

Carlos Martinez

ETHNC 5730

Final; Podcast Transcript; How Chicana Feminism inform us about mental health issues in our community?

**Carlos**

Hello listeners, my name is Carlos. For today's podcast, I have with me, Lucia Miramontes, who is a dear friend and comrade. Today, Lucia and I are going to be discussing how Chicana Feminism can help us better understand and deal with mental health issues in our community? But before we dive into that big question I think we should discuss what makes the Chicana experience particularly important to understand?

**Lucia**

Sure, we are talking about a lot of experiences, but all of which seem very similar, in the struggle of juggling two identities, two cultures, just that experience in itself. Is so difficult. So when we're talking about feminism and women's oppression, there is a special little corner for Chicanas, you know the intersectionality's of these struggles.

**Carlos**

Yeah, I think that's an astute observation, it reminds me a lot of what Bernice Ricon discussed in her contributions to Chicana Feminist thought when she was talking about the la Chicana experience, and how la Chicana function between two spaces. Two contradictory spaces. One the Mexican traditionalist, which are held a lot by Chicanos, their brothers, their fathers, their cousins. Then then the ideals of women in America, this third-wave feminism which that empowers women to enter the labor force and to create their own career paths. And these type of

conflicts contradictions between these two conceptions is something that unique and important to understand when dealing with issues of mental health.

**Lucia**

And this is all because you are juggling two identities, two cultures, and having nowhere to go, that can lead you to nothing to turn to, and this is why it can have such mental health outcomes.

**Carlos**

I think part of that has to come from a non-understanding of our identity or- the struggle to understand our identity- I guess would be a better way to say it- I think that contributes to our ability to understand and recognize the roots of our mental illness in our communities and how their manifesting, and how their being perpetuated. If we look at somebody like Elizabeth Martinez, and the way she conceptualizes the Chicana experience, you can see that it's one which is expertly tied from pain, and rape, force, and violence.

**Lucia**

-from imperialism?

**Carlos**

Yeah, imperialism.

**Lucia**

Yeah

**Carlos**

Yeah, and I think that kind of ties in well with also- alnzuldudas understanding of identity- the way it's disembodied- Frankenstein-esque. Really violent. It does something which I think the narratives of hybridity don't. so I was just wondering what do you think about this idea of

violence and coercion being like a central part to the Chicana identity and its ramifications for understanding mental health in our community.

**Lucia**

Well, I think there's also a juggling of two types of trauma. I mean we're handling intergenerational trauma from this imperialism and from years and years of erasure. We're also facing trauma and suffering from our own lives and our inability to have a sense of self. And so we're kind of dealing with something that not only runs deep within your family-but also- something you face yourself- and that has huge ramifications to your mental health.

**Carlos**

Yeah

**Lucia**

I think I definitely see that in Chicanos

**Carlos**

-yeah, I think Yvette Flores' text when she's discussing 'los hombres' and their mental health issues, I think repression is a central aspect to not only the perpetuation of it within Chicanos but the degree to which it affects them as well, is also like tied into their repression and inability to sometimes understand and recognize it. And I think that's why – you know- Chicana feminism is really crucial because it can help us not only better understand it and recognize and confront mental health, but also, as a way to alleviate it, such as viewing it in a more public way which Sherry Moraga discussed when she was discussing Aztec and native interpretations of mental health. I think that's an important way Chicana feminism informs us about mental health. You

being someone who does a lot of art in the community I was wondering, what are your thoughts on about the way in which, you know...

**Lucia**

-it all ties in together?

**Carlos**

Yeah. It can all tie in together.

**Lucia**

Yeah well, it absolutely isn't just an issue I face, this is an issue an entire generation faces. And emotions are not as private as we think they are.

**Carlos**

-Right.

**Lucia**

You know, our suffering and our experiences are very much connected and are very much something we should be uniting over and something that we should be, you know, finding justification and validation within each other- and within each other's experiences, but we don't actually do that as much. And so what art does it really is like a bridge into these conversations. So community art is a way to engage people into talking and having conversations. And when you're facilitating a community art thing it's, it's about navigating this conversation. It's not like it's the answer, but it's engaging, and that really brings up to the whole third space of art. Now we're pushing into like 'this isn't art just for viewing and just for observing' this is art that is happening. That word, understanding, as an action. Or understanding as a form of love.

**Carlos**

Transformative.

**Lucia**

Transformative and it's almost like, restorative.

**Carlos**

I think that's a really great point. In the way in which we try to shift our understanding of mental health because Chicana feminism kind of informs us to do so, right? Because we don't want to perpetuate our understandings of mental health that feeds into a patriarchal, racist, and classist notion of mental health. We want to create a transformative understanding of mental health, one that accounts the public, one that accounts for the gender, one that accounts for the specific experiences of the mestizos that our community is comprised of. I think one, again- not a golden solution that's going to fix everything- but one thing that can at least start engaging conversation, one which is again needed in our community because we see that repression is a huge part of the perpetuation and stigmatization of mental health and the solutions to it. Yeah, thank you, Lucia, for coming and talking to me today about Chicana feminism and how it can inform us on mental health problems in our community

**Lucia**

Yeah thanks for having me. Is that a wrap?

\*music continued in background\*

**Carlos**

I am the proletariat. I'm not a pig. Quote.

Podcast Link: <https://soundcloud.com/solipsism-3/chicana-feminism-in-mental-health>

