

CHICANA POETRY OF RESISTANCE: GALVÁN RODRÍGUEZ
EXTENDING THE MESTIZA CONSCIOUSNESS AND ENCOURAGING POLITICAL
ACTIVISM THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

by

Nicole Crevar

April, 2018

Director of Thesis: Dr. Marame Gueye

Major Department: English

This thesis presents an analysis of Chicana poetry of resistance by poet and activist Odilia Galván Rodríguez. Specifically, I examine three poems—“Geographic Dreaming or What it Means to be Chicana,” “Collecting Thoughts from the Universe,” and “Poem 25 ~ Giving Voice”—to argue how contemporary Chicana poetry represents a form of, and a precursor to, political action and community activism. Underpinning my analysis are Gloria Anzaldúa’s Borderlands theory and Barbara Harlow’s theory of resistance literature. Through her poetry, Galván Rodríguez extends Anzaldúa’s conception of the mestiza consciousness into the twenty-first century context by meeting Anzaldúa’s vision for Chicanas to not just react, but *act* against the social injustices that continue to plague those living at the U.S.-Mexico borderland. Galván Rodríguez seeks to educate the dominant hegemonic culture about the reality of violence and oppression at the borderland in order to actualize change. To meet this goal and reach a broader audience, the poet disseminates her poetry of resistance through social media. Harnessing the power of digital communities, Galván Rodríguez encourages Chicanas and those in the dominant culture to work in solidarity and actively construct a more inclusive society that reflects the tenets of equality and justice for all in the United States.

CHICANA POETRY OF RESISTANCE: GALVÁN RODRÍGUEZ
EXTENDING THE MESTIZA CONSCIOUSNESS AND ENCOURAGING POLITICAL
ACTIVISM THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the Department of English
East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in English
Multicultural and Transnational Literatures

by

Nicole Crevar

April 2018

© Nicole Crevar, 2018

CHICANA POETRY OF RESISTANCE: GALVÁN RODRÍGUEZ
EXTENDING THE MESTIZA CONSCIOUSNESS AND ENCOURAGING POLITICAL
ACTIVISM THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

by
Nicole Crevar

APPROVED BY:

DIRECTOR OF THESIS:

Maramé Gueye, Ph.D.

COMMITTEE MEMBER:

Richard Taylor, Ph.D.

COMMITTEE MEMBER:

Andrea Kitta, Ph.D.

CHAIR OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH:

Marianne Montgomery, Ph.D.

DEAN OF THE
GRADUATE SCHOOL:

Paul J. Gemperline, Ph.D.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family and friends for their love and support through my academic endeavors. In particular, I am most grateful for my sister, Cheyanne, who has continued to encourage, support, and motivate me to do my best, be my best, and settle for nothing less than what I deserve and work for.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis director, Dr. Gueye, for her invaluable guidance throughout the thesis process. Additionally, I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. Taylor and Dr. Kitta, for their feedback on my thesis and suggestions for further research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1: CHICANA IDENTITY AND RESISTANCE IN “GEOGRAPHIC DREAMING OR WHAT IT MEANS TO BE CHICANA”	10
CHAPTER 2: REACTION AS RESISTANCE IN “COLLECTING THOUGHTS FROM THE UNIVERSE”	30
CHAPTER 3: TAKING ACTION IN “POEM 25 ~ GIVING VOICE”	49
CONCLUSION.....	68
WORKS CITED	74

INTRODUCTION

Since the formation of the United States as a Western nation, ethnic minority groups have continuously struggled against oppression from the dominant White hegemonic culture. In particular, those living along the borderlands of the United States and Mexico have faced the social, economic, and political ramifications of having their land and rights taken away from them. As a result of the “long legacy of political and cultural exclusion” (Oboler 121), Mexican American, or Chicanx, people have endured countless acts of discrimination and inequality based on being perceived as the “foreign other.” In reality, a large portion of what is now the United States was once Mexican territory. Those states include California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Nevada, Utah, and parts of Colorado and Wyoming (Reed 103). According to T. V. Reed, author of *Art of Protest: Culture and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Streets of Seattle*, the forceful result of the nineteenth-century wars between the United States and Mexico left the native Mexicans “strangers in their own land . . . treated as second-class citizens” (103). Having their own cultural and national way-of-life literally ripped out from under their feet led Chicanx to develop a foundation of resistance tied to their cultural identity. Such resistance to the dominant hegemonic U.S. culture includes the development of various social movements throughout the country by Mexican-Americans for social and political change.

Perhaps one of the most widespread and successful social movements of resistance in the United States was the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Minority groups, including Chicanx, experienced heightened ethnic consciousness during this movement, demonstrated via protests and worker strikes to confront injustices by social institutions (Fernández 1). What became known as the Chicano Movement, or El Movimiento, emerged as a resistance to labor and land disputes that increased the political consciousness of farmworkers in

southern California and throughout the Southwest (Fernández 1). This period brought forth a significant push for equal rights, including equal access to education, employment opportunities, and land ownership. The protests and strikes by Chicano exemplified their resistance to the continued oppression by the dominant hegemonic culture. Civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. confirmed this resistance during his Nobel Lecture speech in 1964, stating, “Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever.”

One prominent figure of the Chicano Movement was poet and theorist Alurista. This poet wrote the “Plan Espiritual de Aztlán,” which became the manifesto and political motif during the movement by encouraging Chicano to form a sense of community and togetherness (Fernández 2; Urayoán Noel 855). The emphasis of this piece is based on the Aztec myth of Aztlán—the Aztecs’ homeland of the north. Alurista harnessed this Aztec myth to create a momentum of community building among Chicano peoples that entailed establishing a “self-redefinition of Chicano identity” (Fernández 2). In a later article, “Cultural Nationalism and Chicano Literature during the Decade of 1965-1975,” Alurista explains this newly defined Chicano identity is predicated on a unique cultural heritage and a national consciousness. Alurista writes how culture is a “dynamic adaptation,” and during the Chicano Movement, “Chicano culture became a force of resistance against the total assimilation and the consequent self-denigration of Chicanos in the U.S.” (24). His poetry and scholarly contributions represent a form of resistance against the dominant hegemonic culture as well as a powerful tool for inspiring political action.

Literature of resistance, such as Alurista’s “Plan Espiritual de Aztlán” from the Chicano Movement, exposes the collective struggle of a minority group against oppression from a dominant group. According to Barbara Harlow in *Resistance Literature*, this field of literature is “a political and politicized activity” (28). Although Harlow’s seminal research largely pertains to

the resistance literature of “Third World” national liberation movements (Harlow vxii), her theoretical findings are relevant to the study of minority literature in the United States, as these groups have continued to experience discrimination from a dominant hegemonic culture. In addition, the borderland region is close in proximity to Mexico, often considered a developing or “Third World” (Harlow) country. Because Chicana identity is linked to Mexican heritage and some families are even split between the borderline, Chicana partially identify with the “Third World” that Harlow refers to. Harlow’s theory is founded on issues of national identity as a consequence of “the First World’s military, economic, and political intervention in the Third World . . . [which] has been the catastrophic disruption of Third World peoples’ cultural and literary traditions” (33). Chicana reality aligns with this disruption of identity as they have experienced years of persecution by a dominant force. Analyzing Chicana literature in accordance with Harlow’s theory of resistance literature serves to unveil the political importance and influence of this writing.

Harlow’s research supports that literature can be a powerful tool for minority groups to publically confront oppression and incite political change. Harlow explains, “the emphasis of this literature of resistance is on the political as the power to change the world. The theory of resistance literature is in its politics” (30). Extending this claim to Chicana literature exposes the political reactions of this group and their power to provoke change through literature. Alurista, for instance, encouraged the formation of a community of togetherness among Chicana people (Fernández 1). This collective resistance brought forth improved social rights and increased awareness of Chicana identity by the mainstream society.

Despite the success of the Chicano Movement, sexist ideologies and patriarchal norms with roots to Mexican heritage remained (Fernández 3). Even the name of the movement itself

takes on the patriarchal-based language ending with an ‘o,’ for Chicano (men), and excluding the ‘a’, for Chicana (women). The Chicano Movement did, however, allow Chicanas to be actively involved in the political arena, therefore equipping them with the tools to fight for equal rights as women. Although the number of Chicana feminists increased during the 1970s, internal struggles persisted due to a deep cultural history of patriarchal ideals and an inability to clarify gender roles (Fernández 4).

Responding to this need for a Chicana leader and theorist, Gloria Anzaldúa, in her 1987 foundational text, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, proposed a vision for Chicanas, and by extension all Latinx, to challenge the oppressions of society and establish a new culture wherein Chicana voices are heard and respected. Not only does Anzaldúa give rise to a strong Chicana identity, but she also publically identifies as a lesbian, thus extending her works to queer theories and concepts of identity development. Her research is based on personal experience as a native of the U.S.-Mexico borderland region as well as the historical and cultural aspects of this region. The significant contributions of her text include the development of Borderlands theory and the conception of the mestiza consciousness. For clarity, in *Borderlands Theory: Producing Border Epistemologies with Gloria Anzaldúa*, Orozco-Mendoza explains Anzaldúa uses a lowercase b when referring to the geographic borderland located at the U.S.-Mexico border, and the theorist uses a capital B when referring to ideological Borderlands that exist without rigid boundaries (2).

According to Anzaldúa, Borderlands theory refers to the metaphorical and ideological borders of individuals who are split between two, or more, terrains, identities, and languages. Although borders, as a construct, imply a binary division between two opposing sides—“us vs. them”—Anzaldúa evolves this definition of a border from a geographical perspective into the

concept of Borders as inclusive of ideological, emotional, spiritual, sexual, and psychological terrains. The geographical borderland, then, represents a location of hybridity, or “a third space between cultures and social systems” (Cantú and Hurtado, 6) that allows Chicanas to navigate ideological Borderlands and to establish their own identities inclusive of both sides, rather than choosing one or the other. Anzaldúa’s theory illuminates a deeper understanding of the various social worlds Chicanas live in and their ability to rearticulate a new social reality in opposition to restrictions set by the dominant culture (Cantú and Hurtado 7).

Anzaldúa defines the mestiza consciousness as a “consciousness of duality” (59), of mixed-race women living at the borderlands. This dual consciousness has resulted in internal struggles among Chicanas as a result of being split between two, or more, cultures. Anzaldúa writes, “Cradled into one culture, sandwiched between two cultures, straddling all three cultures and their value systems, *la mestiza* undergoes a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, an inner war” (100). Duality, however, does not mean division. Instead, Chicanas’ dual and hybridized identity is malleable, flexible, and therefore resistant to the influence and oppression of two conflicting cultures (Anzaldúa 86). The result of this resistance is a third culture that is not one or the other, but both. Through the mestiza consciousness, Chicanas have established their own identity and race in the face of cultural collision.

Along with defining the mestiza consciousness, Anzaldúa challenges Chicanas to speak up against, and demonstrate opposition to, subjugation by the dominant hegemonic culture (Anzaldúa 100-101). Anzaldúa urges Chicanas to not just react but *act* against the changing social, political, and economic environment in the United States that limits their participation in society. Her vision for Chicanas is therefore relevant to contemporary Chicana literature and to understanding where the mestiza consciousness is now and where it is proposed to go for future

generations. Anzaldúa's Borderlands theory is applicable to contemporary Chicana literature because of its emphasis on identity (or consciousness) building through negotiation of dualities and the unearthing of a shared history of resistance that is a significant part of Chicana identity.

In this thesis, I argue how contemporary Chicana poetry represents a form of, and a precursor to, political action and community activism, therefore meeting Anzaldúa's vision for Chicanas to not just react, but *act* against the social injustices they encounter. The focus on poetry is reflective of prior Chicana poets who have used their writing as forms of resistance and political action, such as Alurista during the Chicano Movement and Anzaldúa in *Borderlands/La Frontera*. Specifically, I analyze three contemporary poems by Chicana poet and activist Odilia Galván Rodríguez: "Geographic Dreaming or What it Means to be Chicana," "Collecting Thoughts from the Universe," and "Poem 25 ~ Giving Voice." Galván Rodríguez's poems articulate Chicana resistance to a hegemonic identity; the poet's reaction to, and unearthing of, current injustices at the borderlands; and the necessity for Chicanas to speak up and act against these injustices to create a better world for future generations.

I specifically chose these poems because Galván Rodríguez parallels the past resistance of her ancestors to the current resistance of Chicanas in the twenty-first century, highlighting how the mestiza consciousness has evolved and how it will continue to adapt. The poems were published after 2010, which helps establish a more contemporary view of the mestiza consciousness. Not only does Galván Rodríguez meet Anzaldúa's vision for action, but she also does so by utilizing social media and the Internet as a new terrain for disseminating her ideas. Thus, these poems were selected based on their medium of publication in addition to their direct content that urges Chicana to resist the dominant culture and work toward constructing a more inclusive, peaceful future.

Thirty years after Anzaldúa's foundational text, Galván Rodríguez's poetry indicates where the mestiza consciousness is now, exemplifying Chicanas' continued resistance to discrimination and their perseverance for equality. Because Galván Rodríguez's poetry of resistance confronts the dominant hegemonic culture to incite political action, her poetry demonstrates Harlow's assumption that the theory of resistance literature is in its politics and its ability to produce social change. Therefore, I analyzed these poems using both Anzaldúa's Borderlands theory and Harlow's theory of resistance literature to argue how Galván Rodríguez's poetry of resistance is a form of, and a precursor to, political action and community activism.

In addition to extending the mestiza consciousness and writing about twenty-first century realities of Chicanas and those living along the U.S.-Mexico borderland, Galván Rodríguez is mastering a new terrain to disseminate her poetry—social media. By publicizing her poetry in an online, easily accessible format, Galván Rodríguez is able to reach a broader audience without the limitations of publishing companies that largely support literature by the dominant hegemonic culture. From the public protests of the Chicano Movement to the groundbreaking theoretical contributions of Anzaldúa, Chicana writers and activists have proven their resistance to a mold forced upon them by the dominant culture by constructing their own identity. Taking her poetry of resistance to the public platform of social media, Galván Rodríguez exemplifies the adaptability of Chicanas and their perseverance for social equality.

In Chapter 1, I analyze Galván Rodríguez's poem "Geographic Dreaming or What it Means to be Chicana." This poem reflects how resistance is tied to Chicana identity, and the main resistance by Chicanas is against the hegemonic identity imposed on them by the dominant culture and U.S. government. Through her poetry, Galván Rodríguez expresses resistance to this

mold that Chicana, Latina, and immigrants have been placed into. Her poem extends Anzaldúa's conception of the mestiza consciousness by defining where it has been, where it is now, and where it is going for the next generation of Chicanas in the twenty-first century. Galván Rodríguez's emphasis on dreams, a form of consciousness, serves as a metaphor for a new frontier that encompasses a generational and progressive perspective of the mestiza consciousness. Chicana writers, therefore, are reconfiguring Frederick Jackson Turner's original frontier thesis to include physical and metaphorical B/borderlands as locations of resistance.

In Chapter 2, I discuss the second poem, "Collecting Thoughts from the Universe." Through this poem, Galván Rodríguez articulates reactions to the current political and economic reality at the borderlands. The poem represents a form of action (through literature) to bring awareness to and challenge the social institutions that discriminate against the border population and immigrants. Galván Rodríguez lists the current ramifications of the mold the dominant U.S. culture tries to force upon Chicanas. Harlow's theory of resistance literature supports Galván Rodríguez's overt political observations and address to those in power. The poem represents a form of action, meeting Anzaldúa's vision, as Galván Rodríguez publically brings these issues to the forefront to spread awareness.

In Chapter 3, I examine the final poem entitled "Poem 25 ~ Giving Voice." The main theme of this poem is action. Galván Rodríguez encourages Chicanas to stop hiding, use their voices, and resist the dominant culture's pressure to "tame their wild tongue" (see Anzaldúa, "How to Tame a Wild Tongue") and assimilate. The poet parallels Alurista's poetry and the Aztec mythical homeland of Aztlán to the twenty-first century context, arguing for Chicanas to sing the songs of their ancestors as part of their healing process. An overarching theme of this poem, which is equally reflected in the other two, is that of educating the youth and working

toward creating a better tomorrow for future generations. Her poem ends optimistically, echoing Galván Rodríguez's own positive vision for Chicanas to achieve justice through action.

In the final chapter, I conclude by arguing that Galván Rodríguez's poetry represents a form of, and a precursor to, political action and community activism. Her poetry extends Anzaldúa's conception of the mestiza consciousness, as well as reflects the importance of both Borderlands theory and Harlow's theory of resistance literature to analyzing contemporary Chicana literature. Utilizing social media as her main form of publication, Galván Rodríguez overcomes traditional publication limitations, reaches a broader audience, and enables her poetry to have a more significant impact in the political arena. I conclude by further delineating Galván Rodríguez's participation as a community activist, which exemplifies her continued commitment to social change and commitment to constructing a better world for future generations.

CHAPTER 1:
**CHICANA IDENTITY AND RESISTANCE IN “GEOGRAPHIC DREAMING OR
WHAT IT MEANS TO BE CHICANA”**

Anzaldúa’s Borderlands theory and definition of the mestiza consciousness have been thoroughly researched since the publication of *Borderlands/La Frontera* in the late 1980s. However, the significant applicability of her theory and her future vision for Chicanas demonstrates the need to understand where the mestiza consciousness stands in the twenty-first century. Galván Rodríguez’s poetry allows for such an analysis because she explores Chicana identity, established through the mestiza consciousness stages of *nepantla*, *Coatlicue*, and *Coyolxauhqui*, in relation to the past and present experiences of discrimination at the U.S.-Mexico borderland. Resistance to discrimination and the mold forced upon Chicanas by the dominant hegemonic culture is tied to their identity; however, Chicanas do not let this resistance solely define them, but rather use it as a tool to proactively construct a better world for the next generation. In the poem, “Geographic Dreaming or What it Means to be Chicana,” Galván Rodríguez extends Anzaldúa’s conception of the mestiza consciousness into the present, as well as emphasizes the importance of dreaming and working toward achieving acceptance and equality for Chicanas in the future.

Defining the mestiza consciousness entails understanding the processes that occur to reach this final state of self-awareness and the resultant creation of an alternate value system that works for Chicanx and against the dominant culture’s imposed reductionist identities. Conducting a thorough analysis of Anzaldúa’s Borderland’s theory, Orozco-Mendoza confirms that there are three stages prior to reaching the mestiza consciousness—*nepantla*, *Coatlicue*, and

Coyolxauhqui (45). Each of these stages is reflected in Galván Rodríguez's poetry as she extends the mestiza consciousness into the twenty-first century context.

The first process, *nepantla*, represents the transitional period or in-between state of identity formation (Orozco-Mendoza 46). At this stage, Chicanas begin to confront their identities and transcend the rigid ideological boundaries that have been imposed on them. Although the *nepantla* state can represent a time of confusion and frustration, this in-between period also signifies where dreams are constructed before being actualized. Dreams, a form of consciousness, denote a reoccurring theme throughout Galván Rodríguez's poem. In addition to "geographic dreaming" of a more peaceful borderland region, dreams serve as a metaphorical frontier and as a space to envision possibilities. In Galván Rodríguez's poem, dreams symbolize a nonphysical terrain for Chicanas to overcome societal oppressions and to make a place for themselves—a home. With many Chicanas living at the borderlands, an area where their ancestors inhabited the land before it became the southwestern United States, they have resisted assimilating into a culture that is not representative of their ideological roots and the roots of the land. This resistance is exemplified by Chicanas forming a new race—a third race—that bridges social, political, and economic barriers. Galván Rodríguez writes, "knowing we were something new / a mezcla to embrace" (21-22), suggesting Chicanas accept and appreciate their mixed race. As Chicanas become more aware of the diverse realities of the world, they initiate "the process of de-colonization by substituting monolithic views with multiple knowledges" (Orozco-Mendoza 47). Galván Rodríguez exemplifies this as she confronts past, present, and future Chicana realities in her poem, "Geographic Dreaming or What it Means to be Chicana."

In the *Coatlicue* state, Chicanas sort all of the information gathered in *nepantla* to make meaning of their experiences (Orozco-Mendoza 49), which Anzaldúa confirms "can lead us

toward becoming more of who we are” (68). Historically, *Coatlicue* was a Mesoamerican goddess of life and earth, also known as the Serpent goddess (Anzaldúa 49). The *Coatlicue* state represents a state of fusing contradictions—“life and death, mobility and immobility, beauty and horror” (Anzaldúa 69). This process can cause significant pain as one faces fears in an attempt to kill the colonized self and reveal the truth behind one’s identity (Orozco-Mendoza 50, 64). Through her poetry, Galván Rodríguez encourages those who remain hiding in the *Coatlicue* stage to confront their oppressors and the identities forced upon them by the dominant hegemonic culture.

By confronting personal demons and fears, Chicanas enter the *Coyolxauhqui* state, which is the daughter of *Coatlicue*. This phase represents self-acceptance and allows Chicanas to “put all the pieces together” and rebuild their identity (Orozco-Mendoza 52). The process of *Coyolxauhqui* entails being proud of their identity and determining how to interpret the world and filter information to become more empowered. Galván Rodríguez illustrates this self-acceptance in “Geographic Dreaming or What it Means to be Chicana” as she states, “Chicana proud despite all the years” (19) and “Holding my head high” (23). Galván Rodríguez’s poetry represents how she has reached the final stage of Borderlands theory, the mestiza consciousness.

As previously explained, the mestiza consciousness is a state of self-awareness and self-acceptance in which Chicanas can sort through their past and present experiences of oppression and take action toward constructing a better future. Orozco-Mendoza articulates this consciousness by explaining, “all the previous processes have prepared the self to engage, to abandon previous feelings of victimization, and to replace them with reason and political action” (53). Recognizing each stage that leads up to the mestiza consciousness—from identity

confusion to self-acceptance—is necessary to understand how the mestiza consciousness is a consciousness of political action.

Because Borderlands theory represents a process of resistance to, or decolonization from, an identity socially constructed by the dominant culture (Orozco-Mendoza 3), Chicana writers, such as Galván Rodríguez, demonstrate how their negotiation and reconceptualization of their identity leads to liberation. Anzaldúa indicates this cycle of transformation as “Deconstruct. Construct” (104), while Juan Flores and George Yudice refer to Guillermo Gómez-Peña’s explanation, “We de-Mexicanized ourselves to Mexi-understand ourselves” (59). Galván Rodríguez, therefore, divides her analysis of what it means to be Chicana into a past, present, and future awareness of Chicanas negotiating racial and gender identities and forging a sense of belonging in the United States.

The Mestizo/a race emerged around the 16th century as a mix of Mexican, American Indian, and Spanish descendants (Anzaldúa 27). Since that time, life at the borderlands of the United States and Mexico has been in a constant flux of people in displacement, largely as a result of social, economic, and political movements, including the U.S.-Mexican war in the mid-1800s, land being taken away from original owners, treaties not being honored, the construction of the border fence that divides the two countries, and immigration laws (Anzaldúa 29). Because of the unique history and mixing of cultures at the borderlands, Mestizas do not identify as just one culture, but rather a mix of cultures that has become resilient from surviving war, oppression, and division, leading to a third race able to resist imposed reductionist identities and claim their own identity. Anzaldúa confirms, “Stubborn, persevering, impenetrable as stone, yet possessing a malleability that renders us unbreakable, we, the *mestizas* and *mesitzos*, will remain” (86).

Galván Rodríguez discusses the struggles of acceptance and identity formation of mixed-race Mestizas living at the borderlands, specifically regarding their racial identity as Chicanas. She writes about the “melding of ancestor cultures” (3) and refers to the United States as “a place for all, but for no one different” (9), signifying that many of the social and political challenges Chicanas have faced in the past are still present and relevant today. Anzaldúa traces this history of oppression along the borderlands to expose how their ancestors produced a resistant, hybridized race, *una mezcla*, giving Chicanas the ability to “see” the influence of social categories and confront “Chicana feminisms to exclude while including, to reject while accepting, and to struggle while negotiating” (Cantú and Hurtado, 7). Galván Rodríguez reflects on this hybridization, or “melding” (3) of cultures—including White European-American and indigenous cultures of the United States and Mexico—as a symbol of Chicana identity. However, despite this new culture formed along the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, geographically a part of the United States, Chicanas are still rejected as a minority race and treated as “other” by the dominant White culture and social institutions in a country ironically predicated on the tenet of acceptance “for all” (Galván Rodríguez 8).

The first section of Galván Rodríguez’s poem is a reflection of the past, with an emphasis on Mestiza roots and the dream of a “place to call our own” (1). Galván Rodríguez revisits this past as a process of appreciating her ancestors’ strength to keep significant parts of their traditional ideologies and language intact, despite pressures of conformity and pressures to choose a side (the United States vs. Mexico). In addition to these pressures, Orozco-Mendoza argues Chicana history has been largely distorted by the dominant European-American White male culture to “justify its past actions and atrocities” (58). Re-engaging this history in a public

format, such as publishing her poetry online through social media, Galván Rodríguez gives voice to the real history of discrimination against people living at the borderlands.

Social media are an ideal outlet for Chicana identity negotiation because such digital communities allow “for bonding and for the development of a collective identity” (Kavada 34). As social media sites provide public forums to communicate and share knowledge, posting her poetry of resistance online represents a form of digital democracy. Galván Rodríguez not only helps create a sense of community and collective identity among Chicana peers, but she also shares her poetry with the dominant culture to spread awareness and challenge the social institutions that continue to oppress minorities. Manuel Castells in “Communication, Power and Counter-Power in the Network Society” refers to online social movements, including digital communities formed through social media, as “purposive collective actions aimed at changing the values and interests institutionalized in society, what is tantamount to modify the power relations” (249). For Chicana activists, these collective actions entail rearticulating their history and their identity using the power of social media engagement to bond, share information, and incite change.

Galván Rodríguez’s poem “Geographic Dreaming or What it Means to be Chicanas” is published on two social media sites: Facebook and Chicana and Latinx literary blog, *La Bloga*. Both of these websites are designed for community building and information sharing between members and the public. Her poem is specifically published on the Facebook page “Poets Responding to SB 1070,” for which Galván Rodríguez serves as co-founder and a moderator. Any poet can submit his or her poems of resistance via email or a Facebook note to the acting moderator for review before it is posted on the page and publicized to all viewers (Poets Responding to SB 1070, “Home”). The Facebook page has approximately 13,000 “likes” and

more than 12,000 followers, representing the community members who are exposed to and engage with the site regularly (Poets Responding to SB 1070, “Home”). Although Galván Rodríguez’s poem has received less than thirty “shares” and “likes,” its scope of dissemination reaches a higher number of viewers who follow the page, as well as reaches those viewers who are networked with the Facebook users who shared the poem to their “walls.”

In addition, *La Bloga* works in conjunction with the “Poets Responding” Facebook page via a monthly publication of selected poems from the page to the blog. “Geographic Dreaming or What it Means to be Chicana” is published in “*La Bloga* On-line Floricanto Ten Best Poems in 2016,” and therefore engages with the broader *La Bloga* community (Sedano, “La Bloga”). Considering that *La Bloga* website has a page view of almost four million, Galván Rodríguez’s poem reaches a significantly larger audience than that of the Facebook page. Her poem is presented in conversation with nine other poems, all of which “respond to repression with poetry as a fitting mode of expression” (Sedano, “La Bloga,” para 2). The poems in this collection span both English and Spanish, depending on the author’s choice of language. This alternating of language via Chicano Spanish as well as the sole use of Spanish in a poem reveals a form of resistance to language hegemony. The poets’ word and language choices, therefore, insinuate the need for resistance against the dominant culture that has silenced minority voices in the push for assimilation.

Highlighting that Chicanas possess a dream of acceptance and prosperity in the United States in her poem, Galván Rodríguez indicates this group has not always felt a sense of belonging—both racially and in terms of gender within their own Chicana race. Therefore, Galván Rodríguez’s poem supports why Anzaldúa needed to establish and define the mestiza consciousness—in order to explain this third space or third identity of the Mestiza culture. The

Mestiza has developed a consciousness of ambiguity and flexibility as the result of “*un choque*, a cultural collision” (Anzaldúa 100) between opposing cultures and value systems. This consciousness, as Anzaldúa argues and Galván Rodríguez exemplifies, is achieved through negotiating opposing identity structures to construct a third culture that works toward, and dreams of, establishing a more inclusive representation of Chicanas in the United States.

Echoing Anzaldúa’s gratitude for Chicanas’ malleability and stubbornness, Galván Rodríguez reflects that she is thankful for their resilience. Galván Rodríguez writes,

Of razas who never left us
who refused to melt away
in that pressure cooker pot
Which has become the way
in these lands called US of America. (4-8)

Galván Rodríguez’s celebration of the resilience of her ancestors for maintaining their cultural roots extends Anzaldúa’s declaration, “They’d like to think I have melted in the pot. But I haven’t, we haven’t” (108). Through her assertions, Anzaldúa has created a space for Chicana voices, such as Galván Rodríguez, to embrace the mestiza consciousness as a tool for continuing their resistance to the social and political forces that threaten to eradicate their culture and language under the encouragement of homogenization.

Both Anzaldúa and Galván Rodríguez also highlight the faulty ideology behind the “melting pot” metaphor used to describe U.S. citizens. According to Flores and Yudice in their article “Living Borders/Buscando America: Languages of Latino Self-Formation,” the melting pot metaphor was an assimilationist theory of the early twentieth century that encouraged the homogenization of cultures in the United States (58). This homogenization, however, takes away

from individual culture's unique identities and forces their language, cultural ideologies, and value systems to be reduced, if not eliminated altogether, from mainstream U.S. society. This push for homogenization included academics and politicians in the 1980s and 1990s urging for English to be mandated as the official language of the United States (Cantú and Hurtado, 6). The result of establishing one "official" language in the country would have, or still could, force all minorities to abandon their native tongues, at least in the public sphere. Therefore, language and its associated literature of resistance are imperative to combating oppression from the dominant culture that does not consider Chicanas part of the national narrative. Such literature includes those poems published via "Poets Responding to SB 1070" and *La Bloga*. In *Resistance Literature*, Harlow quotes Ghassan Kanafani, who states, "The resistance springs from linguistic initiatives, working together with the rigidity of the conditions of the situation (LROP, 11)" (3). Language is not only crucial to a collective resistance, but it is also a significant factor in establishing identity, including national identity.

Although no legal precedent exists regarding an official language in the United States, this argument still pervades throughout public mindsets and social institutions in the twenty-first century. For example, some U.S. citizens have argued for Latinx to "speak 'American'" (Benavides "Students Walk Out"), which is a result of the urgency for homogenization under the melting pot metaphor. In the late nineteenth century, F. J. Turner argues in *The Frontier in American History* that frontiers, or geographic borders, foster the development of a "composite nationality" (23). F. J. Turner further explains how the frontier is a location where "immigrants were Americanized, liberated, and fused into a mixed race" (23). The limitation of F. J. Turner's theory, however, is that he largely focuses on immigrants as an inferior group and the area of the frontier (or border) as a location of assimilation and homogenization. Anzaldúa and Galván

Rodríguez's discussion of the borderland exemplifies how Chicanas did not conform to this Americanization because of expanding frontiers. In addition, many of those living along the now U.S.-Mexico borderlands did not physically immigrate to another nation, but rather were the original inhabitants of what is now the southwestern United States. The resistance of the Chicana race to the pressures of homogenization supports why Galván Rodríguez is thankful that Chicanas have "refused to melt away" (5).

Galván Rodríguez's use of "cooker pot," referring to a crockpot, relates to the inaccurate metaphor of the United States as a melting pot. The new image of a cooker pot can be interpreted as a cheap, easy way to lump people together, please the masses, and let individuality melt away and homogenize. However, this metaphor perpetuates identity confusion and reduces cultural individualities. Galván Rodríguez's use of the term cooker pot, commonly considered a cooking pot, also places emphases on the word *cooker*—the person who performs this action. This image depicts how those in dominant culture, the cooks, attempt to force immigrants and minorities to assimilate and become molded into one specific pot (identity). Anzaldúa argues, despite movements to homogenize minorities, including Chicanas, and force them into a specific "Americanized" mold, mestizas have remained resistant.

Similar to the "cooker pot" image, Galván Rodríguez continues this wordplay through the use of "US of America," as opposed to U.S. (the proper acronym for the United States) of America. The poet's word choice signifies her perception that Chicanas are here to stay and are working toward traversing the social and political terrains of separation in the United States to form a nation of "ours / together with them" (Galván Rodríguez 27-28). Playing on Anzaldúa's terminology of "us vs. them" (Feghali 66), Galván Rodríguez criticizes the history of division specifically between "Indo-European" (11) Whites and Chicanas, but also establishes the need

for both cultures to embrace their differences with increased acceptance and respect. In “Re-articulating the New *Mestiza*,” Zalfa Feghali asserts, “any understanding of the *mestiza* must also be a continuous process. The continuous nature of ‘theorizing’ will also have important implications for the formation of alliances and the mobilization of resistance to domination and repression” (68). Therefore, the continual adaption of the *mestiza* consciousness by Chicana writers, such as Galván Rodríguez, proves their resilience and flexibility has brought Chicanas one step closer to meeting Anzaldúa’s vision that Chicanas “have taken back or uncovered our true faces, our dignity and self respect . . . our humanity and worth no longer in question” (109).

Galván Rodríguez identifies historical and present divisions between European-American Whites and Chicanas, some of whom are part White, in the middle section of her poem. Specifically, Galván Rodríguez places an emphasis on where the *mestiza* consciousness is now, in the twenty-first century. Similar to her reference to the melting pot metaphor, Galván Rodríguez explains the expectation of assimilation, “You must fit their mold / complete with Indo-European looks” (10-11), indicating that nonconformity to this mold results in alienation. The reference to “looks” closely relates to clothing and hygiene standards. This allusion denotes the perception that the way people dress is reflective of their socioeconomic status, and therefore reflective of their worth (monetarily and in terms of acceptance or equality) as a member of society. Because of this judgment of Chicanas based on their noncompliance to dress like middle- to upper-class “Indo-European” Americans, they are treated as “others” and are not viewed as equal members of society.

In her poem, Galván Rodríguez also acknowledges the subjugation of Chicanas by the dominant European-American White culture as exemplified through “their hate speech spewed down / In all the papers and books / of what is Supreme” (12-14). Again, her language connects

back to the melting pot metaphor of homogenization and its ramifications on U.S. national identity. For instance, members of the dominant culture arguing that Latinx, including Chicanx, need to “speak ‘American’” is representative of a form of hate speech against those members of society whose first language is not U.S. English. Because language is the cornerstone of culture, and therefore a foundation of identity, attacking one’s native language equates to a profound attack on one’s culture and identity. The implications of this attack on language can lead to a significant decrease in self-acceptance among those victimized. Galván Rodríguez brings this issue of hate speech to the forefront in order to highlight how Chicanx, and all Latinx, are continuously subjected to oppressive ideologies based on their race, cultural heritage, and language.

Galván Rodríguez, similar to Anzaldúa, confronts the “Supreme,” which is an allusion to acts of White privilege or limitations the U.S. government projects on minorities. In particular, both authors highlight how U.S. social and political systems were founded on the oppression of minorities. Anzaldúa confirms, “The dominant white culture is killing us slowly with its ignorance. . . . Ignorance splits people, creates prejudices. A misinformed people is a subjugated people” (108). The system of the Supreme, Galván Rodríguez argues, was built “On the backs of our world” (16), as Chicanx ancestors were the indigenous people living in the land that is now the southwestern United States (Anzaldúa 26). By confronting the oppressive actions of the dominant culture and the social institutions in place that limit Chicanas’ rights as U.S. citizens, Galván Rodríguez writes to rearticulate the reality of living at the borderlands in contemporary society. Her emphasis on the present situation is pertinent to society’s perception of Chicanas and the borderlands region, which have both been consistently overshadowed by the dominant culture’s skewed perception of history.

Through the mestiza consciousness, Chicana writers develop the “possibilities of healing and meaning making” (Ortega 246) by uncovering their history and “winnow[ing] out the lies” (Anzaldúa 104). Galván Rodríguez demonstrates this process of healing by making meaning of the past and present treatment of the Chicana race to encourage a collective re-envisioning of equality for future generations. Therefore, “Borderlands theory re-appropriates the symbolism of the border as a sign of restitution, reconfiguration, and re-vitalization” (Orozco-Mendoza 59). By confronting this violent history at the borderlands, Anzaldúa and Galván Rodríguez situate physical and metaphorical B/borderlands as locations of resistance.

Feghali explains Mexican philosopher José Vasconcelos’ theory of a cosmic race, or a mixed-blood race that, despite representing a “history of violence,” can “forge an identity that moved beyond such a violent history—and flourish” (63). Specifically, Vasconcelos theorized a new cosmic race would represent a mix of all races, leading to a “race-less” world (Feghali 63); however, this homogenization of races links back to the melting pot analogy that limits cultural and racial individuality. Anzaldúa narrows Vasconcelos’ idea of a cosmic race to apply to the mestiza consciousness as a figure of hope and political potential of this specific race (Feghali 62). Galván Rodríguez furthers both Vasconcelos’ and Anzaldúa’s theories by embodying that she is part of both the mestiza consciousness *and* the cosmic race. Galván Rodríguez writes,

But this is about what it means
to be me, a woman of that Raza Cosmica
who is Chicana proud despite all the years
Of not fitting Here nor There. (17-20)

The new mestiza consciousness that Anzaldúa defines and envisions is now the present ideology of Chicanas who have used this consciousness to navigate their identity and establish a “place to call our own” (Galván Rodríguez 1).

The final section of Galván Rodríguez’s poem presents her vision for the future of Chicanas and presents where the mestiza consciousness is going. Galván Rodríguez writes,

Holding my head high

teaching the young ones

to be one-hundred percent

Proud of all of who we are. (23-26)

Anzaldúa has confirmed that Chicanas are resilient, persistent, and refuse to let the dominant culture “tame” their language or “wild tongue” (75). Galván Rodríguez exemplifies this resilience with pride, supporting her cultural heritage and inspiring future generations to continue embracing their Mestiza roots. Galván Rodríguez’s use of “one-hundred percent” (25) symbolizes the vision for future Chicanas to fully accept themselves, as a “mezcla” (22), or a mixed race, of varying percentages of ethnic ancestry. This acceptance must extend from individual self-awareness to the gender and racial group identity (all Chicanas accepting one another) in order to influence the acceptance of Chicanas as one-hundred percent represented in the U.S. national identity. The mestiza consciousness, as a foundational tool for resistance, allows Chicanas to actualize visions of change.

The emphasis on percentages also parallels the percentage of U.S. citizens who are Latinx. The U.S. Census Bureau’s population report from the last decade (2000-2010) predicted that by 2050, Hispanics will comprise 29% of the U.S. population (Colby and Ortman 9). This growth iterates the need for Chicanas to continue expanding the mestiza consciousness and

turning their dreams of a “place to call our own” (Galván Rodríguez 1) into a reality for generations to come.

Galván Rodríguez’s poetry extends Anzaldúa’s vision by establishing how the Mestizas of the twenty-first century are embracing their hybridized identities and constructing a better future for Chicanas. This future is possible because of their history of resistance and the location of the borderlands, which have created an opportunity for transformation. Bridging this resistance into the digital network of social media, Chicana writers are taking action by forming communities and publicizing their realities that have been largely ignored by the dominant culture. Orozco-Mendoza confirms, “this new *mestiza* needs to propose things, to take the initiative to construct a better world; she needs to put her ideas on the table so she can stop being the subject of other’s intentions” (65). Galván Rodríguez confronts the systems of oppression, hate speech, and push for homogenization in the United States through her poetry of resistance, while proposing a plan to “teach” the next generation self-acceptance.

Galván Rodríguez stresses the importance of education throughout her poetry, which compliments her position as an activist fighting for equality. She strives to encourage the Chicana community and all U.S. citizens to invest in the next generation by teaching minorities, including Chicanas, to be “proud of all of who we are” (26). This pride and self-acceptance goes hand-in-hand with increased respect for others and embracing diversity—factors that are prudent to teach to youth through the education system and local communities. Although the intended audience of her poem is Chicanas, as indicated by the use of the first-person plural *we*, *our*, and *us*, her argument is applicable to all U.S. citizens because educating the next generation and building a nation of acceptance for all should be a collective responsibility. Anastasia Kavada echoes this sentiment of a collective responsibility in her research on engagement and identity

building across social media platforms. Kavada argues that social media can help foster a “shared awareness” (Shirky, as cited in Kavada 31) by those in the community, who will then be motivated to take action and share their experiences with others—including those in the dominant culture.

In addition to the general intended audience of her poem, Galván Rodríguez’s use of social media to disseminate her poetry indicates a focus on a younger audience, who are more likely to use this online context. As the current young adult population turns to social media for news and information, Galván Rodríguez’s choice to share her poetry online allows her to reach this audience and encourage them to attain self-acceptance by partaking in community building and activism. Using this medium also transcends the dominant hegemonic culture’s “hate speech” (12) as published “In all the papers and books / of what is Supreme” (13-14). Galván Rodríguez’s use of social media to publicize her poetry of resistance, therefore, exemplifies how Chicanas’ adaptability and perseverance can lead to positive social change.

For Chicanas, self-acceptance confirms the need to re-articulate an accurate history of violence along the borderlands. Their history has been significantly distorted “In all the papers and books” (Galván Rodríguez 13) created by the U.S. government and social institutions. Anzaldúa confirms, “I remember how the white teachers used to punish us for being Mexican” (111). Galván Rodríguez proposes that the true history of the borderlands should be incorporated into the public education system, instead of erasing Chicanas’ history of resistance from the national context. Anzaldúa supports this, claiming, “we must teach our history . . . Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society” (109). As Galván Rodríguez demonstrates, self-acceptance and being “proud despite all the years” (19) must come before social revolutions can be actualized. After establishing this self-

acceptance, largely through resistance to the dominant culture's imposed reductionist identities, Chicanas are better prepared to promote social and political change. One such change, as both authors argue for, is to the education system that teaches a distorted U.S. history. Teaching the next generation a more inclusive history will position Chicanas one step closer to achieving the dream of "birthing that nation of ours / together with them" (Galván Rodríguez 27-28).

Resistance to the pressure to "fit their mold" (10) with no vision or dream would lack purpose. Anzaldúa, with her vision for Chicanas, and Galván Rodríguez, with her expanded dream for the future of Chicanas, seem to echo Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech for social and political change. Galván Rodríguez's politically-charged words, "a place for all, but for no one different" (9), reiterate how dreams, a synonym for hope, represent a frontier for Chicanas to not only confront societal oppressions, but also to add to, work toward, and amplify the poet's vision for Chicanas to be "Proud of all of who we are" (26).

Galván Rodríguez's motivational language for Chicanas encourages current and future generations to bring their dreams to fruition. Instead of chasing the European-American's previously established "American Dream," Chicanas are striving towards a new vision of equality, acceptance, and recognition. Galván Rodríguez's poetry represents an extension of Anzaldúa's vision for Mestizas. Specifically, Galván Rodríguez confirms in her poem "Geographic Dreaming or What it Means to be Chicanas" that Chicanas are moving beyond resisting societal pressures of conformity by renegotiating what it means to be Chicana in this "land of the free." Her poetry of resistance represents how Chicana literature of the twenty-first century echoes Anzaldúa's assertion for Mestizas to not just react, but *act* against the changing social and political climate in the United States. Anzaldúa explains, "All reaction is limited by, and dependent on, what it is reacting against" (100). Reaction is not enough to institute

liberation. However, the active process of negotiating an identity of resistance, through the mestiza consciousness, and Chicana writers publicizing this negotiation are forms of action. Galván Rodríguez's poetry, therefore, represents a form of, and a precursor to, political action and community activism.

Galván Rodríguez also makes use of dreams as a unification of what is possible—the vision—with what is actual—the political and geographical. In Flores and Yudice's article, the authors explain that the current "mass migration of Latinos to the United States engenders such a process of reconceptualization, bringing to mind F. J. Turner's notion of America as a moving frontier and giving it another twist so as to invent a new trope: America as a "living border" (59). The idea of America as a living border in relation to Chicanas living at the borderlands reconfigures F. J. Turner's frontier theory. Instead of F. J. Turner's limitations of the borderlands as a site for cultures to be "Americanized" and "fused" (23), Chicanas have repositioned this location not as a site of assimilation, but rather as a site of resistance and reconfiguration. Chicane embody a mix of races that represent both sides of the border, which serves to break down the rigid borderlines and encompass a more fluid, breathing land/identity along the border. This fluidity is exemplified through immigration as well as the flexibility of Chicanas and their language to bridge the restrictions of "us vs. them."

In addition to the idea of a physical geographic frontier, many Chicana writers are redefining a metaphysical identity frontier to develop and make sense of their own identity as females of a mixed-race culture. Chicana writers have continued to expand the mestiza consciousness, as embodied in their "living language" (Anzaldúa 77) that is "neither *español ni inglés*, but both" (Anzaldúa 77). Galván Rodríguez utilizes this code-switching between English and Spanish in her poem, "a *mezcla* to embrace" (22), which reinforces Chicanas' resilience and

perseverance to birth “a nation of ours / together with them” (27-28). Anzaldúa explains, “Until I am free to write bilingually and to switch codes without having to translate . . . my tongue will be illegitimate” (81). As language is the cornerstone of culture, establishing a fluid Chicana Spanish allows Chicanas to negotiate identity on their own terms. Chicana Spanish and its associated literature, such as Galván Rodríguez’s poetry, are redefining the identity frontier in which Chicanas are working to confront societal oppression as a mixed race and as females to establish their own identity.

Navigating the identity frontier of the twenty-first century, Chicana writers are reconfiguring F. J. Turner’s original frontier thesis in terms of geographical and metaphorical shifting frontier lines. Chicanas’ flexibility and adaptability when confronted with social and cultural resistance exemplify their ability to bend borders, mold languages, and push rigid boundaries established by the dominant culture. This adaptability and perseverance to define their own racial and gender identity expands the mestiza consciousness and continues to create a space for Chicanas to challenge the social, economic, and political environments of the United States. In terms of ideological Borderlands, Chicanas’ identity reconfiguration contributes to the overall identity frontier of the United States. Identity, therefore, represents a fluid and shifting “border” of “What it Means to be Chicana” (Galván Rodríguez), as well as what it means to be a U.S. citizen.

From Anzaldúa’s foundational *Borderlands/La Frontera* to Galván Rodríguez’s “Geographic Dreaming or What it Means to be Chicana,” the identity frontier for Chicanas has encompassed a generational and progressive perspective of the mestiza consciousness. By expanding the mestiza consciousness, Chicana writers, such as Galván Rodríguez, continue to negotiate and redefine their racial and gender identities in the wake of the changing social,

economic, and political environments in the United States, specifically at the borderlands. In the process of defining their own cultural identity, Chicanas are equally contributing to and changing the identity of the United States itself, echoing F. J. Turner's notion that what happens at U.S. borders and frontiers defines the United States. Ultimately, Galván Rodríguez's poem demonstrates that Chicanas have emerged as a stronger third race, "despite all the years" (19). Chicanas' continued resilience and expansion of the mestiza consciousness enables their voices to be heard and respected, as well as enables them to turn their dreams into reality.

CHAPTER 2:
**REACTION AS RESISTANCE IN “COLLECTING THOUGHTS FROM THE
UNIVERSE”**

The U.S. government and its associated social institutions have continued to oppress Chicanx and indigenous peoples since the formation of the country in the “new world.” As the white European settlers began expanding their territory, largely through forceful means, they formed a social identity of superiority toward indigenous people based first on religion, and then on race. This classification system instituted an “us vs. them” approach that pervades throughout politics today in the twenty-first century. The site of the U.S.-Mexico borderland, in particular, represents a microcosm of this division of power in which the effects of U.S. politics and prejudices are heavily concentrated. However, the reality of this situation at the borderlands is largely ignored or minimized by the mainstream media. Acknowledging this truth and publishing her poetry of resistance through social media, Galván Rodríguez writes to confront this issue head on in order to actualize change.

In Galván Rodríguez’s poem, “Collecting Thoughts from the Universe,” the author expresses her reaction to the past and current existence of hatred and maltreatment that has persisted along the U.S.-Mexico borderland. Anzaldúa depicted this area of concentrated tension as “una herida abierta [an open wound] where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds” (25). Anzaldúa purposefully defines the borderland with the uncomfortable image of a bleeding wound to epitomize what life at the borderland is like for the “prohibited and forbidden” (25) people who live there. Extending on this image, Galván Rodríguez seeks to highlight how those in power, such as U.S. presidents and the wealthy upper class, have continued to oppress Chicanas and have turned the borderland into a militaristic war zone.

Galván Rodríguez's questioning throughout the poem directs the reader to consider who or what is responsible for the sociopolitical movements that have reinforced this discrimination.

Galván Rodríguez's tactic in the poem is simple—to share the truth that has been overshadowed and ignored by mainstream society in an attempt to raise awareness and promote change. Her reactionary poem signifies a form of political action because she refuses to remain silent and refuses to allow the dominant hegemonic culture to define Chicana identity or misconstrue the situation at the U.S.-Mexico borderland. In addition to highlighting the existence of war, suffering, and maltreatment that persists in this area, Galván Rodríguez emphasizes the importance of education. Of the current children who live at the borderland, at least 50% identify as “Hispanic,” with the second largest group identifying as “White,” according to statistics for Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas (Kaiser Family Foundation). The children who attend public schools in this region also include those who illegally cross the border from Mexico to obtain a U.S. education. Because these children are exposed to daily violence, particularly those who identify as “Hispanic,” a need exists to invest in the future wellbeing of generations to come. Therefore, not only does her poem serve to educate the public about the reality at the borderland, but it also represents a call to action against this violence by recognizing the sociopolitical movements that have reinforced it.

In *Resistance Literature*, Harlow stresses how poetry is a powerful medium for articulating issues of inequality and injustice from a dominant culture. Harlow states, “Poetry, as a part of the cultural institutions and historical existence of a people, is itself an arena of struggle” (33). The struggle represented in resistance literature, particularly poetry, is manifested by a history of imperialism, such as the United States taking over parts of Mexico. Galván Rodríguez's poetry of resistance portrays how this history of struggle against the dominant U.S.

culture continues into the modern context, as political movements regarding immigration and national security divide families and increase violence at the borderlands.

The poem “Collecting Thoughts from the Universe” follows a stream-of-consciousness construction. Galván Rodríguez rattles through her thoughts about, and reactions to, the injustices that occur at the borderland, where she lives. The poet purposefully limits the use of punctuation, forcing the reader to interpret the poem as one long, laborious-to-digest thought. She uses this technique to emphasize the endless list of maltreatment that Chicanas face and the countless political initiatives that victimize Chicana people. Punctuation is a tool to guide the reader through an organized flow of statements and questions. Galván Rodríguez’s dearth of punctuation signifies the chaos that exists at the borderland and the unorganized effort by the U.S. government to protect the border and control Chicana and immigrants through social interventions, such as the War on Drugs. In addition, end-of-sentence punctuation signals to the reader that there is an end. Therefore, her lack of end punctuation reflects how this oppression seems endless to those who inhabit the borderland region of the United States.

The specific political initiatives of oppression that Galván Rodríguez refers to in her poem span from the genocide of native people when the European colonists expanded the United States, to the current political debates over immigration policies. Galván Rodríguez writes,

We wage wars
support criminal
heads of State
murderous coups
genocide
the false war on drugs kind. (25-30)

During presidential elections, politicians have propagated these corrupt initiatives as a tactic to incite fear in the public and win the election by proposing a plan to solve the issue they constructed. One of the most famous examples of this is the War on Drugs.

In 1971, President Nixon (1969-1974) spearheaded the idea of a “War on Drugs” by informing U.S. citizens that drug abuse was “public enemy number one” (Cummings 417) and therefore it was a public crisis. In *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, Michelle Alexander explains the War on Drugs was essentially a political approach for Nixon to win the election and establish a system of social control. Nixon persuaded voters that he would reinstate a sense of order throughout the country to combat the chaos of public protests and violence that had increased during the Civil Rights Movement. The president and his successor, President Ronald Reagan, claimed that a drug problem with crack cocaine in low-income neighborhoods was skyrocketing crime rates and therefore was a threat to public safety. The reason that this was a “false war” (Galván Rodríguez 30) is because no major drug problem existed to begin with, but rather politicians created the problem. Alexander explains that during this period, drug use was actually on the decline (6), but with the explosion of the media on this “crack crisis,” arrests for anyone thought to be associated with drug use significantly increased, especially for minorities (5). In particular, low-income communities were targeted as the areas with the largest drug problem, and therefore the areas that required the most police intervention.

Although Nixon established the War on Drugs, following presidents could have overturned this racist political ploy; however, many embraced Nixon’s approach because it proved to be a successful strategy to win the election. The Reagan era (1981-1989) brought forth a stronger “‘color-blind’ rhetoric on crime, welfare, taxes, and states’ rights” (Alexander 48).

Similar to Nixon, Reagan preyed on white conservatives' racial and class fears and tailored his campaign speeches toward issues of crime and welfare. Reagan was not after a solution, such as helping those citizens with drug problems find resources for help, but rather his "war" was a political strategy to reinforce racial stereotypes and continue the concerted effort of social control of minorities that Nixon initiated.

Republican administrations were not the only "criminal / heads of State" (Galván Rodríguez 26-27) to heighten fear in the public that a drug, crime, and safety problem plagued the country. The Clinton Administration (1993-2001) also used racially-charged propaganda and passed laws that discriminated against minorities, including Chicanx. Such policy changes included limiting federal assistance for welfare and public housing and developing tougher policies on illegal immigration. In 1996, President Clinton claimed in his State of the Union address that he would strive to eradicate illegal immigration and secure the nation's borders (Andreas 141). This strategy was convincing to the voting public because the U.S.-Mexico borderland is the main port of entry for illegal drugs into the country, and therefore is likely the area in need of stricter law enforcement. Through each president's campaign and time in office, the promise of securing the southern border and keeping the United States safe persisted. This political effort continued to reinforce an "us vs. them" approach, which became a key ingredient to voter support.

Presidential administrations, or the executive branch, may be the face of governmental decisions, but there are two other branches in place that ensure democracy is upheld—the legislative and judicial branches. Galván Rodríguez's reference to "criminal / heads of State" includes all governing branches and associated regimes that are turning against the people and dismantling democracy. In the United States, all states are able to make their own laws and

regulations; some states governments have restricted the freedom of those living in the borderland region. Therefore, the “criminal / heads of state” that Galván Rodríguez refers to include more than just the presidential administrations of the country, as state governors, courts at all levels, and those who hold positions of power (e.g., corporations and the wealthy upper class) have also supported political initiatives that violate both Constitutional rights and human rights.

The ramifications of these political initiatives created a militarized and war-like environment at the U.S.-Mexico borderland, which is an issue Galván Rodríguez brings to the forefront in her poem. Galván Rodríguez explains, “At the border / people act less than human” (7-8), referring to the increased police and border patrol. In Peter Andreas’ *Border Games: Policing the U.S.-Mexico Divide*, the author iterates, “proposals to send in the troops are especially popular during election season, when the border often becomes a political stage” (149). Echoing research by Alexander, Andreas confirms that policy makers use the border as a strategy in their political agenda. Politicians continue to convince the public that the national security is under threat by people crossing the border, and therefore a need exists to keep the country safe. The laws created to reinforce security at the border, however, are largely a form of social control by the government and a tactic to emphasize U.S. power in the global arena (Andreas 143).

The increased policing at the border has evolved into what Andreas refers to as a “border game,” in which law enforcement officials care less about protecting or helping citizens and more about how many “body count” points they can score (145). According to Andreas, “body counts” needed to “win” the game include the number of illegal immigrants and drug smugglers captured as well as the numbers of drugs confiscated (145). The reality of this violence, however,

is often disregarded by the media or misinterpreted as a positive solution to the drug problem that politicians so vehemently contest. Instead of acknowledging the negative influence of this militarization on the people who live in the borderland region, politicians and law enforcement become the “less than human” (Galván Rodríguez 8) game players who threaten the social welfare of border people. Additionally, most of the money spent to solve the drug problem is invested in border protection, as opposed to solving the problem at its source—public chronic drug use (Andreas 146). The government neglects to spend money on rehab facilities and drug interventions for citizens, and rather continues to blame drug smugglers and illegal immigrants as the sole source of the problem.

As exemplified by the political success of the War on Drugs, strategies aimed at reinforcing security at the borderland and securing the nation from harm are predicated on forms of social control. Politicians have targeted immigrants, whether legal citizens or not, as a contributor to social problems that affect the dominant hegemonic culture, such as drug use or economic downturns. Strategically, politicians, including those in the current Trump Administration, use immigrants as a scapegoat for deeper social problems. In her poem, Galván Rodríguez refers to these politicians and upper class individuals as “twinkling down / big smiles on their faces” (4-5) while they inflict suffering upon immigrants and those living at the borderlands—whether they directly realize it or not.

During the 2016 election, and continuing through his presidency, President Donald Trump has emphasized the need to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border in the hopes of keeping illegal immigrants, drug smugglers, and potential terrorists out of the country. His tactic follows that of the “criminal / heads of State” (Galván Rodríguez 26-27) who came before him—blaming immigrants as the reason for social problems or magnifying them as a threat to the

national security of the United States. However, President Trump has specifically discriminated against Mexicans by calling them “bad hombres” and is even trying to force Mexico to pay for the construction of the wall, thus further placing the blame on another country (Salama). Not only that, but the President also appears to forget, or ignore, that much of the land that comprises the southern United States was Mexican territory, and the people living there are of Mexican descent. Therefore, his derogatory term was directed at some of his own U.S. citizens.

A driving platform for Trump’s election was addressing the issue of unemployment for middle- and lower-class citizens. Trump claimed immigrants were taking away job opportunities from U.S. citizens and essentially stealing money from the U.S. economy (Hoban para. 2). Therefore, his goal of stricter immigration policies is intended to increase U.S. jobs and significantly benefit the economy. However, according to senior researchers at the Brookings Institute, undocumented workers obtain hard labor jobs that Americans do not want, and immigration has actually shown a direct correlation with economic growth (Hoban). Andreas adds that the United States is the toughest country on immigration control, yet the nation is exceedingly lenient on employers who employ illegal or migrant workers (147). These findings echo Galván Rodríguez’s sentiment when she questions, “who is the real enemy” (37). Instead of solving the problem of employing illegal workers at its source—stricter enforcement of regulations on the employers—policy makers are blaming immigrants and using this social situation as a reason to increase policing along the border.

The influence of the media, including social media, in twenty-first century politics has presented a new problem for mainstream society to decipher fact from fiction. With a history of violence at the borderland that has already been overshadowed by political stratagems of increasing national security, Chicana authors and activists, such as Galván Rodríguez, are

refusing to remain silent about their reality. By posting her poetry through social media, Galván Rodríguez proves her strength and perseverance as a Chicana to not let the dominant hegemonic culture define what it means to be Chicana and what life is like at the borderlands. Specifically, her poem “Collecting Thoughts from the Universe” is published online in *La Bloga*’s 2014 “Ten On the Fifth of the Eighth: August On-line Floricanto.” As part of a collection of 10 poems, Galván Rodríguez’s work compliments the other Latinx and Chicanx poems that reflect the themes of borders, war, and children. Although reader comments in the online community are not made on one specific poem, public commenters indicate their appreciation for these collective strong voices. For example, commenters expressed, “Que lindo trabajo! [What a beautiful job, my translation] Thanks for it all!” and “I very much love your choice of poems to post here . . . Excellent job. Me quede’ con hambre! [I am still hungry, my translation].” The use of code-switching in both the poems and the comments on *La Bloga* denotes Chicanx resistance to the dominant culture’s hegemonic language.

These comments strengthen community building through the *La Bloga*, as both authors and the public can engage in the open forum at the bottom of the page to support and encourage each other as artists and activists. In addition, *La Bloga*’s page view of almost four million viewers indicates that despite the low number of comments on the collection of poems, the site receives a high volume of traffic. Therefore, the community of writers, commenters, and viewers are collectively engaging with concepts of human rights violation and resistance that, in turn, foster community building and identity negotiation through social media. The end result of this engagement is increased awareness of injustices and the potential for the poems to incite political activism among readers.

According to Urayoán Noel in “Bodies that Anitmatter: Locating U.S Latino/a Poetry, 2000–2009,” poetry expressed through new technologies, such as social media, allows Latinx poets to actively document their community-specific realities (857). Poets like Galván Rodríguez, then, are pertinent now more than ever as the influx of fake news and alternate facts by the dominant culture attempt to twist Chicanas’ reality. Anzaldúa confirms, “Ignorance splits people, creates prejudices. A misinformed people is a subjugated people” (108). In order to overturn this ignorance largely propelled by the media, Chicanas are using their voices to spread the truth and harnessing the power of social media to reach a wider audience.

As typified in “Collecting Thoughts from the Universe,” Galván Rodríguez’s poetry represents a form of political action against injustices by the dominant hegemonic culture. According to Arna Chatterjee, “Poetry can always act as a vehicle for protest and change in two ways,” (a) to highlight social injustices and produce alternative trajectories, or (b) to highlight “themes, techniques, and modes of representation that challenge previous modes of signification” (133). Galván Rodríguez seeks to publicize how the violence at the borderlands is a result of corrupt politicians and their controversial initiatives that have turned this region into a domestic war zone. The poet questions, “What kind of war / is being waged here” (16-17), and further adds, “And who do we help / does all this war make life better” (35-36). Avoiding the use of the question mark as end punctuation, Galván Rodríguez indicates there is no time to break or slow down her train of thought. The immediacy of this situation needs to become incorporated into the public consciousness of U.S. citizens in order to actualize change, and this immediacy is reflected in her choice of language and punctuation.

As Galván Rodríguez questions who all of this war and suffering helps, she exposes the issue of wealth distribution in the United States. Galván Rodríguez writes,

who is the real enemy
in a land
where one percent of people
owns more wealth
than the rest of us put together. (37-41)

Included in this one percent are celebrities, who have the power to sway the public's opinions and endorse politicians, as well as some of the politicians themselves, such as the president. Her questioning infers that if one percent of the population owns most of the wealth, then why are immigrants and illegal workers the people blamed for economic inequality?

As previously noted, the media plays a significant role in how these issues are presented to the public. Urayoán Noel confirms the effort by Latinx to be accurately represented in mainstream society has been countered by "a media-fueled depiction of Latinos/as as an unmanageable other, most notably in the controversy of illegal immigration" (853). As the dominant hegemonic culture is exposed to this information, they are less likely to sympathize or understand immigrants' point of view. Galván Rodríguez writes about this detachment of the dominant culture and those of higher socioeconomic status from the reality of others, including those living at the borderlands. She starts off her poem by questioning, "What do the stars say / about children dying" (1-2). Galván Rodríguez explains how "there's no suffering there" (6), with "there" referring to where "stars," or celebrities and the wealthy one percent, live (i.e., not the borderland). The play on words with stars referring to celebrities or politicians also depicts the image of these individuals as stars in the sky, who are living so far away from those below them, at the borderland, that they are too detached to recognize the suffering and violence they endorse. Galván Rodríguez describes the stars as "spirits / twinkling down / big smiles on their

faces” (3-5), indicating they are unaware or cannot comprehend the violence at the borderland, otherwise they would not be smiling. The author confronts the one percent, including corrupt politicians and the wealthy individuals who support them, to argue that U.S. citizens should be scrutinizing those who control most of the wealth in the country regarding the issue of unequal wealth distribution—not immigrants and minorities who are accused of taking away jobs.

Emphasizing the correlation between geographic location and social status, Galván Rodríguez juxtaposes “there” with here, “At the border” (7), where war and suffering are commonplace for the inhabitants. Through her poem, she addresses those in power, the “one percent” (39), by explaining how the social institutions of the U.S. government and economy have taken advantage of Chicanas and have turned their home into a war zone. Despite the U.S. government’s efforts to keep the country safe, the borderland region has become a site of violence, where the safety of children is not a priority.

Galván Rodríguez addresses the deep-seated issue of class divides in the United States to bring to light the injustices forced on those living at the borderlands. As politicians convince the public that immigrants and minorities are stealing jobs from American workers or threatening national security with increased drug smuggling, violence at the border continues to heighten. Galván Rodríguez, therefore, chose to juxtapose this violence with the innocence of children to reach the reader on an emotion level. Because children are a symbol of innocence and represent the future, focusing on the lives of children in this war zone communicates the significant need to consider how public policies and increased security are affecting children. To emphasize the bleak reality for these children, Galván Rodríguez describes how they are living along battle lines, which impede their education and future dreams. The poet writes,

frightened traumatized children

in yellow school buses
their small faces pressed
against the windows
they see
the gnashing of teeth
hear shouts of rage. (9-15)

The image of children as onlookers of violence iterates how what they see outside of their homes significantly influences their identity and understanding of the world.

Galván Rodríguez places a concentrated emphasis on children in the poem to stress that young, impressionable minds should not be exposed to this violence nor should their innocence be ripped away by fear of death. As they travel to school in their “yellow school buses” (10), the children living at the borderland are exposed to the ramifications of the dominant culture’s political tactics for social control. Galván Rodríguez depicts these children as “fleeing war / fleeing death” (18-19) while travelling to school, where they hope to find safety and acceptance. However, with the education system significantly focused on the history and success of the dominant hegemonic culture, Chicana children are not being exposed to an accurate representation of their race.

Compounding the violence at the borderland, when children arrive to school, they are largely taught the dominant hegemonic culture’s version of history, as teachers are forced to include texts predominantly from the American literary canon. Anzaldúa’s experience as a high school teacher in 1971 exemplifies the limitations of U.S. public education for Chicanas. Anzaldúa explains how she tried to incorporate Chicana texts into the curriculum and was “reprimanded and forbidden” because she was only allowed to teach “‘American’ and English

literature” (82). The unequal representation of Chicana literature in the American literary canon “negatively impacts students’ views of themselves” (Al-Shalabi et al. 54), as well as reinforces that the government and the dominant culture do not consider Chicanas equal members of U.S. society.

Scholars have confirmed how the lack of representation of authors outside the dominant hegemonic culture suggests texts written by those authors deemed as “other” are unworthy of study. In “The American Literary Canon: Impervious to Change?,” Al-Shalabi et al. argue how the lack of minority texts taught in U.S. schools is one reason why Chicanas, and all minorities, have been “struggling for equality, recognition, identity, and life . . . because they have been nonexistent” (52). Their voices and histories, as articulated through Chicana literature, have been stripped of accurate representation in the education system. Galván Rodríguez touches on this issue in her poem “Geographic Dreaming or What it Means to be Chicana” when she refers to how “all the papers and books / of what is Supreme” (13-14) have created a culture predicated on “a place for all, but for no one different” (9). Similarly, in her poem “Collecting Thoughts from the Universe,” Galván Rodríguez advocates for education equality by describing how this right is not being upheld at the borderlands. Instead, children are “traumatized” (9) by the violence they experience outside the classroom and feel culturally excluded via a lack of ethnic representation in the history and literature they are taught each day at school.

Galván Rodríguez also maintains children at the borderland do not have the same opportunities to dream and express their creativity as children living elsewhere in the United States do—because “there’s no suffering there” (6). At the border, the poet explains, children are merely,

looking for a place to dream

or looking for what's left
of their family
that's already flown away
for fear or promise. (20-24)

Because of the war, genocide, and social inequalities afflicting the borderland, many families have been torn apart. For some residents, their extended family may be split between those living in the United States and those living in Mexico, while other residents experience family members leaving the country out of fear or the hope of finding a better life somewhere else. This broken familial situation and exposure to daily violence can negatively impact children and halt their ability to dream and develop ambition. With the addition of an education system that is primarily inclusive of the accomplishments of the dominant hegemonic culture, Chicana children are deprived of Chicana role models to look up to.

Chicanas' struggle for equal inclusion in mainstream society has been predicated on the issues of citizenship and sense of belonging. In her article, "Citizenship and Belonging: The Construction of US Latino Identity Today," Suzanne Oboler clarifies that the idea of citizenship has been linked to legal status and the existence of social and political inclusion (121). As demonstrated via the Chicano Movement during the 1960s and 1970s, mere legal status as a U.S. citizen does not translate to equal rights and opportunities. Chicanas have been forced into a mold as the "foreign other" and their contributions to society are not broadly acknowledged by the dominant hegemonic culture, especially throughout the public education system. In addition to the history of oppression and maltreatment at the borderlands, the dominant culture is sending a clear message that social acceptance as U.S. citizens requires Chicanas to assimilate and abandon their cultural heritage. However, despite the government's concerted efforts for social

control of minorities and the push for assimilation, Chicanas have remained resistant. This unyielding effort proves that Chicanas are meeting Anzaldúa's vision by rearticulating their place in society. Anzaldúa writes, "To the immigrant *mexicano* and the recent arrivals we must teach our history" (109). Poets such as Galván Rodríguez are doing just that—teaching the dominant hegemonic culture the true reality of life at the borderlands and the oppressive consequences of corrupt social institutions.

Census data and projections have confirmed that Latinx are changing antiquated definitions of what it means to be a U.S. citizen. Oboler verifies immigrants are advancing the meaning of U.S. citizenship in the twenty-first century to extend beyond a simple legal designation to include social value and belonging (124). This refusal to submit to the dominant culture's imposed reductionist identity is reflected in Galván Rodríguez's linguistic choices in her poem "Collecting Thoughts from the Universe." In particular, Galván Rodríguez's purposeful lack of the question mark punctuation throughout her poem is a symbol of resistance because it forces the reader to disengage with the conventional ways of thinking and perceiving. Chatterjee explains poetry of resistance often involves the writer disregarding traditional grammar and punctuation rules. As an example, Chatterjee refers to African-American writer Amiri Baraka, whose disregard for common poetry conventions represents a "gradual disenchantment of white models of poetic composition" (133). Resistance writers employ stylistic choices that go against the grain of the dominant culture's traditional form of poetic expression as a stylistic expression of resistance.

In addition to disrupting the reader from traditional forms of punctuation, the very topic of Galván Rodríguez's poem urges the reader to consider the alternate reality of life at the U.S.-Mexico borderland, as told by someone who lives there. The poet seeks to expose the social

institutions that have continued to direct violence on borderland residents and maintain oppressive labeling of Chicanas as the unmanageable foreign other. According to Nancy Naples in her research, “Presidential Address: Crossing Borders: Community Activism, Globalization, and Social Justice,” borders represent “sites for the reproduction of, and resistance to, inequalities” (2). However because borders are often locations of everyday violence, borderland regions are also ripe areas for political reactions and activism (Naples 8). Galván Rodríguez reacts to this violence, which she describes as,

the raining down bombs
on innocents kind
the scaring of innocent children
riding on yellow school buses kind. (31-34)

Galván Rodríguez takes the political stance that the warfare at the borderlands is a war against the innocent and a war against the future of the country, represented by children.

Writing about the violence and maltreatment of Chicanas at the borderland, Galván Rodríguez attempts to rearticulate the historical and present situation that has been distorted and trivialized, if even acknowledged, by the mainstream media. Confronting this issue, however, is not an easy task. Anzaldúa explains, “Writing produces anxiety . . . Living in a state of psychic unrest, in a Borderland, is what makes poets write and artists create” (94-95). The frustration and emotional turmoil that Galván Rodríguez experiences as a Chicana is reflected in her language throughout the poem: *fear*, *scaring*, *suffering*, *rage*, and *death*. Recognizing that it is time to take a stand for the equal treatment, and accurate representation, of Chicanas, Galván Rodríguez confronts these demons head on. Through the mestiza consciousness, Chicana writers are able to

contest limited perceptions of reality in an effort to reclaim their identity and belonging and work toward creating a more inclusive, accepting world.

Galván Rodríguez's poetry of resistance would not be as credible if she were not from the borderland region or not actively involved in the fight for Chicana equality. Harlow refers to the critic Kanafani, who states, "No research of this kind can be complete unless the researcher is located within the resistance movement itself inside the occupied land" (3). Although the borderland region is not technically "occupied" by a foreign power, it is occupied by U.S. law enforcement and border patrol officers who have turned this region into a war zone where "people act less than human" (8). Those living at the borderland, including Chicanas and immigrants, are subjected to the dominant hegemonic culture's social institutions and policies that have produced a collective struggle against inequality. Galván Rodríguez, therefore, writes to resist this maltreatment by exposing the border condition. The poet's ultimate goal is to publicize the truth, as expressed by Chicanas, and to overturn the dominant culture and mainstream media's faulty perceptions of the borderland region.

Giving voice back to the people who experience this daily violence, Galván Rodríguez lays the foundation for collective change. By publicizing her poetry through social media, the poet seeks to encourage a world where both Chicanas and individuals within the dominant culture work together to make a change for the good of all, not just the good of the select "one percent" (39). Castells confirms that networked digital communities, such as those established through social media, are ideal for confronting and resisting oppression by the dominant culture's social institutions. Chicana writers and activists are able to spread awareness about injustice through these online platforms because of the ease of use, low cost, flexibility, and instant communication that that Internet affords (Castells 250). Therefore, harnessing the

political power of the Internet, Galván Rodríguez writes to encourage Chicanas and those in the dominant culture to work together in harmony for the betterment of society. Anzaldúa confirms, “we need to allow whites to be our allies. . . . We need you [white society] to own the fact that you looked upon us as less than human, that you stole our lands, our personhood, our self-respect” (107-108). Together, both Chicanas and all U.S. citizens need to be asking, “who is the real enemy” (37) and “can we be put together again” (42), instead of blaming innocent immigrants for the issue of unequal wealth distribution. Galván Rodríguez argues that as a country, we need to become more aware of the corrupt politicians and sociopolitical movements that destroy homes and families and subject Chicanas to daily violence and warfare at the borderland. With education as the weapon to combat ignorance, Galván Rodríguez writes to encourage the local community, and the online community throughout the United States, to stand up against the violence at the borderland and invest in the future of the children and the country.

CHAPTER 3:

TAKING ACTION IN “POEM 25 ~ GIVING VOICE”

Chicana voices have been muted and ignored by the dominant hegemonic culture in the United States, often forcing Chicanas to hide and silence their language. However, this act of hiding and only using their Chicana Spanish in private spaces reinforces the faulty identity of Chicanas created by the dominant culture. By taking action and using their voices to spread awareness, establish their own identity, and promote positive change, Chicanas are able to overturn the restricted mold they have been forced into and actively construct a new, inclusive reality in the twenty-first century.

In Galván Rodríguez’s poem, “Poem 25 ~ Giving Voice,” the poet emphasizes the importance of Chicanas taking action and speaking up about the injustices they face. The poet equally addresses the dominant culture, urging them to act in solidarity with Chicanas and fight for the equality of all U.S. citizens. Galván Rodríguez’s main argument is how language—the foundation of cultural identity—is instrumental to actualizing change. The poet argues it is time to stop hiding and living in fear, as there is “no choice / but to speak out” (1-2). Harnessing the power of language and optimizing the self-confidence attained through the mestiza consciousness, Chicanas are equipped with the tools necessary to heal from the trauma of their past and take action toward constructing a better tomorrow. Galván Rodríguez, as an activist herself, serves as a model for Chicanas. Through her poetry and activism, Galván Rodríguez exemplifies how language is a powerful tool to heal, promote change, and achieve justice. Therefore, “Poem 25 ~ Giving Voice” represents how poetry can serve as a form of, and a precursor to, political action and community activism.

In addition to encouraging activism through her poetry, Galván Rodríguez leads by example. She has worked with various organizations, including United Farm Workers of America, the AFL-CIO, and the East Bay Institute for Urban Arts, as well as holds creative writing workshops throughout the country titled “Empowering People Through Creative Writing” (Rico para. 5; University of Arizona Poetry Center para. 3). Galván Rodríguez is also the author of six volumes of poetry and founder of Red Earth Productions & Cultural Work, an organization dedicated to community collaboration and activism in the name of social justice. Her online activism is equally as impressive, serving as co-founder and moderator of the Facebook page “Poets Responding to SB 1070” (@PoetryofResistance) and collaborating with Chicana and Latina literary blog, *La Bloga*.

The “Poets Responding to SB 1070” Facebook page has garnered pronounced success since its implementation in 2010. The site was created by the late Francisco X. Alarcón, Professor at the University of California, Davis, and Galván Rodríguez in reaction to the 2010 Arizona Senate Bill 1070, which legalized “racial profiling and police and ICE abuses against all people whom they deem to be people who ‘may be’ in the US without papers” (Poets Responding to SB 1070, “About”). The bill essentially allows law enforcement officials to victimize, abuse, and even deport *legalized* immigrants based on their skin color or Spanish accent. As a clear exploitation of civil rights, the founders established the Facebook page, managed by a collection of appointed poet moderators and administrators, to encourage other poets and artists to respond to social injustices. The initial outpour of poetry and community activism associated with this Facebook page has been part of a concerted nation-wide effort of activists to ban the law. In 2012, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down on three of the four major provisions, but upheld that law enforcement officials can still “demand ‘papers’ and investigate

immigration status if they suspect a person is undocumented” (American Civil Liberties Union). Therefore, “Poets Responding to SB 1070” has helped diminish crucial aspects of this law, proving that the power of language can lead to political changes. Although this law is still in place, the Facebook page and its community remain dedicated to fighting against this policy and other issues of human rights violations.

The founders explain that as a social media site, “Poets Responding to SB 1070,” “represents a return to the oral tradition in which ‘storytellers/writers’ engage ‘listeners/readers’ in a direct way to reflect and act” (Alarcón and Galván Rodríguez p. xiv). The Facebook page is not just limited to Chicana and immigrant followers, as it is also a site welcome to “all people who care about human rights” (Poets Responding to SB 1070, “About”). This declaration iterates the importance of solidarity in the fight for equality and justice for all in the United States.

Galván Rodríguez and Alarcón’s activism through the Facebook page spurred collaboration with Michael Sedano, Tuesday editor of *La Bloga*, to create a monthly On-Line Floricanto (Flower and Song), which publishes the works of poets who submit to the Facebook “Poets Responding” page (Alarcón and Galván Rodríguez xv; Sedano, “2017 Best Poems” para. 8). Together, these online communities endorse and publicize poetry relating to racial and social injustices that occur domestically and throughout the world. *La Bloga*’s On-Line Floricanto was inspired by a three-day reunion floriculto organized by Sedano at the University of Southern California in Fall 2010, reuniting artists from the original 1973 Festival de Flor y Canto (Sedano, “2017 Best Poems” para. 5). The 1973 Flor y Canto was a celebration of emerging Chicana artists and writers, including Alurista. Metaphorically, the concept of floriculto refers to poetry, art, and music—all of which inspire cultural celebration. By sharing this poetry of resistance on

La Bloga, “Poets Responding to SB 1070” has been able to reach a larger audience regarding issues of racial inequality and human rights violations.

In addition to their successful online community on Facebook, Alarcón and Galván Rodríguez published *Poetry of Resistance: Voices for Social Justice* in 2016. This collection includes 88 poems that were published on “Poets Responding to SB 1070” and selected for *La Bloga’s* On-Line Floricanto. The editors explain how the publication of these poems online and in their recent collection represents “a groundbreaking multicultural collective poetic project that involves thousands of engaged participants, hundreds of poems, and thousands of posted comments” (Alarcón and Galván Rodríguez xvi). Posting poetry of resistance via an online, public format not only reaches a broader audience regarding issues of social injustice, but also proves how the age of social media has brought forth increased collaboration between artists and activists. Alarcón and Galván Rodríguez confirm this online poetic activism has proved stronger as a resistance movement than traditional forms of activism (xiv). Galván Rodríguez’s participation as a community activist, in addition to her poetry of resistance, exemplifies her continued commitment to social change and her commitment to constructing a better world for future generations.

In concurrence with giving voice in “Poem 25 ~ Giving Voice,” Galván Rodríguez also gives thanks to *La Bloga* and the associated poet-activists of “Poets Responding to SB 1070.” At the beginning of the poem, she includes a note of dedication to express her gratitude for the commitment of these online communities and their collective success as activists against social injustice. The audience of her poem extends beyond the members of these online artist and activist communities to also include all Chicanx, minorities, as well as the dominant hegemonic culture and its associated social institutions (e.g., the media). Galván Rodríguez urges readers to

use their voices, bringing to mind the old adage that if you do not speak for yourself, others will speak for you. As Chicana voices have been largely silenced by a history of violence and oppression from the dominant hegemonic culture, Galván Rodríguez acknowledges it is time to make a change and take a stand for justice. She begins her poem by emphasizing that remaining silent is no longer an option for Chicanas.

no choice

but to speak out -

loud about injustice

those who must hide have no voice, just

slashed tongues. (1-5)

The issue of silence, or having no voice, relates to a larger theme of language and its importance to communication and identity. Without language, including nonverbal forms of communication, humans cannot negotiate their personal and cultural identity and sense of self. Therefore, being forced to follow a language system other than one's native system results in identity confusion, hiding, and being taken advantage of by a foreign dominant culture. Flores and Yudice explain this struggle over language by stating, "language, then, is the necessary terrain on which Latinos negotiate value and attempt to reshape the institutions through which it is distributed" (61). The dominant culture seeks to maintain a hegemonic language as a symbol of power and privilege, therefore limiting languages other than U.S. English to private spheres, behind closed doors (Flores and Yudice 61). The result of this ethnic silencing has forced Chicanas and other minorities to either hide in fear or adopt the dominant culture's language while muting their own native language. The very act of silencing their native voices, however, represents a silencing of personal, cultural, and ethnic identities. Chicanas thus feel obligated to

assimilate in order to survive. Feeling that they have “no voice” (Galván Rodríguez 4), many Chicanas “hide / while being used” (Galván Rodríguez 6-7).

Galván Rodríguez is aware of the situation of illegal immigrants at the U.S.-Mexico borderland, or “those who *must* hide” (4; emphasis added), but this stress on “must hide” also extends to legal immigrants. Referring to the Arizona SB 1070 that prompted the Facebook page “Poets Responding to SB 1070,” even those legalized immigrants who *looked* suspicious or spoke Spanish are in danger of being deported or subjected to extreme discrimination, despite being legal U.S. citizens. Therefore, Chicanas have been forced to “live silently in fear” (Galván Rodríguez 9) and only speak their native tongue in private.

In *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Anzaldúa expounds on the situation of “being caught speaking Spanish” and her teachers forcing her to “speak ‘American’” and eliminate her accent (76). The irony of this silencing is that it is a direct violation of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution regarding freedom of speech. The dominant hegemonic culture in the United States has twisted and reduced this right to be only applicable to those who speak U.S. English, infringing on the very tenets of freedom and justice for all. Adding another level of irony, the land that comprises much of the southern United States was once Mexican territory (Reed 103). Therefore, the inhabitants and ancestors of this land were and are native Spanish speakers, not native English speakers. The result of this language collision at the borderland region is the development of Chicano Spanish, which Anzaldúa describes as a hybridized “living language” (77) that encompasses both English and Spanish. Anzaldúa explains this language empowers Chicanas to communicate “the realities and values true to themselves” (77). Instead of conforming to the dominant culture’s demand to “speak American,” Chicanas have remained resilient and adopted their own malleable language to withstand discrimination.

Despite the success of Chicano Spanish, discrimination against those who do not speak the dominant language still persists in the 21st century, as demonstrated by Arizona SB 1070. Chicanas feel pressured to only practice their native language in the private sphere and comfort of their homes. Flores and Yudice add that the “private sphere,” which includes language and sexuality, becomes the foreground for discrimination in the “public sphere” (61). Therefore, those who speak Spanish as their native language in public experience increased discrimination from the dominant culture. Galván Rodríguez depicts this castration of language as “slashed tongues” (5), because Chicanas have no opportunity to speak, are not listened to when they do speak, and are not able to truly express their identity (via their language) in public. Anzaldúa equally mocks the dominant culture for trying to “Tame a Wild Tongue” by imposing the English language, including the limitations of public education. In the article “Sin Vergüenza: Chicana Feminist Theorizing,” Karen Mary Davalos argues public school classrooms represent a location where power differentials, particularly concerning language, clash (168). Davalos explains majority students are not exposed to minority texts or languages, thus “jeopardizing the potential for social change” (168). Chicana feminists are aware of these silences that occur in the public sphere, and therefore strive to break the silence and promote change, as validated by Galván Rodríguez’s poem, “Poem 25 ~ Giving Voice.”

Because Chicanas are not free to express their own language, they feel they must hide their voices, and therefore their identity, in order to survive. Galván Rodríguez writes, “they hide / while being used / by people who speak lies” (6-8). Relating to similar themes in her poem “Collecting Thoughts from the Universe,” Galván Rodríguez confronts the dominant hegemonic culture and its social institutions for constructing a false reality and identity of Chicanas and those living at the borderland region. The “criminal / heads of state” (“Collecting Thoughts” 26-

27), including politicians and the media, have continued to publicize an alternate reality of life at the U.S.-Mexico borderland, reiterating the need for Chicanas to speak up and share the truth. In addition, because corrupt politicians have significant power and can reach a broad audience, an urgent need exists for Chicanas to use their voices to confront and correct false information. Galván Rodríguez meets this need of reaching a larger, more inclusive audience by posting her poetry online and she encourages others to “speak out - / loud about injustice” (2-3). The clear break in “out loud” between these two lines in the stanza signifies that Chicanas must do more than just speak—they must speak *out loud* in the public sphere so that others, including those in the dominant culture, will hear and listen.

Galván Rodríguez encourages Chicanas to utilize the power of language to realize change. Flores and Yudice confirm the significant influence of language, which Latinx and Chicax have harnessed to construct a new hegemony reflective of their cultures (73). Anzaldúa verifies how Chicanas have learned to juggle languages and cultural codes as a form of resistance to the contradictions that plague their daily lives. Anzaldúa explains Chicanas possess “a malleability that renders us unbreakable” (86) and “only by remaining flexible” (101) can Chicanas survive and overcome the divisions their world is built on. After reaching the final mestiza consciousness stage, Chicanas are able to change their reality and join together with people of all races to create “a new story to explain our world and our participation in it” (Anzaldúa 103). Galván Rodríguez stresses this need to work together as a community of all races and backgrounds and use “the power of the word” (Alarcón and Galván Rodríguez xiii) to make a positive change.

“Poem 25 ~ Giving Voice” is published on both the “Poets Responding to SB 1070” Facebook page and *La Bloga*. Its presence on Facebook, however, has received significant praise

and community discussion regarding the need for minority voices to speak out. The poem holds a current status of nineteen “likes” and thirteen comments, with many commenters acclaiming Galván Rodríguez for her truthful and inspirational language (Galván Rodríguez, “Giving Voice”). One viewer wrote,

I believe your poem has a great message that most people in this country must listen to and consider. There is a great injustice when our leaders, our civil, elected representatives lie to us, yet there is a greater injustice being done if people who have the power to “vote” don’t do anything to hold these representatives accountable for their lies. Thanks for sharing this inspiring and well crafted poem.

This comment demonstrates how the online social media community—including Latinx, Chicanx, and those in the dominant culture—is engaging with the poem and encouraging political activism, as inspired by Galván Rodríguez’s message.

Another commenter on the poem added, “This is what the voice of poetry is for; to get the word of injustice out.” The comment indicates that others in the community are fighting for the same cause: to spread awareness about injustice and encourage others in the community to also use their voices to realize change. This interaction echoes Kavada’s assertion that social media outlets help create a collective identity among users that motivates them to take action. Through sharing informative posts, such as Galván Rodríguez’s poetry of resistance from the “Poets Responding to SB 1070” page, users are able to diffuse these ideas “through existing social networks and contacts” (Kavada 44). Therefore, posting her poetry on Facebook offers an increased opportunity for interaction with both Chicanx and those in the dominant hegemonic culture in the hopes of actualizing change against social injustices.

As previously stated, Galván Rodríguez does not just address Chicanas in her poem. The poet also speaks directly to the dominant hegemonic culture by challenging them to join Chicanas “in solidarity” (14). Galván Rodríguez writes,

who then
will speak for us
when others turn away
who joins in solidarity
speaks up. (11-15)

Similar to her lack of end question mark punctuation in the poem “Collecting Thoughts from the Universe,” Galván Rodríguez disregards this traditional poetic convention in “Poem 25 ~ Giving Voice.” Her questioning directed at the dominant culture can be interpreted as rhetorical, thus creating a dramatic effect to emphasize her point that solidarity is essential to overcoming injustice. Galván Rodríguez also poses her questions as a challenge, forcing readers from the dominant culture to reflect on their own (un)conscious biases that have led them to “turn away” (13) from helping others and speaking up. Her questioning asks those in the dominant culture who “speak lies” (8) whether they are brave enough to start telling the truth and constructing a new reality inclusive of all citizens.

In the same stanza, Galván Rodríguez equates herself with all Chicanas through the use of “us” (12), as she identifies and empathizes with the tongue-less, voiceless individuals in hiding. The poet uses “the people’s language” (Harlow 62) and takes a stand for equality by encouraging those who are oppressed and denied their Constitutional rights to speak up. In Harlow’s *Resistance Literature*, the theorist explains the poetic language of resistance “must contend not only with the outsider, the invader or aggressor, and the regressive effects of

colonialism, but with the burden of its own past as well” (62). Galván Rodríguez meets these factors of resistance literature in “Poem 25 ~ Giving Voice.”

First, Galván Rodríguez acknowledges that Chicanas struggle with the lies told by the dominant culture and its social institutions; these lies distort and capitalize on those living at the borderland region. The media, politicians, and those who “turn away” (Galván Rodríguez 13) represent the “invader or aggressor” (Harlow 62) as they support and enforce increased military presence at the borderland. An example of this is the War on Drugs, in which the U.S. government implemented stricter control of the border region and created a militaristic war zone for inhabitants. Galván Rodríguez reflects on the effects of colonialism, such as the control over language and the invaders’ attempt to erase Chicano Spanish as an additional form of social control waged over language. This attack on language, and therefore attack on culture, has forced many Chicanas to “live silently in fear” (Galván Rodríguez 9) with “slashed tongues” (Galván Rodríguez 5). Last, Chicanas must confront and live with the hardships of their past, including the reality that their land was forcefully taken away from them, leaving Chicanas as “internal exiles within our own country” (Anzaldúa 282). Although this history of oppression has “muted voices” (Galván Rodríguez 17), Galván Rodríguez urges that there is no longer a choice to remain silent. By speaking up and challenging the dominant culture to join “in solidarity” (Galván Rodríguez 14), Chicanas can work to rearticulate a new reality and “demand / justice” (Galván Rodríguez 24-25).

Striving to reclaim Chicana history and voices, Galván Rodríguez writes to “unearth / muted voices” (16-17). The word choice of “unearth” depicts digging up, or unburying, something hidden, ignored, and out of view. Galván Rodríguez is referring to the reality of life at the borderland, including the past atrocities that occurred on this land, which have been buried

by the dominant hegemonic culture in an effort to actively forget this past violence. Nietzsche refers to this “active forgetting” as a process of choosing which information or events to purposefully forget. However, this process of selectively choosing what parts of history to remember, or not, implies Chicanas’ history and all of the violence their ancestors experienced is not worth remembering or incorporating into the overall U.S. history. Because the dominant culture has continued to erase their history and language, Chicanas need to take a stand and “speak out - / loud about injustice” (Galván Rodríguez 2-3). Therefore, as an activist and poet, Galván Rodríguez works to unmute Chicana voices and “teach them new songs to sing” (18).

A prominent theme throughout Galván Rodríguez’s work is her emphasis on education. The poet writes to “teach them,” referring to both Chicanas and those in the dominant culture. Her language is explanatory and inspirational as she encourages Chicanas to speak up and encourages those in the dominant culture to open their eyes and take a more active role in fighting for equality. Through her poetry of resistance, Galván Rodríguez contributes to Anzaldúa’s vision for Chicanas to see “through the fictions of white supremacy, a seeing of ourselves through the true guises and not as the false racial personality that has been given to us” (109). This regaining of self-respect allows Chicanas to speak out and to have their history and identity accurately represented in mainstream U.S. society. Galván Rodríguez aspires to teach those who “turn away” (13) to also stop hiding in fear of others in their own dominant culture. The poet ultimately argues that the power of knowledge, through education, can help construct a more inclusive world for all cultures and languages.

Demonstrated in her poem “Geographic Dreaming or What it Means to be Chicana,” Galván Rodríguez explains utmost importance should be placed on educating the next generation to be “one-hundred percent / Proud of all of who we are” (25-26). Through the mestiza

consciousness and establishing a high level of self-awareness, Chicanas can help teach children “new songs” (“Poem 25 ~ Giving Voice” 18) that celebrate their cultural heritage. Music, as a form of cultural expression, can instill a sense of pride in children and teach them not to live in fear, but rather to be strong, speak up, and “demand / justice” (Galván Rodríguez 24-25). According to Harlow, education is essential to the resistance movement and “crucial to its agenda of liberation” (59). Education through songs and poetry that reflect themes of “peace ~ / flowers” (Galván Rodríguez 19-20) embodies images of rebirth and prosperity. Because flowers are a symbol of growth and renewal and poems or songs are a form of cultural celebration, these concepts together—*flor y canto*—have the “poder ~ [power]” (Galván Rodríguez 22) to construct a new, prosperous world for Chicanas.

Stressing the importance of education for all, Galván Rodríguez urges readers to learn “new songs to sing” (18) that reflect the doctrines of peace and justice outlined in the U.S. Constitution. In contrast, the current national anthem celebrated throughout the country, “The Star Spangled Banner,” was written with pro-slavery and racist sentiments that only serve to reinforce oppression of minorities. During the War of 1812, Francis Scott Key wrote the poem that became the national anthem after losing to a British troop largely composed of freed African slaves (Johnson). The third verse of the song, which is not generally taught in schools or exposed to mainstream society, indicates the writer’s disdain toward those slaves who elected to fight on the side of the British in exchange for their freedom (Johnson). The song, therefore, argues for the freedom of Americans, but this freedom is limited to those who identify with the White European majority—not African Americans or indigenous peoples. Because the third stanza reflects themes of White privilege and subjugation of others based on skin color, it has been erased or muted from being taught in the public school system. This altering of reality and

muting of the truth is similar to the situation at the borderland, which has been ignored or distorted by the media and society. The silencing of certain events in U.S. history, and in the current twenty-first century, are the types of injustices Galván Rodríguez believes society needs to become aware of. She therefore urges the dominant culture to stop turning away and instead work to compose “new songs . . . poems for peace” (18-19).

Galván Rodríguez equates songs, a form of art, with peace to emphasize that music and art represent types of medicine. Music and art are forms of therapy, and they can influence people on personal, intrinsic levels to help foster positive change in their lives and in the community. Because music and art can also be outlets to channel pain or anger, these creative expressions offer a cathartic means to heal. Music and art therapies require the individual who is in need of healing to establish a more open, interconnectedness with others and the world around them, echoing Galván Rodríguez’s sentiment that both Chicanas and those in the dominant culture need to work together “in solidarity” (14). When Chicanas are able to “allow whites to be our allies” (Anzaldúa 107) and those in the dominant culture “admit that Mexico is your double” (Anzaldúa 108), a more respectful, prosperous relationship is established. Anzaldúa explains that once this harmony is achieved, “the intracultural split will heal” (108).

To fully understand the need for a healing process, one must first acknowledge why Chicanas are in pain. Galván Rodríguez explains that Chicanas seek to heal from the “fear, hatred” (24) that pervades the borderland region. They seek to heal from the continued violence they are exposed to as a result of the increased militarization at the border. Such everyday violence has developed as a result of government-driven initiatives to secure the border from harm. In reality, the increase of policing has caused more danger than safety for those who live along the “herida abierta [open wound]” (Anzaldúa 25) that is the U.S.-Mexico border. In

addition to the current violence, Chicanas are in need of “medicine to heal” (Galván Rodríguez 23) from the past atrocities against their ancestors. Chicanas and indigenous peoples have experienced a history of oppression, becoming foreigners overnight as their land and rights were stripped away from them (Anzaldúa 28). Because the situation at the borderland has left the inhabitants to “live silently in fear” (9), Galván Rodríguez urges Chicanas to work together to heal, regain their strength, and actualize change by speaking “out - / loud about injustice” (2-3).

In addition to the need for Chicanas and those living at the borderland to heal from the wounds of injustice, Galván Rodríguez’s poem implies that the country as a whole need to heal from its history of oppression against minorities. The emphasis on solidarity and working together is key to overcoming the “fear, hatred” (Galván Rodríguez 24) that has left many feeling as if they have “slashed tongues” (Galván Rodríguez 5). On a larger scale, this healing connects to the “open wound” (Anzaldúa 25) that bleeds between the United States and Mexico. As President Trump demands for a stronger border wall, he supports the “us vs. them” mentality that relegates Mexico as the enemy instead of the brotherly neighbor (Salama). However, amongst the chaos and oppression, there is hope, as exemplified in Galván Rodríguez’s poetry. The author confirms that the antithesis to this violence is to promote “peace” (19).

Reflecting on the title’s theme of “giving,” Galván Rodríguez’s activism parallels that of civil rights activists Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi. These leaders used the power of their words to promote peace and oppose violence from a dominant oppressor. Galván Rodríguez reflects how she and the other artists of “Poets Responding to SB 2010” and *La Bloga* write to “dedicate them poems for peace ~ / flowers” (19-20). Their action of speaking up and writing about civil rights violations is a form of peaceful protest. The writers turn their pain into art, “medicine to heal” (Galván Rodríguez 23), and use their encouraging words to spread peace—

the only weapon strong enough to “cure” violence. Leading by example, the poet-activists of these online forums do not hide, but rather “speak out” (2) and “demand / justice” (Galván Rodríguez 24-25). Women activists, Naples explains, are “especially skillful in building bridges across different issues, diverse communities, and varied political perspectives in their struggles to secure the health and safety of their families and communities” (9). Chicana writers, including Galván Rodríguez, are utilizing the social media context to build bridges and connect people of all backgrounds as they fight for social justice.

Galván Rodríguez dedicates “Poem 25 ~ Giving Voice” to the online poet-activists to applaud the powerful impact of their On-line Floricanto. The poet writes,

flor y canto
poder ~ [power]
sweet medicine to heal
fear, hatred and yes, to demand
justice. (19-25)

The combination of flor y canto, which translates to flower and song, is the Nahuatl (or Aztec) phrase that means poetry. Because Aztecs are the people of Aztlán (Anzaldúa 26), the mythical homeland of the north, the allusion to flor y canto in both Galván Rodríguez’s poem and *La Bloga*’s On-line Floricanto advocates the importance of celebrating heritage.

During the Chicano Movement, poet-activist Alurista also harnessed the positive energy of connecting with the ancestral homeland in his “Plan Espiritual de Aztlán.” For Chicanx, his plan served as the political motif for establishing a sense of community and national belonging in the United States (Fernández 2; Urayoán Noel 855). In addition to “El Plan,” Alurista’s first volume of poetry, *Floricanto en Aztlán* (1971), detailed creative connections between Aztec

symbols and Chicana identity in the 1970s (López 93). In the poem “libertad sin lágrimas,” Alurista writes “freedom shall not escape us / libertad en mano . . . free like the eagle / y la serpiente” (Floriscanto 5, as cited in López 96). The Aztec symbols of the eagle and the serpent hold various meanings, such as good vs. evil, and are the current figures on Mexico’s coat of arms. Alurista employs these symbols to convey that Chicana can attain freedom, and therefore reach Aztlán, through self-knowledge and pride of their cultural roots (López 96). In “The Language of Resistance: Alurista’s Global Poetics,” Marissa López explains that Alurista refers to Aztlán “not so much a place as an idea of nationhood predicated on the erasure of national borders, the unification of all people, and the humanization of labor” (106). This ideal “location” of unification has manifested into an ideological frontier where Chicana establish a sense of community predicated on their ancestral roots to Mexico.

The concept of Aztlán that Alurista revived during the Chicano Movement is still relevant in the twenty-first century, as Galván Rodríguez writes about the power of “flor y canto” (21), the Aztec phrase for poetry, to inspire political activism. Because no physical location of Aztlán exists, the frontier of Aztlán is represented not as a geological terrain, but rather as an ideological frontier where Chicanas “put history through a sieve, winnows out the lies” (Anzaldúa 104) and build a stronger mestiza consciousness in the face of duality and oppression. Chicana writers, including Anzaldúa and Galván Rodríguez, have re-envisioned F. J. Turner’s frontier thesis to include the terrain of ideological Borderlands as sites that foster identity negotiation and a sense of community and belonging in the United States. Therefore, Aztlán is the ideological Borderland Anzaldúa outlines in her Borderlands theory. Aztlán represents the homeland of the north as an intrinsic location that has always been with Chicanas; the search for this “home” is internal. Anzaldúa confirms,

The struggle has always been inner, and is played out in the outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the “real” world unless it first happens in the images in our heads. (109)

Aztlán further extends into the contemporary world as a location represented in online communities built through social media outlets. Alurista’s use of the Aztlán myth as a symbol of community building is echoed in digital communities, such as “Poets Responding to SB 1070” and *La Bloga*. These communities are dedicated to “Giving Voice” to those with “slashed tongues” (5) and incite peaceful protesting in the name of equality and justice for all. As digital platforms, social media outlets allow Chicana voices to be heard and Chicana writers to be publicized, without the limitations of publishing houses that largely cater to writers in the dominant culture. In addition to spreading awareness and encouraging Chicanas to “speak out - / loud about injustice” (Galván Rodríguez 2-3) through this online terrain, Chicanas are engaging in a more inclusive process of community building. Kavada adds that community building through social media occurs because users are contributors to the conversations and posts, as opposed to mere consumers of content (31). Because social media offers increased opportunities for interaction without the constraints of geographic locations, activists “build ties of solidarity” with a much faster rate (Kavada 31).

Galván Rodríguez’s “Poem 25 ~ Giving Voice” encapsulates the necessity for Chicanas to use their voice and “demand / justice” (24-25) in order to bring about positive changes in society. Achieving this justice, however, entails confronting fears that they have “no voice” (Galván Rodríguez 4) and instead realizing that they have “no choice” (Galván Rodríguez 1) but to speak up. By expressing their language and true identity in the public sphere, particularly

through social media contexts, Chicanas are rearticulating their history and value in the United States. The poem emphasizes the needs to unite “in solidarity” with the dominant culture and to educate future generations to be proud of their cultural history and language. This pride, exemplified through the mestiza consciousness, gives Chicanas the power to not just speak up and react to the injustices around them, but also to partake in political activism to construct a more inclusive world for people of all cultures and backgrounds.

CONCLUSION

Chicanas have experienced a history of oppression from the dominant hegemonic culture since the expansion of the United States and seizure of Mexican territory. Turned into “foreign others” in their own land, Chicanas have developed a resilient identity tied to resistance. This strength and resilience heightened during the Chicano Movement, with leading poet and theorist Alurista harnessing the power of the Aztec myth of Aztlán to instill a sense of community building and identity among Chicax. The process of community building is predicated on Chicax embracing their unique cultural heritage, which includes continuing to use their Spanish language despite the dominant culture’s push for assimilation and a hegemonic language. In the twenty-first century, community building has transitioned into online contexts, with social media sites representing a digital frontier for Chicanas to confront oppression, spread awareness about their reality, and encourage political activism through a border-less terrain.

In this thesis, I analyzed three poems by Chicana poet and activist, Odilia Galván Rodríguez, to argue how literature, specifically poetry, is a form of, and a precursor to, political action and community activism. I focused my study on poems Galván Rodríguez published through the social media websites of Facebook and Latinx and Chicax literary blog, *La Bloga*, to further argue that Chicana authors are utilizing social media to spread awareness of their situation and provoke change. Guiding my analysis were Gloria Anzaldúa’s Borderlands theory and Barbara Harlow’s theory of resistance literature. These theories supported my thesis for two prominent reasons. First, Harlow confirms, “the theory of resistance literature is in its politics” (30). Second, Anzaldúa refers to the mestiza consciousness, a key component of Borderlands theory, as a consciousness of political action. Specifically, Anzaldúa proposes a vision for Chicanas, and by extension all Latinx, to challenge the oppressions of society and establish a

new culture wherein Chicana voices are heard and respected. Anzaldúa urges Chicanas to not just react but *act* against the changing social, political, and economic environment in the United States that limits their participation in society (101). Therefore, by combining the concepts of resistance literature as political and the mestiza consciousness as a political consciousness, I determined Galván Rodríguez's poems represent a form of, and a precursor to, political action and community activism.

Considering that the U.S.-Mexico borderland is a location of everyday violence, the area is ripe for the production of political activism against injustice (Naples 8). In Galván Rodríguez's poem, "Geographic Dreaming or What it Means to be Chicana," the poet articulates how the mestiza consciousness has enabled Chicanas to resist discrimination and the mold forced upon them by the dominant hegemonic culture. Although resistance to a dominant force is tied to their identity, Chicanas do not let this resistance solely define them, but rather use it as a tool to spread awareness, incite political action, and work to construct a more inclusive world for Chicanas. Spreading awareness about the history of discrimination and the reality of violence at the borderland region is a form of political action. Galván Rodríguez further publicizes her reaction to this violence in "Collecting Thoughts from the Universe" as a means to educate the dominant culture of this reality, which is largely ignored or distorted by the mainstream media. Galván Rodríguez's poetry represents a form of political action as she uses her voice, including the code-switching power of Chicana Spanish, instead of continuing to allow the dominant culture to silence Chicana identity and language. In her poem "Giving Voice ~ Poem 25," the poet emphasizes the need for Chicanas to take back their voices, stop hiding in fear, and demand justice. In addition to taking action by speaking up about injustice, Galván Rodríguez encourages Chicanas and those in the dominant culture to work in solidarity against human rights violations

and to construct a more inclusive society that truly meets the tenets of justice for all. The progress these poets and their associated online communities have made is evidenced by the reduction in the provisions of Arizona SB 1070, which were reduced from four to one by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2012 (American Civil Liberties Union).

Anzaldúa's Borderlands theory is applicable to contemporary Chicana literature because of its emphasis on identity (or consciousness) building through negotiation of dualities and the unearthing of a shared history of resistance, which is a significant part of Chicana identity. In "Geographic Dreaming or What it Means to be Chicanas," Galván Rodríguez extends Anzaldúa's conception of the mestiza consciousness, a state of self-acceptance and self-awareness, into the twenty-first century. The poet situates where Chicanas are now, "Chicana proud despite all the years" (Galván Rodríguez 19), and where the mestiza consciousness is going for the future, "birthing that nation of ours / together with them" (Galván Rodríguez 26-28). Because the mestiza consciousness affords Chicanas the ability to make meaning of the past and present atrocities at the borderland and heal from them, Galván Rodríguez's poem confirms that Chicanas possess the strength and perseverance to achieve a future of equality. In addition, by resisting imposed reductionist identities and remaining flexible, Chicanas have proven their ability to bend borders, mold languages, and push rigid boundaries established by the dominant culture. Galván Rodríguez confirms this pride of their "consciousness of duality" (Anzaldúa 59) by stating, "knowing we were something new / a mezcla to embrace" (21-22).

In the poem "Collecting Thoughts from the Universe," Galván Rodríguez shares her reaction to the continued violence and oppression that has persisted along the borderland. Her poem is a form of political action as she spreads awareness about, and makes a call to action against, this violence by highlighting the corrupt sociopolitical initiatives that have reinforced it.

The poet targets the deceitful politicians and social institutions that threaten the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for Chicanas. From President Nixon to current President Trump, many politicians have used the fear-mongering tactic of the “false war on drugs” (Galván Rodríguez 30), including the construction of the border wall, to win voter support. These political initiatives by “criminal / heads of state” (26-27) have created a militarized war zone along the border, where “people act less than human” (Galván Rodríguez 8). Compounding this issue, the media has largely ignored or distorted the reality of life at the borderland. Therefore, Galván Rodríguez’s poem serves to educate the U.S. public about this reality.

Education represents a prominent theme throughout Galván Rodríguez’s poetry, which parallels the poet’s understanding that minority voices are largely underrepresented in both mainstream society and politics, as well as in the U.S. public school system. This lack of equal representation iterates the need for Chicanas to use their voices and take action. In “Geographic Dreaming or What it Means to be Chicana,” Galván Rodríguez emphasizes the need to teach “the young ones / to be one-hundred percent / Proud of all of who we are” (24-26). After this pride of identity is established, Chicanas need to speak up about the reality of everyday violence that they experience and begin to question, “And who do we help / does all this war make life better / who is the real enemy” (“Collecting Thoughts” 35-37). With education representing the weapon to combat ignorance, Galván Rodríguez writes to encourage Chicanas and those in the dominant culture to work together and invest in the future of the country.

“Poem 25 ~ Giving Voice” is Galván Rodríguez’s most encouraging poem, emboldening Chicanas to stop hiding in fear and to “speak out- / loud about injustice” (2-3). The poet stresses that the time is now to take action and that Chicanas must refuse to let the dominant culture silence their language and identity. Her poem exemplifies how language is a powerful tool to

heal and promote change: “flor y canto . . . sweet medicine to heal” (19, 21). In addition to motivating Chicanas to take action, the poet challenges those in the dominant culture to unite “in solidarity” (14) and work together to realize a more peaceful, respecting society. Galván Rodríguez dedicates this poem to *La Bloga* and the poets associated with the Facebook page “Poets Responding to SB 1070.” These writers and activists disseminate their poetry of resistance through social media as a form of peaceful protest against human rights violations. In addition, as co-creator and moderator of the Facebook page, which is partnered with *La Bloga*’s On-Line Floricanto, Galván Rodríguez’s activism, both online and exemplified through her poetry, has spurred other poets to join in this resistance. As the number of followers and contributors on these social media outlets continues to grow, this increase confirms Galván Rodríguez’s poetry of resistance is not just a form of political action by spreading awareness and speaking up about injustice, but it is also a precursor to action by inspiring other poets and activists to also speak out.

Disseminating her poetry through social media, Galván Rodríguez reaches a broader audience and thus defies the limitations of publishing houses that unequally represent writers from the dominant culture. Flores and Yudice confirm that language is the vehicle for negotiating identity and establishing value. Because Galván Rodríguez chooses to post her poetry of resistance through digital communities, increased community building and political activism have occurred among members and viewers. Using their language and voices online, and thus representing their true identity in the public sphere, Chicana writers are rearticulating their history and value in the United States. Social media, therefore, give Chicana writers and activists, including Galván Rodríguez, the power to use their voices, spread awareness, and

actualize change as they work in solidarity to create a better world for people all cultures and backgrounds.

WORKS CITED

- Alarcón, Francisco X., and Odilia Galván Rodríguez. Introduction. *Poetry of Resistance: Voices for Social Justice*, by Alarcón and Galván Rodríguez, University of Arizona Press, 2016, pp. xiii-2.
- Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. The New Press, 2010.
- Al-Shalabi, Nazmi, et al. "The American Literary Canon: Impervious to Change?" *International Forum of Teaching and Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2011, pp. 50-55. *ProQuest*, www.proquest.com/.
- Alurista (Alberto Urista). "Cultural Nationalism and Xicano Literature during the Decade of 1965-1975." *MELUS*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1981, pp. 22-34. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/467145.
- American Civil Liberties Union. "[Infographic] What's at Stake: SB 1070 at the Supreme Court." 2018, www.aclu.org/issues/immigrants-rights/infographic-whats-stake-sb-1070-supreme-court?redirect=sb1070-graphic.
- Andreas, Peter. "Chapter Seven: Borders Restated." In *Border Games: Policing the U.S.-Mexico Divide*, 2nd ed. Cornell University Press, 2009.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. 4th ed., Aunt Lute, 1987.
- Benavides, Cristian. "Students Walk Out After Teach Orders: Speak 'American.'" *NBC News*, 16 Oct. 2017, www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/students-walk-out-after-teacher-tells-students-speak-american-n811256.
- Cantú, Norma Élia, and Aída Hurtado. Introduction. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, by Gloria Anzaldúa, 4th ed., Aunt Lute, 1987, pp. 3-13.

- Castells, Manuel. "Communication, Power and Counter-Power in the Network Society." *International Journal of Communication*, vol. 1, 2007, pp. 238-266, www.ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/46/35.
- Chatterjee, Arna. "Poetics as resistance: Exploring the Selected Poetry of Pablo Neruda and Sachidananda Vatsayayan Ajñeya." *Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics*, vol. 39, no. 1-2, 2012, pp. 133-141, www.jclaonline.org/.
- Colby, Sandra L., and Jennifer M. Ortman. "Projections of the Size and Composition of the U.S. Population: 2014 to 2060." *U.S. Census Bureau*, March 2015, www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/demo/p25-1143.pdf.
- Cummings, André D. P. "'All Eyez on Me': America's War on Drugs and the Prison-Industrial Complex." *Journal of Gender, Race, and Justice*, vol. 15, no. 3, 2012, pp. 417-448. *ProQuest Central*, www.proquest.com/.
- Davalos, Karen Mary. "Sin Vergüenza: Chicana Feminist Theorizing." *Feminist Studies*, vol. 34, no. 1/2, 2008, pp. 151-171. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/20459186.
- Feghali, Zalfa. "Re-articulating the New *Mestiza*." *Journal of International Women's Studies*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2011, 61-74. *ProQuest*, www.proquest.com/.
- Fernández, Roberta. "Abriendo Caminos in the Brotherland: Chicana Writers Respond to the Ideology of Literary Nationalism." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, vol. 14, no. 2, 1994, pp. 23-50. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/3346623.
- Flores, Juan, and George Yudice. "Living Borders/Buscando America: Languages of Latino Self-Formation." *Social Text*, vol. 24, 1990, pp. 57-84. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/827827.

Galván Rodríguez, Odilia. "Collecting Thoughts from the Universe." *Beyond Boundaries Part II.*

Ten On the 5th of the 8th: On-line Floricanto. La Bloga, 5 Aug. 2014,

www.labloga.blogspot.com/2014/08/beyond-boundaries-part-ii-ten-on-5th-of.html.

---. "Geographic Dreaming or What it Means to be Chicana." *Facebook*, 5 Aug. 2016, Poets

Responding, [www.facebook.com/notes/poets-responding/geographic-dreaming-or-what-](http://www.facebook.com/notes/poets-responding/geographic-dreaming-or-what-it-means-to-be-chicana-by-odilia-galv%C3%A1n-rodr%C3%ADguez/1071825469520989?__mref=message_bubble)

[it-means-to-be-chicana-by-odilia-galv%C3%A1n-](http://www.facebook.com/notes/poets-responding/geographic-dreaming-or-what-it-means-to-be-chicana-by-odilia-galv%C3%A1n-rodr%C3%ADguez/1071825469520989?__mref=message_bubble)

[rodr%C3%ADguez/1071825469520989?__mref=message_bubble](http://www.facebook.com/notes/poets-responding/geographic-dreaming-or-what-it-means-to-be-chicana-by-odilia-galv%C3%A1n-rodr%C3%ADguez/1071825469520989?__mref=message_bubble).

---. "Poem 25 ~ Giving Voice." *Facebook*, 28 Aug. 2011, Poets Responding,

[www.facebook.com/notes/poets-responding/poem-25-giving-voice-by-odilia-](http://www.facebook.com/notes/poets-responding/poem-25-giving-voice-by-odilia-galv%C3%A1n-rodr%C3%ADguez/200006206702924/)

[galv%C3%A1n-rodr%C3%ADguez/200006206702924/](http://www.facebook.com/notes/poets-responding/poem-25-giving-voice-by-odilia-galv%C3%A1n-rodr%C3%ADguez/200006206702924/).

Harlow, Barbara. *Resistance Literature*. Muthuen, 1987.

Hoban, Brennan. "Do Immigrants 'Steal' Jobs from American Workers?" *Brookings Institute*, 24

Aug. 2017, [www.brookings.edu/blog/brookings-now/2017/08/24/do-immigrants-steal-](http://www.brookings.edu/blog/brookings-now/2017/08/24/do-immigrants-steal-jobs-from-american-workers/)

[jobs-from-american-workers/](http://www.brookings.edu/blog/brookings-now/2017/08/24/do-immigrants-steal-jobs-from-american-workers/).

Johnson, Jason. "Star-Spangled Bigotry: The Hidden Racist History of the National Anthem."

Root, 4 July 2016, [www.theroot.com/star-spangled-bigotry-the-hidden-racist-history-of-](http://www.theroot.com/star-spangled-bigotry-the-hidden-racist-history-of-the-1790855893)

[the-1790855893](http://www.theroot.com/star-spangled-bigotry-the-hidden-racist-history-of-the-1790855893).

Kaiser Family Foundation. "Population Distribution of Children by Race/Ethnicity." 2016,

[www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/children-by-](http://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/children-by-raceethnicity/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D)

[raceethnicity/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%](http://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/children-by-raceethnicity/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D)

[22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D](http://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/children-by-raceethnicity/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D).

Kavada, Anastasia. "Engagement, Bonding, and Identity Across Multiple Platforms: Avaaz on

Facebook, YouTube, and MySpace." *MedieKultur: Journal of Media and*

- Communication Research*, vol. 52, 2012, pp. 28-48.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.7146/mediekultur.v28i52.5486>.
- King, Martin Luther Jr. "Nobel Lecture." 1964 *Nobelprize.org*,
www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1964/king-lecture.html.
- López, Marissa. "The Language of Resistance: Alurista's Global Poetics." *MELUS*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2008, pp. 93-115. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/30029743.
- Naples, Nancy A. "Presidential Address: Crossing Borders: Community Activism, Globalization, and Social Justice." *Social Problems*, vol. 56, no. 1, 2009, pp. 2-20. *JSTOR*,
www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/sp.2009.56.1.2.
- Oboler, Suzanne. "Citizenship and Belonging: The Construction of US Latino Identity Today." *Iberoamericana*, vol. 7, no. 25, 2007, pp. 115-127. *JSTOR*,
www.jstor.org/stable/41676161.
- Orozco-Mendoza, Elva Fabiola. *Borderlands Theory: Producing Border Epistemologies with Gloria Anzaldúa*. Dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2008.
- Ortega, Mariana. "Latina Feminism, Experience and the Self." *Philosophy Compass*, vol. 10, no. 4, 2015, pp. 244–254, doi:10.1111/phc3.12211.
- Poets Responding to SB 1070. "About." *Facebook*,
www.facebook.com/pg/PoetryOfResistance/about/?ref=page_internal.
- . "Home." *Facebook*, www.facebook.com/PoetryOfResistance/.
- Reed, T. V. *Art of Protest: Culture and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Streets of Seattle* (e-book). U of Minnesota P, 2005.

Rico, Diana. "The Pen or the Sword? Poet Activist Odilia Galván Rodríguez." *HipLatina*, 27 Nov. 2016, www.hiplatina.com/the-pen-or-the-sword-poet-activist-odilia-galvan-rodriguez/.

Salama, Vivian. "Politics: Trump to Mexico: Take Care of 'Bad Hombres' or US Might." *Associated Press*, 2 Feb. 2017, www.apnews.com/0b3f5db59b2e4aa78cdbbf008f27fb49.

Sedano, Michael. "2017 Best Poems La Bloga On-Line Floricanto." *La Bloga*, 23 Jan. 2018, www.labloga.blogspot.com/2018/01/2017-best-poems-la-bloga-on-line.html.

---. "La Bloga On-line Floricanto Ten Best Poems in 2016." *La Bloga*, 03 Jan. 2017, www.labloga.blogspot.com/2017/01/best-poems-from-la-bloga-on-line.html.

Turner, Frederick Jackson. *The Frontier in American History*. Henry Holt, 1921. *Project Gutenberg*, www.gutenberg.org/files/22994/22994-h/22994-h.htm.

University of Arizona Poetry Center. "Odilia Galván Rodríguez." www.poetry.arizona.edu/people/odilia-galv%C3%A1n-rodr%C3%ADguez.

Urayoán Noel, T. "Bodies that Anitmatter: Locating U.S Latino/a Poetry, 2000–2009." *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 52, no. 4, 2011, pp. 852-882. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/41472496.

