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Pedagogies of the Home and Terquedad in Transgender Parenting and Teaching

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Abstract: This counter-narrative utilizes pedagogies of the home (Garcia & Delgado Bernal, 2021; Delgado Bernal, 2001) and terquedad, or intentional resistance against dominant group norms (Salas-Santa Cruz, 2020) to illustrate how I transmit home-based lessons regarding oppression and liberation to my children and to my college-aged students. It demonstrates the importance of sharing counter-narratives with both groups, and illustrates how resistance and terquedad can be utilized to actualize social justice. I describe how I, as a Puerto Rican transgender parent and educator, use my body and lived experiences as text (Helton, 2020) for curriculum in my home and in my classroom to support a shared terquedad.

Introduction

The first memory I have of my gender took place when I was about four years old. I had been lying in bed between my parents watching the "Twilight Zone" when I stole away from the flickering black and white images on the screen and the usually watchful presence of my mom and dad. Because my mother knew that my too-long absence usually meant that I was engaged in mischief, she went to investigate my whereabouts. When she found me in my favorite hiding spot, a "fort-like" place under the living room end table, I was dry-shaving my face with my dad's razor. Horrified, she yelled, "You can't do that! You'll hurt yourself!" The next day, she returned with a gift: a plastic "Lil' Shaver" toy shaving kit with a colorful tray of "6 Safe Cartridges!" and a fake can of shaving cream. I squealed with delight upon its presentation and ran upstairs to the bathroom, where I meticulously applied Noxzema to my damp face, carefully stretching and contorting my face in the mirror as I shaved.

Reflecting on what my mother had done amazes me. When she discovered me under the table, she did not yell, "You can't shave because you're a *girl!*"[1] because her first instinct was to keep me safe—not to regulate my gender. She could have dismissed the shaving incident, but instead she creatively encouraged my shaving obsession despite a busy schedule and competing demands. A great deal of risk accompanied this encouragement. The socialization of gender is rife with stereotypes demonstrated through antiquated gender roles and reinforced by a system of rewards and punishments (Harro, 2018). Gender socialization in my Puerto Rican family revered male leadership and messages that expected "girls" and women to refrain from adopting any male rituals and behaviors. My father once threatened me with corporal punishment for whistling because "girls don't whistle, boys do!" Fully aware of the restrictions posed on girls and women by the male Latino authority figures in our family, my mother's overt support of my shaving was an act of terquedad, or intentional disregard for authority (Salas-SantaCruz, 2020) and in this case, patriarchal authority. This support would not be the first or only time that my mother flirted with the boundaries around racialized gender and so-called authority figures in our Puerto Rican family. When my father abandoned us early in my childhood, mom's identity as a single-mother thrust her into circumstances she had not anticipated. Without a template on how to raise three children and perform the duties of both a mother *and* a father, my mother resisted the trappings and restrictions of oppression by designing and embracing new worldviews.

While I always viewed my mother's instincts for our survival as a gift, I now see how she was doing more than following a "hunch" and manifesting what Cindy Cruz refers to as a brown body epistemology (Cruz, 2001). In embodying this epistemology, my mother's wisdom and knowledge were more profound and complicated than simply rejecting patriarchal boundaries. Instead, she was calling upon her demonstrated experiences of existing as a Puerto Rican woman and a mother and choosing how to bequeath her knowledge to her children. My mother was a living example of terquedad and what she taught us at home through her *terquedades*, pushed the gender and social norms dictated by familial and societal authoritarians. Mom's terquedad in the face of these expectations are models of what Delgado Bernal (2001) refers to as pedagogies of the home. These pedagogies are where cultural production in the household is transferred from caregiver to child, and utilized to resist oppressive structures.

As a single parent, mom was charged with preparing her children to encounter oppression in the real world. We

[1] I was AFAB (Assigned Female at Birth)

received *orgullo*[2]-filled messages about our marginalized identities. She loudly and proudly declared that she could perform the duties of two parents and work "like a man." As a single mother, she imparted lessons about racism and how whites held low expectations and high contempt for Puerto Ricans. I learned first-hand of the sentiments whites held about Puerto Ricans when someone I considered to be a friend informed me of their family exception on visitors. She explained that I was allowed in their home because I was not like "those" Puerto Ricans." Encounters like these reinforced my mother's instructions that we wildly exceed racial stereotypes and defy limitations held about Puerto Ricans, especially in the area of education. Instead of teaching us how to internalize oppressive messages about Puerto Ricans, mom reminded us of our cultural power. Her insistence on embracing and amplifying our Latinx culture was an act of terquedad against a culture whose racialized language seeks to devalue and demean. In referring to us as "minorities," and "subordinate," the dominant white culture sought for us to believe we could never be equal to our white peers. In our mother's lessons on the importance of working harder than these peers, she exemplified a brown body epistemology (Cruz, 2021). By utilizing this self-produced and embodied knowledge, she survived racist environments and imparted the skills crucial for our own survival and resistance. Her audacity to instill us with power against a system that endeavored to render us power*less* was her transmission of terquedad. With this framework of confronting power with power, my mother was establishing her own pedagogy, a pedagogy of the home (Delgado Bernal, 2001).

Her pedagogical approach was successful because through her modeling of a brown body epistemology and use of terquedad, I have inherited her ability to develop a pedagogy of my own. The *terquedades* she modeled influenced how I would approach my (still emerging) trans and established racial identity. It is through these *terquedades* that I can blur and reject boundaries and binaries across gender and race in schools and at home.

As a Puerto Rican, raised poor, Catholic, transmasculine person with invisible disabilities, the intersectionality of my social identities deepens and complicates my humanity. I am not just a trans man or just a person with invisible disabilities. I am a trans man who has to worry about where I can safely travel with my family if I need medical care in a state whose legislation demeans my dignity and discards my humanity. With increasing state legislation that targets where transgender students and adults can use restrooms and acquire gender-affirming medical care and a surge in anti-trans hate speech on social media (Lorenz, 2024; Compton, 2019), I do not take lightly the decision to submit this publication with my name and institutional affiliation. Yet, to challenge systems of oppression, and to be "*tercos*," we must name and confront the very fears that help to maintain these systems. Eliminating a void in the sharing and publishing of trans narratives and pedagogies is a matter of life and death for young people. Counterstories or accounts that give voice to and amplify the lived experiences of marginalized communities against mainstream and dominant narratives, are necessary to offer alternatives to suffocating and restrictive messages and binaries.

As the author, I challenge the reader to consider actions they can take to interrupt these messages and binaries. Two questions are at the fore of this challenge. First, how can parents from marginalized communities and educators impart pedagogies of the home within their families and school lives? Secondly, what can terquedad and resistance look like when actualizing these pedagogies? In this article, I demonstrate how counter-storytelling, as a decolonial pedagogical approach, is central to these questions. I will accomplish this through sharing my own counterstories, shaped through a brown body epistemology and manifested through my pedagogies of the home and a terquedad approach.

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

Terquedad

Terquedad is the method by which my pedagogies of the home are actualized. *Terquedad*, according to Omi Salas-SantaCruz, is defined as a "pluralist source of survival and resistance, but which has been used historically to describe willful defiance, stubbornness, misconduct, and insubordination to authority" (Salas-SantaCruz, 2020, p. 26). Making meaning of the "moments of *terquedad*" (p. 27) referencing the work of Gloria Anzaldúa, Salas-SantaCruz describes *terquedad* as a "praxis of embodied refusals" (p. 31) and a position sought by dominant groups to promote and impose assimilation. In interpreting Anzaldúa's text, Salas-SantaCruz also makes clear that the body is a central feature. I utilize this concept for two reasons. First, my pedagogies replicate the transmission of resistance from an authority figure with power (parent to child, and also in my case, teacher to student), and secondly, because resistance and *terquedad* are action-driven. My pedagogies are aligned with situating action in the brown body (and the trans brown body) (Cruz, 2001).

But what does a pedagogy the home manifested through *terquedad* look like in parenting and teaching? Such a pedagogy deliberately centers embodied experiences. As a parent and educator, my refusal to participate in the politics and practices of assimilation whether it be in my home or my classroom, are manifested through the traditionally and historically silenced experiences of marginalized communities. Therefore, this paper centers the brown trans body through a series of counterstories with the caveat that mine is only *one* story and does not represent the diversity within trans of Color spaces. As recounted and re-membered

[2] Pride

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embodied experiences, these counterstories present a challenge to white and cis attempts to stifle a subordinated perspective and allow for a more complete retelling of history (Garcia and Delgado Bernal, 2021). Re-membering is an example of a trans of Color critique that seeks to "complete a body of knowledge that has been dis-membered by white, Anglo queer theory" and is described as "an act of criticism and a political commitment to center trans of color people, forms of oppression, and resistance through decolonial feminist frameworks" (Salas-SantaCruz, 2021). Re-membering also interrogates the generational inheritance of gendered messages that promote binaried thinking. This method of counter-storytelling replicates terquedad in its deliberate refusal to replicate colonized methods of raced and gendered parenting and teaching. In my role as a parent and educator, I disrupt majoritarian narratives and colonized ways of being around race and gender by occupying and amplifying spaces in the margins. These marginal spaces are occupied by community and are a place of resistance and a site of "radical possibility" (Hooks, 1989, p. 20). Occupying marginal spaces is aligned with terquedad in that it rejects attempts at assimilation and honors identity and authenticity by existing on the periphery.

My ability to disrupt these narratives is not a haphazard action but something that comes from knowledge I have inherited and produced within my brown and trans body. Cindy Cruz's (2001) brown body epistemology framework provides a foundation for understanding this embodiment and manifestation of knowledge.

Brown body epistemology

I draw heavily from Cruz's brown body epistemology (Cruz, 2001), which provides a helpful structure for understanding my positionality as a Puerto Rican trans man. Cruz's brown body epistemology rejects master-narratives endorsed by white supremacy and asserts that "production of knowledge begins in the bodies of our mothers and grandmothers" (p. 658), and it maintains that the brown body has stories to tell that have been silenced by whiteness.

Although Cruz grounds her theorizing of brown body epistemology in Chicana lesbian identity, her exploration of her masculinity as a cis Latina lesbian helps me to articulate my own Puerto Rican trans identity. Cruz's framework assists me in sharing counterstories from my Puerto Rican brown body experience that have been silenced by whiteness, and counterstories from my trans identity that have been silenced by cisheteronormativity. Cruz's work also supports the notion that the brown body is regulated, and understanding the "regulation of its movements is fundamental in reclaiming narrative and developing radical projects of transformation" (p. 664). Highlighting marginalized narratives through pedagogies of the home is one method that engages a complete retelling of trans brown body experiences. This engagement occurs when the trans brown body is recognized as the producer of cultural knowledge and the container for the intersectionality of identities.

Pedagogies of the Home and (Re)Making Home

Dolores Delgado Bernal's groundbreaking work and theorizing of pedagogies of the home (2001) provided a preliminary framing of how Chicana parents generate cultural knowledge in the home that their children could utilize to confront oppression in their daily experiences within education. This initial work, while noteworthy, failed to include the lived experiences contained within the intersections of members of Latinx identities. For example, and critical to this article, is how the inherent cisheterogenderism in her early work did not account for the lived experiences and generation of cultural knowledge of queer and transgender families. Fundamental to the original work are curiosities that I, as a trans parent and educator have, such as "what is 'home'?" and "who gets to define 'home'?" In some instances, home can be a loaded concept if one's family rejects one's transness. In these cases, one cannot fully be simultaneously "at home" with family and within their authentic selves. The concept of family is also complicated as not all queer and trans youth are accepted by their families of origin. Revisiting pedagogies of the home, Garcia and Delgado Bernal (2021) grapple with themes Delgado Bernal's original work did not address (2001).

I build on the spirit of the original Delgado Bernal (2001) study, which focused on Chicana college students, while also adopting her updated work that is more identity-inclusive and expansive (Garcia & Delgado Bernal, 2021). Although her research focused on Chicana students, for the purpose of this article, I find that I can apply the concept to my experience as a transmasculine Puerto Rican parent. Her 2021 work is utilized to illuminate my experiences as a Puerto Rican *and* transgender parent and teacher. I demonstrate how I utilize the pedagogies I learned from my mother in my current parenting role, as well as my role as an educator. Due to the dearth of literature on personal trans of Color parent and educator experiences, I resist forcing this original model to fit my identities.

Instead, I adopt Garcia and Delgado Bernal's revisited application of pedagogies of the home (2021) because of the exploration of the concept of home and awareness of the need for critique. While in 2012, Delgado Bernal's pedagogy of the home framework failed to address the intersectionality of identities that included gender, the 2021 Garcia and Delgado Bernal revision of the earlier work is more inclusive and expansive. Acknowledging the conceptual complexities of "home," Garcia writes, "A lot of what we encounter in the 'home' is from the residue of white supremacy, patriarchy, and heteronormativity. I think venturing out of the 'home' is key because 'home' is not restricted to the nuclear family" (Garcia & Delgado Bernal, 2012, p. 568). In the amended pedagogies of the home, Garcia and Delgado Bernal write about

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"(re)making home" and describe it as "the process of cultivating a space of belonging that simultaneously provides the teaching and learning of social justice praxis" (Garcia & Delgado Bernal, 2021, p. 580).

As part of that social justice praxis that takes place within the home, centering the experiences of marginalized groups becomes key. Counterstories of parenting are crucial because as white supremacist culture places white parenting as dominant and promoted as the "norm," it renders other ways of parenting subordinate and invisible. Counter approaches decolonize white supremacist norms by centering knowledge production of brown bodies and intersectionality of experiences, which leads to shared learning and resistance. "Home-making" requires an approach of terquedad as home is not the location one has been assigned, but the space one creates and chooses thereby disregarding a restrictive understanding of "home." Because home can also exist in the body, home is mobilized to be anywhere we wish it to be. The embodiment of home, a home we carry within the self, deepens Cruz's (2001) framework of the brown body epistemology in how we literally carry our knowledge production inside of us. Therefore, the knowledge and pedagogies produced at home takes place in community and within our beings. The concept of pedagogies can also be revisited. Pedagogies and productions of knowledge do not rest with licensed or trained educators. This system enforces a false notion that positions recognized adults as the only reputable producers of knowledge. While Delgado Bernal's (2001) original framework centers caregivers as the architects of knowledge, young people can also possess this ability. Pedagogies of the home can take place in the home and in the classroom, by parents and teachers, but also in churches, clubs, athletics, and lunchrooms with lessons from trusted individuals outside the home with chosen family.

I cannot untangle and fully separate my brown body identity and my trans identity. As I see teaching as an act of social justice, I choose to disregard binaries that also attempt to separate my identity as a parent from my identity as a teacher. Young people and young learners have not traditionally occupied the seat of power. Education is an act of social justice because it disrupts a system of inequity maintained by advantages and disadvantages based on social identity. While the learning is differentiated for my children and my students, as a caregiver to both groups, the messages rooted in social justice are the same. As a professor of education, I know that pedagogical processes are taught, but the internal resistance, the *poder*[3] needed to withstand opposition to social justice, requires terquedad, (Salas-SantaCruz, 2020) or intentional disregard for oppressive authority. Counter-storytelling is the primary way in which I share examples of terquedad with my children and my students. This methodology honors my Puerto Rican and trans experiences.

Methodology

This article engages the counter-storytelling principle of Critical Race Theory (Matsuda, 1991) as a methodology. Counter-storytelling is a means of active resistance against a dominant narrative of the experiences of BIPOC individuals and communities. It creates spaces and amplification for the embodied truths of these marginalized communities (Santa-Ramirez, Vega, Hernández, & Montelongo, 2024; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Counter-storytelling and counter-narratives developed as "a method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 26) and are in opposition to dominant narratives. In other words, these counterstories offer a more complete account of experience as it illuminates the reality of historically subordinated communities thereby offering an analytical challenge to the majoritarian story. They also offer a type of resistance that legitimizes the experiences of marginalized groups as true, valued, and worthy, which is antithetical to a colonizing perspective. In shaping my counterstories, this paper is inspired from the work of trans scholars and educators Keenan (2017) and Helton (2020). In the area of education, both Keenan and Helton write about the trans body as the site of embodied knowledge and how the experience within the trans body can become both the pedagogy and the text. I present the wisdom of these scholars later in this paper.

The counter-storytelling principle is also employed here in sharing the subordinated perspectives from the trans and trans of Color experience. Counter-storytelling is the most appropriate methodological choice as it aligns with terquedad (Salas-SantaCruz, (2020), brown body epistemology (Cruz, 2001), and pedagogies of the home (Delgado Bernal, 2001; Garcia & Delgado Bernal, 2021) frameworks presented in this paper. The counterstories that I share are generated from the knowledge I produce and hold in my body as a Puerto Rican transgender man. These lessons I share are utilized to confront and survive racism and cisheteronormativity. The teachings I impart to my children at home and my college students are manifested in my pedagogies of the home, the guidance I offer through my embodiment as Puerto Rican and trans man, and modeling how to use resistance to work for liberation. Finally, counter-storytelling is an act of terquedad. White supremacy designed the genocide of my ancestors, the Taíno people, and transphobia poses constant threats to my survival as a transgender man, and my presence in the face of these treats is to be honored. As Lucille Clifton (1993) wrote, "come celebrate with me that everyday something has tried to kill me and has failed" (lines 11-14). My resistance to succumb to these extortions, my obstinate commitment to exist, and my audacity to share my counterstories defy the systems that call for my extinction. Counterstories ensure that the voices and

[3] Power

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experiences of historically marginalized groups are immutable.

This paper introduces counterstories that also highlight moments of terquedad. These counterstories have themes I have received from my mother, revised for my own children and students, and used to describe resistance to racism, social constructions of gender, and transphobia. I have chosen to focus on these particular themes as they reflect the social identities most salient in the lives of my children and my college students. As a pedagogue, these counterstories are a part of my pedagogies of the home and classroom. I engage theoretical implications for these pedagogies in my parenting and teaching to frame my counterstories.

Counterstories and Theoretical Implications

Counterstory 1: My Childhood: Race and Gender Pedagogies of the Home

The Author as a Child

The lessons my mother imparted about race and gender, the expectations she held for us, and the habits she instilled in us, reflect Delgado-Bernal's (2001) "pedagogies of the home." It is important to understand my positionality and origin story of race and gender as these early messages and experiences inform my practices as a parent and an educator, and why I demonstrate a terquedad on both my home fronts of my children and my students. My mother's initial pedagogies of the home lacked the vocabulary of liberation and oppression, much less specific gender-based terminology, so we all bore witness to the sexism and gender violence my father subjected her to with no access to a theoretical framing.

In my childhood, I held two different versions of my mother. The first was one who was experiencing physical domestic violence, donning sunglasses and long sleeves to conceal evidence of her weekly beatings. She was not alone in the community of women in my family, as my aunts also had silent rituals around the violence they experienced. It was so obvious, and yet none of the women ever spoke of it at the family barbecues and holiday parties where their husbands had too much to drink, seeking to publicly humiliate them through a self-proclaimed and socially sanctioned right to "discipline" their wives. After the night that my mother fought back and demanded that my father leave, she vowed to fight any man who would dare to raise his hand to her. Her liberation from my father inspired my aunts to follow suit and a new community of single mothers emerged.

As a single mother, she taught me about gender in ways that simultaneously conformed to and rejected notions of a gender binary. On holidays, my sister and I were dressed up and held to expectations around sitting "like a lady," but I was also supported in my penchant for playing ball and climbing trees. My mother seamlessly moved between socialized gender roles and norms in ways that simultaneously modeled and embodied both power and vulnerability. When my father abandoned his role as a parent, my unpartnered mother assumed my father's socially constructed gender roles. Self-taught, she fixed small machines, patched up household electrical issues, installed drywall, laid down flooring, and took on a larger role as a disciplinarian. We witnessed her embody a full range of emotions, demonstrate incredible tenderness, and beautify our home with items she had crafted or thrifted. She personified the expectations of a "father" and a "mother," and with that personification, a blurring of socially constructed gender. The lessons my mother taught me through centering her body, offering her body as the text and context, inspired me to "encourag[e] gender play, physical presence, and attentiveness to the physical being" (Helton, 2020, p. 28). My mother embodied terquedad in her ability to exist as a cis Latina and exhibit a fluidity of gender in an otherwise gender binaried world.

This fluidity marked a stark contrast between lessons learned at home about gender and the lessons I learned during my Catholic school upbringing. At school, gender was marked by strict expectations regarding dress and roles. Girls had to wear skirts, the lengths of which were measured to monitor modesty, while I glowered at the boys who got to wear slacks and ties. "Traditional" gender roles, performed and sanctioned, my religious education mirrored the societal expectations of gender roles and relationships. Priests assumed leadership roles within the church and school, leading religious services, and acting as guests of honor at school assemblies. These gender performances reflected the negative gender pedagogies I learned at home and reinforced them. Contrarily, nuns assumed helping roles by creating welcoming spaces for the priests, setting the altar, and acting as harsh disciplinarians. The boys were allowed to be at the altar fulfilling enviable roles as altar boys, but in the 1970s and 1980s, my church had no altar girls. The male leader of the church held the ultimate authority which placed him as the immediate intercessor between parishioners and God.

In contrast, my mother willfully disobeyed the church's teachings and gendered expectations; and she was particularly loud and public about her defiance. While seated in a pew in the Holy Rosary Church, she declared she did not believe in the Catholic Sacrament of Confession because, as she put it, "Why should I confess my sins to a *man*?! A woman can talk to God the same way a man can!" Rejecting the limitations and curated messages imposed by racism and white supremacy that stereotyped Puerto Ricans as uneducated and lazy, she emphasized the importance of study habits and a good education, and held three jobs to support my siblings and me. As parents and teachers, we impart wisdoms with hopes and dreams pinned to them, but we do not always know what becomes of that knowledge-sharing. How did my mother's lessons leave a lasting impact on her children?

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Theoretical Implications

In disrupting society's limits on gender and race, my mother passed on lessons that upended our family's previous socializations. My brother learned that men can be nurturing, and my sister and I learned that women were limitless and powerful. Where racism demanded that Puerto Ricans feel shame about our historically marginalized identity, my mother beamed with Puerto Rican pride and instilled that pride in us. Where sexism set boundaries on vulnerability and strength, my mother aptly shattered those boundaries. Mom's defiance of stereotypes, especially her ability to assert her power against male violence; determination to raise scholars of Color and demonstrated engagement in our education; zero-tolerance stance on racial epithets; and resistance against dominant narratives that Puerto Ricans are "not involved" in education reflected my mother's terquedad, or the rejection of the directives of the status quo.

As Salas-SantaCruz (2020) notes, this terquedad is "a resistance subjectivity at the level of gestures when confronted with the cultural violence of gender dualism and other forms of a dichotomous self" (p. 27). My mother's pedagogies, centered in her body, supported by multiple gestures of her terquedad, and buoyed by her racial production of knowledge (Cruz, 2001) presented a roadmap for the young person I was and the man I am becoming. My mother's lessons illustrated the arbitrary nature of binaries in the realms of race and gender. Her demonstrated terquedad in the tangible act of physically defending herself against my father returned all of us to a pre-colonial reality where the indigenous Taíno women native to Puerto Rico cared for the family *and* could also be tribal chiefs, where they created art, and they were also warriors. My mother's pedagogy of the home (Garcia & Delgado Bernal, 2021; Delgado Bernal, 2001) extended beyond her children and was a pedagogy offered to the women in our family who followed my mother's messages on self-defense and self-determination. Throughout her life, whenever my mother secured justice for herself, she guided others to access it for themselves. Lacking formal education and analysis to enact this pedagogy, it was clear that her knowledge production occurred in her body and through her lived experiences (Cruz, 2001). My mother's teachings on the multiplicities of identity and shared liberation are those I invite in my own life, both in my teaching roles at home and in my classroom.

Counterstory 2: My Parenting: Pedagogies of the Home: Addressing Gender

The Author as a Parent

Eight years after my mother's passing, grief and nostalgia force me into a reflective place, one where I draw on the comparisons and contrasts between the parenting that was modeled for me, and the parenting I choose to embody. My mother lacked vocabulary for gender oppression and racism, so how did she know to act in the ways that she did to resist dominant systems? As I lie awake many nights worrying about my own children and how to interrupt—or coach them to interrupt—oppression in their lives, I think of how my mother must have done the same. My mother acted on her brown body epistemology and the cultural knowledge she relied on as a product of her indigeneity. The act of resisting injustice requires a terquedad that surpasses the knowledge that an act is unjust. My mother's life would have been so much easier had she just conformed to the prescribed socializations. When I was accepted into college and decided to move out of state almost 200 miles away with no safety net of family, my mother's sister demanded to know why she would "kick me" out of the home and punctuated that with "only white people kick their kids out of the house!" My mother did not relent or demur but pressed ahead with my plans to leave home for college. She convinced that same sister to host my going away party. She embodied a brown body epistemology in following her instincts to let me go and a terquedad in remaining unbowed to familial and societal boundaries that dictated which racial groups could and could not gain an education away from home.

My mother's lack of a formal education spurred her sacrifices to ensure I had what she did not. I had always wanted to be a parent, but what I did not predict was that I would be the parent to three *white* children. Although my mother embodied a brown body epistemology and terquedad, she did not have the access to language to confront oppressive systems. However, the sacrifices she made to ensure I enjoyed a formal education afforded me the power to strengthen my brown body epistemology with theoretical frameworks.

In my parenting, I can now employ this combination of analysis. My children's racial identity negated their ability to intuit racism in the ways that I could, and so they would need to be *taught* about racism, not for their survival, but to use their privilege to dismantle it. I now transmit the vocabulary and action taking my children need to resist and dismantle oppression.

For example, dialogues on race with my daughter, Lex, began as soon as she was born. My family and I spoke to her in both English and Spanish, and she was exposed to a variety of foods and family, languages and literatures. Her more formal education around racism began when she was around three years old, and she decided that her favorite movie was Disney's *Pocahontas*. During one of her many viewings of that film, I asked her about Captain John Smith and why he had come to the land that Pocahontas and her family resided on. I expressed curiosity on how she felt about the derogatory names the Powhatan were being called and how they were being treated. I asked what it would feel like for someone to come and take her home away from her. I did not want Lex to feel ashamed of the movie she loved, but I did want her to learn to think critically about it. I wanted her to use her white privilege to benefit others and to know that if she had a friend who was different based on race and/or ethnicity and that friend was being mistreated, Lex had more options than to

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remain silent and hopeless. The liberatory approach I take with Lex mirrors what I offer my students because I know that "young people are quite ready to engage in this work of an/other world-making" (Helton, 2020, p. 25). My mother did not leave a blueprint for dissolving systems of oppression. She did not need to erect signposts as her lived example provided an ample model of what was expected of us. While, as a parent, I did not have a critical thinking or conceptual model to draw from, I know collusion with the system of oppression was not an alternative.

Mom's influence on my pedagogies and demonstrations of terquedad can be observed in other aspects of my daily life and parenting. My intentional parenting style and transness reflect a conscious and blatant disregard for the gender admonitions issued by the men who held authority in my family (Salas-SantaCruz, 2020).

I am currently most impacted by mom's embrace of a "both/and" approach to gender. Most significant is the fact that five years into my hormone replacement therapy (HRT), I am still being "read" as female. I elected to have top surgery, my voice has dropped, the shape of my face has become more angular, and I have facial hair. Despite wearing clothes personally aligned with my gender identity and having a physique that translates as "male," I am still addressed as "Miss" or referred to as "she" or "her" or "ella." I have come to attribute my misgendering as part of my absolute refusal to conform to outdated gender norms and my intentional resistance to binaries portraying women as kind and open and men as closed-off and cold. My mother's messages about gender were dispensed to teach her daughters how to confront the system of sexism, and she was absolute about wanting to raise strong, educated, and independent Puerto Rican women. My sister and I received consistent messages that as girls, were never to think of ourselves as weaker or subordinate to boys. In her opinion, and on her insistence, we could do anything a boy could do, and we could do it better. On one occasion, I demonstrated that I understood her message when I burst through the door of our home waving my signed "Presidential Fitness Award" and boasting to my mother that I did the most pull ups in my class "and even beat all the boys!"

I no longer have the desire to demonstrate my physicality of engage in feats of herculean strength, but I am still dealing with social constructions of gender in my home. As my emerging authentic self encompasses lessons from my past self, my mother's example continues to appear in my parenting. After some minor infraction a few years ago, my son, Quincy, and I grappled with issues of masculinity and gender. I was lecturing him on the kind of "man" he should want to grow up to be and started asking if he wanted to be a man who was honest, hard-working, and reliable. I had a good laugh when I realized that the attributes I was assigning to good "men" were also words I have used to describe my mother. Such moments with my children have been opportunities for a gender-based pedagogy of the home, where I have actively resisted the familial machismo narratives regarding gender roles and expectations. In these moments I realize that I too, am still unlearning unhelpful pedagogies of the home around gender.

Reflecting on the racialized and gendered pedagogies of the home that I received is "a means to call on the past to resist the present" (Salas-SantaCruz, 2020, p. 23) and these pedagogies are present as I consciously design my parenting and teaching. But how do these reflections inform my present-day reality?

Theoretical Implications

I now see that understanding my masculinity and defining what it meant to be a Puerto Rican man was informed and internalized by witnessing my mother's experiences with race and gender. One caregiver does not solely teach pedagogies of the home, and what is left is not necessarily positive (Garcia & Delgado Bernal, 2021). While mom imparted empowering messages in her pedagogies of the home, I also studied negative pedagogies from the cismen in my family and examples of what *not* to be. With that, I committed to embody the values of a Puerto Rican spouse capable of communicating with his wife; resisting gender roles that hold binaries and hierarchies; demonstrating tenderness and vulnerability while still prioritizing family; rejecting partner violence and modeling feminist ideals to my two daughters *and* my son. My practice of resistance against patriarchal expectations was one I learned from my mother whose embodied acts of resistance disrupted trite notions of gender roles. My mother's disruptions are explained by Salas-SantaCruz's (2021) assertion that acts of terquedad are informed by the application of counter-narratives. My mother, who demonstrated a fluidity of gender roles, used counter-narratives to convey her fears and vulnerabilities while conveying how she overcame insecurities to work for justice.

Unlike my days as a child, as a parent, I am privileged to accept more possibilities around gender, and my terquedad provides "a means to call on the past to resist the present" (Salas-SantaCruz, 2021, p. 27). As a Puerto Rican child, I learned to respect the authority of adults regardless of their proximity. The Puerto Rican men in my childhood subscribed to deep-seated beliefs that girls and women were to submit to the will of boys and men and perform prescribed gender roles. Older male family members never openly disparaged my lesbian cousins, but behind closed doors, my queer cousins were mocked and privately accused of "wanting to be men." Meanwhile, public taunts and humiliation awaited boys or men who showed any perceived weakness for "acting like girls." Knowing how I experienced limitations due to gender binaries in my childhood, I offered something different in my role as a parent. My children and I are beneficiaries of a both/and approach to gender as I witnessed my mother take on roles as a mother and a father. My children experienced me as "Mamí" before my medical and social transition and now know me as their "Baba." In my childhood, I experienced my mother as a mother and a father, and my parenting exhibits an expansion of gender and parenting. With this approach, my children

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inherited the freedom that comes with the invitation and the ability to be one's authentic self.

My trans parenting presents opportunities for a transgender pedagogy of the home that is actualized by terquedad. I discredited easily digested socially constructed roles (although it would have made for simpler dinner conversations). Instead, I purposefully avoid titles like "Dad" because I do not embody or connect to that identity. Being "Baba" allows a fluidity where I can choose and define my roles within my gender identity, and in choosing to "exist openly" in my body (Helton, 2020, p. 28), I invite my body to be "an expressive site and vehicle of healing" (Helton, 2020, p. 28) from experiencing negative pedagogies of the home. My calculated self-definition is a staunch rejection at attempts to assimilate my body and my gender. In modeling these choices for my children, they experience a reimagined home affording them the ability to make similar choices.

Counterstory 3: My Teaching: Pedagogies of the Home in the Classroom

The Author as an Educator

I learned to be a better educator in my parenting role by facing challenging questions and scenarios. My pedagogies of the home are manifested as counterstories in my classroom, allowing the modeling of vulnerability and offering all of my students an invitation for self-reflection (Cáraves, 2020); for my trans students, specifically, my representation in the classroom makes a critical difference. This approach reflects the pedagogies of the home imparted by my mother and realized through my clear and purposeful terquedad. My mere *existence* is an act of willful resistance and disobedience, especially in a political climate determined to extinguish trans youth and adults (Kinney, Pearson & Ralston, 2022). Showing up to teach my students every day, despite how I am deadnamed, misgendered, and misrepresented makes me a terco as I "contest oppression through embodied refusals" (Salas-SantaCruz, 2020, p. 26) and resist internalized oppression and assimilationist mandates. These mandates and expectations suggest that I accept dominant ideals as the norm. However, my experiences in my trans brown body are of value to those who seek examples on how to resist these norms. Representation matters, and showing up in my brown trans body and being my authentic self has made a difference to my students.

As a faculty member who occasionally sports bow ties, I have received notes and messages from gender non-conforming students who expressed gratitude for having a teacher who looks and dresses "like them." At the student level, I have witnessed the bravery of what was initially just a few students sharing their experiences of being trans on campus. It was their courage that inspired me to come out, and in exchange, how I chose to live my life became an embodied text. Although I teach a module on gender identity, as a teacher, "we teach our students what's important less by the lessons we teach than in the way in which we live our lives" (Helton, 2020, p. 30). What a gift to be able to demonstrate that an open and accepting life is internally and outwardly possible.

Unfortunately, not all of my student interactions regarding gender have been positive. After the first day of class, when I had introduced my name and pronouns (at the time, I was using they/them pronouns), a cisgender white student approached me and asked, "Are you *sure* those are your pronouns?" I politely informed her that she would be the first to know if I ever changed my mind. I am no stranger to challenges by white students on my credentials, authority to teach a course, or even my grasp of the very concepts I am teaching. However, a student has never questioned my own sense of self. It seemed impossible to my white, cisgender college student that I could know my gender better than she could. I echo Keenan's (2017) assertion of trans folks that, "I am an expert on trans identity simply because I live in a trans body" (p. 551). Since I have been personally and institutionally excluded as "one of the boys," the absence of texts on transphobic experiences forces me and trans folks like me to offer "texts of ourselves" (Helton, 2020, p. 28) and amplify the need for counterstories.

This willingness to share my counterstories did not come naturally. Although I was teaching courses on social justice education and was quite comfortable imparting personal narratives related to race, I lacked the terquedad needed to come out and occupy my transness and spent time disguising myself as an ally to trans students. I witnessed the bravery and defiance of my trans students, but I was choking on my own internalized transphobia and fear. It was finally my students' courage and terquedad that sparked mine. I could not shake the truth that the transphobia I experienced paled in comparison to what my students faced. I could no longer wait for the work of my trans students to make my experience better. Combined with my students' resistance to silence and invisibility, and my reluctance to keep myself a secret in what was once a "women's college," ours became a *shared terquedad.* My "coming out" story is shared with students, and I initiate the counter-storytelling sharing process as it creates "non-hierarchical, critical spaces for both students and teachers to learn." I become a "bridge builder between different worlds" (Cáraves, 2020, p. 111). Building bridges across difference can be a solitary process, but what does this building process have to teach parents, children, teachers, and learners?

Theoretical Implications

The general lesson of the pedagogies of my home was that I possessed the resilience to survive and move through various types of oppression. My experience of being a Puerto Rican trans man is only something that my co-conspirators (Love, 2019) and I can fully understand. Instead of offering my students a third-hand account of a brown bodied trans experience, openly naming the specific gender identity hurdles I have overcome, humanizes the curriculum. It also echoes the

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messages I received through my mother's pedagogies on disrupting oppressive narratives and norms. These pedagogies of the home and demonstrated terquedad would also follow me into the classroom, where they pertained to racism, gender oppression, and their intersections.

Dialogues about oppression and resistance have implications for the survival of historically marginalized groups, and my practice of terquedad are non-negotiable aspects of my pedagogy. One such critical dialogue is about race. I believe my white children and white students must also receive education regarding their racial privilege and what they can do to end racism. Just as it is essential for me to offer counterstories at home, my students also receive this curriculum as I share personal experiences with microinvalidations (Sue et al., 2007). Sharing my counterstories invites my BIPOC and trans students to share, center, and validate their own experiences. Marginalized groups are well aware of our subordinated status, but bringing counterstories into the classroom reminds us all of our power and agency.

My counterstories that personalize and underscore my curriculum on racism are not always well-received or welcome. Just as I embody intimate knowledge about my transness, I also embody that knowledge about my Puerto Ricanness and the infinite ways I have learned to "read" some white behaviors. This form of "knowing" (Tatum, 2017) has been developed throughout my lifetime in my identities as Puerto Rican and trans. As a teacher, I can "read" my students, and through various assessments, I can recognize students' voices in their academic writing and my teaching evaluations. More often than not, I represent a racial, gender, disability, and socio-economic minority in the classroom. In addition to assigned texts, counterstories are also used to bring real-life accounts of oppression into the room and amplify absent voices and perspectives.

When I read their course evaluations of my teaching, I "hear" the voices of my white students when they say, "Professor Matos shares too many stories," and students dismiss counterstories that are pedagogical choices. The course content is undoubtedly challenging, as I am instigating disruptions to what students have been socialized to view as truth (Helton, 2020). While I certainly do not grade students based on their alliance with my ideals, some white students have participated in utilizing my performance evaluations–that affect my tenure–to contain and silence racial and minoritized counterstories.

This example is one of the ways white, cis, and other dominant-identity-based students are supported in using their privilege by using tools provided by the institution to reference and disregard counterstories as indulgent and irrelevant. These messages are part of the "administrative and institutional 'moves' made to silence important racial, class-based, gendered, and sexuality-based 'deviations' from the normative 'givens' of school" (Helton, 2020, p. 23). While the most vocal white students have taken issue with honest and personal accounts of racism, BIPOC students' express gratitude for feeling seen and represented by bringing personal experiences of racism into the room as part of my pedagogical practice. However, counterstories derived from my Puerto Rican history are not seen as valued because they are not privileged as a master-narrative. A culture that prioritizes the master-narrative reinforces academic, recognizable, and dominant pedagogical "norms" such as lecturing about peer-reviewed texts.

Suggested Pedagogical Re-Orientations

These are unprecedented perilous times for trans people and further complicated for trans BIPOC. Phenotypical markers of race cannot be obscured, and gender is heavily policed in restrooms, athletics, and classrooms. To be out as transgender and to deny our transness are both lethal choices. I return the reader to my initial challenge to consider how parents and educators can impart pedagogies of the home within their families and school lives and what terquedad and resistance can look like when actualizing these pedagogies.

This challenge is answered in how we have no choice but to share and become our counterstories. As transgender parents, concealing our gender identity presents our children with a detrimental pedagogy of the home in that it suggests our lives are not worthy of living and we embody something deserving of shame. As transgender educators, muting our counterstories colludes with the dominant discourse that there is no place or space where we can exist. It transmits messages to our trans students that they, too, are left without a "home." It is critical, then, that we connect to our capacity to reimagine home for ourselves and to invite students into freedom dreaming (Kelley, 2002; Love, 2019) and freedom planning of what a future free of transgender oppression and racism can hold. To accomplish this requires a commitment to be tercos, to refuse to be hidden away, pathologized, assimilated, and worse.

No matter how messy, parents must initiate dialogues with their children that serve the curiosities they hold about themselves, and to empower young people with the necessary resources and vocabulary to give voice to their experiences and engage in change making. Teachers must also embody a pedagogy of the home that requires a method of terquedad. This approach must be blatantly present in all educational spaces and to model that bravery, which in turn provides exemplars of identity for our students. Practically speaking this means ensuring that the realities of the trans experience and existence is reflected in the actual classroom space, in the curriculum, and in the nurturing that trans educators provide when we engage in solidarity with our students in forging new realities. We are tercos when we insist on honoring student names, pronouns, and identities. We are tercos when we believe students when they say another teacher or administrator has refused to validate their identity. We are tercos when we examine whose voices are missing in our

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curriculum and we secure resources to ensure those experiences are accounted for in the classroom. We are tercos when we hold space for students, advocate for them, and promise one another that we will not consent to our erasure. We are tercos when we believe students when they tell us who they are.

Often, parents and educators need direction about where to begin dialogues on oppression and liberation in the interest of saying the "right thing." As a longtime educator, I can share that no lesson plan and no pedagogical design is ever perfect, but every lesson plan and curricular blueprint needs a starting point. Fortunately, parents and educators can consider dialogues with young people on racism and other forms of oppression as "first drafts." These need not be perfect dialogues where all questions are answered and all problems are solved. If facilitated successfully, the dialogues are open-ended and can be revisited and further complicated. The only prerequisites for holding these dialogues are one's own lived experiences and reflection on those experiences, this is the knowledge production that helps us move with terquedad. Parents and educators with social identity privilege can share what they have learned about their identities and how their decisions on what to do with those privileges affect minoritized social identity groups. Personal hesitations and successes in utilizing privilege to advance social justice can be shared.

Parents and educators from marginalized social groups can share their counterstories and experiences from that perspective. Sharing reflections on the knowing that motivated and activated their resistance and terquedad can be discussed. In both instances, sharing these pedagogies of the home and the terquedad required to work for social justice can be used as personal accounts to provide examples to young people of the options for action available to them. As first drafts, these imperfect dialogues are more authentic and are aligned with how "terquedad has an aesthetic. It is messy, defiant, unbound, clumsy, porous, complex, and conflicted" (Salas-SantaCruz, 2020, p. 32). As "adults" demonstrate that these are complicated dialogues, they can also demonstrate vulnerability and invite that vulnerability in their young people (Cáraves, 2020).

Despite the potential societal repercussions of unapologetic terquedad, the absence of such a stance holds a personal price too great to bear as a parent and educator in my trans brown body. Just as I inherited pedagogies of the home about race and gender from my mother, through her sacrifices, I deepened them, and I work to ensure that my children and students are beneficiaries of that legacy. I impress upon both groups that their own terquedad and conscious resistance are key to achieving liberation in their lifetimes and ensuring it for future generations. Resistance alone is not enough, and what every great civil rights movement has had at their disposal has been stronger than any racist or transphobic ideology or legislation, and that is *hope*. In my parenting and teaching, hope is the ignition, and resistance is the accelerant.

Resistance acknowledges that there is more work to be done. Resistance through utilization of our bodies as text (Helton, 2020), when it comes to race and gender, is one of the most important lessons that we transmit to both our children and students. Disruptions of binaries and boundaries afford them unique opportunities to imagine, design, and facilitate new realities where human beings are limitless in our possibilities. Teachers do not bring disparate parts of ourselves into the classroom, and as such, we cannot separate our race from my gender but come to this endeavor as our whole selves. As a descendant of Taínos, who Columbus tried to annihilate, and as a transman whose actual body is subject to legislation and genocide, the simple act of being alive is an act of deliberate resistance. Every manifestation of this resistance is not bodiless (Cruz, 2001), and through my *being*, my teaching comes alive, and I become both the pedagogy *and* the text through my counterstories. My ancestors and I will continue to exist as long as we tell our counterstories and teach them to our children. This resilience requires a terco pedagogy of the home where knowledge and action achieve a synergy that counters normative discourses of the self. This pedagogy calls forth the action of knowing. This knowing, drawn from lived experiences in our queer brown bodies, resists markers of white supremacy that honor the written word over the oral narrative and paternalism over the value of indigeneity and other knowledges (Jones & Okun, 2001).

Conclusion

These other knowledges introduced by pedagogies of the home can be used to share counterstories related to marginalized social identities. These embodied pedagogies are also significant examples of the diversity within the experiences of subordinated groups and are applicable to the experience of brown bodies and trans bodies. While this approach is valuable within home settings, it is also impactful in educational settings, with the understanding that counterstories offer a more complete perspective of the diversity within the human experience. As Harper Keenan (2017) states, "There is no universal queer or trans experience or language" (p. 539). Trans pedagogies ultimately reject universality and embrace many possibilities in the classroom. Helton shares how the queer pedagogue uses their body to resist dominant norms by "inviting the body *in*: the body as canvas, the body as text, the body as an expressive site and vehicle of healing" (Helton, 2020, p. 28). As an educator, this creates an embracing and inclusive pedagogy that allows space that transcends binaries.

Left to question is how non-gestational trans and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) parents teach their cis-white children about race and gender. Describing my parenting through counterstories (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) allows me to share my personal experiences as a parent who identifies as a person of Color (specifically Puerto Rican) within a historical and contemporary context of racism in the United States (Ellis et al., 2011; Pennington, 2007; Pennington & Brock, 2012). It also allows me to speak to my experiences

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as a transgender parent and educator of Color. While other scholars have broached the subject of being a trans educator (Keenan, 2017; Helton, 2020) and as a trans educator of Color in higher education (Cáraves, 2020; Salas-SantaCruz, 2020), absent from existing literature is an account of embodying the experiences of marginalization and oppression as a Latinx trans parent and educator of color in higher education.

As a trans man of Color, I have learned to reject binaries in all aspects of my life. I see myself as multidimensional, and therefore, I see those with whom I am in community in the same way. My refusal to embrace binaried thinking means that I am a parent who teaches my children and who has also learned many life lessons from them. I am a teacher who instructs my students on racism and other forms of oppression, yet, they have taught me new ways of being and vulnerability. Actualizing a refusal of binaries requires resistance and terquedad (Salas-SantaCruz, 2020), which requires dedicated and intentional non-negotiable positionality on rejecting oppression and binaried thinking. Affording my children and students a similar priority in shared pedagogies of the home and shared terquedad demonstrates the rejection of binaried either/or practices and is an invitation to inclusivity and expansion.

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