our Jotería voice. They illuminate further complexity in our identities, expand our Jotería-Muxerista consciousness, and teach us new

approaches in the struggle against white supremacist heteropatriarchy and cissexism. Listening to our students and being accountable to them requires we center Jotería traditions that reject elitism, paternalism, assimilationism, and respectability politics.

Through a liberatory reconsideration of educator-student relationships, we encourage radical accountability in ways that consider how systems of domination alter all spaces of learning. We envision educators being radical accomplices when students speak up against oppression in spaces of learning, however they may express themselves. Radical accountability means attending to the urgency in a demand for a more expansive Jotería. Radical educator-student relationships are the ground upon which we build the trust necessary for students to voice when they have been oppressed in a space of learning. This also means that we are attentive to the ways race, class, gender, sexuality, and other categories create tensions among students, faculty, and administration. In other words, holding each other accountable within these relationships looks different case by case. For example, tensions between faculty of color and White students have different ramifications than a White faculty member and queer students of color. A Jotería pedagogy endeavors to create a relationship of trust solid enough to tend to and heal wounding acts of spirit murder. Moreover, while we ground our praxis in healing, we are fully aware of the complex tensions, negotiations, and strategies of doing so. Getting there will look different every time.

For example, an experience of trans-exclusionary and cissexist behavior we faced at a national Chicana/Latina and Indigenous women's conference offered us a transformative lesson from our Jotx and trans students, witnessing their brilliance, and radically and deliberately holding space in solidarity with them. In 2008, Revilla took one of her gender-xueer/nonbinary identifying students to the Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social (MALCS) Summer Institute, a space that had been intentionally created by and for women, and faced backlash for doing so. When her student, Xuanito, was encouraged to run for chair of the Lesbian, BiMujeres, and Trans caucus, an emergency meeting was called the next morning to essentially force Xuanito to resign the opportunity to become chair. Long-time lesbiana friends and colegas of Revilla expressed disappointment at Revilla for her and her student's "disrespect of *mujer* spaces." The remainder of the conference Revilla and her students were socially ostracized from Jota and lesbiana spaces. For Revilla, her student Xuanito, and their larger Las Vegas Jotería-Muxerista activist crew, this moment was deeply painful, especially because the most hurtful responses came from fellow Jotas. Hetero cisgender allies within the larger MALCS conference, however, encouraged Revilla to continue the dialogue at the following institute. Revilla proposed a conference-wide plenary, inviting trans Chicax scholar activists Bamby Salcedo and Francisco J. Galarte. The plenary was extremely successful in expanding Jotería-Muxerista consciousness and trans and gender inclusivity. MALCS bylaws were soon after changed to reflect a new politics of gender inclusivity. This moment was an important moment in Chicana/Latina history, and one that was importantly initiated by a Jotx y gender-xueer student in partnership with an educator. This moment also illustrates the messiness and contradictions in transformative lessons. Xuanito and some of Revilla's other students were devastated and unwilling to return to MALCS. The institute's change in political stance and organizational culture has surely created space for other transgender, gender-nonconforming and nonbinary students to forge community there and find mentorship in the space. Furthermore, as the years passed, Revilla and fellow Jota colegas continued to come together in Jotería space, apologies were offered and relationships were reconciled.

As Francisco J. Galarte (2014) urged us to do in his powerful essay "On Trans* Chican@s: Amor, Justicia, y Dignidad," Jotería commits itself to ensuring that we always consider who is being left out of the conversation and to engaging in the groundwork necessary to make all spaces welcoming to trans people. Engaging in collective accountability means taking stock of who has been pushed out or hurt in the community, and doing the work of making amends, repairing trust, asking for forgiveness or forgiving with compassion, and transforming previous conditions. Already, Jotería

Studies has encountered many moments that called for accountability, as mentioned throughout. Thus, with every encounter and new project embarked upon, we search for ways to be generous, to humanize, and to embody the social transformation of which we dream. This practice is critical in the classroom as well.

Jotería, Home and Space-making

As working-class queer people of color, our bodies, voices, and language are often dismissed as unintelligible in academia. As educators, we have the ability to reimagine spaces of learning through our own vision of education. For this reason, we bring home into the classroom. We understand home as places of learning where food, music, storytelling, and other cultural practices inform familiarity, comfort, and growth. For us, home is cultivating queer kinship, open gender expression, and other forms of social acceptance, celebration, and resistance. When we bring teachings from the home into the classroom, we radically create new classroom possibilities for those us who have felt alienated in these spaces. William A. Calvo-Quirós (2014) explores how Latinx queers, *jotas/os/xs*, *tortilleras*, *maricones*, and *mariposas* “mariconize” the world, or construct queer worlds that are grounded in healing and mutual love. We do this by (re)claiming our *jota/o/x* ways and honoring our most authentic selves. He names the process of repositioning “our traditionally subjugated and devalued *jota/o* forms of knowledge [to] the center of cultural expression” a *jota/o rasquache* intervention (p. 185). Calvo-Quirós (2014) further elaborates,

Our unapologetic presence and unique aesthetics as *jota/os* in the world allow us to:

Recognize others who are like us, and therefore map a *jota/o* community. . . . As we emerge from the desert of hostility and homophobia, any interaction with *jota/o* cultural production becomes an oasis in which to rest and recharge. These *jota/o* spaces allow us to lower our guard, relax, and recover from the exhausting work of trying to survive in a world that has denied our existence or wants us dead. Our *jota/o* aesthetic interventions allow us to envision and create nonhomophobic geographies.

(pp. 184–185)

Jotería spaces therefore foment a sense of vulnerability in the classroom that shifts the culture of learning where queer Latinx and non-queer Latinx students alike are encouraged to explore the meaning of home and space. As Jotería, we push the boundaries of home to nurture students’ abilities to make home as they are. The classroom is used to reflect a model of home founded in love where fat bodies, disabled bodies, queer bodies, trans bodies, Indigenous bodies, and bodies of color (in all their intersections) co-exist and are celebrated. This is in line with Anzaldúa’s (1983) vision of left-handed world-making, that is the creation of a Mundo Zurdo where queer groups “live together and transform the planet” (*This Bridge Called My Back*, p. 209). We urge educators to take time in the classroom to expose, narrate, and transform students’ understanding of home, family, and space-making to disrupt a classroom space rooted in institutional violence and fear.

Towards Decolonizing Education

As Jotería-Muxerista scholars, we acknowledge the challenges of teaching in historically colonial and predominantly White institutions. As such, we have had to develop strategies to deal with the day to day violences and microaggressions that we face teaching in the classroom, walking through campus and attending faculty/administrative meetings. Moreover, building community with other

queer people of color and allies on and off campus has been life sustaining in our experiences. We do so in a way that enables us to blur the lines that the university reinforces. Xamuel Bañales (2014) examines the formation of Jotería as a political project that challenges Western thought. Put more specifically, Bañales utilizes coloniality discourses to situate queer Latinx and Chicana modes of thinking and being as central to the movement of decolonization. He further argues that “Jotería is an epistemological move toward personal and collective healing that seeks to transcend Western colonization’s dehumanizing drain” (p. 160). He therefore further highlights the possibilities of understanding Jotería as a political project linked to decolonization by its methodology that (1) utilizes art, activism, and scholarship to challenge dominant systems of power; (2) seeks unity of the mind, body, and spirit; (3) allows spaces and modalities that transcend resistance; and (4) provides transgenerational spaces. His work draws a direct link between the decolonial project and Jotería praxis.

Practicing Jotería-Muxerista pedagogies comes about in many forms. It is a way of resistance to all forms of oppression. However, understanding the power and privilege in our own positionality is a critical component of Jotería. It allows us to enter a space and see ourselves holistically. Jotería pedagogy challenges us to be critical of all social constructs and to question all alleged truths. Furthermore, it provokes us to interrogate the traditional ideals of a teacher/student relationship and norms within the classroom. Our Jotería reminds us of the importance of creativity in and out of academic spaces. Changing the paradigm of today’s educational structure is a key component of Jotería as it “speaks from the heart and is rooted in radical queer love” (Revilla & Santillana, 2014, p. 173). This presents itself when we teach students. By deconstructing the hierarchy between a teacher and student, we strive to build a community where everyone is critical of their positionality. We intentionally begin classes with check-ins, we create spaces where we can be vulnerable and voluntarily share how we feel at that moment. For us, vulnerability allows the relationships we create in class to transcend into a place where we are actively working towards trust and accountability.

We encourage educators to think critically about the place of all Western constructs in the classroom, and see time as an example of one faction of education that should be decolonized. Western modes of education teaches educators to think rigidly about time. We place value on negotiating timelines with attention to how race, class, gender, immigration, sexual identity, disability and other social categories alter students’ capacity to turn in assignments, be in the classroom, and participate in learning. For example, critical race sociologist Rahsaan Mahadeo (2019) demonstrates the ways youth of color perpetually lose time as they are required to perform physical and emotional labor to process the daily realities of racialization and other structural inequalities. As Jotería-Muxerista educators, we understand that time works against students from historically oppressed communities. Instead of punishing students, we reevaluate assignments appropriateness for students who are experiencing hardships as well as encourage dialogue and communication that supports students’ well-being outside of the classroom. In many ways, Jotería-Muxerista practices remedy time losses. At times, this means that we must radically shift our orientation towards the pedagogies we best see fit for students. We center students need not by university standards but by students’ standards.

In practice, decolonizing notions of Western time as well as space does not simply mean offering assignment extensions, it means student-teacher reflexivity that welcomes and enables everyone to contribute to how time operates and spaces are shaped in a collective setting. It means that educators frame time and space in such a way that they actively disrupt the presence of issues such as anti-Blackness, settler colonialism, capitalism, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, and other existing systems of colonial domination in the classroom, and do so in conjunction with larger decolonization movements led by Indigenous people organizing to reclaim stolen land, time, lives, and

resources. Interrogating notions of productivity, success, professionalism, and achievement coincide with dismantling multiple colonial power structures. When we allow, respect, honor, and create time and space for Black, Brown, and Indigenous students to cry and stop classroom lecture or discussion because the weight of the world is heavy, we disrupt white supremacy and heteropatriarchy. When we honor and respect working-class and poor students' classroom absences to take extra shifts to pay their bills, we disrupt capitalism. When we honor and respect queer, nonbinary, and trans students using the pronouns and names that align most with their spirit openly in our classes and their written work, we disrupt homophobia and transphobia.

Conclusion

As queer Chicana Latinx educators, artists, scholars and activists, we believe in the radical capacity of healing the wounds of this nation for our collective liberation. We believe in dismantling, disrupting, and transforming how we imagine education. *Jotería-Muxerista* love in the classroom, as we four imagine it, comes into being when we employ liberatory theories, methods, and strategies; we offer these to the world in the face of ongoing violence. These are not meant to be end all solutions within education; they are tools for inciting systematic transformation through queer, Black, Brown, Indigenous, and feminist modalities. The *Jotería-Muxerista* pedagogies we offer in this chapter are for anyone who seeks to be a co-conspirator in our vision for creating social, political, and economic justice within and outside of education.

The foundation of our work centers, uplifts, and validates queer Latinx and Chicana people and people of color in their experiences. Moreover, we identified four areas of inquiry that highlighted our personal teaching styles, and we shared our practices and vision. In the first section "Healing in the Classroom," we name racial battle fatigue, microaggressions, burnout, and spirit murder as major wounds within education as well as highlight what the path toward healing has looked like for *Jotería-Muxerista* educators, students, and communities. In section two, "Radical Accountability," we reexamine the student-teacher relationship through a deep consideration for thinking through radical listening and accountability that is attuned to ongoing tensions and conflicts in the classroom and other learning spaces. In section three, "*Jotería*, Home and Space-making," we discuss the nuances of bringing and creating home in the classroom through the value of both ethnic and queer cultural practices. In the last section, "Towards Decolonizing Education," we invite educators to reconsider everyday violences confronted by students of color through a conversation about decolonizing time and space. We offer these strategies as examples of our own *Jotería-Muxerista* pedagogical practices, which are rooted in our lived experiences and theoretical ruminations, and we welcome the opportunity to continue to expand these practices as many more of us enter the university and academia. We are certain that many classrooms, faculty spaces, and college and university-wide efforts will begin to shift as we successfully recruit, retain, sustain, and ensure the spirit restoration and protection of *Jotería* and *Muxerista* students and educators.

Notes

1. We use the term *Brown* as a political, racial, and cultural classification, because it speaks to the racialized experience of Latina/o/x people.
2. The benefit of Latinx or Chicana and other related words with an "x" (e.g., Lxs, Ellxs) is to be gender expansive in our language, providing a term that is inclusive of those who are transgender, nonbinary, or gender queer. These are important considerations given that Spanish and other romance languages are gendered through standard language conventions, particularly nouns, articles, indirect objects, and groups of people (M. de Onis, 2017). We use *Latinx* here to refer to people of Mexican, Caribbean, Central American, and South American origin, and the term *Chicana* to refer to people of Mexican descent living in the United States.

3. We use the word *expansive* in connection to gender and sexual identity because we acknowledge that feminist, queer, trans, and nonbinary communities are moving further and further away from static and restrictive gender and sexual identities that were initially framed by heteronormativity, cisnormativity, and Europatriarchy.
4. To be sexually fluid means that I give myself permission to have sexual and romantic relationships with any person regardless of their gender identity and/or genitalia. A muxer is a Chicana/Latina person and/or woman who identifies with a Muxerista politic and identity.
5. See www.ajaas.com.
6. Muxertor/muxertee, queertor/queertee, and jota-tor/jota-tee are terms of endearment that are playfully used within Jotería-Muxerista community. These words are intentional paradigmatic shifts away from words that are male-centered and patriarchal. While “mentor” and “mentee” are not formally gendered, there is a playful and intentional desire to disrupt patriarchal notions by removing the word *men* and replacing it with words and identities we are more closely aligned with. Revilla’s muxertorship intentionally takes a different approach to mentorship. Muxertorship rejects patriarchal paternalism and professionalism and instead uses intersectional feminism as a guide. For example, Muxertors and Jotería-tors (or Jotators) are rooted in familia-making, reject respectability and hierarchy, and have reciprocal student-teacher relationships.
7. Revilla discusses the concept of spirit murder here: <https://vimeo.com/232571581>. The phrase was coined by critical legal scholar Patricia Williams (1991).
8. This concept expands on the concept coined by William A. Smith of racial battle fatigue.

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