A Critical Bond: Cultural Transmission and Nation-Building in Métis and Chicana/o Picture Books

by

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ABSTRACT

It was not until the later part of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century that Métis and Chicana/o authors began to create picture books as a counter-literary response to the discrimination that they faced as mixed-race peoples. The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the literary contributions by Métis and Chicana/o writers to show how the bond between grandparent and grandchild shapes transcultural identities in picture books. I analyze Métis identity and nation-building elements in *Relatives with Roots: A Story About Métis Women's Connection to the Land/ Lii Peraantii avik la Rasin: Eñ Nistwaar Taanishi lii Faam di Michif E'ishi Kisheyitakik li Tayraeñ* (2011) by Leah Dorion; *Flour Sack Flora* (2001) by Deborah L. Delaronde; *Fiddle Dancer/Li daanseur di vyaeloon* (2007), *Dancing in My Bones/La daans daan mii zoo* (2009), and *Call of the Fiddle/ Li Vayaloon ka Tapypwatikooyen* (2011) by Wilfred Burton and Anne Patton; and *Jenneli's Dance* (2008) by Elizabeth Denny. I compare those Métis picture books with Chicana/o texts like Pat Mora's *The Beautiful Lady: Our Lady of Guadalupe* (2012); Gloria Anzaldúa's *Friends from the Other Side/Amigos del otro lado* (1993) and *Prietita and the Ghost Woman/Prietita y La Llorona* (1995); and Amada Irma Pérez's *My Diary from Here to There/Mi diario de aquí hasta allá* (2002). My disseration offers a comparison of the children's literature of New Peoples in North America. I argue that in this self-validating literature Métis and Chicana/o authors promote visual and textual literacy to create a sense of pride in being a member of their respective nations. Picture books provide the required space for identity recovery, assertion, and transmission of their transcultural identities.

For Denis Blakeman—it a privilege to call you my grandfather

For Nana and Papa—you have shown me the crucial bond that exists between generations

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INTRODUCTION

"The most important aspect [. . .] for those who are Chicano, is that in writing history they will contribute modestly to their heritage and self-knowledge of the community, and perhaps contribute to a structural analysis for positive action on behalf of the community."

—Juan Gómez-Quiñones, "Toward a Perspective on Chicano History" (1971)

"They started a new nation with equality for all.
But Ottawa's oppression finally made it fall."

—Adrian Hope, "Ode to the Metis" (1968)

Colonization radically altered the physical and mental landscapes of North America. The invasion by Europeans produced a different social order and, among other effects, led to the ethnogenesis of New Peoples,[1] notably the Métis and Chicanas/os.[2] In this study I will compare and contrast the picture books of these two nations on the grounds that the two collectivities share similar defining historical trajectories that have shaped their identity: birth as New Peoples, war and rebellion (nineteenth century), dislocation and discrimination (early twentieth century), and revolution and renaissance (late twentieth

[1] I have chosen to capitalize and pluralize New Peoples and Indigenous Peoples out of respect and also to recognize that more than one group exists.

[2] The term Chicana/o could be discussed and defined at length. At one time, the expression Chicano was used in a pejorative manner to refer to "lower-class persons of Mexican descent" (Gutiérrez 184). However, since the Chicano Movement, in the 1960s, the word has been appropriated by people of Mexican-American ancestry to redefine and reassert Chicana/o identity (184). I use the term Chicana/o to refer to individuals who trace their lineage back to Mexico and self-identify as members of the Chicana/o nation.

century). For years, it was a constant struggle for Métis and Chicanas/os to assert their print culture as nation-building artifacts because of the discrimination they faced living within their respective dominant Euro-American societies. It was not until the later part of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century that Métis and Chicana/o authors began to create picture books as a counter-literary response to the long-suppressed racism they experienced as mixed race peoples.

Even though the nineteenth century is often regarded as the catalyst for Métis nationhood, the Métis were born out of the economic motives of the fur trade; they united and formed a distinct group within Canada. Their national pride increased with the Battle of Seven Oaks (1816), and later the Red River Resistance (1869-70) and the North West Resistance (1885). However, the defeat at Batoche, the scrip program, the death of Louis Riel, and the economic, political, and social marginalization, among other things, soon left them displaced and relegated to the road allowances. Chicanas/os, in contrast, point farther back to 1519 and the encounter between La Malinche and Hernán Cortés, which resulted in the beginning of their mestiza/o race in Tenochtitlán. That said, Chicanas/os are a post-colonial people because they did not exist as such until the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. It was virtually overnight that Mexicans living in the Southwestern United States assumed American citizenship. At that time, they were labeled as Other, and were deemed outcasts within the white Anglo society in which they now lived. Acclaimed Chicana writer and theorist Gloria Anzaldúa explains what it means to be Chicana/o: “We don’t identify with the Anglo-American cultural values and we don’t totally identify with the Mexican cultural values. We are a synergy of two

cultures with various degrees of Mexicanness or Angloness" (*Borderlands* 85). Anzaldúa's view represents the synthesis of the Mexican and the Anglo-American transcultural identity. However, Chicana/o identity goes beyond where a person is born or lives. Rather, much like Métis identity, it is highly dependent on self-identification. Thus, all the authors in this project self-identify as Métis or Chicanas/os.

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the literary contributions by Métis and Chicana/o writers to demonstrate how the bond between grandparent and grandchild as represented in the images and stories in children's picture books configures transcultural identities. Picture books have long been used as pedagogical tools for literary development and socialization. But the picture books in this study serve an even greater purpose; they are identity-shaping tools that oscillate between self-identity and national building. A picture book, much like a nation, to borrow the words of Montserrat Guiberneau, "responds to a complex process by which individuals identify themselves with a set of symbols and traditions, and a culture and language" and "have the power to unite and stress [a] sense of community" (*Identity* 31-32). The psychological, cultural, historical, and territorial dimensions of national identity come to the forefront in the Métis and Chicana/o picture books I analyze as the young protagonists gain a deeper understanding of what it means to be a member of their larger community from a grandparent. The figure of the grandparent is central to both Métis and Chicana/o children's books in order to recover the past, and links the present to the future. Print culture secures this cultural transmission, as well as provides the necessary space for a collective imagining of the nation. It is crucial for both their political and emotional well-

being that Métis and Chicanas/os see themselves reflected in the literary world that surrounds them. For the next generations of Chicanas/os, Anzaldúa explains, "Reading and writing [children's] books that show Chicanos in a positive way becomes part of decolonizing, disindoctrinating ourselves from the oppressive messages we've been given" (*Interviews* 245). Likewise, Judy Iseke-Barnes suggests that Métis Elders are not only storytellers and historians, but also educators. Their work is equally crucial to the decolonization process: "[Métis] stories and histories educate communities and sustain our culture" ("Grandmothers" 69). She goes on to say: "We need these stories if we as Métis peoples are to understand fully ourselves, our culture, and our histories within the cultural, social, and economic history of Métis communities" (70). In this project I analyze and explore how picture books, with their visual and textual stories, can be used to promote cultural consciousness and kinship solidarity. All of the critical works touch on one or more of the twenty-five decolonizing methodologies as named by Linda Tuhiwai Smith in her book *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (1999). Métis and Chicana/o authors engage with elements of Smith's claiming, testimonies, storytelling, celebrating survival, remembering, indigenizing, intervening, revitalizing, connecting, reading, writing, representing, gendering, envisioning, reframing, restoring, returning, democratizing, net-working, naming, protecting, creating, negotiating, discovering, and sharing (Smith 143-61).

The ideological undertones in these texts allow children to conceptualise and connect with the nation. I cover a range of literature and cultural history, but specifically I examine picture books as cultural, social, historical, psychological, and political

artifacts. I analyze Métis identity and nation-building elements in *Relatives with Roots: A Story about Métis Women's Connection to the Land/ Lii Peraantii avik la Rasin: Eñ Nistwaar Taanishi lii Faam di Michif E'ishi Kisheyitakik li Tayraeñ* (2011) by Leah Dorion; *Flour Sack Flora* (2001) by Deborah L. Delaronde; *Fiddle Dancer/Li daanseur di vyaeloon* (2007), *Dancing in My Bones/La daans daan mii zoo* (2009), and *Call of the Fiddle/ Li Vayaloon ka Tapypwatikooyen* (2011) by Wilfred Burton and Anne Patton; and *Jenneli's Dance* (2008) by Elizabeth Denny. I compare those Métis picture books with Chicana/o texts like *The Beautiful Lady: Our Lady of Guadalupe* (2012) by Pat Mora; *Friends from the Other Side/Amigos del otro lado* (1993) and *Prietita and the Ghost Woman/Prietita y La Llorona* (1995) by Gloria Anzaldúa; and *My Diary from Here to There/Mi diario de aquí hasta allá* (2002) by Amada Irma Pérez. The recurring motifs, vivid plots, strong characters, and illustrations facilitate learning and self-knowledge about the respective nation because they are understandable and within the intellectual grasp of the child readers. Throughout this project transculturation will be read as an important signifier of distinct time periods when Métis and Chicanas/os have produced and renegotiated their cultural identities. It will also provide the framework for reading and analyzing the relationship between the past and the present as well as the colonizing and decolonizing sites. What I wish to explore is how such books respond to a need for culturally relevant texts that foster learning and becoming—self-knowledge and self-actualization. Consequently, through these works children make meaningful connection with their communities, and develop a greater consciousness. The timeliness of this study highlights the importance of using stories as a vehicle for decolonization.

This project emerges out of post-colonial and comparative contexts. One of the main objectives of comparative literature is to study the interrelationship between different literatures, periods, and languages; as a result comparative children's literature is concerned with cross-cultural studies and the relationships at play in different literary productions. No literary work exists in isolation. Drawing from the work of Emer O'Sullivan, I suggest that picture books come to have much greater meaning when read against other texts because children's literature is both influenced by and quietly resists other genres. We see evidence of intertextuality in Anzaldúa's *Prietita and the Ghost Woman*, Mora's *The Beautiful Lady,* and Burton and Patton's fiddling trilogy *Fiddle Dancer, Dancing in My Bones,* and *Call of the Fiddle*.

Each text has its tradition and is related to other cultural and political productions. As such, all texts that I examine in the following chapters are shaped by an important series of moments in the histories of these two nations, and present symbols that are often encoded to express and explain the specific community. Therefore, in this introduction, I provide the cultural and literary background for my analysis of my primary texts, which I contend preserve and engage with their respective mixed-race identities in complex ways. I will also highlight some of the earlier Métis and Chicana/o authors whose literary productions helped pave the way for children's literature. I identify the grounds for my comparison of these literatures and outline what I argue is an urgent need to examine Métis and Chicana/o children's literature as an artifact of identity recovery, assertion, and transmission.

Until the latter part of the twenty-first century, many Métis and Chicana/o stories

were ignored or silenced; Métis and Chicana/o literary works were denigrated because their embedded narratives and counter-historical texts disrupted the hegemonic nationalist histories and accounts. However, in the 1960s and 1970s Métis and Chicana/o literature began to reach a wider circulation in Canada and the United States; this success can be attributed to political movements and the development of national publishing presses. Much of the literature created at this time consisted of manifestos and resistance poetry that sought not only to bear witness to the social and economic situation of Métis and Chicanas/os but also to combat the negative images and descriptions that had become ingrained in the minds of North Americans for centuries. Adrian Hope's "Ode to the Metis" (1968), published by the Alberta Federation of Metis Settlement, and Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales's "Yo soy Joaquín" (1967), produced in a small barrio newspaper, for instance, are examples of this type of resistance poetry. The two poems depict some of the struggles faced by the Métis and Chicana/o nations from shortly after their ethnogenesis until the middle of the twentieth century, challenge the historical stereotypes, and promote cultural consciousness. The works, written during a period of crisis, articulate a sense of pride in belonging to their respective communities. Along with other counter-narratives, they provided a critical strategy to address colonization to heal the wounds of historical prejudice, to participate in nation-building, and to decolonize the literary stage. In the process, they also offered an alternative voice and a space to reimagine—a very particular state of mind—what it means to be Métis or Chicana/o. At the same time, it is troubling to note that both Hope and Gonzales failed to mention women in their poems and to recognize their significant role in nation-building. Despite

their gender exclusivity, Hope and Gonzalez helped to open the doors for aspiring Métis and Chicana/o authors.

The struggle for identity amidst dominant, potentially levelling forces, is at the forefront of the majority of Métis and Chicana/ literature. In fact, for cultural critic Stuart Hall, identity is constantly being negotiated:

> Though they seem to invoke an origin in a historical past with which they continue to correspond, actually identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we come from', so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. ("Introduction" 4)

Hall perceives cultural identity as "a process of becoming," and more importantly acknowledges that groups should be able to define themselves. Although he emphasizes the fluidity of identity in "Who Needs 'Identity'?", his analysis could be more detailed in regards to different groups rather than an over-arching theoretical assertion. That said, in his earlier work "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," Hall challenges the fixed notion of identity as he problematizes oneness of the black experience as he investigates the Caribbean diaspora. It is crucial for minority groups struggling for recognition of their identities that they and others not disregard the past but instead allow for respectfully re-envisioning of the past. The self-validating picture books that I analyze in Chapters 2 and 3 provide compelling evidence of this creative imagining as the protagonists negotiate what they learn from the stories and teachings of their grandparents. Hall's flexible

position on identity allows Métis and Chicana/o the opportunity to look back to tradition as a means of recovering the past; at the same time, it functions to re-establish their own cultural identities rather than having them determined by others.

Métis and Chicana/o children's literature provides the critical and creative space for authors to not only imagine but also to re-write and re-interpret the struggles and self-articulations of these two nations. The work is crucial to cultural transmission and nation-building considering that the aftermath of wars and rebellions led to the imposition of new laws that left both Métis and Chicanas/os among the most marginalized in people in North America. It was tragic the way in which their traditional family structures, which combined European and Indigenous knowledge and customs, were systemically undermined. Furthermore, the strong role of cultural keepers and Elders long associated with Métis and Chicana/o grandparents was severely damaged through the acculturation of the residential schools in Canada and the assimilation policies in the United States whereby Euro-American conformity created the erasure of cultural pride; the critical connection between one generation and the next was disrupted.

Corpus of Literature and Methodology

The first step in conducting this study was to create a list of titles of picture books *by* Métis and Chicana/o writers, rather than literature *about* Métis and Chicanas/os. I used online bibliographies, books lists, list servs, provincial and state primary education curricula pamphlets and library catalogues to begin my research of children's literature. All searches were conducted using a variety of descriptors such as "Métis children's books," "Métis picture books," "Chicana/o children's books," "Chicana/o picture books,"

as well as "Mexican-American children's books," and "Mexican-American picture books." It was considerably more difficult to locate Métis picture books; there does not seem to be a comprehensive list of Métis children's literature. Over the years different Chicana/o anthologies have been created although few focus on children's works. In the end, the websites of publishers like the Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI), Theytus, Pemmican Publishing, and Lee & Low Books, which acquired Children's Book Press, proved most fertile in my search. At the same time that I was assembling my annotated bibliography of Métis and Chicana/o children's works, I began reading interviews, historical accounts, and other literature about and by Métis and Chicanas/os in order to identify similarities and important differences between the two nations.

In my analysis of more than 100 Chicana/o and 50 Métis picture books, by authors who self-identify as members of these nations, I concluded that two groups of picture books exist: picture books with significant specific cultural information and works that deal with themes other than being Métis or Chicana/o.[3] My findings also

[3] Métis and Chicana/o works that deal with themes other than being Métis or Chicana/o are not within the scope of my project. Take Gary Soto's *Big Bushy Mustache* (1998), for example. It introduces the reader to Cinco de Mayo, Spanish code-switching, and a few culturally specific elements, but I would not consider it specifically Chicana/o children's nation building literature because it does not exhibit national tendencies that provide the reader with a deeper understanding of what it means to be Chicana/o. Pat Mora's English-Spanish poetry *Yum! MmMm! Qué rico!* (2007) explores different foods of the Americas and *I Pledge Allegiance* (2014) features the process of becoming an American citizen. Likewise, Juan Felipe Herrera's *Super Cilantro Girl/La Superniña del Cilantro* (2003) combines superheroes and super powers as it reimagines the border and borderlands while his book *The Upside Down Boy/El niño de cabeza* (2013) tells the tale of a migrant family trying to settle down in the United States. Similarly, Métis authors like Sherry Ansloos and Jordan Wheeler have created picture books that do not include specific reference to being Métis. Ansloos's *I Loved Her* (2010) is the creative telling of a girl who draws on her memories of her grandmother to deal with loss. Wheeler's *Chuck*

revealed that prior to the 1990s few Métis and Chicana/o picture books were in circulation. On the one hand, this is surprising considering that North American multicultural children's literature began to emerge in the 1970s as a response to "an all white world of children's literature" (Larrick 63). On the other hand, Métis and Chicana/o social consciousness-raising did not take place until the 1960s and 70s. It would take two more decades for Métis and Chicana/o authors to create nation-building children's literature.

The children's stories that I examine are distinct within their literatures in that their primary aim is to impart traditional knowledge, promote language learning, and create a sense of national pride for Métis and Chicanas/os. At first, I observed national tendencies as expressed through Elsie Belger's "5Fs": food, fashion, fiesta, folklore, and famous people (Belger 272). Food is an integral part of culture, and therefore it is not surprising that many Métis and Chicana/o authors have written about traditional dishes and celebrating together. The represented preparation of food also enacts the presence of family and community for the readers. Cuisine is a cultural identity marker and, as such, asserts Métis and/or Chicana/o heritage. Métis works like *The Bannock Book* (2007) by Linda Ducharme and *Christmas La Pouchinn* (2010) by Delaronde, and Chicana/o books like *Abuelita's Heart* (1997) by Amy Córdova, *Too Many Tamales* by Soto (1993),

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in the City (2000) and its sequel *Just a Walk* (2009) both feature a young boy named Chuck as he learns about the world around him—leaving his rural community to visit his grandmother and exploring the woods in his backyard; the humorous tales make no mention of the Métis nation. These are merely a few examples of books that do not display specific cultural expressions but rather provide readers with stories about the world around them.

Growing up with Tamales (2008) by Gwendolyn Zepeda are but a small sampling of texts that detail the celebration that comes with culinary creations that convey group identity. As for Belger's second "F," there are not many of Chicana/o titles that are solely dedicated to fashion. *What You Can Do with a Rebozo* (2008), by Carmen Tafolla, tends to focus on the practical uses of the traditional Mexican shawl. The Métis sash, in contrast, is present in many children's books. This frequency is because it is not only an article of clothing but also a cultural symbol that emerged out of the fur trade. The sash is central to *Little Métis and the Métis Sash* (2000) by Delaronde, *Li Saennchur Fleshii di Michif/ Thomas and the Métis Sash* (2004) by Bonnie Murray, translated into Michif by Rita Flamand, the Nolin trilogy by Burton and Patton, and other works. Fiestas are celebrated in *My Family* (2001) by Penny Condon as a Métis family gathers for a feast, while *A Gift from Papá Diego* (1988) by Benjamin Sáenz depicts a Chicano birthday celebration with "Las Mañanitas" and *Family Pictures* (1990) by Carmen Lomas Garza's a Chicana "Quinceañera." That said, *Fiddle Dancer*, *Call of the Fiddle,* and *Our Lady of Guadalupe* are the only works within my project that make reference to such traditional celebrations. Children and young adult literature authors also draw on folktales in their work. *Maya's Children: The Story of La Llorona* (1997) by Anaya and Anzaldúa's *Prietita and the Ghost Woman* introduce children to the legend of La Llorona, also known as the "Weeping Woman," while Campbell's *Stories of the Road Allowance People* and the Nanabosho series by Joe McLellan and Matrine Therriault acquaint the readers with traditional Indigenous stories and other legends. The last of the "5Fs," famous people, often manifests itself in political figures. Some picture books have been

written about Cesar Chavez, including *Cesar Chavez: The Struggle for Justice* (2008) by Richard Griswold del Castillo and *Cesar Chavez: A Hero for Everyone* (2003) by Soto. Chavez is also referenced in *My Diary from Here to There.* In contrast, there are only a few Métis picture books that introduce the reader to historical Métis notables, especially Campbell's *Riel's People* (1976) and *Call of the Fiddle.*

Food, fashion, fiesta, folklore, and famous people are undeniably part of Métis and Chicana/o culture and thus it is not surprising that Belger's 5Fs have been used when seeking to identify and promote multicultural literature. That said, Hazel Rochman worries about the oversimplification of reducing the analysis of children's books to and cultural group to only the 5Fs (27). Therefore, my examination of the picture books goes well beyond the 5Fs and investigates the representation of the social, economic, and political themes. I focus my project on what Rudine Sims Bishop posits as "culturally conscious" texts. In *Shadow and Substance: Afro-American Experience in Contemporary Children's Fiction* (1982), Bishop justifies the importance of culturally specific children's literature. After surveying and examining more than 150 fiction books in the United States, she concluded that there were three different types of texts: social conscience, melting pot, and culturally conscious books. The "culturally specific" or "culturally conscious" books reflect what makes one community distinct from others, and are set in specific environments, include some textual cultural markers, and contain protagonists from the particular group. The Métis and Chicana/o picture books that I analyze can be categorized as "culturally conscious" works because, while they proclaim national tendencies, they also acknowledge heterogeneity within the cultural group, and

detail the "everyday life" that is recognizable to members of the given national group (Bishop, "Teaching" 44). It was obvious that some of the specifics outlined by Bishop, such as language styles and patterns, religious beliefs and practices, family configurations and relationships, and other "behaviors, attitudes and values shared by the members of a cultural group" were also present in the Métis and Chicana/o picture books (Bishop, "Teaching" 44). As I began to compare the two bodies of literature, I identified similarities and differences between them. One of the underlying similarities that I discovered was the crucial bond between a child and grandparent.

Métis and Chicana/o refiguring of the grandparent figure spans all genres, but for the most part the grandmother tends to appear more often than the grandfather, with the exception of a few works like the Nolin trilogy, *Farolitos for Abuelo* (1999), and *A Gift from Papá Diego/Un regalo de Papá Diego*. In *I Knew Two Métis Women* (1999) and *Thunder through My Veins* (2000), Gregory Scofield makes continual reference to teachings from his Métis grandmother and other grandmother figures. Maria Campbell also emphasizes the bond between herself and her great grandmother, Cheechum, in *Halfbreed* (1973). Judy Iseke-Barnes has even created a film about the important role of grandmothers as educators, Elders, storytellers, and historians in *Grandmothers of the Metis Nation* (2010). Similarly, Chicana/o works like Anaya's *Bless Me, Ultima* (1972), Sandra Cisneros's *Caramelo, or, Puro Cuento* (1997), and Lorna Cervantes's *Emplumada* (1981) also feature strong grandmother figures. It is not surprising that grandparents are frequently highlighted in Métis and Chicana/o literature, considering that these individuals are known for passing along their culture to the next generations.

Joan Robertson points out that "Older generations, deliberately or incidentally, serve as reference groups and models for society, families, and individuals. Hence, grandparents function as microcosms of the family and the broader community" (249). Some grandparents are also in a more pivotal position than parents to transmit tradition, ancestral language, and heritage because they often have both the time and the resources.

The illustrators of all these texts depict people with different physical attributes to counter the historical stereotypes that determined what a Métis and Chicana/o should look like. They present Métis and Chicanas/os with different colour skin and hair, and physical attributes—differences that are celebrated. This is significantly different from the racial passing that I will discuss in the first chapter in the Métis poetry by Marilyn Dumont and Chicana passages from Cherríe Moraga and Anzaldúa. While there are no references to physically assimilating to the dominant white Anglo society in the children's books, both *Jenneli's Dance* and *Friends from the Other Side* revisit and confront racial hierarchies. The corpus selected for this project offers exciting possibilities of what it means to be a descendant of New Peoples. Furthermore, it provides the children of these two nations, and others, with the opportunity to learn about Métis and Chicana/o cultures and traditions, knowledge that has been severely censored in the primary and secondary school curricula in North America.

Grounds for Comparison

My objective as a comparative literature scholar is to examine Métis picture books and compare them with Chicana/o works produced at approximately the same time. There is cross-cultural value in studying these two minorities in their similar and

differing responses to colonialism as they resist domination. "The future of comparative literature," according to Susan Bassnett, "lies in jettisoning attempts to define the object of study in any prescriptive way and in focusing instead on the idea of literature, understood in the broadest possible sense, and in recognizing the inevitable interconnectedness that comes from literary transfer" (11). Comparative historiography, which greatly informs this project, considers how certain historical periods can be understood across cultures, while my specific study allows us to look at literature in relation to other disciplines such as history, political studies, education, and cultural studies.

The Métis are a minority group within Canada, reside in both rural and urban settings, and are made up of approximately five hundred thousand people (Richardson 57). Chicanas/os make up one of the largest minorities in the United States, with more than thirty million people (Acuña 326). One of the major differences between these two collectivities is how their origin has been recorded. As mentioned, many Chicanas/os trace their beginnings to two single people in post-conquest history, La Malinche and Hernán Cortés. Even though La Malinche has been radically re-imagined by Chicanas/os and Mexicans as we will see in my analysis of Carmen Tafolla's poem "La Malinche" (1978), for centuries she has been represented in three dominant ways: an insignificant accomplice to Cortés's conquest, the destroyer of *la patria,* and a misguided and exploited victim (Del Castillo 122). Métis, on the other hand, do not name any one figure in their ethnogenesis. As Albert Braz writes, "In Métis mythology there is no Amerindian Eve, as there is no European Adam" ("Whitey" 155). There is no traitor or scapegoat but

rather a mixed race nation that was born out of multiple encounters. That said, I should point out that Monika Kaup perceptively makes a connection between La Malinche and Maria Campbell's Cheechum or the "legendary Métis Malinche" in her article "Constituting Hybridity as Hybrid: Métis Canadian and Mexican American Formations" (2002).

Another difference between these nations is how their respective governments, the United States and Canada, view them. In 1982, the Canadian Supreme Court recognized the Métis as one of the three Aboriginal Peoples of Canada, alongside First Nations and the Inuit (Isaac 1). Section 35(2) of the Constitution Act of Canada marked legal affirmation of the shared Indigenous ancestry of the Métis. The ruling was problematic because it did not provide a clear definition of who is Métis (Bell 373). It was unclear if the Métis were to be defined by their historic roots in Red River or if any person of mixed ancestry would be considered Métis (Bell 252; Braz, "Whitey" 153). Chris Andersen concedes that one of the reasons that Métis identity is so difficult to define is because it is rooted in Canada's racial and colonial discursive powers (see "From Nation to Population"). However, perhaps more troubling, is that Métis themselves cannot agree on a common definition of what defined their Métisness (Braz, "Whitey" 153). Regardless, the Canadian government has legally recognized the Métis as an Aboriginal group within Canada. Even though both Métis and Chicanas/os trace their roots to their Indigenous ancestors Chicanas/os have not been recognized as a distinct group within the Anglo-American society in which they reside. Chicana/o Indigeneity is not viewed the same way in United States. Chicanas/os are often excluded when it comes

to defining who is Indigenous in the United States from a legal point of view. As Sheila Contreras explains, "In the United States, Indigenous relationships to the land and Indigenous identity are determined by a system of categorization that privileges tribal affiliation and blood quantum" (1). But this citizenship limbo is contradicted by the fact that many Chicanas/os point to their Indigenous ancestry and their mestiza/o beginnings.

When exploring the nature of new nations, and more specifically stateless-nations, it is crucial to understand the role of territory and/or homeland. Montserrat Guibernau asserts, "A nation without a state, as the term indicates, is based upon the existence of a nation, that is, a community endowed with a stable dynamic core containing a set of factors which have generated the emergence of a specific national identity" (*State* 17). For some Chicanas/os, Aztlán is their "imaginary" homeland.[4] Aztlán is the ancestral home of the Aztecs, but became part of the Chicana/o consciousness when Chicana/o activists took up the term of the mythical homeland during the Chicano Movement in the 1960s and 70s. For the Métis, Red River and Batoche are considered historical homelands, even though today few Métis actually reside in these areas. There is no territory in North America that belongs directly to Chicanas/os and, while there are a few Métis Settlements in Alberta—such as Buffalo Lake, East Prairie, Elizabeth, Fishing Lake, Gift Lake, Kikino Métis, Paddle Prairie, and Peavine—the failure by the Canadian government to honour treaties and the Manitoba Act (1870) demonstrates a blatant violation of Métis land rights. Considering that there is little or no firmly established

[4] I should note that Métis and Chicanas/os are not the only groups that claim these "imaginary" and historical spaces. There are other Indigenous groups throughout North America that claim Aztlán and Red River as their respective homelands.

Métis or Chicana/o territory, the circulation of Métis and Chicana/o literature becomes even more crucial to their survival in the twenty-first century, as print culture enables nations to record, produce, and distribute their literary works, and at the same time fosters nation-building.

In many ways children's stories are an extension of their nations. They allow Métis and Chicanas/os to "dwell within the landscape of the familiar, of collective memories" (McLeod 54). Most of the picture books that I analyze reference actual geographical locations, and take place in contemporary settings that are familiar to children. The reader can find these places on a map: Lakeside, Batoche, Meadow Lake, Green Lake, Edmonton, King Ranch, Rio Grande, El Paso, and Ciudad Juárez. The specific areas suggest that these groups exist in real time and space, and are important to understanding identity politics because they relate to physical and cultural history as many of the literary works mirror Métis and Chicana/o childhoods and journeys. As Gillian Rose writes, "One way in which identity is connected to a particular place is by a feeling that you belong to that place. It's a place in which you feel comfortable, or at home, because part of how you define yourself is symbolized by certain qualities of that place" (89). By using real locations, the authors allow the reader to place himself or herself in the story, to identify with the characters that bear an important resemblance, and expose the reader to geographical literacy.

Over the past few decades, there have been many scholars and critics that have brought Métis and Chicana/o literature to the forefront, and their work remains crucial to contextualizing my project. Comparative studies of these two groups, are limited to those

by Armando E. Jannetta, Monika Kaup, and Dylan Miner. Even then, Jannetta only mentions the possibility of comparison between Métis and Chicana/o writing in *Ethnopoetics of the Minority Voice: An Introduction to the Politics of Dialogism and Difference in Métis Literature* (2001). Kaup's transcultural theory of mixed race formations, on the other hand, actually compares Métis and Chicana works. Kaup's essay "Constituting Hybridity as Hybrid: Métis Canadian and Mexican American Formations" introduces theories of hybridity and discusses North American mixed-race texts like Campbell's *Halfbreed* (1973) and Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987). Kaup examines the ways colonization was experienced by Métis and Chicanas/os, and places a large significance on local history. She is interested in how the colonial process of the past continues to inform these hybrid identities, and how these texts have informed discussions of nationalism. In her comparison, Kaup points out how Métis and Chicanas/os cannot escape the memory of historical trauma of colonization, discrimination, and displacement (205). Her analysis of these two pieces of resistance literature provides strong evidence to compare the literature of these New Peoples.

Miner notes the historical linkages between the Métis and Chicanas/os with regards to the land, cultural hybridity, and anti-colonial practices. In his research, he compares cultural and historical similarities that exist between Métis and Chicanas/os, their self-determination, and more specifically their relationship to the land. He also explores how visual, performative, and literary texts allow these two nations to counter hegemonic and colonial definitions of indigeneity. As Miner states, "By producing a communal narrative and shared mixed-ethnogenesis, Chicano and Métis people, as a

distinct aboriginal peoples at the borders of North America, preserve their communal autonomy in the face of expanding and Anglo-American hegemony" ("Awaken" 186). Indigeneity and nationhood are central to Miner's work. He claims that it is vital that we recognize how these New Peoples have not only survived but also flourished within their respective dominant Anglo societies.

Not surprising Kaup and Miner point out the similarities between Métis and Chicana/o indigeneity and look at the overlapping histories that date back to early American Indigenous nations that existed prior to colonization. While Métis and Chicanas/os are considered post-colonial Peoples, in that neither group existed prior to European contact, their pre-colonial past should not be overlooked. That said, this project centres on the transcultural pride expressed in children's literature rather than Métis and Chicana/o indigeneity because, with the exception of the works by Dorion and Anzaldúa, which make reference to Indigenous folk and medicinal teachings, and to a lesser extent Mora's retelling of the encounter between the Aztec man La Virgen, none of the other children's pictures books mentions the Indigenous beginnings of the collectivities. I do not think that this is an oversight by the authors but instead demonstrates the fluidity of Métis and Chicana/o identity within their respective nations.

Presently, there has been no comparative study of which I am aware that investigates theories of transculturation and nation-building to examine the relationship between Métis and Chicana/o grandparent and grandchild in picture books. Few world literature anthologies even mention these two rich literary traditions. Though world literature anthologies cannot fully represent the entire scope of world literature, they do

supposedly provide a representative sample. Previously, I researched the most widely used world literature textbooks in Canada and the United States: *The Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces, The Norton Anthology of World Literature, The Longman Anthology of World Literature, The Bedford Anthology of World Literature,* and *The HarperCollins World Reader* (Lamb, "Missing Voices"). Of the four anthologies, only *The Bedford* included works written by Chicanas/os, specifically Jimmy Santiago and Sandra Cisneros. Further investigation revealed that the editorial team of *The Bedford* is composed primarily of professors from the University of New Mexico, which leads me to ask: How would their world literature anthology have been received if Chicana/o literature were absent, considering the number of Chicanas/os in New Mexico? Such politics of inclusion and exclusion is significant to my project. This example serves only to demonstrate the underrepresentation of Chicana/o production and the complete ignorance of major Métis works in world literature anthologies. My dissertation therefore addresses a long-standing critical and political blind spot, and, by doing so, offers an original contribution to the field, and provides cultural resources and references to bring these bodies into the classrooms in North American schools.

But what happens when these books are removed from the shelves? In January 2012, the Tucson Unified School District in Arizona banned numerous Chicana/o texts ("Banned" n. pag.). A year later, the School District still did not allow seven of the books back into the classrooms because at one time they were part of the Mexican American Studies curriculum, which some educators and policy makers felt contradicted the state's own curriculum. Although the book ban was concentrated in one city, it led to frustration

and anger throughout the United States. In his article "Banning Books in Tucson," Dennis J. Bernstein writes, "Outrage and disgust continue to build over the decision by the Tucson, Arizona, unified school system to ban books by Chicano and Native-American authors. The punitive action follows on the heels of the decision by state politicians to shut down Tucson's highly effective ethnic studies program that focused on Mexican-American life and culture" (n. pag.). The response should have been expected considering that more than sixty percent of the student population in Tucson is of Mexican descent (Bernstein n. pag.). Chicanas/os fought back and demanded that the books be given the space they deserve. This is reminiscent of the removal of the Métis young adult novel *In Search of April Raintree* (1983), by Beatrice Mosionier (formerly Culleton), two decades earlier. The book was banned because people felt it contained too much violence and a graphic rape scene (Saltman n. pag.). Since then, an abridged edition, containing revised content of the rape of the Métis girl, *April Raintree* (1984) was published for a younger audience. These are two instances of how Métis and Chicana/o continue to resist a history of disrespect, and strive to seek redress and self-expression culturally in a dismissive dominant settler ideology. In the same way that Métis and Chicanas/os have used these events to draw attention to their current reality, Métis and Chicana/o authors are writing picture books as a means of decolonization to create a counter-history. Today, the promotion of identity recovery can be seen in Métis and Chicana/o children's literature as a print culture.

Métis and Chicana/o Literature

Jonathan Kertzer suggests that national consciousness and national literatures are "fostered by the educated elite who instructed the 'folk' from whom allegedly drew inspiration" (63). We can attribute much of the success of Métis and Chicana/o children's literature to the early Métis and Chicana/o writers who fought endlessly to secure a literary space for future generations. This section provides a sampling of noteworthy texts that contributed to the making of these national literatures. Métis and Chicana/o book history dates back to the early nineteenth century. Yet, prior to this, other forms existed such as oral and folk literature. One of the most acclaimed Métis works is Pierre Falcon's "La Chanson de la Grenouillère" (1816). Along with other songs and stories, it was produced and performed to preserve the collective memory and promote national identity. Pierriche's tune, hailed as an unofficial Métis anthem, celebrates the nation's victory at Seven Oaks.[5] Today, the remnants of this powerful oral and folk tradition can be found in Métis picture books like *Stories of the Road Allowance People* (1995), which contains translated stories transcribed by Campbell and illustrated by Sherry Farrell Racette.

Likewise, Chicanas/os have used music and poetry to transmit stories and record historical events. *Corridos*, derived from Spanish romance, portray unrequited love, tequila smuggling, bandits, political events, natural disasters, assassinations, and other topics (Herrera-Sobeck 20). Américo Paredes writes, "*Corrida* (sic)*,* the Mexicans call their narrative folk song, especially those of epic themes, taking the name from *correr,*

[5] The Battle of Seven Oaks ensued when some Métis, led by Cuthbert Grant, seized a supply of pemmican from HBC in protest of the "Pemmican Proclamation," set forth in 1814, which threatened Métis livelihood (Dickason, *Canada's First* 242).

which means ‘to run’ or ‘to flow’ for the *corrida* tells a story simply and swiftly without embellishments” (3). “Gregorio Cortez,” “Joaquín Murrieta,” and “Jacinto Trevino” are a few of the best-known corridos, passed down from generation to generation. In some ways, the corridos are similar to the song and story created in Métis fiddle music that tells stories of the past. Oral and folk tradition is echoed in Chicana/o books like *Tales Our Abuelitas Told* (2006) by Alma Flor Ada and Isabel Campoy as well as *Maya’s Children: The Story of La Llorona* (1997) by Rudolfo Anaya, among others.

It was not until the emergence of María Amparo Ruiz de Burton that written Chicana/o literature became recognized. Ruiz de Burton, who was the first Mexican-American author to write in English, is often hailed as the precursor to Chicana/o literature. In 1885, her novel *The Squatter and the Don* was published anonymously because at that time it was difficult for Chicanos, let alone Chicanas, to have their works published. Set in California in the 1870s, this book depicts the struggle of Anglos, Californians, and Indigenous Peoples as they all contend for their own position in society. Race, gender, and class are at the forefront of this late nineteenth century work, and are a recurring theme more than one hundred years later in the children’s books like *Our Lady of Guadalupe, Friends from the Other Side,* and *My Diary from Here to There.* As a pioneering Chicana writer, Ruiz de Burton was an influence on many other women authors, including Josefina Niggli born in 1910 in Monterrey, Mexico. She moved to San Antonio, Texas, after the assassination of Mexico's president Francisco Madero in 1913. Although the name “Josephine” appeared on the author’s birth certificate, she changed her name to “Josephina” and later the Spanish equivalent “Josefina” (Gunn 87). This self-

naming shows the writer's attachment to her Mexican heritage, which is echoed in her most significant work, *Mexican Village (*1945). Her childhood memories foreground this novel, which combines interrelated stories about a young Mexican American man who returns to Mexico and must navigate the intricacies of two distinct cultures: the Anglo and the Mexican. We see similar anxieties of origin in Cisneros's *Caramelo,* Anaya's *Bless me, Ultima,* and to a lesser extent the picture book *My Diary From Here to There*. The success of Chicana/o children's literature can be traced back to the early success of these two women, and others like them, who fought valiantly to bring Mexican American culture, identity, and history into the canon.

Some of the earliest Métis literary works can be traced to one man, Louis Riel, the so-called Prophet of the New World. Riel's career has spawned massive interest and helped to pave the way for future Métis writers despite the conflicting ways in which he has been depicted (see Braz, *False Traitor*). The posthumous collection published by the Riel family, *Poésies religieuses et politiques* (1886), reveals his loyalty to his faith, whereas *The Collected Writings of Louis Riel/ Les Ecrits Complets de Louis Riel* (1985) makes public his personal thoughts, ideas, interests, and political affiliations of the man who celebrated and exalted his Métis ancestry as evidenced in the following poem. Riel's poem "La Métisse" expresses the national pride he and his Métis comrades felt after one of their victories at Fort Garry:

> Je suis métisse et je suis orgueilleuse
>
> D'appartenir à cette nation
>
> Je sais que Dieu de sa main généreuse

Fait chaque peuple avec attention

Les Métis sont un petit peuple encore

Mais vous pouvez voir déjà leurs destins (*Anthologie* 167)

Riel asserts that the Métis are part of God's plan, and not an accident. He makes the claim that the Métis are predestined to do great things notwithstanding their small numbers and limited resources. There is a sentiment of honor and righteousness that runs through the poem as Riel declares his pride in his Métis history, heritage, and culture. While there are no picture books that make direct reference to and illustrate the events at Fort Garry, *Call of the Fiddle* by Burton and Patton commemorates the Battle of Batoche and reinforces the role of taking up arms in the name of the nation. There is no doubt that Métis and Chicana/o writers today owe much of their success to literary heroes like Riel, Ruiz de Burton, and Niggli. These authors faced nearly complete neglect from mainstream North American publishers for decades. It would take until the middle of the twentieth century for Métis and Chicana/o printing presses to emerge.

Of all the Métis books that have been written, *Halfbreed* (1973) is by far the most acclaimed. Over the years, *Halfbreed* has elicited many critical essays and has inspired Métis writers. As Beth Cuthand asserts, "If people are studying Canadian Native literature, they have to read it. *Halfbreed* is standard" (Lutz 35). Throughout the book, Campbell records her personal family history, along with some historical events of the Métis nation, including the nineteen-century defeat and its stark aftermaths. Identity is at the core of *Halfbreed.* Campbell's memoir "reflects the significant changes being wrought in Métis identity—an identity that favours the Indian side of Métis heritage

much more strongly and single-mindedly than in Riel's time" (Durnin 209). *Halfbreed* demonstrates the anxiety, fluidity, and changing nature of Métis identity. The role of the grandmother as cultural keeper is also central to the text as Campbell introduces us to her great grandmother, Cheechum, Grannie Campbell, Qua Chich, and Grannie Dubuque. In the book Campbell notes that Cheechum, the niece of Gabriel Dumont, "waited all her life for a new generation of people who would make this country a better place to live in" (156; Kaup 203). Cheechum had high hopes for the Métis. At the same time, she was very aware of how colonization changed the North American landscape. Campbell even notes how her Cheechum "hated to see the settlers come" (15; Kaup 203). In many ways, this statement complicates the author's own Métis identity because she herself is the progeny of a post-contact New Peoples. The book's importance to my project lies in its cultural expression of the figures of the grandmothers as knowledge-bearers and guides to the young Maria.

Ten years after *Halfbreed* was published, *In Search of April Raintree* emerged. This semi-autobiographical novel by Mosionier addresses the racial discrimination towards Métis women and complicates the notion of racial passing, which has been part of the Métis reality for centuries. Sisters April and Cheryl Raintree experience harsh insensitivity from the church, the school, the foster care, and the dominant white Anglo society in which they reside. Despite this overt marginalization, there is an overwhelming sense of resilience present in this work as Cheryl seeks to connect with her Métis lineage through the Friendship Centre, and April returns to her Métis ancestry after the unfortunate death of her sister. Like *In Search of April Raintree*, Marilyn Dumont's *A*

Really Good Brown Girl (1996) addresses living in-between two races and two languages. The collection features a poem called "Memoirs of a Really Good Brown Girl" which explores the forced assimilation of the Métis into the ruling culture. The speaker struggles to assert her own identity because she does not want to be ostracized by her classmates. It is not until she begins her post-secondary education that she realizes that being different from others is something to be celebrated, as she finally embraces her transcultural identity. Sharron Proulx-Turner is another one of many Métis writers who writes about being the progeny of two distinct groups. Proulx-Turner's collection *what the auntys say* (2002) combines myth and oral epic to convey the reality of being Métis, as she writes, "two bloods not half and half like cream/ a nation of our own the metis nation" (13-14). Today, the success of Métis children's literature can mainly be traced back to the creative minds of Falcon, Riel, Campbell, Dumont, and Proulx-Turner, as well as others. These works are touchstones of Métis literature. It is this body of literature that I want to help popularize by drawing scholarly attention to the children's literature, especially picture books, which are marginalized within that literature itself.

One of the most notable Chicana/o works is José Antonio Villarreal's *Pocho* (1959), which is considered the first modern Chicano novel. The text features the family of Juan Rubio, a migrant farm worker, his wife, and their nine children as they try to survive the Depression in the United States. This bildungsroman is wrought with tensions as Juan's son Richard is forced to grapple with what it means to be neither Mexican nor American. Another important Chicano work is Américo Paredes's *With His Pistol in His Hand: A Border Ballad and Its Hero* (1958), which captures the reality of the border—

the history, people, and their folk traditions—and at the same time presents a study of corridos. The narrative describes Gregorio Cortez, a Mexican American worker who shot a Texas sheriff and then became a legend. Today in cantinas along both sides of the Rio Grande, "El Corrido de Gregorio Cortez" can be heard as people pay tribute to the folk hero. While Louis Mendoza claims that Paredes's work is "the most common point of departure when discussing the origins of Chicana/o literature" (38), I would argue that the most acclaimed Chicana/o text is Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987).

In her book, Anzaldúa challenges Octavio Paz's *pachuco* as detailed in *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (1950), and offers a new method to conceptualize Chicana/o identity, by proposing the new *mestiza*. Anzaldúa makes reference to the importance of looking to the past in order to understand what it means to be Chicana. While she does not point directly to her grandmother as a transcultural keeper of identity, she refers to tradition keepers and the importance of the curandera as a fictive grandparent in both of her children's books. Anzaldúa takes up the issue of language as a site of struggle; reclaims the Mexican female cultural figures; and deals with the psychology of oppression against Chicanos/as, women and lesbians. Anzaldúa claims, "The dominant white culture is killing us slowly with its ignorance. By taking away our self-determination, it has made us weak and empty" (*Borderlands* 108). *Borderlands* is a call to action for all Chicanas/os to reclaim and re-assert their national identities and how we conceive borders.

For Anzaldúa, the border is more complex than a physical line that divides two nations; rather, it is a psychic, social, and cultural terrain that occupies our mind. She has also been a strong advocate for Chicana/o children's literature because she feels that it has the potential to generate social change and healing. Her children's books, *Friends from the Other Side* and *Prietita and the Ghost Woman,* present strong and wise female characters that provide positive role models for the next generation. I introduce Ruiz de Burton, Niggli, Villarreal, Paredes, and Anzaldúa's texts as examples of Chicana/o touchstones. These works have informed many of the picture books that I will examine later in this study.

Picture Books

Children's literature has long been viewed as what O'Sullivan refers to as a "borderline literature" (47). It "was not regarded as part of great literature, it was not taught as an academic subject and received hardly any attention in universities," despite the fact that children's literature began to flourish in Great Britain and the United States at the end of World War II (O'Sullivan 131). It would take until the 1970s for mainstream presses like Groundwood Books to emerge in Canada and even longer, until the 1990s, for Métis and Chicana/o publishers dedicated to children's works to appear. This can be attributed to a shift within these nations that impelled them to see their histories, cultural, and traditions reflected in North American children's literature.

Comparative children's literature is situated on the interface between national philologies, literary studies, and other disciplines such as children's studies. According to O'Sullivan, "Comparative children's literature, like mainstream comparative literature,

must consider those phenomena that cross the borders of a particular literature in order to see them in their respective linguistic, cultural, social and literary contexts" (12). This body of literature is written for entertainment but its didactic nature cannot be overlooked especially considering that one of its main purposes is to socialize the target audience (Stephens 8). The genre often teaches children not only correct conduct but also their place within society. But, I would contend that in addition to entertainment and education, Métis and Chicana/o picture books seek to provide transcultural identity recovery and self-assertion. The stories tend to focus on the "child in the book," and this imaginative self-projection has influenced my selection of texts for this project.

Zohar Shavit in *Poetics of Children's Literature* (1986) notes the importance of children's literature as an educational tool but does not consider how it has also been used as an instrument of the colonizers (134). In this study, I use picture books as cultural products to draw attention to the crucial bond between generations as a means of promoting cultural literacy, celebrating cultural survival, and decolonizing historical paradigms. My own interest in Métis and Chicana/o children's literature was stimulated by the discussions by Jeffrey Richards in *Imperialism and Juvenile Literature* (1989) and Daphne Kutzer in *Empire's Children and Imperialism in Classic British Books* (2000). These scholars investigate how children's books were used by the British Empire to acculturate Indigenous children. We know that different imperial powers in North America used state schools to indoctrinate children with new religious and cultural ideologies and to strip them of any traditions that ran contrary to the state. As Doris Wolf and Paul DePasquale assert, "Not only was the European bourgeois patriarchal family

transplanted to the colonial environment and mapped onto indigenous kinship relations, but that family structure came to depend on the colonies to test and secure a representation of itself as 'natural'" (94-95). This deculturation was accomplished, as mentioned earlier, through residential and segregated schools systems. The same tools once used to destroy communities, the books of a colonizing print culture, are now used to give back a voice to the Métis and Chicanas/os. Throughout this project I re-visit Chicana scholar and educator Alma Ada's claim: "Every child needs to reclaim and revitalize his or her sense of self" (8). I argue that literature provides Métis and Chicana/o children the opportunity to relate to and identify with the characters on the page to recognize themselves and their nations as important and visible agents of transformation.

There are many different genres within the field of children's literature, ranging from picture books, folktales and fairy tales, historical fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and more. I suggest that picture books are one of the best literary mediums to introduce children to their culture. Picture books are complex because of the visual literacy and interconnectedness between the words and the images. The development of "visual literacy" is important because it avails children the opportunity to return to textual illustrations to "explore, reflect, and critique those images" (Short, "Visual" 506). Unlike many other literary forms, children's books engage the reader's imagination through images and stories. Picture books contain simultaneously three stories: the first composed of pictures, the second of text, and the third of words and pictures combined. As Geoff Moss explains, "Because the primary audience is very young and has a limited grasp of the narrative and graphic codes for decoding picture books, artists have used the

playfulness of this audience to produce works which are at the limits of children's literature" (55). Picture books are often marketed to children between the ages of five and twelve, suggesting that many of the children that encounter these texts will do so before they can actually read the words on the page. Thus the partnership between the illustrator and the author is crucial to create a text in which the child reader can actually relate.

In the majority of Métis and Chicana/o picture books, it is easy to determine the audience. However, there are some works like Campbell's *Stories of the Road Allowance People* whose target audience is not clear. At first glance, the colourful images by Farrell Racette invite readers of all ages to pick up the book. But a closer examination suggests an older audience, considering the ratio of text to image, and the fact that the book's pictures convey little meaning without the written story. The book also requires someone who is literate. As Campbell writes, "It is essential that we read these stories with our ears first. Say them aloud. Listen to them with our friends. Light a fire and speak them to the children and grandchildren" (*Stories* 6). The stories are more suitable for older children, but perhaps the oral tradition exemplified in this book sets it apart as an ageless piece of literature to be enjoyed by all. Either way, the age appropriateness of the stories is critical to understanding how picture books are different from other genres. One Chicana/o book that has received mixed reviews in terms of its classification is *América Is Her Name* (1998) by Luis J. Rodríguez. América, a Mixteca girl, lives in a Chicago barrio where she witnesses a gang shooting in the streets. This culturally responsive text provides a realistic portrayal of life for some Chicanas/os living in urban settings, but the violence in the book lends it to a more mature audience.

The tone in the picture books is significantly different from that of the Métis and Chicana/o poems that I analyze in the next chapter. The poems reveal starkness, but at the same time determination to overcome adversity. "Native literature," Agnes Grant writes, "often confronts the reader with a history that is stark and unredeemable because the historic treatment of Natives was callous" (125). Armand Ruffo also suggests that much Native literature is protest literature because it depicts "the realities of what it means to be a people under siege" ("Why" 663). The same could be said about Métis and Chicana/o adult literature. There are many reasons few children's books directly oppose history, though, despite the assertion of cultural identity. Teaching children a history that runs counter to their textbooks and/or curricula risks or exacerbates a sense of childhood alienation and can create for children severe anxiety about the social world they are in at a formative time in children's lives—the necessary political education can come later in more direct forms. Children's literature has to be more subtle than a political pamphlet. But for Emma LaRocque, "[M]uch of Native writing, whether blunt or subtle, is protest literature in that it speaks to the processes of our colonization: dispossession, objectification, marginalization, and that constant struggle for cultural survival expressed in the movement for structural and psychological self-determination" (xviii). Métis and Chicana/o picture books tend to focus more on teaching cultural identity, imparting traditional learning and nation-building rather than serving as explicit protest literature. The authors of picture books use everyday topics that matter the most to Métis and Chicana/o children, while a few, such as *Friends from the Other Side* and *My Diary from Here to There*, confront harsher periods of history.

In addition to O'Sullivan's work, I also draw on the work of Perry Nodelman to explore Métis and Chicana/o illustrations as a meaningful medium of introducing the reader to the nation and nation-building. Nodelman is adamant that in order to make meaning from an image the reader must have previous knowledge of the objects. However, it is John Stephens' *Language and Ideology in Children's Fiction* (1992) that provides the deepest understanding of the relationship between narrative theory, critical linguistics, and ideology.

Summary

In this introduction, I have outlined the purpose of my dissertation, its relevance, its applications in academic and community fields, and the ways this undertaking came into existence. This project is divided into three chapters. In Chapter One, I compare the Métis and Chicana/o nations, taking into consideration their ethnogenesis as mixed race peoples. I draw extensively on Mary Louise Pratt's work on transculturation to elucidate the historical similarities between the two groups. I examine the different epochs that formed these collectivities as distinct nations and later forced them to renegotiate and re-determine their identities. Lastly, I give compelling evidence of how the relationships between grandparent and grandchild, and the children's literature dedicated to these critical bonds provide the necessary impetus for Métis and Chicana/o nation-building. Chapters Two and Three are dedicated to the textual analysis of the children's picture books. For both, I begin with an introduction of the authors and illustrators. I maintain that the role of the grandparent proves essential for the transmission of cultural knowledge, and I therefore analyze how that transmission and that knowledge unfold in

the texts under consideration. I also explore the transcultural markers, textual and visual, and sharing symbols that make these picture books uniquely Métis and Chicana/o. I consider the use of language as the contested site of cultural values and identity politics in the two cultures as they continue to work and unfold in and against the dominant culture and examine the complex textualities of the picture books themselves.

In the past several decades there has been an increase in children and young adult Métis and Chicana/o literature, yet there is still a shortage of critical studies of these bodies of writings. Métis and Chicana/o children's literature clearly has been overlooked. I want not only to address this critical gap, but also to impress upon teachers and academics that these picture books are integral to the future of these nations. The stories in these works allow children to connect with their nations, understand their traditions, learn ancestral languages and, most important, restore their dignity as members of these transcultural nations. These works are essential decolonizing tools. The grandparent figures engage in processes of healing, mobilization, and transformation. Furthermore, this literature also enables outsiders to learn about Métis and Chicanas/os cultures, traditions, and histories. My hope is that this study will allow for a greater transcontinental understanding of North America's New Peoples and their literary traditions and that the events in Tucson will become an isolated incident.

Decolonize Me

For too long, history has been dominated by a totalizing discourse (Smith 20). Growing up in Okanagan Centre, I was unaware of the exclusionary nature of the dominant discourse of Canadian history in picture books and curriculum. Before I begin

Chapter One, I would like to share my personal story and explain how this project came into existence. In her book *How Should I Read These?: Native Women Writers in Canada* (2001), Helen Hoy wrestles with identity, space, and place, and questions, "What's a white girl like me doing in a place like this?" I can relate to Hoy. Like her, I am a white woman. While her book does not offer a clear method or technique as to how one should read texts by Native women writers in Canada, it encourages self-awareness of location, of cultural difference, and of cultural appropriation. Hoy offers insight into the challenges of reading Indigenous literature as an outsider where unequal relationship of power still exists. I find Hoy's work valuable when considering this project.

In 2002, I had the opportunity to participate in a formal exchange between the University of Alberta and ITESO Universidad Jesuita de Guadalajara (Western Institute of Technology and Higher Education) through the North American Mobility Program. Essentially, the study abroad fostered a trilateral exchange between post-secondary institutions in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. When I left cold wintery Edmonton, I was thrilled for the fun and the sun. I had never been to Mexico before, and had little information, aside from the reports by friends who had visited the resorts of Puerto Vallarta, Acapulco, and Cancún. When my plane landed in Los Angeles, I made my way through the airport to the departure gate. I was surprised to hear so much Spanish. Later, I would come to realize that Chicanas/os make up the largest minority in the United States. I had American friends, but I had never met a Chicana/o prior to my exchange in Mexico.

I was excited to learn about a new country and to improve my Spanish. However,

I was not expecting to re-think and re-evaluate my entire elementary and secondary education. When I walked into my first Tuesday night class with Professor Eduardo González Velázquez, I was enthusiastic to learn about "La realidad de los indígenas." After all, Canada was recognized worldwide for its "progressive" policies towards Indigenous Peoples, or so I was led to believe. I was in for a surprise. When I handed in my first assignment boasting about the land rights of Canada's Métis and other Indigenous nations, Professor González Velázquez pointed me to some websites and articles that had me questioning everything that I had learned. I remember being angry and upset that I was not taught about the reality of Indigenous Peoples in my own country. When I returned to Canada, I was determined to read more, learn more, and above all question more. I was introduced to *Halfbreed* and *In Search of April Raintree* in a summer course about Métis authors, taught by Neal McLeod. Slowly, thanks to professors like him, as well as two others from my undergraduate degree, Fred Judson and Gurston Dacks, I became aware that there was a large gap between my school curriculum and people's lived experience. It was in many ways my reflection on this experience in Guadalajara that led me to pursue a Master's of Education at the University of British Columbia and later my PhD at the University of Alberta, which led me to begin this dissertation.

In 2011, I had the opportunity to teach my first class at the university level: Comparative Canadian Literature. Thinking back to my own learning experiences as an undergraduate almost ten years earlier, I wanted to include works that would challenge the class, teach them something new, and inspire my students. When I came across

Thomas King's *A Coyote Columbus Story* (2007), I knew I had to include it on the syllabus. Some students were puzzled to see a picture book on their reading list, whereas others were excited by the prospect of reading a piece of Canadian children's literature. When it was time to study King's work, I divided the class into two groups. For homework, I asked Group 1 to read the book aloud and focus on the orality of the text, and requested Group 2 to observe only Kent Monkman's illustrations. After they completed this task both groups were asked to re-read the book and focus on the word/images combination. I wanted the students to be aware of the different elements of picture books, and to consider the visual and textual dimensions at play.

When the students arrived ready to delve into the book, I asked the aspiring elementary and secondary school teachers, "How many of you would use this book as a part of your curriculum?" In a class of thirty-five students, fewer than six hands went up. I was surprised, and even a little upset. Before I could even ask another question, students were raising their hands. They wanted to know if this in fact was a children's book. The pictures and language troubled many of the students and the use of history and anachronisms made them uncomfortable.[6] The following excerpt, taken from one of the students' Response Journals, demonstrates uneasiness with King's book: "As an elementary school teacher, I don't think that I would ever teach this book in my class. […] Looking at this story in a historical light, this story does not fit with what the children would be learning in their Social Studies classes" (n. pag.). This student was not

[6] In her article "Unsettling Fictions: Disrupting Popular Discourses and Trickster Tales in Books for Children" (2009), Judy Iseke-Barnes notes a similar experience when teaching the book.

alone. Many of the responses indicated concern about how information could be interpreted. The majority of the students were concerned that children would be unable to differentiate between the story and the history taught in their curriculum books. Few considered King's and Monkman's work as an "alterNative" story. Over the course of the hour, we talked about the images, the orality, and the use of history. As I opened up the floor for discussion and encouraged the students to share their observations, some explained that they liked King's play on historical representation. I shared with the class the intentions of King and Monkman in creating *A Coyote Columbus Story,* and was pleasantly surprised at where our conversation took us. Some of the students began to disclose how they felt that King's book could help children to better understand colonization and its effects from an earlier age, instead of waiting until second, third, or even fourth year university. The more we talked, the more questions my students asked. They wanted to know why books like this were not included in the provincial curriculum. Conversely, not everyone was eager to share the book.

At the end of the class I re-asked the question, "How many of you would share this book with children?" This time thirty hands went up. One student wrote in her response, "It's not something I would've ever thought to teach. However, after discussing the book in class and receiving a little more background knowledge, I became interested, and now I would like to teach it" (n. pag.). I was amazed that in such little time the majority of the students had changed their attitude and feelings towards *A Coyote Columbus Story.* Another student stated:

> I came to the conclusion that I was uncomfortable because I didn't want to

> associate the discovery of the west with the mistreatment of Natives. After coming to this conclusion I had to admit to myself that I would teach this book. I would teach it because it is vitally important for students to avoid the mistake I made. That is becoming stagnant in your thinking and refusing to consider the other side of any story. (n. pag.)

This experience taught me that there are texts that can help children and university students alike to understand the past and transform our way of seeing the world. Much in the same way, I hope that this project will draw attention to texts by Métis and Chicana/o writers and will help people living in North America understand their history. Claude Denis writes, "[N]ative claims will not be taken seriously so long as we, in the white stream, are not willing to see that ending colonialism involves not only a change in the colonized, but also in the colonizer" (33). In his work, Denis maintains that it is vital that everyone become involved in learning the histories and cultures of Indigenous Peoples. I will take Denis's charge one-step further and suggest that the same could be said regarding New Peoples' literary works. By examining Métis and Chicana/o picture books, we can engage in the crucial process of decolonization.

CHAPTER I

TRANSCULTURAL NATIONS

"Half-breed,

Half-burnt wood

I'm not half anything

I am, I am

Metis."

—Lorraine Mayer, *Cries from a Metis Heart* (2007)

"I think: what is my responsibility to my roots—both white and brown, Spanish-speaking and English? I am a woman with a foot in both worlds; and I refuse the split. I feel the necessity for dialogue. Sometimes I feel it urgently."

—Cherríe Moraga, "La Güera" (1981)

In *Performing Hybridity* (1999) May Joseph lists more than twenty concepts of hybridity[7] to illustrate how contemporary theories have been influenced by a plethora of thinkers.

[7] Oswald de Andrade's "anthropophagy," Homi Bhabha's "mimicry," Kobena Mercer's "creolizing practices," Stuart Hall's "new ethnicities," Paul Gilroy's "syncretism," Manthia Diawara's "Afro-kitsch," Edouard Glissant's "transversality," Marlene Nourbese Philip's "babu english," Roberto Fernández Retamar's "Caliban," Antonio Benítez-Rojo's "super-syncretism," Assia Djebar's "nomad memory," Arjun Appadurai's "global ethnoscapes," Lisa Lowe's "heterogeneity," José Marti's "Our America," Nicolás Guillén's and Françoise Lionnet's uses of *métissage,* Néstor García Canclini's "cultural reconversion," Celeste Olalquiaga's "Tupinicopolitan aesthetic," Robert Stam's "carnivalesque," and Michelle Cliff's "ruination" to name a few. (10)

Regardless of the proliferation of terms that underscore the complexity of hybridity, Mary Louise Pratt's concept of transculturation provides the most compelling mode of analysis for Métis and Chicana/o literature, especially picture books, because it extends continually to ongoing moments when New Peoples negotiate their mixed-race identities. The critical idea of transculturation was popularized in English in Pratt's article "Arts of the Contact Zone" (1991), later expanded in her influential book *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992), to replace "overly reductive concepts of acculturation and assimilation used to characterize culture under conquest" (Pratt, "Arts" 36). Transculturation proves crucial to my project because it is not confined to the moment when the disparate groups collided, but can be used to analyze other historical periods. The "timelessness" of transculturation forces these collectivities to reconsider what it means to be a member of their respective transcultural nations as evidenced in the two epigraphs on the previous page.

In this chapter, I examine representations of mixed-race in the work of Linda Martín Alcoff and Franz Fanon, transculturation, established notions of nations and nation-building, and lastly Joan Weible-Orlando's work on grandparenting in order to examine the striking comparisons and contrasts of how cultural knowledge is transferred between generations in Métis and Chicana/o picture books. As the starting point, I analyze the creative works of Métis poets Fyre Jean Graveline, Gregory Scofield, Marilyn Dumont, and Adrian Hope, as well as those by Chicana/o writers such as Pat Mora, Cherríe Moraga, Gloria Anzaldúa, Corky Gonzales, and Carmen Tafolla to demonstrate through comparison and contrast how racial hierarchies have forced

members of these two nations to claim their cultural identities. In addition to the poetic samplings, a historical methodology is crucial to show how the current reality of these nations cannot escape the past, and how contemporary picture books writers have been influenced by the literary works of those who came before them. By making explicit the historical, economic, social, political, and literary contexts that have influenced Métis and Chicana/o authors, I will uncover important contextual differences that play out in these two bodies writing, especially picture books.

Mixed Race

Even though scholarship in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has moved away from racial essentialism, current debates are unable to escape the remnants of the past. "Hybridity in particular," Robert J. C. Young points out, "shows the connections between the racial categories of the past and contemporary cultural discourse" (25). The differences between old and new ideologies about race require ongoing investigation. Racial taxonomies that were created centuries ago continue to be embedded in contemporary society as reflected in the following two Métis and Chicana/o poems and in some of the picture books, which I analyze to demonstrate how these collectivities articulate the dynamics of transculturation and illustrate quiet assertions of mixed race identity.

Métis poet Graveline eloquently traces the history of the Métis from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the present:

MÉTIS. MITCHIF. are MyPeople.

We are a "people between two worlds." […]

Originally from Red River area.

Now. redistributed around North America. (8)

Graveline depicts the coming together of two collectivities and the origin of Métis nationhood in Red River—a recurring theme in picture books such as *Relatives with Roots* and *Jenneli's Dance.* Her poem traces the Métis nation from the past to the present. The speaker references the current state of the Métis but does not elaborate on what caused the group to scatter throughout the continent. This contemporary dispersal of Métis is also echoed in Burton and Patton's *Call of the Fiddle,* in which Métis from all over Canada are brought together to celebrate "Back to Batoche." Graveline forces readers to reach their own conclusions about the exodus from Red River, which caused many Métis to leave their historical homeland. At the same time, the poem evokes a strong sense of belonging to a transcultural nation and the coming together of two groups with reference to people, place, and ancestral language despite their dispersal. What is most interesting about this poem is the history that is not mentioned but is present within the words. The speaker cannot escape the imperial and present-day subjugation. This poem thus suggests that literature can be used not only as a form of resistance but also as a tool to unite the Métis no matter where they live.

In contrast to Graveline's text, Mora's Chicana poem "Legal Alien" does not hesitate to name who is doing the Othering. Mora expresses what it means to be a member of a transcultural nation living in the United States in the poem featured in her collection *Chants* (1985):

Bi-lingual, Bi-cultural,

[…]

American but hyphenated,

viewed by Anglos as perhaps exotic,

perhaps inferior, definitely different,

viewed by Mexicans as alien,

(their eyes say, "You may speak

Spanish but you're not like me")

an American to Mexicans

a Mexican to Americans (60)

This excerpt addresses the fate of the speaker, which has been determined by the coming together of distinct races, cultures, histories, traditions, and knowledge. The poem underlines the complexity of being Chicanas/os, and their ongoing challenge to be recognized as a distinct people within the United States, and the struggle to be accepted by Mexicans. Despite being a citizen of the United States, Mora's speaker does not have the same rights as the dominant white American population. She cannot escape being Othered because of the hyphen, and occupies a space in-between the Mexican and the American. The situation for the speaker in "Legal Alien" is complicated because she is engaging with people in the United States and in Mexico, on both sides of the border, and is not accepted by either group. This enduring theme is prevalent in Anzaldúa's *Friend's from the Other Side* when Joaquin, newly arrived from Mexico, finds himself bullied by the Chicano boys and chased by *la migra.* These "autoethnographic expressions," to borrow from Pratt, call attention to the aftermath of colonial history, and elucidate how

mixed-race theories are intricately woven into the fibres of Métis and Chicana/o literature as Graveline and Mora, as colonized subjects, *engage with* the colonizer's own terms (Pratt, *Imperial* 18).

According to Alcoff, race is "socially constructed, historically malleable, culturally contextual, and reproduced through learned perceptual practices" (182). Race is embedded in the political, economic, and social structures that exist today, and is highly influenced by history. Alcoff uses the term "contextualism" when referring to race because it acknowledges how racialized identities are shaped, sustained, and transformed (182). Race cannot be separated from context; it is real but contingent. Alcoff also suggests that race "begins from the lived experience of racialization" and is "constitutive of the bodily experience, subjectivity, judgment, and epistemic relationships" (183). While few of the picture books that I examine make overt references to race as a lived experience, many of their writers, illustrators, and translators have written at length about their racialized experiences, including Dorion, Flamand, Anzaldúa, Mora, Pérez, and Gonzalez.

One of the earliest post-colonial thinkers, Frantz Fanon, urgently calls attention to race as a lived experience in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). He writes about coming face to face with a white child who is frightened of him because of his black skin. Fanon is unable to combat the child's fear because it is blackness that scares him. As he testifies, "I am given no chance. I am over determined from without. I am the slave not of the 'idea' that others have of me but of my own appearance" (116). Blackness is constructed in contrast to whiteness. A stark binary exists here that not only constructs but also

precedes identity. It would be impossible to argue that race does not exist for Fanon, that his black skin does not in some way create a reaction, or that it has not been historically defined. Race is fixed for Fanon. At the same time, like Alcoff, he also recognizes that race is contingent on historical contexts. Alcoff and Fanon's foundational work, much like the literature produced by Métis and Chicanas/os, point to race as a lived experience.

Alcoff's and Fanon's writings on race prove valuable as I analyze the poem "Between Sides" by the Métis poet Scofield. This poem reveals the difficulty in negotiating one's identity in a dominant white society. It is almost impossible for the speaker to assert his identity because it has already been predetermined:

> White people have their own ideas
> How a real Indian should look
> In the city or on the screen
>
> I've already worked past that came back to the
>
> circle my way is not the Indian way or the white way
>
> I move in-between
> Careful not to shame either side. (*Gathering* 81)

The speaker cannot hide from the unfortunate historical legacy of racism that has been perpetuated in literature and the media. Others have written, directed, and shaped his identity. Even when he tries to assert himself, there is a sense of defeat. This poem, published in the collection *The Gathering: Stones from the Medicine Wheel* in 1993, predates all of the Métis picture books in my project; yet, it gives us a sense of the cultural climate in Canada in the 1990s and the struggle it was for Métis writers to assert

their identity. It is interesting to note how typographically Scofield also performs in the margins in "Between Sides." He starts on the left and moves to the right. He uses spaces to symbolize a certain in-betweeness. He is neither Indian nor white, but rather part of a mixed race—the Métis. In the Métis picture books there is no doubt an overwhelming sense of pride in being a people of mixed race.

Likewise, the Métis poet Dumont addresses the difficulty of negotiating one's identity in a dominant white society in her poem "It Crosses My Mind." It is unfeasible for the speaker to assert her identity because it has already been fixed:

> It crosses my mind to wonder where we fit in this "vertical mosaic,"
> this colour colony; the urban pariah, the displaced and surrendered
> to apartment blocks, shopping malls, superstores and giant screens,
> are we distinct 'survivors of white noise,' or merely hostages in
> the enemy camp and the job application asks if I am a Canadian citizen and I
> am […] (*Brown Girl* 59)

Historical events have determined the fate of the Métis, and now the speaker struggles to find her place in the urban space where she finds herself. Dumont challenges the notion of a Canadian mosaic and official multiculturalism, whereby cultures, languages, and ethnic groups co-exist in harmony, by naming it a "vertical mosaic." There is nowhere for the Métis to belong. They are not welcome. I draw on Dumont's poem to show how the Métis have been relegated to the periphery in the white-dominated society in which they reside—a theme that is visited in *Jenneli's Dance*. Like the protagonist in the picture book, Dumont's speaker is troubled that she does not "fit in." She is frustrated by the

existing categories of identification; there is a certain annoyance present in her voice as she is persistently asked if she is a Canadian citizen when she applies for employment. She is foreign in her own country because of the color of her skin. The poem, written more than ten years after the Constitution Act, reveals how the Métis are treated regardless of their recognition as an Aboriginal People. The speaker claims, "there are no lines for the stories between *yes* and *no*" (59). Her story is untold because there is no space for a person who is "in between." The speaker relives the effects of colonization on a daily basis, not distant history but the history of now, the everyday. It is difficult for the Métis to escape the negative labels that they have been assigned.

However, it is not only Euro-Americans that are doing the Othering. In Dumont's poem "Leather and Naughahyde," also taken from *A Really Good Brown Girl*, the speaker is almost embarrassed about her Métis ancestry. She shares her identity with a stranger she meets: "I say I'm Métis/ like it's an apology and he says, 'mmh,' like he forgives me, like he's got a big heart and mine's pumping diluted blood" (58). After the speaker's Indigenous identity is revealed as not genuine, fake, or artificial, the pleasant conversation comes to an end. The speaker is relegated to silence because she is "naughahyde." I use these poems by Scofield and Dumont, like the excerpt from Fanon, to stress the desire by Métis to assert their own identity rather than having it determined for them.

Racialized identity also unfolds in in the work of Chicana writer and theorist Moraga. "La Güera" expresses the author's internalization of whiteness within her own family, where the lighter your skin color, the better:

> I was "la güera": fair-skinned. Born with the features of my Chicana mother, but the skin of my Anglo father, I had it made.
>
> No one ever quite told me this (that light was right), but I knew that being light was something valued in my family (who were all Chicano, with the exception of my father). In fact, everything about my upbringing (at least what occurred on a conscious level) attempted to bleach me of what color I did have. Although my mother was fluent in it, I was never taught much Spanish at home. I picked up what I did learn from school and from over-heard snatches of conversation among my relatives and mother. (270)

Moraga's writing bears witness to transcultural race politics and passing. Growing up in Whittier, California, a small town outside Los Angeles, Moraga was well aware of the differences between Anglos and Chicanas/os. She references the superiority status given to the Anglo culture and the English language. Unlike Fanon, who cannot escape the color of his skin, Moraga can negotiate how and if she wants to pass. Her skin is negotiable and for years it allowed her to deny her Chicana roots. Her father's out-sidedness to the Chicana/o community allows Moraga to be accepted within the white Anglo society. Moraga's mother, like many other Chicanas/os, did not give her children the opportunity to learn about their Chicanidad because she feared they would become targets of discrimination in the school system. So rather than teaching their children Spanish, she and her husband taught them English, in order for them to be able to fit in and not be seen as the Other. Moraga notes that she was forced to pick up "snatched of conversations" acting as a spy in order to learn her ancestral language. Since that time,

she has come to be one of the leading theorists of Chicana lesbianism, and has contributed significantly to the areas of gender, race, and sexuality. In terms of this project, Moraga's "La Güera," written in September of 1979, shows how attitudes towards skin color have changed and/or been embraced by different Chicana/o writers over the past four decades. Take for example, Mora's *The Beautiful Lady,* where La Virgen's dark complexion is honored, and Anzaldúa's *Friends from the Other Side* and *Prietita and the Ghost Woman,* in which the name of the protagonist celebrates her skin color. At the same time, Moraga's passage demonstrates how the complexity of language continues to be a prominent theme, decades later, especially in a picture book like *Friends from the Other Side.*

Anzaldúa articulates similar sentiments when it comes to whiteness, passing, and race in her earlier work "La Prieta" which predate her children's books by about ten years. As a young girl, Anzaldúa was told not to go in the sun because her skin would get darker. Her mother did not want Anzaldúa to be mistaken for "an Indian or a dirty Mexican" ("Prieta" 220). It never occurred to Anzaldúa that being Mexican American also meant that she shared an Indigenous heritage. As she adds, "I passed my adolescence combatting her incessant orders to bathe my body, scrub the floors and cupboards, clean the windows and the walls" (220). Significant value is placed on the color of your skin. This racial fear, conflated with physical dirt, is also quietly echoed in *Friends from the Other Side.* For Anzaldúa's mother, it was important that people see her daughter as a white Chicana. This fearfulness shows the deep rootedness of racial hierarchies and the ever-lasting effects of colonialism.

Métis and Chicana/o picture books offer powerful means of exploring mixed-race identities. However, in this study, there are only two picture books, *Jenneli's Dance* and *Friends from the Other Side,* that cannot escape historical racializing as the authors make direct reference to racial identities. Denny reminds the reader of the physical and cultural attributes that make Jenneli different from her classmates. The school becomes the contact zone, the contested space, where Jenneli is forced to negotiate her identity as a young Métis girl. The protagonist does not experience any bullying because of the color of her skin but her self-esteem is fragile when her traditions do not align with those of the other children in her class. Her love of fiddling and taste for bannock are not shared by the others. Only with her strong identification with her grandmother does Jenneli become self-assured in her own identity. Sheila Grieve contends that "Children gain confidence, competence, and connection from an infancy and early childhood firmly grounded in their home culture" (43). The bond between the young girl and the older woman allows Jenneli to self-reflect on what it means to be Métis, and feel proud of her Red River roots.

In the Chicana/o picture books the contact zone is dramatized. In Anzaldúa's *Friends from the Other Side* racialized identities and hierarchies are complicated as three young Chicano boys, who are also Prietita's cousins, bully Joaquin, the newly arrived boy from Mexico, because he looks and speaks differently from them. The boys are unaware that they are all descendants of La Malinche. This Othering quietly echoes the seventeenth and eighteenth century caste system in New Spain, which I elaborate on in the following chapter, in which certain racial groups were considered superior based on their caste and skin color. The twenty-first century system similarly categorizes caste by

skin and class through unauthorized and authorized immigration. The Chicano boys, as citizens of the United States, do not recognize their shared ancestry with Joaquin because he is not a legal immigrant—all they see is a "wetback." The encounter between the boys underlines the complexity of the contact zone where historical convergences cannot be escaped. Only after Prietita intervenes do the boys slightly relent and move on. Prietita does not share the same prejudices and biases as her cousins.

I draw attention to the "asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination" at work in *Jenneli's Dance* and *Friends from the Other Side* to highlight the complexities of the contact zone (Pratt, *Imperial* 4). While all the picture books that I analyze depict Métis and Chicanas/os differently, Jenneli and Joaquin are the only protagonists that are subjects to labeling and Othering. It is unclear if the discrimination is deeply ingrained. Nonetheless, Alcoff's contextualism allows us to understand how the experiences between Jenneli and her classmates and between Joaquin and the Chicano boys are "reproduced through learned perceptual practices" (182). Métis and Chicana/o picture books enable us to question why Othering exists, create awareness, and deconstruct structures that perpetuate labeling. These two examples, like the Métis poems and the Chicana poems and excerpts, confirm that race is not only real, but also a personal experience dramatized every day for each of these authors. Not all creative works produced by Métis and Chicanas/os deal with being the progeny of two distinct races; but, for many, this is an integral part of their mixed race national identity.

Transculturation

The Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz first coined the term transculturation in

1940, replacing prominent early twentieth century European and American theories of acculturation and deculturation. As he stated at the time:

> I am of the opinion that the word *transculturation* better expresses the different phases of the process of transition from one culture to another because this does not consist merely in acquiring another culture, which is what the English word *acculturation* really implies, but the process necessarily involves the loss or uprooting of a previous culture defined as deculturation. In addition, it carries the idea of consequent creation of new cultural phenomena, which could be called neoculturation. (102-03)

Pratt draws from Ortiz's work but emphasizes transculturation as a process that must be assessed in terms of power dynamics because historical exploration and travel that constructed European countries as "subjects" in relation to "the rest of the world" still permeate current modes of thinking (Pratt, *Imperial* 4). Pratt shows how European writing focused on the conqueror's perceptions of Indigenous Peoples and offers a careful analysis of the brutalization that occurs in the contact zone. "Transculturation," according to Pratt, "is a phenomenon of the contact zone" (*Imperial* 4), which is a battlefield, a physically and ideologically disputed area where groups come together and struggle with and against each other. New identities are formed in their turbulent encounter.

Synonymous with colonial frontiers, Pratt's contact zone is the most appropriate metaphor to examine the progeny of European and Indigenous Peoples. As Pratt points out, it is a "social space where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination" (*Imperial*

7). The idea that the contact zone is not narrowly confined to the moment of contact but instead extends to any period during which groups have been forced to renegotiate their cultural identity cannot be emphasized enough. I contend that this crucial concept is played out in the picture books and much of the literature produced by Métis and Chicanas/os.

Pratt also identifies the anti-conquest narrative, or the "strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony," as a critical aspect of the contact zone (*Imperial* 9). I am particularly interested in applying this supposed innocence to the process of Othering as it pertains to these two marginalized groups. This cultural projection, along with the scientific shift, enabled Europeans, equipped with specimen bottles and Linnaeus's classificatory scheme, to shape a new "planetary consciousness," which Pratt asserts is a "basic element constructing modern Eurocentrism" (*Imperial* 15). Such classification can be seen in the *sociedad de castas* in New Spain that differentiated the white elite from Indigenous Peoples, and other people of mixed racial identities. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the majority of Europeans conceived whites as superior to other races. This type of thinking supported European colonial expansion in the New World. "The main protagonist of the anti-conquest," argues Pratt, "is a figure I sometimes call the 'seeing-man,' an admittedly unfriendly label for the European male subject of European landscape discourse—he whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess" (*Imperial* 9). The treatment of people as possessions was widespread throughout the Americas. This destructive cultural determination is engaged and counterbalanced

centuries later in much of the Métis and Chicana/o literature that I have examined in this chapter. This Othering and objectification is pronounced in the writing and policies of Duncan Campbell Scott, [8] at one time one of Canada's most highly praised and celebrated poets. In 1920, amendments were made to *Indian Act* and supported by Scott's testimony:

> I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that this country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone. […] Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department and that is the whole object of this Bill. (Qtd. in Titley 50; "Indian Act Amendments")

While Scott did not act alone, this genocidal statement poignantly allows us to better understand the unequal relationship between the colonizer, the colonized, and New Peoples at the beginning of the twentieth century. Scott supervised the residential school system, and was responsible for countless deaths and abuse of many Métis children (Titley 50). His statement, along with his poetry, has profound negative effects on Indigenous communities. I offer Scott's early eighteenth century mandate to illuminate the anti-conquest narrative as means of relentless assimilation.

Transcultural Nations

In order to fully understand the politics of identity as expressed in transcultural picture books, I want to outline the scholarship on nation and nation-building by Lina

[8] Cecily Devereux suggests that Scott's poem "The Onondaga Madonna" be read alongside Armand Garnet Ruffo's "Poem to Duncan Campbell Scott" in order to provide a counter-narrative (183).

Sunseri, Montserrat Guibernau, Benedict Anderson, and Anthony D. Smith. The origin of nations is often disputed between those who argue that nations are a post-eighteenth century phenomenon and those who contend nations arose much earlier. "Nation," writes Kertzer, "is an old word to describe a slippery idea" in which "variety is the norm" (6). Nevertheless, the concept of nation as "a social group […], which, because of a variety of historically evolved relations of a linguistic, cultural, religious, or political nature, has become conscious of its coherence, unity and particular interest" (Alter 17). The idea of nation is equally as important to Chicanas/os as it is to Métis, as both groups continue to assert themselves as distinct entities within North America.

In *Being Again of One Mind* (2011) Sunseri identifies the roles of Oneida women to problematize how colonialism transformed traditional roles within the society; she also provides an "alterNative" discourse on nation and nationalism. Her analysis contributes to this project because it affirms how imperial powers can disrupt certain ways of life. In the case of the Métis the same colonial power that created it also marginalized it, whereas for the Chicanas/os, as a post-colonial people, their fate was determined not from within but by other nations. Sunseri is interested in "decolonizing nationalist movements" that seek to establish new relationships that are not confined by colonialist structures (3).

Sunseri maintains that the Oneida nation, like many other Indigenous nations throughout the world, has a national history that can be traced back centuries prior to the arrival of the Europeans (3). This runs contrary to many theorists, who link nations and nationalism to modernity. Such narrow minded thinking, asserts Sunseri, "dismisses those experiences of nationalism that existed prior to and/or outside of modernity and that

in many cases preceded the time of contact with Europeans and colonialism" (20). Furthermore Sunseri is not alone in her way of thinking. Kiera Ladner, Audra Simpson, and Gerald Alfred all contend that not only is this a Eurocentric formulation, but it is also incorrect. As Alfred asserts, "Each Native community in North America possesses a distinctive culture and set of historical experiences" that have evolved over time (12). Sunseri also draws attention to how nations are in a constant state of flux, continually renegotiating their identity. This insight is valuable considering the different periods that have reshaped the Métis and Chicana/o nations. Self-assertion and self-actualization have been critical to the formation of these nations. Cultural transmission has been made possible through self-identification with the nation and telling peoples' stories.

In addition to Sunseri's writings, Guibernau's work lends itself well to my study of picture books because the texts that I analyze incorporate many of the elements that she outlines. According to Guibernau, national identity is made up of five key factors: psychological, cultural, territorial, historical, and political (*Identity* 11-12). The psychological dimension of identity "arises from the consciousness of forming a group based on a 'felt' closeness uniting those who belong to the nation" (12); the cultural dimension, on the other hand, takes into consideration the values, beliefs, customs, conventions, habits, language, and practices of the nation (13). The psychological, cultural, and historical notions of nation, as named by Guibernau, are more prevalent in the picture books than the territorial and political elements because they tend to fit within the themes presented in children's literature.

For Benedict Anderson, national identity is imagined. He emphasizes the role of creative energies, and traces the evolution of nations from print capitalism to the present. Through the use of a common language and stories, "imagined communities" are born. Anderson, however, is less concerned with language itself than with how language can generate imagined communities and "*particular solidarities"* (133). "Print-language is what invents nationalism," he contends, "not *a* particular language per se" (134). This claim is complicated in that nations did exist throughout the Americas prior to print-language. I do not want to minimize the importance of print, considering that picture books allow children to connect to their respective nations. But Anderson downplays orality and ancestral language, which are also at the core of Métis and Chicana/o nation-building. Today, many Métis and Chicana/o children's authors are using Michif or Spanish code-switching and translations as a reflection of resistance in their native tongue and as a means to introduce ancestral languages to the next generation. The complex cultural and linguistic heritage is a reflection of their transcultural identities.

The root of modern nations, argues Anthony D. Smith, must be examined in terms of ethnicity and common descent (111). Nationalism is an ideology that is linked to the past. "Nations," he contends, "must have a measure of common culture and civic ideology, a set of common understandings and aspirations, sentiments, and ideas that bind the population together in their homeland" (11). When considering Métis and Chicana/o nationalism, Smith's theory is useful in that he recognizes the significance of history and shared ancestry. He does not seem to differentiate between spiritual and historical homelands, but instead places emphasis on an actual territory. His assertion of a

"homeland" is somewhat problematic for Métis and Chicana/o cultures, as these peoples are spread throughout the continent. This is not to say that neither group makes reference to the "homeland." As mentioned in the introduction, Aztlán is thought to be an "imaginary" homeland for Chicanas/os, while Red River and Batoche are considered the historical homelands for the Métis.

In addition, Smith states that "a nation can [. . .] be defined as a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members" (14). Smith places considerable emphasis on people, place, and shared experience within the nation. Nations must draw from their common past to imagine a unified future. I agree with him that an active membership is required for the nation to flourish. Cultural nationalism, even with its limitations and contradictions, requires members to feel like they are part of a conscious forming community that share a common culture. As Isaiah Berlin notes:

> Recognition is demanded by individuals, by groups, by class, by nations, by states, by vast conglomerations of mankind united by a common feeling of grievance against those who (they rightly or wrongly suppose) have wounded or humiliated them, have denied them the minimum demanded by human dignity, have caused, or tried to cause, them to fall in their own estimations in a manner that they cannot tolerate. The nationalism of the last two hundred years is shot through with this feeling. (256)

Métis and Chicana/o nationalism is founded on the desire to be recognized as being culturally distinct from the Euro-American societies amongst whom they live, as well as the belief in the right to assert their own identity. Métis and Chicana/o nations in many ways are "based upon the exclusion of the different" (Guibernau, *State* 15).

For this project, I analyze picture books as tools for cultural nation building, instead of for political national building. This is not to say that the political dimensions, as identified by Guibernau in the making of stateless nations, are not important but rather my focus speaks to Sunseri's argument to recognize and appreciate the fluidity of nations. Considering the child audience of the works I examine, I would argue that the cultural signs, symbols, landmarks, and icons provide a greater understanding of what it means to be Métis or Chicana/o. These textual and visual stimuli create a sense of national identity and provide evidence of the "imagined communities."

In the following chapters I will demonstrate how Métis and Chicana authors use their creative works to foster unity, cohesiveness, and ethnic pride. I look at some of the key moments and experiences that make the Métis and Chicana/o distinct from other North American nations. This brief historical context is meant to describe the ways these collectivities have responded to national events, shifts in cultural attitudes, and identity formation, and to provide a theoretical grounding for the critical analysis of the picture books in the subsequent chapters.

The Métis Nation

The Métis are largely the offspring of Europeans, especially French and Scottish, and Indigenous Peoples; their origins date back to the seventeenth century fur trade.

Sylvia Van Kirk's "*Many Tender Ties"* (1980), Jennifer Brown's *Strangers in Blood* (1980), and Nathalie Kermoal's *Un passé métis au féminin* (2006) are three landmark studies that I will draw on in this section to examine the complexities of Métis history. In his book *Le Métis canadien* (1945) Marcel Giraud emphasizes the biological origin of the "New Nation," noting that the Métis are the progeny of Euro-Canadian fathers and Indian mothers (v-vi). This reference to the racial mixing is also echoed in the works of Van Kirk, Brown, Kermoal and many others. It is indisputably at the forefront of Métis identity. If we claim that Métis are merely a group of mixed-race people who emerged from colonial intimacies, then we reduce them to racialized objects rather than allowing them to assert themselves as a distinct nation born out of the fur trade, and other defining historical forces. As we will see in the picture books, Métis authors have taken the opportunity to define themselves within their transcultural nation instead of than having their cultural identity determined only through mixed race presumptions. For Métis scholar Chris Andersen, "The term 'Métis' has been constituted according to *racial* rather than indigenous *national* constructions" and, over time, "this ordering, 'mixed ancestry' rather than cultural distinctiveness came to be naturalised as a legitimate signifier" ("From Nation" 348). Andersen is concerned about this type of racial categorization, which is not surprising if we consider the poems by Scofield and Dumont.

It is not the "mere separateness from tribal and nonnative communities" that makes the Métis but instead self-identification and shared history (Andersen, "*Moya*" 48). It is important to allow Métis to self-identify as members of the Métis nation instead of labeling them as products of historical contact. As such, for this project, the authors of

the picture books all self-identify as Métis and have been accepted as members by the nation. There are psychological, cultural, political, and historical elements that are unique to the Métis nation that developed in Red River and have continued to flourish since then. From the beginning, there have been instances of separateness that set the Métis apart from both Euro-Americans and First Nations (Andersen 47-48). The community that developed in Red River in the early 1800s was unique in that it was neither specifically European nor Indigenous (Friesen and Friesen 25). The "Red River Métis," writes Andersen, "collectively created, borrowed and combined elements to form a distinctive culture and lifestyle separate from both their Euro-Canadian and First Nations neighbours, including a new language, form of land tenure, laws, a distinctive form of dress, music, a national flag and, in 1869–70, distinctive political institutions" ("From Nation" 350). This history, language, tradition, culture, and kinship are reflected in many Métis picture books. Before turning to my literary analysis, I will summarize some pivotal historical moments that have forced the Métis to negotiate their transcultural cultural identities.

The economic benefits that materialized from the fur trade encouraged the sexual and social union between Europeans and Indigenous Peoples. But Olive Dickason notes that there was a clash between the official policies towards inter-racial marriages and social attitudes whereby notions about "purity of blood" were still present ("Emergence" 21). As she writes, "Europeans brought such attitudes with them across the Atlantic as part of the cultural baggage which they had inherited from the days of the Renaissance and earlier. However, over time French officials supported interracial relations because

they helped with "frenchification," the spread of the Gospel, and economic expansion (Dickason, "Metis" 193). France sought to create a presence on the American continent. Thus, the French notion of métissage legitimized both religious and economic expansion. The Cree named the Métis "o-tee-paym-soo-wuk," meaning "their own boss," in recognition of their independence from other groups participating in the fur trade (Foster 81). The fur trade was dependent on the Métis. Their roles varied and some were trappers, guides, interpreters, hunters, voyageurs, and *coureurs de bois*. Regardless of their position, the Métis were instrumental in the commercialization of the fur trade of the North-West Company (NWC) and the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC). The role of women in the fur trade was also essential (Van Kirk, "*Many Tender Ties"* 4). Van Kirk suggests that the unions between Europeans and Indigenous Peoples "gave rise to distinct family units" (4).

Considering that the Métis were born out of the fur trade, and established themselves as a distinct group, it is somewhat puzzling that few Métis children's book writers have revisited this period. One of the reasons that so many Métis contemporary children's writers draw attention to the present is that they seek to create situations that the reader can self-identify that validate Métis culture. This is not to say that picture books completely ignore the early Métis nation-building era. Over the years, the topic of the fur trade has been written about by Jean E. Pendziwol in *The Red Sash* (2005) and Dorion makes subtle references to the era in *The Giving Tree: A Retelling of a Traditional Métis Story* (2009) and *My First Métis Lobstick* (2014). I also should note that *Flour Sack Flora* mention the importance of trading for the Métis nation, which

dates back to their ethnogenesis, but is set in a rural community in Canada in the middle of the twentieth century. Likewise, Dorion does not make a direct reference of the fur trade in *Relative with Roots* but the dresses[9] worn by the women in illustrations act as an outward sign that points back to this period.

Despite policy shifts against inter-racial marriages in the eighteenth century, during which many European women were imported to New France, the Métis continued to be highly active in the fur trade (Friesen and Friesen 55). In 1735, an edict was established requiring the consent of the government for all mixed marriages (Dickason, "From 'One Nation'" 28). Ironically, there was fear, among Europeans, that racial intermixing could weaken bloodlines (Brown, "Métis" 137.) This panic emerged even though the Europeans had affected the bloodlines of many First Nations. With new opposition to inter-racial marriage, policies concerning the Métis began to change. Within the community, Diane Payment has noted that many Métis sought to renounce their mixed Métis ancestry and "to deny their grandmothers' origin and to assert their French-Canadian 'male' heritage. Yet they remained 'between two worlds'" (20). It was easier for some Métis than others to align themselves with their fathers' European ancestry based on the complexion of their skin. It is not surprising that some people attempted to pass as fully European. Passing allowed Métis to survive in a racist society and helped them to "fit in." However, not everyone was able to pass. Dumont's poem

[9] During the fur trade era the Métis women "portaient […] des souliers mous, surtout brodés, des mitasses, une longue jupe de robe qui descendait jusqu'aux pieds, surmontée d'une espèce de justaucorps appelé basque, à manches bouffantes entre le coude et l'épaule, qui se terminaient entre pointe montant à la hauteur des oreilles" (Charette 668; see also Kermoal 91).

"The red and white" (1996) elaborates on this reality: "all the bleach and soup bones in *The Red & White* couldn't keep our Halfbreed hides from showing through" (*Miscegenation* 17). Renisa Mawani explains how the "inclusion and exclusion from the nation and access to the land and resources were contingent upon defining who was 'white' and who was 'Indian'" (53). Furthermore, from the nineteenth century until 1985, under the paternalistic Indian Act, Indigenous women who married non-Indigenous men lost their status (Van Kirk, "'Marrying In'" 5). Thus, any Indigenous woman who married a European man was "now considered to be a bona fide member of Canadian society. She lost her Indian status and every right that came with it" (qtd. in Kearns 61). Women also lost their right to keep their own children, and there was a constant fear that the state could remove their kids at any time.

Yet, even with these racialized policies, the Métis population was on the rise and their settlements along the Red River were beginning to grow (Sealey and Lussier 9). During the period of the fur trade, Métis inventions appeared, and artistic forms such as fiddling, jigging, embroidery, and beading blossomed. In the early years, for many Métis women, beading was a means for them to contribute to their families' livelihood. They produced leather coats, skin mittens, moccasin, pouches, and saddles, among other things, and adorned their work with beads, porcupine quills, and silk. As individuals and as a collective they did not simply reproduce European designs, but instead created their own art and developed ornate patterns and color usage (Blady 183). "Metis women have left us a legacy in the form of richly embroidered beadwork. It is through their beadwork," maintains Sharon Blady, "that Metis women spoke directly to their

communities, and it is through their beadwork that we will be able to hear their voices again" (184). Therefore, it is not surprising that all the Métis picture books that I analyze pay tribute to the unique Métis art form. Today, contemporary artists such as Christi Belcourt and Farrell Racette use paint instead of beads to recreate the floral designs in artwork while others continue to contribute to the exquisite artistic legacy through beading. Beadwork and embroidery, like any ongoing heritage of specific artistry, stands as a type of communal memory, as quilting, or other art forms do in some other cultures.

The Métis also combined European technology and Indigenous knowledge to create the Red River cart, a unique North American invention used to transport goods and supplies during the fur trade. However, *The Giving Tree* by Dorion, with side-by-side Michif translation by Norman Fleury is one of the only Métis children's works that I look at that introduces readers to the cart, an intrinsic symbol of Métis culture, and provides an explanation of its significance. Bonnie Murray's *Thomas and the Metis Cart*/*Tumaas ekwa li Michif Sharey* (2008**)** with side-by-side Michif translation by Rita Flamand is a simple story about a boy who learns about the Red River invention from his father. Murray does not provide much historical information about the significance of the cart to the Métis nation. I should also mention that Dorion does include an image of a cart, without any explanation, in *Relatives with Roots.* The carts were employed to help Métis families move their belongings from one area to another, especially during the annual buffalo hunt. The hunt, followed both Indigenous hunting techniques and "the military ethos of their French ancestors," and "encouraged the *esprit de corps* that provided a foundation for Metis nationalism" (Dickason, "Metis" 196). After a long day of hunting,

the Métis enjoyed a time of fellowship filled with storytelling, jigging, music, and fiddling (Sealey and Lussier 23). It is these cultural expressions, still very much present today, that are disseminated in the Métis picture books that I investigate in the next chapter.

In addition to the cultural dimensions that helped to form a unique Métis consciousness, complicated political realities forced the Métis to assert themselves. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, tensions began to rise in the Red River Valley among the HBC, the NWC, the Selkirk settlers, the Métis, as well as different Indigenous groups regarding rightful ownership of the land. By this time, Adam Gaudry and Robert L. Hancock write, "The Métis [had] developed their sense of self—as a new nation—in a context of opposition to Canadian expansion into the Métis homeland" (12). They proclaimed their nationhood. When the HBC denied the right to sell pemmican to the NWC, conflict ensued, which led to the infamous confrontation at Seven Oaks.

The Battle of Seven Oaks, also known as the "Massacre at Seven Oaks," left 21 settlers and 1 Métis dead. The notion of a "massacre," however, is contrary to the words expressed in Pierre Falcon's "Chanson de la Grenouillère," which refer to a battle or a dispute between the Métis and the HBC. In his article "The Seven Oaks Incident," Lyle Dick contends that by naming the dispute a "massacre," the Canadian government and historians have been able to justify their portrayal of the Métis as "savage" and "barbaric" people (Dick 113). Not until the 1950s was the term "massacre" replaced with "battle"; one hundred and fifty years after the confrontation it was deemed an "incident" (Martin 60). I would suggest that the de-escalation of this type of historical terminology shows

how the Métis have been able to generate a shift in Othering and reductive labeling. Regardless of how Seven Oaks has been portrayed in the history books, it has been one of the major catalysts of Métis nationalism and "birth of a distinctly Métis consciousness" (Andersen, "*Moya"* 42).

The marginalization of the Métis in Canadian history cannot be underestimated. By the mid-1840s, the Métis made up more than 72 percent of the HBC's work force (Dickason, "Metis" 198). Yet the majority of the Métis held positions of lower rank in comparison to their European counterparts in both the HBC and the NWC. In 1846, two petitions were drafted outlining the demands for free trade and a representative government (Spry 109). There was increased frustration among the Métis who felt that they deserved to be recognized for their contributions. But this was not the case. "The métis, forming the largest and most homogenous section of the population" in Red River, writes George F. G. Stanley, "were strongly suspicious by nature of a change, exasperated by the actions of an aggressive Canadian minority, and left in complete uncertainty of their nationality and their livelihood" (61). Soon the decline of the buffalo, the closure of fur trade posts, and Canadian confederation all had a drastic effect on the Métis way of life.

In the 1860s, negotiations between the Canadian government and the HBC commenced over the sale of Rupert's Land. Many of the Métis resisted the takeover of their historical homeland by the Dominion of Canada, and displayed their dissatisfaction with the seizure Upper Fort Garry in 1869, which led to the Red River Resistance. The Métis had formed a provisional government, known as the Métis National Committee,

under the leadership of Louis Riel, with specific demands outlined in "The Declaration of the People of Rupert's Land and the North-West." According to Gaudry and Hancock, this is considered one of the greatest moments of Métis nationhood (12). The Declaration stated that the Canadian government did not have any authority over the Métis or their homeland: "[W]e continue, and shall continue, to oppose, with all our strength, the establishing of Canadian authority in our country, under the announced form" ("Declaration" 76). But in July, the Manitoba Act of 1870 was enacted, admitting Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory into the Union or Dominion of Canada (Dickason, "Metis" 190). This marked the beginning of many broken promises between the Métis nation and Canada. The Manitoba Act sought to provide Métis with existing land holdings in Red River and "set aside 1.4 million acres for distribution among 'the children of the half-breed heads of families'" (Flanagan 105). However, the distribution of the grants was so poorly executed that it is estimated that fewer than 15 to 20 of the Métis actually received their land (Dickason, "Metis" 200). "Métis scrip, officially known as 'Halfbreed' scrip, was issued to Métis people with the intent of 'extinguishing' Indian title by granting land (or money) to individual Métis people" (Tough and McGregor 38). Many Métis had to sell everything in order to take care of their families; few were able to get loans from the bank to get farming equipment (Dobbin 25).

In July of 1884, Riel went to Batoche after being exiled to the United States following the Red River Resistance. Gabriel Dumont and Riel sought to regain what the Métis had lost, and be recognized as a unique nation. In his memoirs Dumont recalls the moment the Métis bonded together to take defense of their homeland. He reminisces, "If

we must die for our country, we will die together" (57). The image of the Métis banding as a group to defeat the Canadian government runs contrary to the idea that some historians have of the Métis who were "gullible" and "impressionable people" who were coerced into participation by their charismatic leader Riel (Gaudry and Hancock 15). This moment unified the Métis. While the North West Resistance lasted just under three months, it has become a symbol of the Métis nation. Few children's works have been written about the events that took place at Batoche. However, in the last book of the Nolin trilogy, *Call of the Fiddle,* the young protagonist learns from his grandfather about its significance to his family and the Métis nation. This picture book operates as much as a historical recovery text as an entertaining literary device.

Like any struggle for cultural assertion, there are always contestations over terminology and representation. Similar to the contradiction with the use of the term "massacre" at Seven Oaks and the "rebellion" at Red River (Stanley 61), for decades the North West Resistance was also deemed a "rebellion" or the "Riel Rebellion" (Stanley vii). One of the reasons Howard Adams feels this terminology is incorrect is because it suggests that Riel alone was responsible for the aggressions, when in fact there were numerous groups such as "local merchants, farmers, settlers, workers, Indians, and Métis" that were frustrated with Ottawa (70). It is absurd to think that Riel acted alone in taking up arms. But at the same time, he did approve the execution of Thomas Scott.

Following the North West Resistance, the Métis found themselves dejected; they were labeled traitors, and relegated to the road allowances. Some Métis were forced to reside in these makeshift communities, situated on Crown land along the roads; therefore,

in Saskatchewan they were not allowed to send their children to school which demonstrates the fierce marginalization of Canada's New Peoples (Littlejohn 73), while others were forced to send their children to residential schools (Hodgson-Smith 3). Ronald F. Laliberte maintains, "The strength of Métis identity was likely at its lowest point in the history of the Métis people" (116). The period from the end of the nineteenth century through to the middle of the twentieth century is often coined the "Forgotten Years." [10] The Métis became outcasts because they had rebelled against the Canadian government, and their leader was lambasted as the "enemy of Confederation" (Braz, *Traitor* 43). As Fred Shore notes, "Literally caught between two worlds and not welcome in either, the Métis were forced further into the background, economically and politically" (77). It was hard for Métis to find a place to belong because they were neither completely Euro-American nor Indigenous, and were at times regarded as outsiders. As it became increasingly difficult for the Métis to find their own space in a racist Canadian society, any cultural efforts at self-representation and self-determination were minimal.

Métis cultural renaissance began to resurface with the help from leaders like Malcolm Norris and Jim Brady. These men, along with other Métis, sought to create national strategies to address the decades of oppression. In 1932 the Métis Association of Alberta was founded, and it became the catalyst for Métis organizations like the Manitoba Métis Federation, the Ontario Métis and Non-Status Indian Association, and the Louis Riel Métis Association of British Columbia (Brown, "Métis" 143). The

[10] The term "Forgotten Years" is also used in Sealey and Lussier (1975), Lishke and McNab, and other Métis scholars and writers. The Métis picture books that I examine fall silent on this era.

provincial rights groups coupled with the civil rights movements created the impetus for a resurgence of Métis nationalism. As Ron Rivard explains:

> The 1960s witnessed a revitalization of Métis political associations on the prairies and Métis nationalist thought. Among the factors contributing to this revival were the global movement towards self-determination through decolonization, the liberalization of North American society and its new emphasis on human rights, and the upsurge of nationalism in Quebec. (3)

These groups opened the door for Métis artists to take back control of the Métis nation. It has been written that Riel prophesied this development by saying: "My people will sleep for 100 years, and when they awake, it will be the artists who give them their spirit back" (qtd. in Miner, "Awaken" 169; Episkenew 191-92). The Métis picture books that I analyze in the next chapter are a case in point of this prophetic statement.

Today, there is criticism of Métis who choose to assert either their mother's heritage over their father's or vice versa. As Lorraine Mayer states, "The rejection of one side or the other is my way of thinking a perceptual protection, a way to restore cognitive equilibrium: a way to try to become someone—of value" ("Survival" 342). It is important to note that everyone chooses to align with different parts of who they are for various reasons, and at different times. Riel, as the historical leader of the nation, claimed his European roots over his Indigenous ancestry when he said that it was through "their constant communication with the whites [that] the Half-breeds are getting more civilized" (2:272). This statement suggests that despite his deep sense of pride in being "Métis," at times Riel gave preference to his European culture and religion. However, more recently,

there has been a shift to assert one's Indigenous ancestry over the European because of the stigma attached to European colonization. This is evident in Campbell's *Halfbreed* whereby the author suggests that the Métis are "a whole new breed of Native people" (177). There is a discomfort present in Campbell's Europeanness. Aligning with one's Indigenous heritage does not mean necessarily denying ones' Métisness; it demonstrates the complexity of what it means to be Métis as a descendent of both Europeans and Indigenous Peoples.[11] The multifaceted mixed race identity is also echoed by Chicana/o writers as seen with the excerpt about from the young Anzaldúa whereby her mother did not want people to think that her daughter was either Mexican or Indigenous, but rather European. This is a stark contrast when we think of Anzaldúa's work that positions Chicana/o identity as deeply rooted in tropes of Indigenism and mestizaje. The picture books that I examine do not reference directly the mixed-race of either Métis or Chicanas/os but rather tend to emphasize the cultural and historical elements of the respective nations.

The Chicana/o Nation

The Chicana/o nation begins with the birth of the mestizas/os, even though some scholars point to the Chicano Movement of the 1960s or the annexation of parts of Mexico in 1848 as their point of origin. The term "Chicano/a symbolizes a solidarity with the Spanish language and with a pre-Columbian indigenous past, and an understanding of American racial oppression and discrimination against Mexican Americans" (Castro 46).

[11] Since Batoche, there has also been a shift in language use by the Métis whereby English has become the primary spoken language over French (Braz, "Whitey" 152). In the past few years, there has been another linguistic metamorphosis in which Michif has begun to circulate in children's picture books that are published out of the GDI.

I begin this section with an analysis of Carmen Tafolla's poem "La Malinche" (1978) to draw attention to the complexity of the Chicana/o nation. While some might argue that Rodolfo Gonzales' "Yo soy Joaquín" (1967) would be a better place of departure I find it shocking that the foundational Chicano poet does not name La Malinche as the mother[12] of the Chicana/o nation. By excluding women from his poem, Gonzales writes Chicanas out of their own history. Conversely, Tafolla's work acts as Chicana feminist re-imagining or re-writing of Gonzales's gendered poem. This auto ethnographic poem gives La Malinche a powerful voice and writes her back into history:

> Yo soy La Malinche.
>
> My people called me Malintzín Tenepal
>
> the Spaniards called me Doña Marina
>
> I came to be known as Malinche
>
> and Malinche came to mean traitor.
>
> they called me—*chingada*
>
> Chingada.
>
> (Ha—¡Chingada! ¡Screwed!) […]
>
> But Chingada I was not.
>
> Not tricked, not screwed, not traitor.

[12] I would like to note that La Malinche is often grouped together with La Virgen de Guadalupe, the patron saint of Mexico, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, the intellectual mother of the seventeenth century to form the triad of Mexican mothers. Anzaldúa names "*la Llorona,* the mother who seeks her lost children and is the combination of the other two" as the third mother rather than Sor Juana (*Borderlands* 52). There are more pieces of children's literature written by Chicanas/os that portray La Virgen, Sor Juana, and La Llorona in comparison with La Malinche.

For I was not traitor to myself—

I saw a dream

and I *reached* it.

Another world……

la raza.

la raaaaaaaa-zaaaaa……. (198-99)

Tafolla confronts colonialism and changes the fate of La Malinche. She is not the "*chingada*" but a survivor. She is not a traitor but more accurately an active and courageous woman with her own aspirations. From the outset, the speaker draws from historical labels that have been placed on La Malinche, and later "establishes herself as the central, world-changing protagonist of the conquest story" (Pratt, "Yo Soy" 869). La Malinche is not a victim in Tafolla's world; she is the beginning of "la raza", a term that was often used by Chicanas/os during the Chicano Movement to symbolize their pride as a mestiza/o race.

It is through the re-interpretations of ancestry, history, heritage, and myths that Anzaldúa feels that Chicanas/os can re-establish themselves as a distinct nation. Anzaldúa traces the Chicana/o nation back to the beginning of the sixteenth century and the "raza": "*En 1521 nació una nueva raza, el mestizo, el mexicano* (people of Indian and Spanish blood) a race that had never existed before. Chicanos, Mexican-Americans, are offspring of those first matings" (*Borderlands* 27). That said, Chicanas/os must draw from their collective memory and trauma to create a new Chicana/o consciousness. Hall refers to this process as "imaginative rediscovery." As he writes, "'Hidden histories' have

played a critical role in the emergence of many of the most important social movements of our time" ("Cultural" 224). Tafolla's poem "La Malinche" uncovers such hidden histories. It allows Chicanas/os to negotiate their transcultural identity, like a woven rebozo, which combines the coming together of two cultures, and yet resides within a third.

Spanish colonization disrupted the political, social, and economic systems in the Americas, and at the same time created New Peoples to whom Chicanas/os trace their lineage. It is estimated that the Indigenous population fell from twenty-five million to about one million in the first eighty years of Spain's genocidal occupation (Acuña 17). Over time an elaborate caste system developed in New Spain based on supported racial purity: *Españoles* (Spaniards born in Spain), *peninsulares* (born in New Spain), *criollos* (Mexicans born of only Spanish lineage), *mestizas/os* (the product of racial mixing between Spaniards and Indigenous Peoples), and at the bottom, the Indigenous Peoples, and black slaves. The caste system in New Spain in many ways reflected the mentality of the Spanish Crown. In Spain, *la limpieza de sangre* created racist thinking which led to discrimination against Moors and Jews because they were considered inferior to Catholics. The ideology of religious superiority had now been transformed into beliefs and judgments about "blood" (Kuznesof 160). Even with the racial taxonomies which created distinct castes in New Spain, with the increase of inter-racial relations and marriages, the mestiza/o population eventually began to outnumber the criollos and the Spaniards. Mexican Nahua historian Domingo Francisco de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin notes the liminality of mestizas/os and their ability to

straddle two cultures: “The honorable mestizos, male and female, acknowledge that they come from us; but some misguided mestizos, male and female, do not want to acknowledge that part of the blood they have is ours, but rather imagine themselves fully Spaniards and mistreat us and deceive us the same way some Spaniards do” (qtd. in Lockhart 384-85). Some mestizas/os sought to align themselves with their European roots because of racial sentiments and purity based on skin color; this thinking was also echoed by certain members of the Métis nation at different times throughout their history. There is a parallel between the past and contemporary ambivalence about ancestry whereby Euro-American ancestry is always privileged over the Indigenous. Yet, in the case of Moraga and Anzaldúa it is their ability to pass as white or speak English that allow them to escape the Othering.

In addition to racial taxonomies, the Spanish Empire also used its colonial power to impose a new religion in the Americas. Prior to the conquest, Indigenous Peoples of the Americas followed diverse forms of religious practises with unique deities, complex liturgy, codices, and ornate temples. John Schwaller writes that in Cempoala, “[Cortés] destroyed all the sacred images in the native temple and ordered it cleaned and whitewashed. After the cleansing, the Spaniards installed an altar and an image of the Virgin Mary” (57). The imposition of Catholicism was seen as crucial to the formation of Spanish political hegemony. One of the ways that Catholicism was able to spread was through the creation of *encomiendas.* These land grants created unequal divisions of power whereby Indigenous Peoples were forced to work for the *encomiendero,* and in return they were given protection and religious education (Schele and Freidel 56).

However, perhaps the largest conversions to Catholicism can be traced back to the appearance of Our Lady of Guadalupe to Juan Diego at Tepeyac in 1531. Our Lady of Guadalupe is a symbol of tension because she is simultaneously an evangelizer and a liberator. This dichotomy shows the complexity of collective identities. By re-claiming Guadalupe, among others like La Malinche and La Llorona, Chicanas/os are able to find healing with the past rather than rejecting it. She has become a strong central maternal figure in many different genres of Chicana/o literature; today, many Chicanas appropriate La Virgen as cultural expression as depicted in the children's books by Mora and Anzaldúa.

The role of Indigenous women in the creation of New Spain cannot be overlooked. At contact, few marriages emerged between Spaniards and Indigenous Peoples because of the desire to maintain "racial purity" (Kuznesof 153). Yet, this did not deter Europeans from engaging in illicit relations. Inevitably, with economic pressures and the lack of Spanish women in New Spain, relationships between Spanish men and Indigenous women began to form. Indigenous women were not passive but rather instrumental to the economic expansion of Spanish colonialism as portrayed in Tafolla's poem at the beginning of this section. By the end of the eighteenth century, Indigenous and mestiza women made up one-third of the work force in Tenochitlán (Acuña 23). They took on various roles in New Spain depending on their position within the caste system. Over time, the patriarchal system, rigid racial categories, forced labour, enslavement of the Indigenous Peoples, among other things united *los de abajo* to revolt against the ruling Spanish minority.

The New Spain colonial period, from 1518 to 1820, was followed by many wars and revolutions as different groups sought to assert their political powers, including the self-declaration of Irurbide as emperor in 1821; the battle at the Alamo and San Jacinto in 1836; the Mexican-American War in 1848; and the Battle of Puebla in 1862, which led to the installation of Maximilian. In 1810, Indigenous Peoples and mestizas/os began to get frustrated with the political, economic, and social conditions, and hence a revolution was born (Alaniz and Cornish 80). On September 16, 1810, Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, a Catholic priest from Dolores, Guanajuato, ordered the arrest of the Spaniards who lived in the village. He rang the church bell to summon the people to mass. But when they arrived, Hidalgo shouted the now famous cry, "El Grito," to urge the people to fight for their independence (Acuña 35). Under the banner of La Virgen de Guadalupe, different castas united to fight against Spanish rule. Soon after achieving independence, Mexico struggled to assert itself as a new republic, and tension rose between it and the United States over the rightful land ownership (Contreras 33). In 1819, the Adams-Onís Treaty, also known as the Transcontinental Treaty, split up the land between what is now Mexico and the United States. The border between the "then-Spanish lands" and the United States was a source of international debate, and led to many takeovers in the region. But one of the most significant dates in the making of the Mexican nation was the Treaty of Córdoba, signed on August 24, 1824, which recognized Mexico's independence from Spain.

In the 1830s, tensions between Mexico and the United States were exacerbated over the ownership of Texas (Gómez-Quiñones and Vásquez 26). It did not take long for

a war to ensue. Many lives were lost, and even more people wounded. Similar to the contradictions in historical terminology associated with the battles and the Métis at Seven Oaks, Red River, and Batoche, over the years many text have been written about the Battle of the Alamo. Early reports inflated the number of Mexican soldiers killed by the defenders of the Alamo "to emphasize the defenders' bravery" (Milford 117). Mike Milford suggests, "Retelling this narrative became an evangelical act, spreading the gospel of Texas, promoting certain behaviors (the valorous idealism of the defenders), and demoting others (the savage oppression of the Mexican Army)" (118). David Webber adds, "From their English forebears and other non-Spanish Europeans, Anglo Americans had inherited the view that Spaniards were unusually cruel, avaricious, treacherous, fanatical, superstitious, cowardly, corrupt, decadent, indolent, and authoritarian" (6-7). The black legend informed Anglo-American decision making and ultimately their expansion southward. I use this as an example to illuminate how the people of Mexican origin, as descendants of Spanish and Indigenous Peoples, have been victims of reckless Othering by the Anglo society for more than a century.

After the Alamo, conflict between the United States and Mexico continued to prevail, and it was not long before war broke out. In 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo brought an end to the twenty-one months of fighting, in which Mexico lost half of its territory to what is today the Southwestern United States (Wasserman 74). The treaty forced Mexico to give up the area that today includes California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and parts of Colorado, Nevada, and Utah, and the border was established. Overnight, Mexicans residing in the region became Chicanas/os. The border makes the

Mexican a Chicana/o. As Ana Castillo remarks, "The people from whom I descend as a Chicana, are mestizos/as. Our history is inextricably tied to United States history because of the Mexican-American war whereby half of Mexico's territory was appropriated by the United States over one hundred fifty years ago" (10). But it is not just a physical border that separates the Mexican from the Chicana/o. There is also a psychological and mental borderland that exists. Anzaldúa uses the metaphor of a wound to draw attention to the pain inflicted by such an unnatural divide, writing: "The U.S.-Mexican border *es una herida abierta* where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country—a border culture" (*Borderlands* 25). It is through this mark, physical and emotional, that the Chicana/o consciousness is born.

Transculturation is complicated north of the thirtieth parallel because Chicanas/os occupy a space as "Other" in the dominant Anglo-American society. This marginalization is also felt when Chicanas/os return to their ancestral roots. They are considered outsiders because their "Mexicanness" has been contaminated; they are "agringado[s]" (R. Garcia vii). Differences among Mexicans, Anglo-Americans, and Chicanas/os are constantly being addressed and reinvented in texts like Cisneros's novel *Caramelo*.

In this young adult novel, as a Chicana, Lala must negotiate being from "el otro lado" when in Mexico and being "from the other side" when in the United States. The border acts as the physical barrier that separates her from fitting into either Mexican or American society. During Lala's stay in Mexico, her grandmother criticizes her brothers' anglicised Spanish when the two young boys are called on to fetch some *tamales*. She

says, “Memo and Lalo! Are you joking? With their *pocho* Spanish nobody will understand what they’re saying” (Cisneros 257). The grandmother makes fun of her own grandchildren for their inability to fully converse in Mexican Spanish, which is considered superior to Chicano Spanish. She does not take an active role in teaching her grandchildren. While Cisneros writes in English, she also uses Spanish and caló code-switching throughout *Caramelo* to demonstrate the linguistic hybridity of many Chicanas/os. Some of the non-English words are translated and others remain in their original form to provide a sense of what it means to be in-between two worlds. Many of the Chicana/o picture books that I examine also deploy code-switching as a means to draw attention to the reality of being a member of a transcultural nation forced to renegotiate its cultural identity after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

The treaty not only created a new physical border to separate the United States from Mexico but also established certain guarantees to Chicanas/os, including some cultural and religious freedoms. However, after the United States Senate ratified the treaty, it erased Article 10, which assured the protection of Mexican land grants. As Raymund Paredes explains, “Guadalupe Hidalgo had guaranteed Mexican-Americans full rights as citizens but in fact, they were frequently stripped of their property and subjected to severe discrimination” (75). In 1851, the California Land Claim Act was enacted and many Chicanas/os were forced from their homes (R. Garcia 1). Other edicts such as the Greaser Law allowed the police to use force, arrest, incarcerate, and deport anyone who was of “Spanish and Indian blood” (Acuña 115). Essentially, anyone who was of Mexican descent was under close watch. The continuous acts of violence were felt

throughout the United States. One of the most brutal forms of aggression was the lynching that took the lives of many Chicanas/os, which started in the 1880s and continued for more than seventy years (Sánchez 51). It would take decades for Chicanas/os to recover from the physical, emotional, and political defeats of the nineteenth century.

In Mexico, between 1876 and 1911 the Porfiriato regime, under Porfirio Díaz brought wealth to the Mexican bourgeoisie and intensified the poverty of the already impoverished working class. Hundreds of thousands of Mexicans legally emigrated to the United States. However, anti-Chicana/o sentiment continued to rise, and tensions arose between Chicanas/os and Mexican newcomers who sought to create a better life for the families (Acuña 148). The Depression forced some people to return to Mexico, where they had greater support from family, while others stayed. Many American landowners at this time, and one could argue even today, relied on the assistance of Chicana/o and Mexican labourers for their harvest. The dismal working conditions did not stop Chicanas/os and Mexicans from working. As Yolanda Alaniz and Megan Cornish explain, "Mexicanas/os were forced to sell their labor at the cheapest wage and submit to the worst living standards, with little possibility of improving their lot (though some courageously participated in strikes). They had no rights. They were at the mercy of venal labor contractors who often cheated them of their wages" (130). If Mexican workers protested, they were swiftly escorted across the border, and new labourers were brought north. Chicanas/os also continued to face racial discrimination in the new communities they now called home. Initiatives like "Operation Wetback" kept many farm workers in

constant fear of violence and deportation. The purpose of the program was to exile Mexicans who had entered the United States illegally. Law enforcement stopped anyone who "looked Mexican" and required them to produce identification (Acuña 237). Considering this stark time in Chicana/o history, perhaps it is not surprising that few books make reference to this period. In the works that I analyze, *Friends from the Other Side* by Anzaldúa is the only text that mentions this ethnic cleansing.

In addition to racism in the streets and the fields, segregation prevented Chicanas/os from attending school with their white Anglo peers (Valencia 42). From the signing of the treaty until the 1870s, there were very few schools that allowed Chicana/o children; after that, the number of schools for people of Mexican origin started to increase due to demand, and legal mandates (42). As Richard Valencia states:

> The educational access occurred, however, in the context of increasing societal discrimination and a general subordination of Chicanos. Out of this relationship between society and education there emerged a pattern of institutional discrimination. The establishment of segregated, inferior schools for Mexican-origin children reflected this socially racialized agreement of White dominance over Chicanos. (42)

Many of the Chicana/o schools had inferior teaching and lower academic achievement than their counterparts (50). Segregation prolonged Chicana/o powerlessness and inferiority. Some of the governmental policies for education have since changed, but the historical impact cannot be ignored. Unfortunately, discriminatory attitudes are still prevalent.

One of the catalysts for the 1960s Chicano Movement, or *el Movimiento,* was national empowerment. Throughout the United States, in major cities like Denver, Chicago, Los Angeles, Albuquerque, Dallas, and San Antonio, Chicanas/os youth united and organized themselves, joining forces to address the blatant racism and discrimination. In addition, the land grant movement in New Mexico in 1966 and 1967, headed by Reies Lopez Tijerina, sought to convince the federal government to revisit the promises of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. In 1969, "El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán" was born out of the first Chicano National Conference in Denver; it not only identified the organizational goals of the movement but also summoned a call to action for all Chicanas/os. "El Plan" stated, "In the spirit of a new people that is conscious not only of its proud historical heritage but also of the brutal 'gringo' invasion in our territories, we, the Chicano inhabitants and civilizers of the northern land of Aztlán from whence came our forefathers, reclaiming the land of their birth" ("Plan de Aztlán" 108). The Chicano Movement provided the opportunity for Chicanas/os to reassert themselves as a new nation within the United States, and allowed them to re-write their history, but at the same time it created a rift among Chicanas/os. As Carlos Vásquez explains, "There existed a double standard of work and social life among men and women involved in the same struggle. Women did the petty work, men did the leading. Women's opinions were belittled or ignored, and rarely was the woman allowed meaningful positions of leadership" (27). The very Movement that sought to expose societal inequalities failed to address the patriarchal structures of domination (R. Garcia 1).

Lorna Cervantes's "You Cramp My Style" dramatizes the power dynamics between Chicanas and Chicanos:

> You cramp my style, baby
> when you roll on top of me
> shouting, "Viva La Raza"
> at the top of your prick. […]
> Esa, I LOVE
> this revolution!
> Come on Malinche,
> gimme some more!" (105)

Unlike in Tafolla's poem, where La Malinche could be called a visionary, Cervantes's Malinche is a sexualized object much like the narrator. Cervantes uses the image of La Malinche to draw attention to the historical sexualisation of Chicanas, which can be traced back centuries, and to situate the Chicana struggle in the coming together of two drastically different cultures. The poem articulates the narrator's desire to be an active participant in the revolution. But, for her, this is impossible. Cervantes deploys political rhetoric from the Movement, like "La Raza," to illuminate the irony of tackling racism at the expense of sexism. Over time, the Chicano Movement did help Chicanas/os to unite under one nation to address discrimination and racism (A. Garcia 257).

Connecting to the Nation: Literature and Transcultural Identity Keepers

The bond between Métis and Chicana/o grandparent and grandchild, both in real life and as dramatized in literature, is crucial to the survival of their respective nations.

As Mary Anne Lanigan writes, "It is [Métis] stories that need to be told to children so that they can look to their past with pride and face the future with courage making new stories for the next generation" (111). Métis picture books can be empowering, and the same can be said about Chicana/o works. "Every time I paint," states Lomas Garza, the Chicana artist and picture book author, "it serves a purpose—to bring about pride in our Mexican American culture. […] My art is a way of healing these wounds, like the sávila plant (aloe vera) heals burns and scrapes when applied by a loving parent or grandparent" (*In My Family* n. pag.). In recent years, we have witnessed an increasing recognition of the crucial role played by grandparents in children's literature.

The protagonists in each of the texts discover a new level of respect and love for their national identity and their ancestors through the bond with the grandparent figure. As Trinh T. Minh-ha suggests, "What is transmitted from generation to generation is not only the stories, but the very power of transmission. The stories are highly inspiring, and so is she, the untiring storyteller" (134). Minh-ha thus identifies not only the cultural process, but also a strong nation-building quality to these children's books as they celebrate their own telling, their self-articulation as print culture. The untiring storytellers encourage the next generation to take an active role in their respective communities. Métis and Chicana/o authors also occupy the powerful storyteller positions as they depict the unique relationship between this grandparent generation and the next. Through their picture books, the readers learn what it means to be a member of these groups.

In their pioneering study "The Changing American Grandparent" (1964), Bernice Neugarten and Karol Weinstein examined different types of grandparenting and

identified different styles of grandparenting. Two decades later, in 1985, Andrew J. Cherlin and Frank K. Furstenberg, Jr. expanded on Neugarten and Weinstein's findings to develop their own styles of grandparenting. Cherlin and Furstenberg established five groups of grandparenting: detached, passive, supportive, authoritative, and influential. One of their major contributions was the recognition that the different styles of grandparenting are not restricted to one category; they can change over time. This is helpful to my project considering that the majority of the picture books that I analyze straddle more than one type of grandparenting. Since their work in the mid-1980s, Vern Bengston and Joan Robertson, Marsha Kabakow Rudman, Arthur Kornhaber, and others have all produced theories of grandparenting and grandparenthood. However, I would argue that Joan Weibel-Orlando's five dimensions of grandparenting provide a more compelling mode to analyze the bond between grandchild and grandparent in Métis and Chicana/o because of her emphasis on passing down familial culture to succeeding generations.

Weibel-Orlando's essay "Grandparenting Styles: The Contemporary American Indian Experience" (1999) draws extensively on Neugarten and Weinstein to compare the quality, intensity, and types of relationships across generations, and identifies five styles of grandparenting: distanced, ceremonial, fictive, custodian, and cultural conservator (109).[13] There is no distanced grandparent in any of the primary works that I analyze as all the picture books expand on the crucial bond between grandparent and grandchild.

[13] Neugarten and Weinstein first identified five styles of grandparenting in "The Changing American Grandparent": formal, distant, fun-seeker, reservoir of family wisdom, and surrogate parent (199-204).

The majority of the texts feature ceremonial grandparenting and are defined by a deep connection between the generations; the grandparent and grandchild do not reside in the same place. However, every time that they get together, there is an emphasis placed on ceremonial gathering, social activities, and teaching. This type of grandparenting is present in *Relatives with Roots* as the granddaughter learns about the significance of traditional ceremonies such as smudging and the uses of different plants. Likewise, the Nolin trilogy and *Jenneli's Dance* also provide the younger generation with teachings about Métis nationhood through social activities like jigging. In both of Anzaldúa's picture books *Friends from the Other Side* and *Prietita and the Ghost Woman*, the protagonist gets instructions about different uses of herbs and traditional plants as well as about how to take care of others. "Ceremonial grandparents," according to Weibel-Orlando, "provide ideal models of 'traditional' (correct) intergenerational behavior for their children, grandchildren and the community" (117). In the texts that I examine the custodian grandparent only appears in the Nolin trilogy. Moushoom assumes the role of one of Nolin's primary caretakers. The bond between fictive grandparent and the grandchild is expressed through kinship rather than biological ties and can be seen in *Flour Sack Flora* and both of Anzaldúa's picture books. The fictive grandparent seeks to impart cultural teaching and wisdom to the next generation. Lastly, the cultural conservator grandparent takes action to form a relationship with the grandchild out of fear of assimilation. Weibel-Orlando maintains that the cultural conservator "grandparents actively solicit their children to allow the grandchildren to live with them for extended periods of time for the expressed purpose of exposing them" (121). In many

ways, the grandparent figure in all of the Métis and Chicana/o picture books assumes the role of cultural conservator as he or she takes on the responsibility of enculturation. This bond that grandparents form with their grandchildren symbolises cultural continuity (121). Regardless of the types of grandparenting deployed by the authors in these picture books, each of the grandparents employs culturally legitimate signifiers to impart nation-building on the next generation. There is considerable diversity among the grandparent, Elder, and curandera in Métis and Chicana/o children's picture books. Yet, in all of the Métis and Chicana/o picture books self-discovery and self-revelation are at the forefront, as each of the child protagonists learns what it means to be a member of their respective transcultural nations from active and engaged grandparents.

In this project, the grandparents' function is to impart future generations with what it means to be part of their respective nation. However, before moving on to the textual analysis of the picture books, I would also like to draw attention to the absent or silent parent figures in the majority of these works. In *Relatives with Roots, Jenneli's Dance,* and *Our Lady of Guadalupe*, there is no mention of any parental figure. *Flour Sack Flora, Friends from the Other Side,* and *Prietita and the Ghost Woman* make subtle references to the protagonists' mothers. In these three texts, the parent does not have a culturally active role in the life of the child. Flora and Prietita both acquire life skills and knowledge from the fictive and cultural conservator grandmothers. The muteness of the parents suggests that the sharing of culture and passing of knowledge and traditions is primarily the role of the grandparent. *My Diary from Here to There* is the only work that introduces a named mother and father figure. However, perhaps the most curious text in

terms of the absent parent is the Nolin trilogy. The authors present the boy's mother, along with his grandfather, aunts, and uncles, but there is no mention of Nolin's father.

The picture books introduce the complex reality of temporary and permanent grandparent caregiving but fail to provide any historical explanation. According to Esme Fuller-Thomson and Meredith Minkler, "Approximately 1 of every 20 Mexican Americans aged 45 and older was raising a grandchild in 2000, representing an estimated 177,000 grandparent caregivers" (570). In their work, "Mexican American Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Findings From the Census 2000 American Community Survey" the authors investigate the advantages and challenges of placing Chicana/o children in grandparent care rather than state foster care. They mention different factors that contribute to custodial grandparenting, including death, divorce, teen pregnancy, illness, disability, incarceration, substance abuse, and inability to care for one's children. The study, the first of its kind, does have limitations. The authors focus on the permanent placement of children rather than on temporary caregiving. As such, there is no reference to the role of grandparents in providing childcare to their grandchildren to offset the cost for working parents or cultural and ceremonial grandparenting.

Fuller-Thomson's research on North American grand(parenting) is far reaching. Prior to her work on Chicanas/os with Minkler, in 2005, Fuller-Thomson examined the role of First Nations grandparents raising grandchildren in Aboriginal, Métis and Inuit communities in skipped generation households (households with only grandparents and grandchildren). She observed that, despite extremely high rates of poverty and disability, one-third of First Nations Canadian grandparents were raising two or more grandchildren

(333). According to Fuller-Thomson, the lasting effects of residential schools and child welfare agencies cannot be ignored (333). The residential schools striped children (some of whom who would later become parents) of their culture and language, and forced them out of their communities (see Logan, "A Métis Perspective on Truth and Reconciliation"). However, perhaps the most tragic long-lasting effect has been the scars from the emotional, physical, and sexual abuse that have led to suicides, divorce, teen pregnancy, incarceration, substance abuse, and inability to care for one's children. Thomson-Fuller argues, "Many First Nations grandparents, similar to non-Aboriginal grandparents provide care in response to crisis, such as alcohol and drug addiction or imprisonment of the grandchildren's parents" (333). The role of as caregivers cannot be understood without considering the historical aftermath of the residential schools (see *Stolen from Our Embrace*). I draw attention to the absent or quiet parental figures to show how crucial the bond is between grandchild-grandparent for the continuance and preservation of these nations.

This chapter has traced the history of New Peoples from their beginnings to the present. I have introduced and analyzed the poetry of some of the more prominent Métis and Chicana/o authors to show how the present cannot escape the past. In addition, I have introduced theories of racial hybridity and nation that will be developed in the next two chapters. Lastly, I have highlighted the crucial role of the grandparent, or the last "living generations of their people", since it is the grandparent who will allow the next generation to "connect harmoniously with their past, present, and future" (Knudtson and

Suzuki 179). The words of Dianne Longboat vividly describe how important it is to educate the next generation:

> Our people, and most particularly our children, are our most important resource. They are our link to the past generations, our enjoyment for the present, and our hope for the coming generations. It is our children who will take the results of our struggle to maintain sovereignty and self-government and carry on to rebuild our governments and our nations. (40)

In the following two chapters I examine the works of seven Métis and Chicana/o writers to demonstrate how literature can be used as a resource to impart a sense of pride for the future generations of these transcultural nations.

CHAPTER II

THE MÉTIS GRANDPARENT AND THE ELDERS: CULTURE, TRADITION, AND LANGUAGE KEEPERS

"*a nation of our own the metis nation*

we teach we learn from the old ones the elders who tell us"

—Sharron Proulx-Turner, *what the auntys say* (2002)

"Respect your Elders for they have the wisdom

and the experience of life and nature. All you

have to do is ask and they will advise you"

—Adrian Hope, "Respect" (1967)

Métis children's literature "provide[s] readers with a mirror of themselves, their friends, and their relatives, revealing similarities and differences, reminding them that who they are and what they might become is shaped by people and experiences, places, and customs" (Giorgis et al. 432). Métis picture books have the potential to spark discussions about identity, and in many ways, act as mirrors for children looking for their reflection of self in a dominant culture systemically denying them that affirmation. The visual transcultural artefacts throughout the books in this chapter are a reminder of the historical, political, and cultural exchanges precipitated by colonization. In *Contemporary Challenges: Conversations with Canadian Native Authors* (1991) by Hartmut Lutz, Métis

writers like Maria Campbell, Beatrice Mosionier, Jordan Wheeler, Howard Adams, and Emma LaRocque share their experiences of growing up with little access to Métis literature. In her interview, Campbell says, "The two books I wrote for children, I wrote for my children, because they were at school, and there was no material for them" (Lutz 48). This statement is a reflection of the lack of Métis books available in Canadian classrooms. It is this void that leads Campbell and others, such as the authors featured in this chapter, to pick up their pens and take action into their own hands. LaRocque, influenced by the stories of her grandmother and mother, expresses a similar reason for becoming a writer. As she explains, "I think it came from a profound need to self-express because there as so much about [Métis] history and about [Métis] lives that, I quickly learned, had been disregarded, infantilized, and falsified" (181). In this chapter, I examine how different authors express their Métisness.

I have selected *Relatives with Roots, Flour Sack Flora,* the Nolin trilogy, and *Jenneli's Dance* because of the bond between grandparent and grandchild that fosters self-constructions of transcultural identity, and the cultural, social, historical, psychological, and political elements that promote nation-building. Grandparents and Elders "carry our histories in their stories, our visions for the future," says Jennifer Adese. "They are caretakers of the ways of knowing *how* Métis are Métis" (50). Four types of cultural figures are asserted and affirmed in this chapter—the ceremonial grandparent, the custodial, the fictive, and of course the cultural conservator—all of whom are valued for their roles as keepers of tradition. Intergenerational relationships are crucial as stressed in the epigraphs above. The lines in the epigraph, taken from Proulx-

Turner's poem, acknowledge the importance of the intergenerational bond that allows Métis children to connect to the past, whereas those by Hope are a call to action to create a better future for the Métis nation by listening to the wisdom of the older generations.

I begin with an analysis of Leah Dorion's *Relatives with Roots,* which has side-by-side English/Michif translation and Michif code-switching, as it dramatizes a journey by a grandmother and a granddaughter; it is filled with storytelling, claiming, remembering, and teaching about the land. Next, I consider fictive grandparenting in *Flour Sack Flora*, by Deborah L. Delaronde, as the protagonist engages with her own grandmother, Elders, and their testimonies, in order to appreciate Métis history through trading and the artistic expression of beading and embroidering. Wilfred Burton and Anne Patton's trilogy, which also features side-by-side English/Michif translation and Michif code-switching, explores the bond between grandfather and grandson to illuminate the importance of history, storytelling, celebrating cultural survival, remembering, and tradition for members of the nation. Lastly, in *Jenneli's Dance,* by Elizabeth Denny, the central character becomes self-confident after spending time with her grandmother, who teaches her about her Métis roots and more importantly the Red River jig. Jenneli learns that being different is something to be embraced rather than feared. This book, more than any of the other Métis texts that I analyze, engages with the role of culturally relevant literature and the promotion of self-esteem (Gonzalez-Mena 16-17). That said, all of these picture books affirm Métis identity recovery, assertion, and knowledge transmission through storytelling and celebrating cultural survival. The methodology used to analyze the texts in this chapter considers a thematic and

comparative historical approach to examine how the visual and textual representations reveal the importance of the grandparents and grandchildren in creating a bond not only to create a family connection but also to promote a Métis cultural legacy. Therefore I draw on writings of scholars like Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Thomas King, Sylvia McAdam and educators like Kim Anderson, Gloria Alvernaz Mulcahy, Katherine Pettipas, Sharon Blady, Maggie Hodgson, and Pamela V. Sing, along with, Métis scholars like Christi Belcourt, Cheryl Troupe, Jennifer Adese, Campbell, Sherry Farrell Racette, Rita Flamand, Jonathan Anuik, Laura-Lee Kearns, and others to ground my analysis. I should note that there is a significantly larger body of literary analysis on Chicana/o picture books in comparison to Métis works.

Storytelling and Connecting to the Land

Dorion, best known for her work as an artist, partnered with the GDI to publish *Relatives with Roots*, along with three other books: *The Giving Tree: A Retelling of a Traditional Métis Story; The Diamond Willow Walking Stick: A Traditional Métis Teaching Story about Generosity*; and *My First Métis Lobstick. The Diamond Willow Walking Stick* which received the Gelett Burgess Children's Book Award for excellence in family-friendly books just one year after Chicana author Pat Mora won it for *Gracias Thanks* (2011). This award recognizes not only literary excellence but also children's development through literature. It is given to books that address the cultural, social, emotional, intellectual, and physical well being of the readers. Literary prizes like this one are important because they draw attention to notable works, which leads to inclusion on reading lists in schools and libraries and thus accessibility for readers.

In addition to writing children's books, Dorion has also developed elementary, secondary, and university curricula, and has taught subjects like Métis history and Native Studies at the First Nations University of Canada, the GDI, and the University of Saskatchewan. However, Dorion is perhaps best known for her role as an accomplished artist, such as her art exhibit "Country Wives" that features the women behind the scenes of the Métis nation like Madeleine Dumont, Sara Riel, Marguerite Riel, and other female leaders in the community (Dorion, "Projects" n. pag.). I list these professional activities to make the link here between picture books as art and as pedagogical devices.

I have selected *Relatives with Roots* because of its articulation of the dynamics of Métis nationhood learned through mentorship and a deep connectedness with not only the land but also one's kin. Not surprisingly the work is dedicated to Maria Campbell, "A Métis Elder who has generously shared her knowledge and respect for the land with many women and children" (Dorion, *Relatives* n. pag.) This honor is significant because, as I mentioned in the introduction, Campbell's *Halfbreed* is regarded as not only one of the landmark texts of Canadian Indigenous literature but also as arguably the single most acclaimed work of Métis literature. The tribute demonstrates Dorion's deep regard for Campbell as a Métis Elder, cultural teacher, grandmother, and great-grandmother; as well, it enacts the acknowledgement of cultural and intellectual kinship roots. The story itself constructs Métis identity rooted in collective and personal narratives, stewardship, and oral storytelling, and the book concludes with the words of Anne Anderson and Luke Chalifoux, co-authors of "The Indian Way in Some Native Herbal Medicines," that offer thanks to the Great Spirit and Mother Earth for the gifts and remedies they give to the

people of the land. There is also a glossary and two diagrams at the end of the text that detail the "Anishnabeg Order of Creation" and the "Traditional Métis Learning Philosophy." Dorion's paratext provides the reader with additional resources about terms and concepts used in *Relatives with Roots.* Métis culture is also transmitted through transcultural intermediality and oral storytelling as Dorion and Rita Flamand partner together to provide an accompanying CD that contains narrations of the story in English and Michif. Flamand is a Métis Elder who was born in 1931 in Camperville, Manitoba, and has worked on the preservation of Michif since the 1980s. Over the years, she has translated numerous works into Michif.[14]

Métis culture manifests itself throughout the book as readers accompany the grandmother and granddaughter on their rite of passage journey; they are introduced to different transcultural aesthetic markers like the Red River cart and sash, embroidery, beading, fiddling, and the infinity symbol as important aesthetic markers of their collective identity. The author does not write about the significance of these symbols other than illustrating them. This narrative silence or visual semiotics evokes a sense of historical distance and simultaneously cultural recovery. The sash and the infinity symbol are of particular interest because they represent the preservation and continuance of the Métis nation. As Cheryl Troupe notes, "The Métis adopted the sash through their participation in the fur trade. Sashes became particularly popular among the Red River Métis as a symbol of their growing nationhood" (19). Some Métis have even embraced

[14] Some of Flamand's translations include: *Li Minoush/ Thomas and His Cat* (2001), *Li Saennchur Fleshii Di Michif /Thomas and the Metis Sash* (2004), *Tumaas ekwa li Michif Sharey/ Thomas and the Metis Cart* (2008), *Li Paviyon Di Michif /Thomas and the Metis Flag* (2011), and *Michif Conversational Lessons for Beginners* (2011).

the sash to honor and recognize Métis and non-Métis for their political, cultural, and social contributions to the Métis community with the "Order of the Sash" similar to the "Order of Canada" (Troupe 20). The prominent white infinity symbols in *Relatives with Roots,* featured on the nation's flag as early as 1816, occupy a similar place to the sash. Lawrence Barkwell suggests the symbol represents the unification of two cultures and the existence of a "people forever" (146). These illustrated emblems, along with the beadwork, embroidery, and fiddles, act as Métis markers that allow the reader "to imagine their community as separate and distinct from others" (Guibernau, *Identity* 13). Many members of the Métis nation would instantly notice the distinguishing Métis elements, and have an awareness of their importance to the nation, for others the picture books may offer a first encounter with their historic nation.

Relatives with Roots begins and ends with the grandmother and the granddaughter walking and holding onto a red basket fashioned from the stems of trees. The basket symbolizes the strong bond between the two and the transition of cultural transmission, as it accompanies the two on their sacred journey; the grandmother teaches the granddaughter about the land and traditional medicines, a heritage and health theme also echoed in the picture books of Gloria Anzaldúa in the next chapter. It is difficult to determine the exact period and location that Dorion is representing, since the placement of a Red River cart on one of the first pages of the book could act either as a time stamp or merely a symbol of Métis history. Regardless, the central themes of storytelling and learning about traditional ceremonies are evident.

This is the only picture book in which the protagonists do not have proper names. This is odd considering the inherent power associated in naming. According to Stephens, "The state of namelessness can express a radical exclusion from society" (110). However, I contend that the women serve as the collective voice for Métis women throughout the years. Dorion places greater significance on the role of the women than on their names. The grandmother is a storyteller, healer, and cultural keeper of knowledge. She shares teachings, legends, and histories to educate her granddaughter in this auto-ethnographic text. The granddaughter is an avid learner, a keen apprentice, and a student of the culture and traditional practices of her people.

Relatives with Roots represents collective and personal narratives in that the protagonist comes to know herself, her history, and her culture through the wise words of her grandmother and simple everyday tasks. I draw on the work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith to highlight the pivotal role of storytelling and culture sharing performed by texts like this picture book:

> Story telling, oral histories, the perspectives of elders and of women have become an integral part of all indigenous research. Each individual story is powerful. But the point about the stories is not that they simply tell a story, or tell a story simply. These new stories contribute to a collective story in which every indigenous person has a place. [...] For many indigenous writers stories are a way of passing down the beliefs and values of a culture in the hope that the new generations will treasure them and pass the story down further. The story and the story teller both serve to connect the past with the future, one

> generation with the other, the land with the people and the people with the story. (144-45)

The grandmother imparts stories as teachings. This act, what Kermoal refers to as "le savoir féminin," requires the grandmother to rely not only on text books or manuals, but also and perhaps more importantly on her lived and learned experience (18). A similar hope of entrusting sacred knowledge can be seen in Anzaldúa's *Friends from the Other Side* and *Prietita and the Ghost Woman* whereby the curandera imparts her *conocimiento*[15] or spiritual awareness attained with "creative acts–writing, art-making, dancing, healing, teaching, meditation, and spiritual activism–both mental and somatic (the body too is a form as well as site of creativity)" ("now" 541-42). It is this creative engagement that allows young Chicanas/os to become active learners and connect with the past. *Relatives with Roots* differs from *Friends from the Other Side* and *Prietita and the Ghost Woman* in that Dorion does not make the claim that one day the young Métis girl will assume the role of storyteller and share her culture with her grandchildren, whereas Anzaldúa makes it very obvious that Prietita will someday become a curandera.

Relatives with Roots places a strong emphasis on the teachings of the Elders partly because, for decades, Métis Elders have looked out for the safety and well-being of their community, and reclaiming the past (K. Anderson 159). The grandmother also instructs the girl about the significance of smudging. It is simultaneously a tradition that has been transferred from generation to generations to "clear your mind and focus on good thoughts" (Dorion, *Relatives* n. pag.) and an act of living resistance. The ceremony

[15] *Conocimiento* is "derived from [...] a Latin verb meaning 'to know' and is the Spanish word for knowledge and skill" (Anzaldúa, "now" 577).

in *Relatives with Roots* thus responds to hegemonic practices, and performs an act of healing and transformative negotiation of past with renewed present. [16] Today, these gatherings provide the opportunity to create conversations and to learn practices that were previously forbidden.

The grandmother acts as a family archivist teaching her granddaughter about the past through cultural practises when she pulls out a small-embroidered pouch of kinnikinnick, made from mixing different herbs, to make a traditional offering. The mixed-herbs are kept safe in a little ornate bag, an allegory of Métis identity, with a bright purple and pink flower,[17] and red buds. The artisanry resembles the beadwork that emerged as a distinctive Métis art form in Red River in the nineteenth century (Brasser 223). The pouch in this picture book, then, is a transcultural marker as Dorion pays tribute to the historical Métis nation that used small-decorated bags to store tobacco (Troupe 44). According to Métis artist and scholar Christi Belcourt, "It is a little known fact that Métis floral art had some influence within the emergence of floral beadwork within other nations. Because of their close connection to the fur trade, Métis women sold and traded their beaded items to help support their families economically" (*Beadwork* 37). By including the pouch and the kinnikinnick, Dorion references the mixing of

[16] This self-expression is important considering that until the 1950s, Métis and other Indigenous groups were legally denied smudging as a means of forced assimilation (Pettipas 61). The legal ban forced Elders to protect and preserve traditions clandestinely. "The destruction of ceremonies," Maggie Hodgson claims, "was the core of the Canadian government's genocidal policies. It served as a knife cutting into the heart of our culture. […] When ceremony was outlawed, they removed the very resource needed to heal from the abuse experienced by some of the people who attended residential schools" (364).
[17] The Sioux named the Métis "The Flower Beadwork People" because of their exquisite beading floral designs (Blady 179).

different elements whereby a new property is created and at the same time silently alludes to the ethnogenesis. The grandmother acts as a living time machine that transports her granddaughter to back to the fur trade era—the very origin of the nation.

The land is more than a physical backdrop for Dorion's artistic creation and there is a strong emphasis on the relationship between people and place. The young girl also comes to understand how "identity, imagination and storytelling [are] inextricably linked to the land" (Silko 21). The grandmother uses the phrase "relatives with roots" throughout to exemplify that there is something that connects the Métis not only to the land but also to each other. This is reminiscent of the lesson between Campbell and her Cheechum, who taught her "that inside each thing lived a spirit" (*Halfbreed* 83). Thomas King expands on the relationship between human beings and the world around us, including animate and inanimate forms, in his work *All My Relations* (1990). As he asserts, "'[All] my relations' is an encouragement for us to accept the responsibilities we have within this universal family by living our lives in a harmonious and moral manner" (ix). I cite King's words to illustrate that the interconnectedness between people and land is not only part of Métis culture but also of different Indigenous cultures. The grandmother seeks to impress on her young granddaughter a deep sense of gratitude for the land: "You are Métis, my grandchild. As such, you inherit all the wisdom and stories that Indigenous women know about this land" (Dorion n. pag.). This remark suggests two things: the young girl is connected to the land like her ancestors before her, and there is a certain responsibility—that of teacher, disseminator, story-teller—that comes with inheriting her grandmother's wisdom with the next generation. The stories that are shared

give the Métis girl a knowledge base from which to draw cultural and traditional understanding. She becomes part of a greater community. Since this knowledge is political as well as practical, the girl becomes a cultural agent.

One of the best examples of the connectivity between the Métis and Mother Earth is the two page spread that Dorion devotes to the special encounter between grandmother, granddaughter, and a beloved birch tree. Gloria Alvernaz Mulcahy posits, "Indigenous people have a responsibility to be caretakers of the earth. We acknowledge her in our ceremonies and see the trees, plants, animals, the sky, wind and the water as sacred" (163). The borderless picture fosters a certain creativity and is a potent symbol of regeneration and responsibility for the future of the next generation. The image of the branches reaching high into the sky and the roots delving deep into the earth, which go beyond the physical space of the page, gives the impression that nothing can restrict or confine the Métis nation. In many ways, the roots represent history, traditions, and endurance of the Métis nation, while the branches that reach outward might represent the wisdom that is passed down. The roots and branches together are a powerful message of continuance and longevity that allow readers to forge in their own imagination what exists beyond the actual image on the page both and in real life.

In addition to the stories and the teachings, the grandmother provides the girl with a metaphor for Métis living when she makes a parallel between the plants and the Métis people: "You can't force a plant to grow in conditions that it is not suited to live in, just as you can't force people to live a life not connected with their higher purposes" (n. pag.). This subtle yet crucial phrase is multifaceted. On the one hand, it is a direct reference to

the destructive periods in Métis history that left community members marginalized. On the other hand, it is a call to action for the young girl to find her place within the Métis nation. The grandmother is giving her granddaughter the opportunity to define herself and become an active member of her nation.

Lastly, I analyze Dorion's use of intermediality, since it contributes to the multimodality of storytelling through text, oral narration, and visual images. By using oral storytelling the author and publisher recognize the significance of ancestral language. Dorion and Flamand expand the transcultural boundaries in *Relatives with Roots* as they re-work the picture book into an oral story. The accompanying CD is evidence of how technologies have changed how readers interact with children's literature. As O'Sullivan points out, "New conventions and protocols of storytelling are emerging with attendant cultural emphasis on fragmentation, adaptation and reworking of texts" (37). The narrations complement the picture book, which introduces the theme of storytelling. This adaptation allows the reader, or in this case the listener, new opportunities to engage with the story. Reading and listening thus become acts of decolonizing the mind. As Cree scholar Sylvia McAdam notes, "The recovery of our languages is one of the most powerful forms of self-determination and is necessary to reverse the effects of colonization" (5). The strong emotional connection between grandmother and granddaughter in *Relatives with Roots* created through storytelling fosters solidarity and sense of responsibility. It allows the girl to see herself as part of the larger community. She comes to understand that, in order for the Métis nation to survive, she must learn

from her grandmother so that one day she can impart her wisdom on the next generation. The roots, and survival, of the Métis nation are dependent on her active participation.

Reminiscing, Remembering, and Rites of Passage

Pemmican Publications, whose mandate is to promote Métis authors, illustrators, and stories, published *Flour Sack Flora* (2001). Written by Deborah L. Delaronde and illustrated by Gary Chartrand, it won the 2001 McNally Robinson Book for Young People Award (Picture Book Category). Delaronde was born in St. Boniface, Manitoba, and grew up in the Métis community of Duck Bay. She was awarded the Lieutenant Governor's Medal for Literacy, and has authored the most Métis children's books, including *Petit Métis et la Ceinture Flechée* (1985), *Métis Spirits* (1995)*, A Name for a Métis* (1999)*, Métis Sash* (2000)*, Flour Sack Friends* (2003)*, The Rabbit's Dance* (2009)*, Un Nom Pour un Métis* (2009)*, Christmas La Pouchinn* (2011)*,* and *Emma's Gift* (2014).

The illustrator Chartrand has created many works using pencil, watercolors, oils, and acrylics. Unlike the suggestive, connotative paratext used in *Relatives with Roots* to contribute to the overall meaning*,* the direct, denotative paratext employed in *Flour Sack Flora* is quite simple in that the author only provides a brief historical account of the use of the flour sacks. The front cover depicts a young girl, Flora, standing beside an older woman who is sitting in a rocking chair, holding up a white piece of cloth, and behind the chair is a large bag of "Robin Hood: Enriched Flour." The back cover features a summary of the story, and autobiographical details about the author and illustrator. The text, which usually appears left of the two-page spread, is accompanied by pictures, resembling aged oil and acrylic paintings, on the right. The old-fashioned look helps to date the story.

On every page there is a fine black line that acts as a frame or defined border around the painting, hence making it difficult or near impossible for the reader to imagine anything outside of Chartrand's images. This is different from illustrations in *Relatives with Roots* and *Jenneli's Dance*, in which the images are not neatly contained and allow readers to forge their own ideas of what exists beyond the page. Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott contend, "Framing creates a sense of detachment, and together with the title and the author's name on the cover it emphasizes the existence of the book as an artefact" (247). *Flour Sack Flora* thus acts as an *object d'art*, as readers are forced to focus on the image that is placed in front of them.

The story takes place in an unnamed rural community in the middle part of the twentieth century. The ambiguous location is significant because it is likely set somewhere on the prairies, a place of historical significance for the Métis. Recollecting the past is the central theme of *Flour Sack Flora,* and it is captured in the still frames paintings, which resemble photographs in a given moment in time. Together, Delaronde and Chartrand bring to life the story of a young Métis girl named Flora, a direct reference to the Flower Beadwork People, who wishes to create the perfect dress for her trip to town—a special rite of passage. Flora's transition from one phase of life to another is marked by her leaving her rural community, which is drastically different from the protagonist in *Relatives with Roots,* who also experiences her own rite of passage by connecting to the land. In *Flour Sack Flora,* much importance is placed on Flora's departure from her community whereas in Dorion's book the emphasis is given to the exchange of cultural information. That said, the trip itself takes up very little of the actual

story. Instead, Delaronde focuses on the cultural, historical, and political dimensions of the Métis nation, and introduces the reader to transcultural artifacts like beading and embroidery which are a reminder of the contact zone.

This book represents a vital contribution to the history of Métis fashion and dress, design history, and material culture. At the same time, it also emphasizes the lifeline of community for a marginalized group. Like many other Canadians from small towns, Flora and her family must work together with the other community members to coordinate visits into town to get supplies and food. *Flour Sack Flora* opens with the protagonist standing in the doorway dressed in blue coveralls and brown moccasins adorned with beadwork. From the beginning, there is a standardized notion of what is and what is not considered appropriate. Flora is told explicitly that her everyday moccasins are not suitable attire for a trip to town, even though for generations they have been part of traditional Métis dress (Troupe 31). It is troubling that Flora cannot sport the footwear that is so revered by her community. As Troupe notes, "Most Métis living on the Plains and in more northern regions adopted a moccasin style that originated from northern Cree and Ojibwa groups" (31). In naming moccasins as unfitting for town, Delaronde makes the distinction between insider and outsider clothing whereby there is a specific dress code that is required in order to leave the community. It is impossible for Flora to escape the notion of beauty as set by mainstream society. DePasquale and Wolfe note how Delaronde's "Métis community […] is always affected by the white colonizer's world" (98). The two scholars are concerned that neither the grandmother nor her friends question the notion of beauty, as they accept that moccasins are not appropriate attire, and

put more of an emphasis on creating a "mainstream-styled dress" as a rite of passage (98). While I agree with DePasquale and Wolfe that it is puzzling that Delaronde favours a conventional European dress code, I think that this example demonstrates how over the years the notion of prettiness, much like the concept of race, has been "socially constructed, historically malleable, culturally contextual, and reproduced through learned perceptual practices" (Alcoff 182). Here attractiveness is embedded in the social structures of the day, and is highly influenced by history.

Delaronde dedicates the book "to children who, like myself, grew up wearing hand-me-down clothes" (n. pag.) and indirectly draws attention to the poverty associated with the use of the flour bags. The author thus disseminates Métis culture in a selective way that does not emphasize the economic marginalization of Métis families. I analyze this textual void through Pratt's lens of transculturation because it allows us to understand how hierarchies and systems of classification that were created in the nineteenth century are carried out in *Flour Sack Flora.* The flour sacks are a reminder of the contact zone, and the "historical disjuncture whose trajectories now intersect" and at the same time a visible symbol of the divide between the haves and the have-nots (Pratt, *Imperial* 18). The flour sack, as clothing, signifies the socioeconomic and cultural marginalization of Indigenous Peoples, such as the Métis, under settler expansion. I draw attention to this long-neglected historical blind spot because it is crucial to recognize the aftermath of the North West Resistance (1885). It is troubling that Delaronde does not reference these "Forgotten Years." But considering her very young target audience, perhaps the visual evocation of the flour sack without explicit historical discourse is less

unsettling. I would suggest that educators and teachers who use this book as part of their curricula should provide students with additional commentary to the troubling history that Delaronde decides to reference, but only mutedly.

Unlike the other picture books that I examine, *Flour Sack Flora* is the only Métis text that uses a repetitive story line, which allows the reader to anticipate what is coming next. "Repetition," explains Perry Nodelman, "is inherently reassuring, pleasurably conforming—a matter of knowing what to expect and therefore not being unsettled by uncertainty" (*Hidden Adult* 233). The predictability in this book with the recurrence of words and sentences allows pre-emergent readers to interact with the text and learn the simple vocabulary. Delaronde's use of reiteration also points back to the oral tradition, which used this technique to underscore its main aim. By repeating the same phrases, the oral storyteller is able to make sure that everyone is following along, but in this case "[r]epetition is an important aspect of transferring stories to children so the teachings have a better chance at becoming embodied" (Dorion, *Opikinawasowin* 96). The use of repetition creates a familiarity for the readers and listeners, and patterns of recognition allow the audience to become involved in story. Once Grandma and Flora complete sewing the dress, they stand back to admire their work but notice something is "missing." Thus begins the repetitive plot of visiting different members in the community who contribute to the garment; this formative experience also references the importance of Métis women as active producers within family economies during the fur trade. Community forms the ground of both cultural and practical exchange in *Flour Sack Flora.* Delaronde introduces the reader to trading as fundamental in the emergence of the

Métis nation. In exchange for the perfect adornments such as embroidery, beading, and ribbon—all assertions of cultural identity—Flora gives up some of her personal valuables and as well as her own time. The importance of community and working together, also echoed throughout Métis history, cannot be overlooked in this story.

Trading became part of the Métis livelihood and, in some ways, was at the core of their nation-building. "The métis were unique among native peoples in the sense that as distinct entities they did not antedate the fur trade," asserts John E. Foster, "They alone could look to the fur trade for their origins and not simply for significant formative influences" (73). Without trade, it would have been difficult for the Métis to survive. Delaronde incorporates trading into her story to introduce Métis culture and history. She allows us to learn about the positive impact of the Métis, which can be contrasted with some of the negative ways that this group has been at times depicted throughout Canadian history. By using historical events such as the fur trade, Delaronde contributes to the way that history is constructed, represented, and remembered. The tradition of trade in *Flour Sack Flora* may go unnoticed by the young reader, but it is evident to the adult reader familiar with the making of Western Canada that the author deliberately incorporates national formation.

In addition to trading as a cultural and historical dimension of Métis transcultural nation-building, embroidery was and continues to be a very prevalent motif in the Métis community. The recognition of Métis art as both culture and currency informs the book's educational strategy. Chartrand fills the pages of *Flour Sack Flora* with colourful embroidery—blue, red, and white—a tribute to the Métis flags. As mentioned, this

craftsmanship provided the Métis with opportunities to sell or trade their merchandise throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Ted J. Brasser notes, "Much of the early ethnographic material originating from the Red River region indicates an experimentation with the fusion of diverse art traditions" (225). However, Brasser suggests that the nineteenth century was the climax for Métis artwork and since then it has been in decline with the dwindling of the buffalo herds and the forced dispersal of the Métis (228). Farrell Racette challenges Brasser's claim that Métis artwork developed, flourished, and then disappeared. She argues that Métis art, like the Métis nation, has undergone periods of transition but that beading is still an integral element of Métis identity. *Flour Sack Flora* stands as evidence that beading remains an intrinsic symbol of the Métis nation that emerged out of the contact zone and is a powerful reminder of this unique transcultural nation.

Lastly, recollecting and reminiscing are echoed throughout *Flour Sack Flora*. The repetitive nature of the plot captures the idea of re-enactment that affirms Métis cultural identity. Every time Grandma and Flora meet with the Elders, who help to make the prefect dress, the older women recall the first time they went to town. Recalling thus becomes part of the journey. They remember the clothes they wore, the people they met, and the day itself. They share their testimonies and relive the past through Flora. It is their collective or cultural memory that they draw on to remember their youth with a certain sense of nostalgia. According to Adam D. Smith, "There is a felt filiation, as well as a cultural affinity, with a remote past in which a community was formed, a community that despite all the changes it has undergone, is still in some sense recognized as the

'same' community" (33). In each interaction among Grandma, Flora, and the other women, there is a strong emphasis on remembering this significant moment. In order to survive as a nation, the Métis must learn from their Elders. It is this collect memory that gives birth to a distinct Métis history. The fictive grandparenting in *Flour Sack Flora* allows Emily, Gladys, and Mary to impart their wisdom and stories on the next generation. The three women help Flora learn about Métis culture and history, even though she is not their biological granddaughter. This fictive kin demonstrates the deep bond that can exist between this generation and the next.

The Nolin Trilogy: People, Place, and Language

The Nolin trilogy highlights how the strong connection between grandfather and grandchild configures transcultural identities. The three picture books impart traditional knowledge, promote Michif, and create a sense of national pride for Métis. *Fiddle Dancer* is the first volume in the trilogy, followed by *Dancing in My Bones,* and *Call of the Fiddle. Dancing in My Bones* won three Saskatchewan Book Awards (2009): the Award for Publishing; the First Peoples Publishing Award; and the First Peoples Writing Award. The following year, it received the Gold Medal Spirit Award for Native Folklore from the Moonbeam Children's Book Awards. The trilogy focuses on the ethnosymbolism that distinguishes and unites the Métis nation: myths, symbols, traditions, heroes, and holy places. The books are co-written by Wilfred Burton and Anne Patton, illustrated by Farrell Racette, translated into Michif by Norman Fleury, and published by the GDI. Burton, from the area around Glaslyn, Saskatchewan, and Patton, from St. Catharines, Ontario, both used to be teachers. The two have co-authored a wide

variety of children's books. The vibrant acrylic illustrations by Farrell Racette, a member of the Timiskaming First Nation, complement the English and Michif text. Both Fleury and Farrell Racette were born in Manitoba and have created numerous works in an effort to preserve Métis culture. Fleury is the past director of Michif Languages for the Manitoba Métis Federation, and is a strong advocate for the preservation of the Michif/Cree languages.

A chronological reading of these three books is not essential to understanding the unique tie between grandfather and grandson. At the same time, reading the books in sequence allows the overall plot to build, taking the reader on a transformative journey into the lives of more than three generations of Métis. I am analyzing these books as a case study of the kinship that exists between grandparent and grandchild in Métis nation-building. The trilogy also brings into question how culture is passed on to the next generation—through our genes or by learning. Unlike the other children's books that I have examined thus far, the Nolin trilogy also directly references one of the darkest periods in Métis history. By depicting actual events in a way that the target audience can understand, the authors re-write Métis back into history and celebrate cultural survival.

Mooshoom's[18] role as grandparent oscillates between what Weible-Orlando calls custodial and cultural conservator grandparenting (109). Mooshoom is a cultural conservator in that he allows Nolin to stay with him for extended periods of time. He puts his hope in Nolin for Métis cultural and familial continuity by teaching the boy not only about fiddling and jigging but also about historical events that have formed the Métis

[18] Burton and Patton use "Mooshoom" in the first book and then refer to Nolin's grandfather as "Moushoom" in the last two books of the trilogy.

nation. There is no mention of Nolin's father, whereas the reader is introduced at the outset to Nolin's mother, who is also Mooshoom's daughter. Mooshoom cares for Nolin like a son. This parenting style suggests that Mooshoom, in fact, is a custodial grandparent and that he partially raises his grandson, despite the presence of the boy's mother. Regardless of Mooshoom's expression of grandparenthood, it is evident by his active role that he is deeply concerned with the continuity of Métis consciousness and nation-building.

From the beginning, Burton and Patton make an emotional connection with the reader through their dedications: "to those who keep Métis culture alive by fiddling, dancing, remembering Michif and sharing stories" (*Fiddle* 46); "to all the children who are willing to try new things even if they're a little scared" (*Dancing* n. pag.); and "to all the children who honour the stories and teachings of grandparents" (*Call* n. pag.). There is an underlying significance placed on intergenerational relationships as the authors pay tribute not just to one person, but rather "to those" and "to all the children." The focus on the collectivity is noteworthy because it also denotes the aspirations that the authors have for their work. I would argue that like their dedication, Burton and Patton hope that their books will help to "keep the Métis culture alive." This continuity is impossible without the next generation. There is also an unnamed call to action "to all children," Métis and non-Métis, to learn about the Métis nation, which is essential for the nation's survival, a theme that is also echoed in *Relatives with Roots.*

Another significant paratext in two books of the Nolin trilogy is the recipes that can be found at the back, which introduce the reader to traditional Métis foods and are

written testimony to the sustenance of the past and for the future at once. *Fiddle Dancer* includes the instructions for bannock and thus represents its significance to the Métis nation.[19] A staple during the fur trade, this bread is known to be very filling and can last for a long time. For the Métis, it is not only a form of nourishment but also something that has been passed on from generation to generation. It creates tradition, nostalgia, and a sense of belonging (Alston 125). *Dancing in My Bones* shares the steps to make *tourtière,* a French-Canadian meat pie, which denotes the interconnection and entwining of different cultures in the make up the Métis nation. However, these recipes are more than instructions for cooking traditional Métis meals. They are symbols of a living culture. In the third book, Burton and Patton provide a written summary of the North West Resistance and the Battle of Batoche, and include photographs of the historical site. This reference directs the reader's attention towards a specific period in Canadian history. "Collective cultural identity" in the Nolin trilogy builds a "sense of continuity on the part of successive generations of a given cultural unit of population to shared memories of earlier events and periods in the history of that unit and to notions entertained by each generation about the collective destiny of that unit and its culture" (Smith 25). These pictures function as metonyms of cultural and historical heritage. The images passively enact remembering, whereas the recipes perform an active call to action. Yet, both connect the past to the present in different ways.

[19] While the origin of bannock is disputed, the word has its roots in the Gaelic for term "unleavened bread"(Hourie, et al. 121). Some scholars argue that Scottish fur traders introduced bannock to the Americas, whereas others believe that it was a common staple for some Indigenous Peoples prior to colonization. Regardless of who first created bannock, it was a staple for many Métis during the fur trade era, and still is today (Hourie et al. 122)

In addition to the visual and textual literacy, the trilogy introduces audio literacy as a form of intermediality to expand and deepen the reader's learning experience much like *Relatives with Roots*. Burton and Patton use CDs that contain English narrations by Burton, Michif narrations by Fleury, and songs[20] by one of the most acclaimed Métis fiddlers, John Arcand. Arcand's "Red River Jig" is repeated in all three books of the trilogy because it is the best-known tune at many of the Métis dances. Arcand, who started to play the fiddle at the age of six, learned the piece from his father and grandfather. He is passionate about preserving Métis tradition. He was honored with a National Aboriginal Achievement Award for Arts and Culture in 2003, and has received many accolades for his fiddling. Arcand's lifetime commitment to fiddling demonstrates his desire to promote and preserve this important national tradition. Moreover, it is not surprising that Maria Campbell pays tribute to him in her poem "La Beau Sha Shoo" in *Stories of the Road Allowance People* (51-63). The fiddle music engages the listener in an important transcultural tradition, which deeply reflects an artistic creation born out of the contact zone, and the narrations give a "voice" to the picture book. According to Margaret Mackey, through this type of intermediality "[we] can see stories shifting and altering their borders even as the world of make-believe expands beyond anything our ancestors might have imagined" (16). The compositions create a stimulating learning environment, change the way one interacts with the text, and allow the reader to connect

[20] The following songs are present in *Fiddle Dancer*: "The Red River Jig," "Whiskey Before Breakfast," and "Big John McNeil." *Dancing in My Bones* introduces the reader to "Red River Jig," "Isbister Jig," and "Emma's Memorial Jig." *Call of the Fiddle* features the following songs by Arcand: "Red River Jig," "Drops of Brandy," "A Waltz for Margaret," and one track by David Sayer and Fred Desjarlais called "The Rabbit Dance."

with the ancestral language that is uttered with and possibly against the colonial tongue of the dominant culture.

From the beginning of the *Fiddle Dancer*, there is a sense of passing on tradition when someone yells out to Mooshoom, "Hey, ol' *Baptiste,* better teach your grandson to take your place" (3). This suggests that in order for Métis culture and traditions to be sustained the next generation must learn from their grandparents. But Mooshoom complicates this idea when he explains to Nolin: "Well it started before I was born. Whenever *Ma Mayr* heard fiddle music, she drummed her fingers on her big belly. That beat vibrated inside her where I was curled up, waiting to be born. The jigging beat just soaked into my soft, little baby bones" (Burton and Patton, *Fiddle* 13). Burton and Patton play with the idea that all Métis are born with "dancing in their bones" and yet Mooshoom takes time to teach his grandson how to jig. Regardless of whether it is a learned skill or something "in your bones", it is evident that jigging holds a cultural significance for many Métis. Therefore, it is not surprising the sheer volume of literature dedicated to jigging.

But Nolin worries that, unlike the other members of his family, he does not have the gift, asking: "Is it too late to get dancing in my bones?" (26). Nolin's concern is very real; he does not want to be different from the members of his family, which is a reoccurring theme in children's literature. Mooshoom encourages Nolin to get a legendary Arcand CD and to listen to the rhythm of the fiddle. Burton and Patton seem to signal their admiration for the Métis fiddler with the intertextual reference to Arcand.

There is a sense of celebration and accomplishment as Nolin learns to dance. Mooshoom is so proud of his grandson that he gives him his sash, which has been passed down from generation to generation. Although the significance of the sash is not outwardly expressed here, much like the silence observed in *Relatives with Roots,* the text enacts consolidation of Métis identity in this represented moment. The framed version of the front and back cover is used at the climax of the picture book. Farrell Racette's image captures a confident Nolin dancing from one side to the other: "Look Mooshoom, your sash is making my feet fly/ Chwayr Mooshoom ta saenchur flayshii ni wiichinhiyikoon chi oopiiyaan avik mii pyii" (37). Farrell Racette uses overt and subtle visual historical symbols throughout the series to educate the reader about Métis culture, images that show and produce cultural transmission at the same time. As Belcourt points out, Farrell Racette's "paintings speak a thousand words and she paints with intent and purpose, not merely to entertain the viewer or herself, but to raise awareness of the Métis, to educate and be a proponent for change for Métis people" ("Purpose in Art" 145). The same can be said about Dorion's images that point back to the historic Métis nation and simultaneously look ahead to a promising future. Perhaps there are more complex images of Métis symbols in the Nolin trilogy and *Relatives with Roots* in comparison with *Flour Sack Flora* and *Jenneli's Dance* because Farrell Racette and Dorion are both acclaimed Métis artist and as such automatically incorporate cultural codes and signs.

Fiddle Dancer presents signs and textual devices as Métis iconic symbols as Burton and Patton introduce different clothing and food that are important to the Métis, like the sash (2, 33) and moccasins (23), as well as bannock (8). These signifiers act as

codes for Métis cultural identity. John Fiske maintains, "A code is a rule-governed system of signs, whose rules and conventions are shared amongst members of a culture, and which is used to generate and circulate meanings in and for that culture" (4). These sets of Métis signs have ascribed meanings to the nation. That said, there are also "multiple histories of negotiation between cultures" (Bradford 191-92). It is interesting to compare the status of moccasins in the Nolin trilogy to *Flour Sack Flora.* In Burton and Patton's works "[t]he clothing worn by Métis and Halfbreed people" not only "reflects the historic events that have impacted them over time: the fur trade, changing economies, resistance and displacement" but also represents significant symbols of pride (Farrell Racette, "Sewing" 1). The same cannot be said about Delaronde's work.

Dancing in My Bones, like *Fiddle Dancer*, also centers on the psychological elements of the Métis nation and introduces the reader to Métis food, festivities, religion, storytelling, and dancing. Unlike the first three other works that I have analyzed, *Dancing in My Bones* makes direct references to an actual place. This specific evocation of location is significant because it allows the reader to make a connection between real life and the text. "Actual settings," suggests John Stephens, "implicate attitude and ideology" (209). The story begins with Nolin and Moushoom en route to the boy's home in Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan, a significant community in Métis history. In Saskatchewan in the late 1940s, just before winter, some of the Métis families were forced to leave their homes and were taken to Meadow Lake, and then eventually 40 miles to Green Lake as part of a settlement agreement with the Saskatchewan government. Unfortunately, there were no resources in place and by the spring "a lot of people got sick and died, just from

flu, and pneumonia, and other diseases" (Lutz 45). In her interview Campbell told Lutz that a "lot of [Métis] moved back by wagon, back to some of their communities, and then tried to rebuild again. But they were scattered. The communities were never the same again" (45). Burton and Patton do not provide readers with any details about the significance of Meadow Lake but rather leave it up to us to make their own connection between the past and the present.

While dancing and jigging are at the forefront of this book, storytelling plays an equally important role because it imparts cultural learning. Moushoom tells Nolin a story about when he was a young boy. The authors uses the two-page spread to show Nolin listening intently to his grandfather, who is wearing a leather jacket with bright beaded flowers, and a giant moose with large antlers standing in the snow visible reminders of the Flower Beadwork People. Historically, the Métis relied on hunting a moose, and other animals like deer, bear, fish, and of course buffalo (Adese 57). On the one hand, the image of the animal creates a sense of wonder about Moushoom's tale, which resembles Hope's 1967 poem "The Home Provider—Moose Hunter," and on the other hand it is a reminder of the case between R. v. Powley in which Métis hunting rights were questioned.[21] There is a sense of gratitude expressed in this picture book as Moushoom and his father obtain more than meat as nourishment from the moose for, when the weather begins to shift, the moose hind protects the two from the cold winter elements. There is a picture of two men, one young and one old, with large beaded leather mitts

[21] In 1998, Métis lawyer Jean Teillet argued Métis rights in the case *R. v. Powley,* in which Steve and Roddy Powley were charged with hunting without a license. It would take until 2003 for the Supreme Court to rule in favour of the Powleys (Teillet n. pag.).

huddled under what appears to be a large red blanket, which is actually the hide of the moose. The clothing of the boy and his grandfather is a reminder of the rich Métis textile legacy. For years, the Métis have worn ornately decorated mittens with floral motifs (Troupe 34). The gauntlets are not only a source of warmth but also a source of cultural revitalization.

Moushoom uses a cautionary tale about living from the land, and having a grateful heart—a practice echoed in Dorion and Anzaldúa's works. However, Nolin takes on a more passive role compared to the protagonists in *Relatives with Roots, Friends from the Other Side,* and *Prietita and the Ghost Woman*. Nolin learns the importance of respecting Mother Earth through storytelling rather than actually physically connecting to the land. "Stories are not simply a means of learning about others and history," writes Laura-Lee Kearns, "they can also have a deeply personal meaning and can potentially transform peoples' understanding of one another and themselves" (59). There is a deep importance put on the sacredness of places and animals in *Dancing in My Bones*. It is the duty of the Nolin and other Métis to honor these spaces to make sure that they will exist far into the future.

Métis spiritualism is also expressed through the Catholic religion. Unlike overt Catholic symbols in the Chicana/o picture books that I will examine in the following chapter, this book uses subtle Catholic references to demonstrate the importance of faith to Moushoom and his grandson. Farrell Racette dedicates a two-page spread of the family sitting around the table with their hands neatly folded together, heads bowed, and eyes closed. Burton and Patton write, "everyone made the sign of the cross" (*Dancing* n. pag.).

Moushoom and his family express gratitude to God by saying grace. There is disagreement as to the most practiced religion by the Métis today, but Burton and Patton obviously feel that the Catholic faith is important to the nation considering the space that they dedicate to the religious act. Historically, many Métis followed and accepted the Catholic faith. Even Riel himself claimed to be a prophet sent by God (Le Chevallier, *Batoche* 263; Braz, *False Traitor* 158). Jacqueline Peterson maintains that Catholicism is still practiced by the majority of Métis ("Women" 28). However, others have become critical of the Roman Catholic Church, its missions, its teachers, and its effects on the Métis psyche due to its involvement in residential schools. "Although many Métis adults still attend Roman Catholic churches and financially contribute to the Church's missionary work," Jonathan Anuik contends, "the Métis of the twentieth century have redefined the depth of their relationship to the Church and questioned its role as a spiritual leader, educator, and health care provider to the Métis Nation. And for some Métis, the attitude to the Roman Catholic Church now is one of ambivalence" (161). I draw attention to the contentious relationship that exists between the Catholic Church and some Métis, because more than half of the picture books that I examine make reference, albeit subtle and overt, to this faith.

Food, like faith, is an integral part of national identity. Food is as essential to cultural identity as it is to life, and it is a recurring motif in children's literature, including many Métis and Chicana/o works (Keeling and Pollard 5). After Nolin and his family say grace, they take part in their meal. The table is filled with tourtière, moose meat, lii beignes, and Saskatoon pie, likely made from traditional family recipes. Food serves as

more than a marker of Métis identity; it provides a greater look into the socioeconomic situation of Nolin's family. The rich spread signifies the family's prosperity in contrast to some of the years of Métis poverty and marginalization that I referred to in the previous chapter, which is drastically different from creating a book that centers solely on the creation of traditional foods. *Dancing in My Bones* along with *Relatives with Roots,* and to a lesser extent *Jenneli's Dance,* gives us extensive insight about the physical nourishment of the nation. Burton and Patton combine food with fellowship as a means to celebrate, whereas Dorion uses it to introduce edible and medicinal plants.

Another recurring theme in many children's books is the instruction of proper behaviour. *Dancing in My Bones* makes an overt reference to correct conduct. This is because Métis authors tend to focus on nation-building and self-determination. Nonetheless, Burton and Patton make a point to illustrate the importance of helping out and responsibility. When the meal comes to an end, Nolin helps clear the table because Moushoom has taught him what to do. Farrell Racette paints Nolin with a tea towel in his hands to suggest that he is washing the dishes. The subtle, yet real, conduct exemplified by Nolin reinforces what is appropriate. After the work is done, it is time to play and thus time to bring out the fiddle. The only other text that imparts similar teachings is *Flour Sack Flora* in that only once the dress is complete can the protagonist join her parents on a trip to town. That said, there is an underlying message in all the Métis texts to always work hard whether at work or at play.

The excitement and emotion of fiddling and dancing in the first book is duplicated in the sequel. Everyone is dancing but Nolin. There is a close-up of the boy with his

mouth wide open and his eyes with a slight squint. At first glance, it is difficult to discern if he is sad, scared, shy, or surprised. This ambiguous image allows different readers to identify with Nolin, and put themselves in his situation, or to remember a time when they felt the same way. But Burton and Patton explain, "What if [Nolin] couldn't remember the steps?" (*Dancing* n. pag.). In short, he is worried. "He wished he could disappear under the moose hide," they write, "from Moushoom's story" (n. pag.). The reader can identify with these feelings. Everyone has felt like Nolin at one point in his or her life. It is through the special bond between grandfather and grandson that Nolin becomes confident. Once "The Red River Jig" begins to play, Moushoom motions to Nolin, "Áshtum, óta, Nooshishim" (n. pag.). He pulls Nolin onto the dance floor, wrapping him up in his sash. As soon as the sash is tied around Nolin's waist, the boy begins to dance. It is almost as if Moushoom's dancing steps are transferred to the boy through the sash. Nolin "felt the dancing in his bones" and it was not long before he was doing the Bunny step and the Chi Galop (n. pag). At the end of the book, Moushoom tells his grandson, "Soon, you'll be the best jigger in the North" (n. pag). Nolin hesitates to take on the honor, and defers to his grandfather. The jigging steps and the sash are passed to Nolin, and it is his turn to take on his Métis pride.

The last book in the trilogy, *Call of the Fiddle,* centres more on the historical, territorial, and political aspect of the nation, although the cultural and psychological elements are very much present. The image on the front cover shows a boy standing in front of a rolling hill, surrounded by a rainbow of music notes, looking at what appears to be a camp ground filled with tents, vehicles, and tipis. The reader later learns that this is a

picture of Nolin looking down at Batoche. The image has layers of intertextual meaning that reference a certain period in Métis history, the North West Resistance, as Moushoom teaches Nolin about their importance to the Métis community at the Back to Batoche Days. Every July, thousands of people gather to take part in the four-day event that highlights Métis history, tradition, and culture "Back to Batoche." The gathering "represents both the commemorative and a 'living' site of Métis politics and national identity" (Andersen, "I'm Métis" 161). Batoche is not just a place to come and celebrate. It also symbolizes territorial, political, and psychological elements of Métis nationhood. Moushoom reveals to his grandson his personal and national connection to the site. The Battle of Batoche, May 9-12, 1885, brought an end to the North West Resistance, leaving many Métis dead and wounded. Nolin's grandfather tells him about the importance of remembering the events that took place. By "sharing stories of Métis resistance, resilience, silence, and identities," Moushoom "helps open up the public space to legitimize Métis people's diversity, complexities, stories, experiences and understanding" (Kearns 85).

There are two simultaneous plots at work in *Call of the Fiddle,* storytelling and fiddling, and they reinforce Métis identity by focusing on ethnosymbolism. The story begins with Moushoom, Nolin's mother, and Nolin en route to Batoche. As they approach the site, they see a giant gate with a large sign painted across the top and two paintings on each of the posts: Gabriel Dumont and Louis Riel. This image within the picture book is a form of cultural dissemination: storytelling about history, and history as storytelling. Farrell Racette pays tribute and reclaims Métis heroes who played a

significant role in the North West Resistance. Dumont, the political and military leader, and Riel, the revered political strategist, were fearless defenders of the Métis nation.

There is an overwhelming sense of excitement in the text about jigging. After Nolin and his family enter the gates, a Métis Elder is impressed by Nolin's dancing and encourages Moushoom to enter his grandson in the contest. But Nolin expresses his fear about the competition. The next day Nolin watches Moushoom and his mother jig, and is still somewhat hesitant. However, it does not take long for him to gain his confidence once he hears the music of Arcand, after all Nolin took his first dance steps to the music of this famous Métis artist. Farrell Racette deviates from her typical illustration style and shows a picture of Nolin's mother nudging her son onto the floor on the top right hand corner, and an image of Arcand playing the fiddle on the bottom left. The text appears on the top left, and bottom right. The reader's eyes are forced up and down, just like a fiddle. Burton and Patton also deploy bold letters and alliteration—"rollicking rhythm of the 'Red River Jig'"—to increase the excitement of the story (n. pag). The energy of the story shifts quickly when, on the next page, we see Nolin standing with his shoulders turned inwards, lips pursed downwards, and eyes filled with angst. Farrell Racette uses a visual hyperbole of dozens of eyes to symbolize the large crowd (n. pag.). Nolin is paralyzed until he hears Moushoom yell, "Nooshishim, you can do it. You've got dancing in your bones. Shooshlwaepinikae, Nolin! Show your steps!" (n. pag.). Burton and Patton use a Michif saying, "Show your steps," or "Dance hard," to introduce the reader to the ancestral language (n. pag.). This encouragement from his grandfather gives Nolin a new sense of assurance.

Moushoom invites his grandson to the procession of the Battle of Batoche to commemorate the three-day battle. The march, through the contested historical contact zone, elicits mixed feelings from Moushoom. It allows him to teach his grandson about the sacred place where many Métis fought for their nationhood. Despite their defeat at Batoche, the historical reference becomes a sign of strength and resilience of the Metis nation. Farrell Racette devotes two pages to the pilgrimage. The picture does not have a border, which allows the reader to imagine what is beyond the page. We see people of all ages, dressed in all types of clothing, walking along a dirt path. They are following a priest dressed in a white robe and a red stole, and two men on horseback who are carrying large Métis flags: one red and one blue. This image imparts a strong sense of cultural consciousness. The illustration allows the reader to see that there are many ways to "look" Métis. There are old and young people, some have light skin and others darker skin. There is no intentional passing in this picture, rather an overwhelming sense of pride is at hand regardless of one's skin color. Farrell Racette's painting of the procession makes it evident that being part of the nation is not about skin color but rather about connecting to common dreams and aspirations.

As Moushoom and his grandson gather at the cemetery, the grandfather becomes silent. Burton and Patton write, "Nolin realized there was something serious, something sacred about this place" (*Call* n. pag.). The reader's eyes are drawn to the framed picture of Nolin and Moushoom paying their respects. The image and text work together to create a special shared moment for the older and younger generations as Nolin comes to realize the sacrifices of his ancestors. The Saint Antoine de Padoue Church site holds a

special significance to Nolin's family, and to the Métis nation. The use of this personal and national symbol increases the sentiment of belonging to a larger shared community in which a common history exists.

Call of the Fiddle recounts the actual events that played out at Batoche. Moushoom points out to Nolin the bullet holes under the peak that were left from the Riel Resistance. This tangible evidence writes history onto the walls. Moushoom explains how the women and children had to hide when the fighting happened. As Charles Pelham Mulvaney explains, "Caves had been dug—ten, fifteen, twenty feet long—five or six wide, and four or five deep—and these were carefully covered with trees and brush and earth. In these, during the four day's struggle, the families lived and ate, and slept if they could" (272). The Métis were forced into the ground to survive. Moushoom tells the boy about the difficult times that ensued for the Métis. Women and children lived in a constant state of fear about what would happen next and there was an overwhelming sense of panic: "les mères se trouvèrent séparées de leurs enfants, même des plus jeunes. Quelques petits anges se traînèrent, on ne sait comment, à une distance de plusieurs milles òu on les trouva deux au trois jours plus tard dans un état pitoyable" (Le Chevallier, "prises" 69). There was little food for the families at this time, and the living conditions were quite stark in contrast to Nolin's reality as evidenced by the rich spread of food in *Dancing in My Bones*. In teaching Nolin about the past, his grandfather seeks to create an active sense of remembering that Nolin can share with his own children in the future. "Calls for action and sacrifice in the face of threats to the nation and of defeat are accompanied by appeals to the 'unique character' and 'qualities' of those who

belong," contends Guibernau (*Identity* 12). By recalling the past and sharing it, Moushoom is calling on Nolin to keep the Battle of Batoche alive and to understand the level of sacrifice of the Métis. "It is through identification with our ancestors," Guiberneau explains, "that we rejoice in their victories and feel for their suffering and humiliations throughout history" (20). The heroic efforts by people from past generations like Falcon, Riel, Dumont, and Moushoom have preserved the Métis nation. This picture book draws attention to the historical memory that is required to create a sense of national identity.

The text ends on a lesson about what can be won or lost. On the day of the final competition, Moushoom wins first place in the finals and Nolin's mother is awarded third prize. Just before Nolin takes the stage, he receives a more significant prize, Moushoom gives him a new sash. There is a distinct differential of values here, since the competition only offers an award, whereas the grandfather's offering is at once inheritance and gift. No matter what the outcome is of this or any jigging competition, Nolin will always have his grandfather's sash, a symbol of shared identity. In some ways, *Call of the Fiddle* has an unlikely ending. When Nolin is done dancing, Moushoom says, "You wore that sash with honour, my boy" (Burton and Patton, *Call* n. pag.). In having Nolin denied victory in the jigging competition, Burton and Patton put the emphasis on learning about Métis culture and community and the sustaining relationship between grandfather and grandson rather than on fleeting individual distinctions. When Nolin takes the stage with the other competitors, he realizes that they are from different places like Edmonton, Green Lake, and Meadow Lake. Burton and Patton make a point to mention different towns where

Métis reside today. It is also interesting to look at how Farrell Racette physically portrays the boys. While they are all wearing contemporary clothing, they each have a different complexion, eye color, hair color, and style as a reminder that each member of the community looks different and expresses themselves in their own way.

The Nolin trilogy illustrates the significance of sharing stories between the current generation and the next to help preserve Métis national identity. Cultural markers are intertwined throughout the series. Through fiddling, dancing, and more importantly the relationship with his grandfather, Nolin becomes more aware of what it means to be Métis. The trilogy also places importance on the larger Métis community and extended family, more so than any other Métis picture book in this project, for cultural survival and nation-building. These books allow Métis and non-Métis readers the opportunity to engage with Nolin and his grandfather to learn more about the Métis cultural identity and what it means to have "dancing in your bones."

Be Proud of Your Differences

Jenneli's Dance was written by Elizabeth Denny, illustrated by Chris Auchter, and published by Theytus. In 2009, it won the Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Illustrator's Award and the Canadian Association of Children's Librarians Honour Book for Illustration. Denny, who grew up in St. Laurent, in the Interlake region of Manitoba, has written many different genres, including poetry, short stories, and scripts for the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) children's series *Wapos Bay and Tipi Tales*. Denny dedicates her work to her own grandmother, Cecile Minchin Leclere, to memorialize the deep bond exemplified between grandparent and grandchild.

The visual and textual symbols work together to impart a greater understanding of what it means to be Métis. Throughout *Jenneli's Dance,* the humorous cartoon pictures appear on the right hand side of the book, and are accompanied with text on the left. The unframed illustrations, like those in *Relatives with Roots,* allow the audience to imagine what is beyond the illustration that Auchter so vividly draws, while the black text written onto the white space balances the bold illustrations. The detail depicted in Auchter's work complements the text in such a way that even without understanding the words the readers can take away the overall theme. The psychological and cultural elements of Métis nation-building are dramatized through jigging. However, unlike the Nolin trilogy where the protagonist is supported by his family and community to learn how to jig, the young girl in *Jenneli's Dance* is forced to justify the significance of this dance when she takes her jigging shoes to school for show-and-tell. The enactment of the Métis dance lends empowerment to Jenneli, while the contact zone provides a compelling mode of analysis of how racial hierarchies play out at Jenneli's classroom.

Jenneli's Dance responds to the needs of children, Métis and non-Métis, to express emotions. Denny uses real life experiences and feelings to draw the reader in from the very first page. We know that Jenneli was an ordinary girl and "felt like she was nothing special" (Denny 4). Often last in the foot races and first out in dodgeball, she struggles to find something that she is good at. Denny addresses the dynamics of transculturation and quiet assertions of racial identity. From interactions with her classmates, Jenneli comes to realize that she is different, whereas through the strong relationship with her grandmother, she discovers that she is part of larger community.

Denny's dramatization of Jenneli's appearance is twofold. The facticity of race is ever present as Jenneli cannot escape the color of her skin. It is fixed. Jenneli has "darker hair and skin" (4). She physically looks different from her classmates. Denny goes on to write, "[Jenneli's] eyes were an unusual color. It was as if they could not decide whether to be brown or green" (4). The noting of the "unusual color" as a symbol of in-betweeness is a theme that runs through the work of many Métis authors. Only by deepening her bond with her grandmother can the young girl appreciate her physical features. The author contrasts Jenneli's appearance with that of the man in charge of the jigging competition; he has "brown hair, brown skin and deep brown eyes" (30), thus making an indirect statement that not all Métis people look alike. Patricia Cianciolo expands on the significance of creating certain images:

> It is important, if one is to view oneself in an adequate and positive manner, that the members of one's particular racial or ethnic group one sees portrayed in books should be depicted in a manner that will permit one to recognize oneself both as a member of that group and as an individual with features, stature, and body build that are definitely unique. (26)

By drawing Métis with different physical attributes, Auchter underscores that not all Métis look the same and affirms physical diversity within the Métis nation, which can also be seen in the Nolin trilogy and *Flour Sack Flora.*

However, it is not just the physical differences that set Jenneli apart from her classmates. Jenneli's classroom is a contested space. It is here that she must negotiate her Métis identity. Her taste in food is not the same as theirs; she brings bannock, while other

children bring sandwiches. There is no reference to the actual reaction of the other kids. I contend that Denny uses food to draw attention to insider-outsider dynamics in the classroom that have existed since the beginning of the Métis nation. Jenneli is not part of the larger group for obvious reasons, but also partly because her food is not familiar to her classmates. The very thing that sustains her also makes her different. This crucial concept of Othering articulates the dynamics of transculturation. Jenneli also likes fiddle music, and most of the kids in her class do not even know the first thing about the fiddle. Her deep interest in the fiddle comes from her grandmother. Denny writes, "The sound of the fiddle [made Jenneli's] heart skip and jump and twirl. Fiddle music reminded her of Grandma Lucee" (4). The specific cultural references, such as bannock and fiddling, situate Jenneli as a member of the Métis nation that came into existence more than one hundred years ago.

The Métis cultural heritage is exemplified in *Jenneli's Dance w*hen Jenneli visits her Grandma Lucee in Lakeside, Manitoba, and learns the Red River Jig. Auchter depicts four people—Jenneli, her cousins and Grandma—with their right legs slightly bent at the knees to suggest movement, or in this case jigging. On the next page Denny provides a history lesson about the Red River Jig. Grandma Lucee tells the story of a Métis fiddler who was down by the Red River when he heard another man playing the bagpipes on the other side of the river. Soon the Métis man started to play along, and from that day, the Métis fiddler created his own version, which denotes the musical ingenuity of the Métis; the song became known as "The Red River Jig." Unfortunately, no one knows who or when the Métis jig first was performed. Some people assert the first recorded reference of

the '"Red River Jig' appeared in 1860, others argue it was the Desjarlais family in Red River that created the song and others feel that it originated from a French-Canadian tune" (Paquin, Préfontaine, and Young 13). Alexander Begg, a journalist who moved to Red River, recorded one of the earliest published references to this Métis dance in *Dot It Down: A Story of Life in the North-West* (1871). Despite the confusion about the sources, there are various accounts from missionaries, fur traders, and others that attest to the expressive passion for fiddling and jigging by the Red River Métis that date back a few hundred years. By sharing the origin of the dance with Jenneli, Grandma Lucee lets her granddaughter know that she is a member of a nation that has made a significant contribution to the Canadian music history.

"The Red River Jig" is a source of pride for many Métis, as evidenced in the Nolin trilogy. It is a symbol of a thriving nation. Even after the 1885 North West Resistance, where many experienced a great deal of oppression and marginalization, the Métis found strength in social gatherings that included fiddling and jigging (Paquin, Préfontaine, and Young 14). It was during these gatherings that they had an opportunity to socialize, reminisce, and partake in the transcultural dance that emerged in their homeland. For decades after the upheaval in Batoche, the Road Allowance communities preserved the tradition despite various obstacles. "Its continued performance over a century later in the face of marginalization and diaspora," writes Sarah Quick, "creates an evocative symbol of survival" (2). Denny uses jigging to connect the past with the present, and to demonstrate that Métis culture has not been forgotten. The historical account provided by the author at the end of the book allows the reader to learn more

about the historical and cultural dance that is cherished by the Métis community (Denny 44).

Unlike the overt emphasis of "dancing in your bones" in the Nolin trilogy, *Jenneli's Dance* tends to stress the importance of learning and practicing the dance steps. Despite having rehearsed the jig at school, Jenneli is very nervous about performing in front of a large audience. There is fear in the young girl's face, but Grandma Lucee assures her that she is ready. The words of encouragement help her to feel more confident. When they call her name, Jenneli makes her way to the stage but, when the music starts to play, she cannot see her grandmother in the crowd, which leaves her feeling insecure. Jenneli is forced to listen to the music and remember the teachings of her grandmother. Soon her feet follow suit and she is jigging away. When it comes time to announce the winners, the man giving out the trophy says, "Not many young children can do three changes of the Red River Jig, Jenneli. Congratulations" (Denny 38). Jenneli is ecstatic and Grandma Lucee is proud. Perhaps Jenneli does have "dancing in her bones." "It was a good day," Denny writes, "When Jenneli went back to school, she felt that being different was a good thing indeed. Being Métis made her feel like there was something special about her after all" (42). Grandma Lucee creates an opportunity for Jenneli to take a risk. When she experiences success, her self-worth increases. There is an overwhelming sense of honor in being Métis and at the same time there is an underlying theme in celebrating one's uniqueness. While Jenneli might be different from her classmates, she now feels part of a greater community.

In this book, the illustrations take up the majority of the space and are responsible for conveying a lot of the information to the reader. Nodelman writes, "The pictures in picture books are literally 'illustrations'—images that explain or clarify words and each other" (*Words* viii). The images in *Jenneli's Dance* complement the text in such a way that when you open up the book your eyes are immediately drawn to the images on the page. Take, for example, the scene of Jenneli and her grandmother sitting on a picnic bench surrounded by rolling hills and a small house. Auchter draws a picture of the girl with her mouth wide open to denote a sense of shock. Jenneli is surprised because Grandma Lucee has entered her in a jigging contest. "The excitement," Denny writes, "caused Jenneli to swallow her bannock too quickly" (12). The author once again makes reference to the bread adapted from Scottish and Indigenous food. This scene is also important because of the visual semiotics. At first glance, the reader might not notice the embroidered bird on Grandma Lucee's dress. However, a closer look suggests a reference to Métis heritage and national identity. The embroidery connotes an index to the social, cultural, and economical interactions actions of the fur trade. In addition to the embroidery, as the quintessentially Métis art form, Auchter draws a buffalo on the following page as a reminder of the significance of this animal to the Métis. The buffalo looking on in the distance appears startled by the commotion of the Jenneli choking on her bannock. The image, while humorous, is a reminder of the integral role of the buffalo to the Métis nation. For decades, the livelihood of the Métis was dependent on this prairie animal. These visual representations are symbols of Métis history and cultural identity.

When Jenneli takes her new jigging shoes for show-and-tell, many of the kids in her class are interested. However, one boy questions the usefulness of the jigging shoes and makes fun of Jenneli. Ms. Johnson, the teacher, speaks up: "Jigging is much harder that you think, Jack. […] You have to remember a lot of steps, and hear the changes in the music, and keep time with the fiddle" (Denny 18). There is a certain power dynamic that exists between adult and child. Here the teacher intervenes and provides value to Jenneli's culture, not only supporting Métis culture and identity but also promoting it when she asks Jenneli to show the class a few jigging steps. The teacher gives Jenneli confidence and, in the process, encourages other students to engage with something different rather than reject it. This simple yet crucial action by the teacher sets the tone for later interactions between Jenneli and her classmates; it is symbolic because of the centuries of educational colonialism whereby assimilation policies created by the Canadian government and residential schools forced Métis and other Indigenous People to abandon their heritage. The teacher helps Jenneli negotiate the contact zone. At recess, instead of playing their daily game of dodgeball, many of the children ask Jenneli to help them with their forward step. They are all eager to perfect their jigging. This newfound respect for Jenneli's culture would not have been so easily attained without the support of Ms. Johnson. As Charles Temple, Miriam Martinez, and Junko Yokota state, "When a book presents a theme that is true to a culture and is filled with specific details that are authentic, members of that culture who read it feel that their experiences have been reflected and illuminated for others to share" (95). The messages provided in these Métis children's texts impart culture, values, and language.

Through the bond with Grandma Lucee, Jenneli is able to connect with her Métis heritage. As someone who learned from her grandmother, Masha Rudman describes the importance of the connection between grandparent and grandchild: "Children need the multigenerational perspective elders can provide. They also need models for treating people with dignity and respect no matter what their age. Books can aid in the development of a mutually rewarding interaction with elders" (119). Jenneli cannot learn to jig from Ms. Johnson or her classmates; she must gain this knowledge from her grandmother. "Jenneli felt proud knowing that she was dancing a dance," writes Denny, "that was special to her people for so many years" (8). Jenneli is no longer uncomfortable with her Métis self. She moves from cultural denial to acceptance, and finds strength to assert her Métis identity. The strong emotional connection with her grandmother and the story about the Métis Red River impart to Jenneli self-confidence in herself as a young Métis woman.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have analyzed the deep bond that exists between grandparent and grandchild in six Métis picture books to demonstrate that the passing of culture, tradition, and language are crucial to the livelihood of the Métis nation. Ute Lishke and David McNab point out that many Métis people confirm their Métisness "as a result of their own knowledge of their identities, family histories, and communities" (1). These books foster a more nuanced understanding of the complexities of identity-formation processes in diverse transcultural frameworks by introducing certain symbols that recur semiotically including beading and embroidery. In *Relatives with Roots* the grandmother

explicitly instructs her granddaughter about the evolution of the beads, and explains how prior to colonization Indigenous People used wolf willow beads for adornments (Dorion, *Relatives* n. pag). Over time, the intricacy of the beadwork and embroidery evolved as seen in the flower that Flora's grandmother creates to adorn her granddaughter's dress in *Flour Sack Flora.* Likewise, in the Nolin trilogy, Farrell Racette paints brightly coloured beaded flower motifs on moccasins, leather jackets, shirts, mittens, and more to draw attention to this unique Métis art form. In *Jenneli's Dance*, Auchter draws only one motif on Grandma Lucee's dress that resembles Métis beadwork. These visual and textual references to beading in the picture books are specific symbols of the "Flower Beadwork People" and are an active construction of national identity. Today, Métis authors, illustrators, and artists interact and engage with this historical production as a form of self-assertion and cultural transmission as it is recreated in the children's literature. This body of Metis literature, then, is a cultural production encapsulating the older cultural expression of beading like writing within a writing. Another way that these strong connections are created are through ancestral language whereby the children come to feel a sense of pride in their Métis culture.

Some of the Métis picture books also deploy ancestral language as a pocket of resistance to counter the colonial tongue of the dominant culture. Michif disrupts the dominance of English in the stories and becomes a decolonizing linguistic tool as well as a teaching device. It is interesting to note that the books that were published by the GDI all incorporate Michif code-switching and side-by-side Michif translations. This speaks to the Institute's commitment to develop Métis literary and educational resources. Métis

children have the opportunity to connect with the language that once flourished in their communities, to gain a deeper understanding of Métis language, and to come face-to-face with the language of their ancestors and claim it as their own. Michif, according to Pamela V. Sing, "proves to be a powerful identity symbol" ("Intersections" 95).

The earliest recording of Michif dates back to 1750 (Dorion and Préfontaine 22). At this time, many Métis were multilingual "who spoke several Aboriginal languages as well as 'Michif'" (Sing, "*J'vous*" 59). Sing goes on to explain:

> For linguists, Michif is a rare, almost exclusively oral, mixed language whose verbs and verb phrases come chiefly from Cree, but also other tribal languages such as Ojibwa or Saulteaux, and its nouns and noun phrases, chiefly from French, but also English (see "Works Cited" entries for Bakker, Crawford, and Rhodes). For the Métis, however, the term is used to refer to any and all of the languages they spoke or continue to speak (Rhodes, in conversation with author). One way of distinguishing among them is to refer to the mixed language as "French-Cree Michif," to the Métis Cree dialect as "Cree Michif" or "Métis/Michif Cree," and to the Métis French dialect as "French Michif" or "Métis/Michif French" (59).

It is important to note that not all Métis spoke Michif. Some spoke French and others English. That said, today Michif has become a symbol of identity. The preservation of language can be linked to nation-building because "for many Métis people losing their Michif language is akin to losing the essence of being Métis" (Dorion and Préfontaine 24).

The number of Métis speakers declined due to colonization, residential schools, and removal of children from their families. Based on his extensive research, Father Guy Lavallée contends that the decline of Michif is largely due to the fact that that many Métis were persecuted for speaking Michif French (85). Forced relocation from the Red River homeland to largely English speaking rural and urban communities has also influenced how the Métis language has evolved. It was not until 1995 that Michif resurged in Métis literary works, and when it did, it was replicated in English texts (Sing, "Défense" 232). Since then, there have been increased efforts by the Métis community to preserve Michif[22] and to introduce it to future generations, especially through literature, as evidenced in *Relatives with Roots* and the Nolin trilogy as well as *The Flower Beadwork People* (1991), *The Beavers' Big House* (2004), *Better that Way* (2007), *The Story of the Rabbit Dance* (2007), *The Giving Tree* (2009), *The Diamond Willow Walking Stick* (2012), and *Roogaroo Mickey* (2013).

For translator Flamand, her passion for language revitalization comes from her experiences as a child when she attended Christ the King School in her hometown:

> We were not allowed to speak our language. Everything was in English. I was learning two languages in school, English in the classroom and Saulteaux out in the schoolyard. A quarter of us kids spoke Michif and the rest spoke Saulteaux. […] English was totally alien, but coming from a day school, we

[22] The GDI has published a series of 27 works called *Taanishi Books: The Emergent Reader Series* (2014), with Michif audio CDs, as well as *The Métis Alphabet Book* (2009). These and other resources give Métis the opportunity to learn their ancestral language.

> did not lose our language completely because we spoke it at home in the evenings. (70)

While Flamand and other Métis children were forced to learn English and abandon their mother tongue, as she points out, she was able to retain Michif by speaking it at home with her family. Flamand is passionate about giving Métis the opportunity to learn and engage with Michif as a means of decolonization, recovery, and assertion. Sing states that "The resurgence of Michif words and expressions in literary texts reminds the community to which they belong, and that they are telling (back) into existence, of its historic, cultural, and linguistic sources, thus re-laying claim to a specific and distinct, but unrecognized space on the Canadian word/landscape" ("Intersections" 95). It is interesting to note that none of the Métis picture books in this project incorporates the French language. This may be attributed to the actual number of Métis French speakers in comparison to Métis English speakers and their access to publish in French instead of English. Another possibility is that over the past three decades there has been an increased interest in Indigenous revitalization.

For Métis and Chicanas/os, children's literature gives them confidence in themselves and an understanding of their community that allows them to function in their community with a strong cultural identity. Carol Cox and Paul-Boyd Batstone argue, "In a profound sense, children look to story for self. Stories are a critical source of discovering where they stand in the world. Adopting a new language of empathy, caring, compassion, and courage through reading multiethnic books enables children to experience issues of identity and beliefs in all their wonderful complexity" (106). Métis

authors like Dorion, Delaronde, Burton and Patton, and Denny have been successful in connecting to and representing for others their cultural roots. Their picture books relate history and provide a sense of continuity between the past and the present. In each of these stories the responsibility of grandparents cannot be overlooked. Through these strong and special relationships the protagonists come to understand the rich culture carried by the stories and lessons of older people from their marginalized groups. The important role of grandparents or Elders resonates throughout Métis and Chicana/o literature. In children's literature, authors, illustrators, and translators pay tribute and homage to those generations preceding them. Their awareness of the historical and social issues affecting their communities demonstrates their desire and power to create social change and revitalize their traditions.

CHAPTER III

THE CHICANA GRANDPARENT AND THE CURANDERA: STORYTELLING, RE-IMAGINING THE NATION, AND CULTURAL TRANSMISSION

"The future will belong to the *mestiza.* Because the future depends on the breaking down of paradigms, it depends on straddling two or more cultures."

—Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands* (1987)

"Each new generation must accept the custom and likewise pass it on."

—Rudolfo A. Anaya, *Albuquerque* (1992)

Despite the fact that Chicanas/os are the largest minority in the United States, their literary production is not reflected in American literature because for many years mainstream literary establishments did not accept Chicana/o literature (Portales 11). In this chapter, I analyze the picture books of three Chicana authors, selected because of the deep bond between grandparent and grandchild that imparts nation-building and cultural identity. These texts celebrate Chicana/o culture, provide positive role models, and at the same time foster knowledge and understanding. In my analysis I specifically examine the psychological, cultural, historical, political, and territorial dimensions of nation-building at work in these children's stories as I draw explicitly on the critical scholarship of Edna Acosta-Belén, Gloria Anzaldúa, Sandra Cisneros, Julie Costa-Malcolm, Denise Dáliva, Mary Esther Soto Huerta and Mari Riojas-Cortez, Tey Diana Rebolledo and others.

In *The Beautiful Lady: Our Lady of Guadalupe,* Pat Mora retells the story of one of the most important female figures in Chicana/o history, as Grandma Lupita, proud of her Chicana heritage, shares the significance of La Virgen in her life with her granddaughter, Rose, and her friend Terry, and captures the sense of storytelling and the oral form. Guadalupe is a symbol of transcultural identity as she straddles multiple cultures. Anzaldúa introduces transcultural elements of Chicana/o identity in *Friends from the Other Side/Amigos del otro lado* and *Prietita and the Ghost Woman/Prietita y La Llorona* through storytelling, folk telling, mythology, and healing. In both works, Prietita is able to connect to her ancestral roots through the special relationship that she forms with a curandera who acts as her fictive grandmother. Chicana/o cultural memory is conserved and transmitted through teaching about traditional medicines. *Friends from the Other Side* focuses on herbs and healing but also promotes a critical consciousness as it depicts the reality of the border and all it entails, whereas *Prietita and the Ghost Woman* reaffirms and celebrates La Llorona as a Chicana/o icon. Lastly, I examine Amada Irma Pérez's *My Diary from Here to There/Mi diario de aquí hasta allá* which it is different from the other three books in that it begins in Mexico and ends in the United States. In this work, the young girl must negotiate the complexity of emigration, and what it means to be home. The words of her grandmother, who remains in Mexico, help the girl adapt to her new life north of the border, and are a constant reminder of her cultural roots. Through the relationship between grandmothers or grandmother-figures, the child protagonists in each of the texts come to gain a greater understanding of what it means to be Chicana as echoed by by Rudolfo A. Anaya in the second epigraph at the beginning of

this chapter. I should note that in this study all of the Chicana/o picture books feature a female protagonist. The fact that no male protagonists are included is perhaps more telling of the writers' personal connection to the story than an outward exclusion of a male protagonist. In my first draft I analyzed *A Gift from Papá Diego*, a picture book by Benjamin Alire Sáenz, which depicts the relationship between grandfather and grandson. However, I concluded that it was lacking nation-building tendencies and thus it did not fit within the scope of this project.

All the picture books that I examine are bilingual, deploying the technique of code-switching, and require the reader to move between English and Spanish. In these works code-switching plays a particular function. It is not merely a communication or educational tool but rather a symbolic action on the part of the authors. John Edwards suggests that language is "a tool of communication" or "an emblem of groupness, as a symbol, [and] a rallying-point" (17). Language is a marker of identity. It allows the authors to distinguish their work from non-Chicana/o writers, and in some ways can also be seen as a decolonization tool as seen in some of the Métis books. Chicana/o culture is transmitted through language and pictures. Writing about poems, Marta Sanchez explains that "[t]he difference lies in how the movement takes place. In a bilingual experience, the reader must mentally juxtapose poems in English with poems in Spanish; in an interlingual experience, the tensions in syntax, the connotations, the ironies, and the reverberations of words and images interlock, pulling in two directions at once" (21). The bilingual reading experience, whether in poetry or children's fiction, forces the reader to move between two linguistic worlds. In addition to code-switching, a particularly

significant trait in Chicana/o literature, *Friends from the Other Side*, *Prietita and the Ghost Woman,* and *My Diary from Here to There* all include side-by-side English and Spanish versions of the story and as such it is difficult to determine the source text. *The Beautiful Lady,* in contrast, does not include a Spanish translation in the story. Mora recreated a Spanish version of the book, *La hermosa Señora: Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe,* with Adriana Dominguez using the same illustrations as *The Beautiful Lady*. The Spanish language is part of Chicano/a history and culture; yet not all Chicanos/as speak Spanish. Educators Renea Arnold and Nell Colburn write, "[t]he most important message we can share with parents is to embrace your native language and celebrate your culture—your children will flourish" (n. pag.). This cultural acceptance and bilingual recognition are crucial, and yet it is not the reality for many Chicanas/os as evidenced in the excerpt that I provided from Cherríe Moraga in Chapter One, where she had to act as a spy to learn Spanish from her own family. While Moraga's example is from her childhood experience in the 1960s, today some Chicana/o parents continue to avoid speaking their ancestral language because they do not want their children to speak English with a Spanish accent.

Storytelling, Insider-Outsider, and La Virgen de Guadalupe

Mora's *The Beautiful Lady* is a contemporary re-telling of one of the most recognizable maternal icons not only in Chicana but also Mexican culture, and as such is ideal for education through children's picture books as both visual and print literacy. It is dedicated to the "memory of my father, Raúl Antonio Mora, who loved Our Lady of Guadalupe" (n. pag.), to demonstrate the deep affection many Chicanas/os have for this

figure. Mora also weaves a few Spanish words into *The Beautiful Lady*: *gracias, mis queridas, la hermosa Señora, por favor, las estrellas, la luna,* and *rosas hermosas*. There is no glossary. By repeating the Spanish words readers are forced to learn their meaning.

The Beautiful Lady, illustrated by the award-winning husband and wife team of Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher, received the 2013 International Latino Book Award and Best Children's Fiction Picture Book; the Award was founded in 1998 to honour outstanding Latina/o children's literature because for too long Chicana/o and other Latina/o texts have failed to get the recognition that they deserved. Even as recently as December 2013, *The New York Times* announced its "Notable Children's Books of 2013," which neglected any titles by Chicanas/os writers. In fact, in the last decade, only one book that features a Latina/o protagonist has made this acclaimed list: *Marcelo in the Real World* (2009), written by Mexican-born Chicano author Francisco X. Stork. It is not for a lack of children's books that Chicana/o works are not named on the best book lists considering the large number of Chicana/o texts that exist. As Latinas for Latino Lit (L4LL) co-founder Viviana Hurtado points out, "There are dozens of beautifully written stories that were recently published and that reflect the faces and experiences of our dynamic culture" (qtd. in Olivera n. pag.). The failure of *The New York Times* to identify this flourishing body of literature forced Latinas/os and Chicanas/os to create their own literary prizes like the International Latino Book Award, the Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award, and the Pura Belpré Award.

Mora was born in El Paso and "grew up speaking mostly Spanish at home, with the influence of her four grandparents who had come to Texas from Mexico in the early

part of the century" (Abreu, Both, and Woodruff n. pag.). Her life unfolded in this fraught contact zone, making her a Chicana writer well able to communicate cultural pride and complexity to children through children's books—the beginnings of literary and cultural knowledge. After completing her undergraduate and graduate studies, Mora held teaching positions at the secondary and college levels for many years until she left her profession to pursue writing. Since 1981, she has written numerous pieces of poetry, as well as young adult and children's literature including a bilingual series. In her poetry collection, Mora draws from her own personal experience as a bilingual and bicultural Chicana woman growing up in the Southwest of the United States as shown in her poem "Legal Alien," which I analyzed in the first chapter. In her prose book *Nepantla* (1993), Mora writes, "I am a child of the border, that land corridor bordered by the two countries that have most influenced my perceptions of reality" (5-6). She goes on to say, "There probably isn't a week of my life that I don't have a least one experience when I feel that discomfort, the slight frown from someone that wordlessly asks, what is someone like her doing here?" (6). While much of her poetry and adult fiction takes on the lived experience of being Chicana with the racism, discrimination, and constant judgment by others, her children's books tend to focus on Chicana/o and Latina/a culture, traditions, and stories.

In an interview with Kathleen Rowland in 2007, Mora explains her desire to see Latinos/as pursuing careers in writing, and changing the big publishing companies from within by occupying influential roles like editors or directors. In order to get more diverse stories in the mega-book stores, Chicanas/os need to take action. As she suggests, "We

need to go to the manager and say, 'Where are the children's books by Latinos?' And we need to be prepared if they say, 'Do you have a list of what you are looking for?' We need to be ready to help, not just complain. We need to be ready to help create change" (24-25). Mora, in her desire to see Chicanas/os assert some control over the production of storytelling, sees writing as a form of social action. Like the other authors I focus on in this chapter, she is committed to writing children's books to reflect the reality of being Chicana/o and to counter cultural invisibility.

Over the years, many different groups have adopted La Virgen, and she has been reproduced in a substantial body of writing. As Stafford Poole points out, Guadalupe is intrinsically connected with *mexicanidad*. "For Hidalgo […] as for Emiliano Zapata," he writes, "Guadalupe symbolized liberation and native rights. For others Guadalupe has had various meanings: indigenism, religious syncretism, respect for cultural autonomy, the struggle for human dignity, or, conversely, submission and subjugation, whether of Indians or women" (4). The wide association with La Virgen has allowed many groups who trace their lineage to Mexico to claim her as their own. Guadalupe "is simultaneously a goddess, a nurturer, a selfless mother, and a powerful, demanding icon of womanhood to which Chicanas are expected to aspire" (Costa-Malcolm 32). However, controversy and tensions have arisen with those who feel that the religious figure should not be re-imagined in any other way than her traditional role as a Catholic icon. That said, many Chicanas, including Sandra Cisneros, have appropriated Guadalupe as an empowering woman figure in contrast to the widespread depiction of her as a mild and submissive virgin. For Cisneros, the Lupe of her childhood, with a strong association to

the Catholic Church, has been replaced with La Virgen, a sexual creature that represents womanhood: "She is Guadalupe the sex goddess, a goddess who makes me feel good about my sexual power, my sexual energy" ("Guadalupe" 49). This demonstrates how the symbol of La Virgen is encoded and expressed so differently by members of the nation. She represents individual and communal agency. Regardless of these manifestations, contends Anzaldúa, she is "the single most potent religious, political and cultural image of the Chicano/*mexicano*" (*Borderlands* 52). Guadalupe gives hope to those who are marginalized. Thus, it is not surprising that Anzaldúa subtly evokes her image in *Friends from the Other Side* and *Prietita and the Ghost Woman* as a reminder to the struggle for social justice even though she does not make mention of La Virgen. The presence of Guadalupe lingers in the books as a culturally understood intertextual reference connecting fiction to belief.

Mora begins *Our Beautiful Lady* with two young girls, Terry and Rose, gathered in the kitchen making flowers out of paper. Rose is aware of the cultural significance of the paper roses, which are to commemorate and celebrate La Virgen, whereas her friend Terry is oblivious to their meaning. She is not a member of the Chicana/o community, and yet she is curious about the statue of a pretty lady, with the gold stars on her cloak, displayed on the counter. Mora, like Denny with *Jenneli's Dance,* makes a direct reference to insiders-outsiders with this defamiliarization in order to show how traditions and beliefs are embedded in culture. In *Our Beautiful Lady,* Terry is unaware of the Chicana/o "collective memory filled with transcendental moments in the life of the community" (Guibernau, *Identity* 20). Grandma Lupita explains to Terry, "Every

December, Rose and I make pretty flowers to put around the statue" (Mora, *Our Lady* n. pag.). Through Lupita, Mora enacts the power and cultural necessity of storytelling about the well-known manifestation of the Virgin Mary in the Americas. Such layered sharing of cultural stories between one generation and the next is repeated in the other Chicana/o picture books, and is also echoed in most of the Métis picture books that I examined in the previous chapter. This is a strong feature of in children's literature, but in marginalized cultures, the technique is more than literary. It is a political act of storytelling as and for survival.

In Mora's book, Lupita narrates the story of La Virgen much like the beginning of a fairy tale or legend, a technique that is also used in Dorion's *Relatives with Roots*: "Long ago, […] on a cold December morning near what is now Mexico City, a man named Juan Diego put on his *tilma,* his cloak, and started down the road to church" (n. pag.). The illustrations of the encounter between Juan Diego and La Virgen de Guadalupe show a man in an orange and yellow poncho kneeling on the side of a small knoll on Tepeyac Hill. Johnson and Fancher depict a lady adorned in a blue cloak with gold trim. She is floating above the ground and a yellow-golden luminous light surrounds her. Mora writes, "Her skin was brown and beautiful" (n. pag.). The mention of Guadalupe's attractiveness and complexion is crucial to the story considering racial hierarchies at the time of her appearance. This quiet assertion of her racial identity, whereby her darkness is considered lovely, is a direct contrast to the notion of darkness in the excerpts by Moraga and Anzaldúa that I introduced in Chapter One. Guadalupe is *morena,* with dark hair and eyes, and she is beautiful, while Moraga and Anzaldúa make every attempt to pass as

white. Alcoff's contextualism is relevant to this discussion because it provides a greater context to understanding how race is constructed and reproduced through learned behaviors (182). In the case of La Virgen, her physical resemblance to the Indigenous Peoples helps create her following. She does not appear to a criollo or a mestizo, but rather to an Aztec man. It is her darkness that allows her to be accepted as one of them. However, for Anzaldúa and Moraga, four hundred years later, their skin color is not perceived in the same way. Instead, the two women try to pass using different tactics to keep their skin as light as possible by staying out of the sun for Anzaldúa and by bleaching it for Moraga. Their racial identities are marginalizing them from the dominant white society in which they reside.

The idyllic story of Juan Diego also suggests that, regardless of one's socioeconomic position, one can be destined for great things. The oath of poverty is a common theme that runs throughout Christian teachings whereby those who are poor in the eyes of the world, but rich in faith, will inherit the kingdom of heaven. Again, considering the historical, political, and socioeconomic climate in the sixteenth century, the social status of Juan Diego is not surprising. Guadalupe is therefore a spiritual companion to the poor on both sides of the Mexican-United States border, which is fitting given the economic marginalization of many Chicanas/os. Some people recognize themselves in the story of Guadalupe as Juan Diego. This self-assertion and self-visualization is one of the reasons that La Virgen is such a powerful icon.

Legend and spiritual belief have it that Guadalupe appeared to Juan Diego, asking him to build a shrine dedicated to the goddess Tonantzin.[23] Not wanting to disappoint the beautiful Virgen, Juan Diego makes his way into town where he has to wait in a long line-up to speak with the bishop. Despite his request, the bishop tells him that he needs a sign or some type of proof from the hermosa Señora before any structure can be constructed. Juan Diego is frustrated by his conversation with the bishop. As he makes his way up Tepeyac Hill, he encounters the Lady a second time and says to her, "*Ay, Señora,* I feel embarrassed […]. The bishop asked for a sign from you. Maybe you could ask a rich and important person to talk to the bishop. I am a poor man and have no influence" (n. pag.). Grandma Lupita tells the girls that at first he was turned away from the bishop because he has no proof the existence of the Beautiful Lady. But Juan Diego does not quit at that. This is another powerful teaching for children also echoed in the Nolin trilogy and *Jenneli's Dance.*

The following day, Juan Diego makes his way up the hill, he notices hundreds of beautiful tiny red roses covering the summit. He picks up the roses, gathers them into his *tilma*, and takes them back to the bishop as requested by La Virgen. Grandma Lupita explains, "As the roses tumbled out, their sweet scent floated around the room. Then everyone pointed at Juan Diego's *tilma.* He looked down. There, on this cloak, was the image of *la hermosa Señora*! Everyone saw her and the sun's rays, the stars on her green cloak, and how she floated on a silver moon" (n. pag.). Once again, Mora refers to "her beautiful brown face." The tale of the *tilma* has created lengthy debate between those

[23] Tonantzin is referred to as Mother Earth, and for many people Tonantzin and La Virgen are the same figure (Elenes 45).

believe that it was fabricated, and others who believe that it is an actual miracle (see Eduardo Chávez's *Our Lady of Guadalupe and Saint Juan Diego: The Historical Evidence* (2006)). Either way, she is a transcultural symbol for many and a guiding source of spirituality.

Mora ends the story with Grandma, Terry, and Rosa eating rose cookies, a possible symbol of ingesting this narrative, which, regardless of spiritual belief, is an intimate of partaking in the Chicana/o collective. "Food acts as an indicator of cultural belonging, a claim to identity," contends Suzanne Bost, "passing Mexican food traditions resists assimilation into the dominant culture" (28). The kitchen table is filled with pink paper roses to commemorate Guadalupe. Over the years, it has become the custom in the United States and Mexico to take roses to mass on December 12 to celebrate the goddess. The grandmother thus not only recounts a story, but performs what Weibel-Orlando refers to as the cultural conservator grandparent, as she tells Rosa and her friend about the significance of La Virgen to the Chicana/o community. Our Lady refers to the common past and at the same time points towards a common future as exemplified through storytelling. The account of the transcultural figure, along with the cultural identity markers, performs together to elucidate Chicana/o identity recovery.

I take Guadalupe as the ultimate symbol of Pratt's transculturation. Historically, she is the synthesis of two worlds coming together in the disputed contact zone, and culturally she embodies the ongoing moments when Chicanas/os continue to negotiate their identity. The blue cloak, once a color associated with Aztec royalty, also represents eternity and the divine in the Catholic tradition. According to Anzaldúa, the Lady of

Guadalupe is a "synthesis of old world and new, of religion and culture of the two races in our psyche, the conquerors and the conquered. She is the symbol of […] ethnic identity and of the tolerance for ambiguity that Chicanos/Mexicanos, people of mixed race, people who have Indian blood, people who cross cultures, by necessity possess" (*Borderlands* 53-54). This collision of two worlds makes La Virgen a strong symbol of Chicana/o identity.

Few children's books have been published in the United States that situate the story of La Virgen de Guadalupe within a contemporary context (Dávila 9). Carmen Bernier-Grand's *Our Lady of Guadalupe* (2012), Dianne De Avalle Arce's *Madonas de Mexico* (2000), Tomie de Paola's *The Lady of Guadalupe* (1980) and *Nuestra señora de Guadalupe* (1988), Francisco Serrano's *La virgen de Guadalupe* (1988), Francisco Seranno and Eugenia Guzmán's *Our Lady of Guadalupe* (2011), and Kelly Stuart's *Canción de cuna de la virgen de Guadalupe* (2002) are among the few books that recount the appearance of the Catholic icon. On the one hand, I find it puzzling that more books have not been written on her considering her revered position. On the other hand, given that the United States is largely a Protestant country, and La Virgen is a Catholic symbol, I surmise that perhaps she has been viewed as foreigner amongst the dominant white Anglo Saxon Protestant community.

Mora ends the book with an afterword that provides the historical date when La Virgen de Guadalupe first appeared to Juan Diego, the role of her image in Mexican, Latino/a, and Catholic culture, and details regarding the basilica that is a popular pilgrimage site in the Americas. It is curious that the author includes this information,

since Our Lady of Guadalupe is one of the most popular cultural and religious symbols among Chicanas/os in the United States. Her ubiquitous image adorns private and public spaces, altars, businesses, churches, and murals. The "Author's Notes" in this case are not for Chicana/o readers but for people, like Rosa's friend Terry, who are unfamiliar with Guadalupe as they perform cultural outreach.

Contested Spaces, Healing, and the Curandera

The strong bond between Prietita and la curandera echoes Anzaldúa's picture books *Friends from the Other Side* and *Prietita and the Ghost Woman,* which represent fictive grandparenting in which a Chicana sage takes the young female protagonist under her tutelage to teach her the ways of their common ancestors. While Anzaldúa is best known for her works for adults, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* and *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (1981), the latter of which she edited with Moraga, her picture books teach young Chicanas/os about their culture, traditions, and stories. Anzaldúa's interest in children's books is a continuation of her own curiosity as a young child:

> I was a very studious little kid and used books as my refuge. […] I also had my imagination. I'd make up stories at night for my sister, fantastic stories about the coyotes, this little girl name Prietita (which was my nickname) dogs, and horses. I had those two retreats: the books and the knowledge. I could sit for hours and do all kinds of stuff. I could be the heroine. (*Interviews* 27)

Anzaldúa's picture books incorporate some of the stories that she made up as a young girl but also include the psychological, cultural, historical, political, and territorial dimensions of Chicana/o national identity. Anzaldúa's book provides children with cultural knowledge, role models, and *conocimiento* to understand some of the identity politics of being Chicana/o. The deep bond between Prietita and la curandera reflects this *conocimiento* through traditional healing whereby there is a nuanced understanding that Prietita will someday become a curandera.

Friends from the Other Side is illustrated by Consuelo Méndez and was published by Children's Book Press. The cover features a girl, the protagonist, looking into the distance. The reader must imagine what lies beyond the pictures on the page, both in landscape and the future. Unpromisingly, there is a broken fence, a tree, and a few animals foraging on the ground. This image, which is also reproduced in the book, runs contrary to the "American Dream" often depicted in children's books and film. The English title, featured in bright pink, is larger than the Spanish version in red. There is something unsettling and unwelcoming about the image on the cover, which is later duplicated inside the book. The pretext sets up the text with a brief introduction to the history of crossing the Rio Grande. Anzaldúa recalls, as a young girl growing up close to the Mexican-United States border, all families that she saw traversing the river. "Many of them got wet while crossing the river," she explains, "so some people on this side who didn't like them called them 'wetbacks' or 'mojados'" (*Friends* n. pag.). These derogatory terms have been used since the beginning of the twentieth century to denote people who enter the United States illegally by swimming and wading through the

waters. In the middle of the twentieth century, the United States government created a policy to deport Mexicans who entered the country illegally, and adopted the expression in their "Operation Wetback." I mention this official example to show how for more than a century Chicanas/os have been labeled as lesser humans by the dominant white society.

Friendship, like that found in *Our Beautiful Lady,* is brought forward as a major theme right from the start with Prietita and her new friend, from the Mexican side of the border, named Joaquin. The text is quite vivid, and describes in detail the images that appear within the pages in such a way that the readers can almost anticipate Méndez's drawings. On the very first page, the illustrator provides a very detailed picture of two young children. The girl, dressed in a modest T-shirt and jeans, is talking to a boy on the other side of the fence. The boy's clothes are ripped and worn, and symbolize the rough journey endured to get into the United States. Prietita wonders "why he wore a long sleeve shirt when it was so hot that most boys went shirtless" (Anzaldúa n. pag.). Anzaldúa creates a sense of curiosity through Prietita's words. The boy's garment hides the sores on his arm. Anzaldúa does not elaborate on how he was scarred, only that he has wounds. It is conceivable that he was injured, his body physically marked, by crossing the treacherous border. Prietita remembers la curandera and her healing powers; instead of running away from the boy, she decides to help him and take him to the herb lady. Prietita's resolve to include the boy rather than flee from him becomes a strong lesson for the readers. However, it is not only his clothes that make the young girl interested in the boy, but also that "his Spanish was different from hers" (n. pag.). While kids that look and speak differently might frighten some children, this is not the case for

Prietita. This book promotes tolerance, acceptance, and understanding of others; it celebrates diversity and highlights the fact that people come in all different shapes and sizes and, just as importantly for her young readers, language groups. This picture book is a reminder of childhood innocence and relationships, in which language, color of skin, and socioeconomics circumstances are not considered in the making of friends. Regardless of their differences, Prietita and the newly arrived boy from Mexico are able to form a strong friendship.

Anzaldúa also uses Prietita and Joaquin to highlight how the physical border, despite its close proximity, can create a language barrier. As a child, Prietita is conscious of the linguistic differences between her and Joaquin, but she does not react adversely. Her Chicana Spanish is different from Mexican Spanish; it is a language that has undergone significant negotiation in the contact zone. Anzaldúa provides an understanding of the complex linguistic climate of those living on the American side of the border in her work *Borderlands:* "People who inhabit both realities are forced to live in the interface between the two, forced to become adept at switching modes" (59). In a comparative study of Mexican and Chicana/o Spanish, Claudia Parodi notes that Chicana/o Spanish uses a more significant number of English loan words than does Mexican Spanish (141). Pratt's transculturation is useful to understand Chicana/o Spanish because it is a Spanish that is born out of hybridity with English, and as with cross-pollination, new varieties and dialects are created:

> Words distorted by English are known as Anglicisms or *pochismos.* The *pocho* is an anglicized Mexican or American of Mexican origin who speaks

> Spanish with an accent characteristic of North Americans and who distorts and reconstructs the language according to the influence of English. Tex-Mex, or Spanglish, comes most naturally to me. I may switch back and forth from English to Spanish in the same sentence or in the same word. (Anzaldúa, *Borderlands* 78)

Most of the Spanish words that Anzaldúa employs in the English of her picture books are simple and often cognates for terms of the same epistemological origin. The author's use of interlingual hybridized language carefully replicates the "mode of articulation in the borderland" (Arteaga 36). Code-switching in *Friends from the Other Side* and *Prietita and the Ghost Woman* avail the reader a of transcultural experience.

Moreover, this picture book engages in other serious knowledge transmission. Prietita knows that la curandera is wise because she has seen the woman help others, and knows that she can help Joaquin through the art of *curandismo*, a Chicana/o and Mexican folk healing tradition rooted in rituals, herbs, and remedies. In fact, some cultural scholars, such as Mary Esther Soto Huerta and Mari Riojas-Cortez, would like to see curandismo endorsed within the public realm. They insist, "It should be viewed as a cultural fund of knowledge that can be used to promote literacy and create a reciprocal learning activity between school, child, and parent" (39). At present, folk medicine and medicinal herbs are often embraced by Chicanas/os and Métis, as evidenced in Dorion's *Relatives with Roots,* yet they are not studied at length within the primary and secondary school curricula in either the United States or Canada, which largely still view corporate medicine as a cure-all for ills, despite mounting evidence to the opposite.

In addition to teachings of traditional medicine, this picture book recognizes the complexity of discrimination between people who share a common ancestry. As Prietita and Joaquin make their way to visit la curandera, they run into her cousin Teté and his friends, who are disgusted with the Mexican boy. Teté yells, "'Look at the *mojadito*, look at the wetback!'" (Anzaldúa, *Friends* n. pag.). Another Chicano boy yells, "'Hey, man, why don't you go back to where you belong? We don't want any more *mojados* here'" (n. pag.). The boys even attempt to physically harm Joaquin by picking up rocks to throw at him, but Prietita intervenes. The reader is drawn to the picture, on the left, of a boy pointing at Joaquin, who is standing in front of a fence. Méndez uses the fence to symbolize the United States-Mexican border, and the physical and psychological barriers of prejudice and cultural diminishment that it creates. The illustrator shows how the relationship between Chicanas/os and newly arrived immigrant Mexicans can be harsh. The cruel words and abrasive actions by the boys demonstrate a learned behaviour. As Virginia Henderson points out, "Many of us are amazed to learn that prejudices, biases, and differences are already formed by the age of three, and certainly by the age of four. At this young age, they are able to recognize differences and to know which are positive and negative" (21). It is not shown in this story if the actions of these boys were learned from their parents or if their negative attitude and behaviour are the results of assimilation within the school system or exposure to United States media. Regardless of whether the tense relationship exists because of real and perceived cultural differences, Alcoff's contextualism is useful to analyze the interaction. Historically, constructions of race complicate the relationship between the children despite a common ancestry among

young Chicanos, who trace their lineage back to Mexico, and Joaquin, as a newly arrived person of Mexican ancestry in the United States. Race becomes more than skin color as the boys pointedly distinguish themselves from Joaquin based on his clothing, which reflects his socioeconomic reality, and his language, which marginalizes him as Other, though he is only a newer immigrant. The boys, at such an early age, have thus internalized the racism defining them in the United States. Her kindness towards Joaquin is partially a learned behaviour that she has acquired from la curandera, who welcomes people into her home and does not differentiate between undocumented and documented immigrants.

After Prietita and Joaquin escape from the boys, she offers to walk her new friend home. When they get to the tumbledown shack, Prietita sees that one of the walls is missing. Although today most Chicanas/os live in metropolitan areas, many continue to live in rural settlements (Rochin 70). There is a large number of Chicanas/os who reside in rural "unzoned, unprotected squatter communities of campers, tents, and lean-to shelters; just one step away from being completely homeless" along the Texas-Mexican border (Rochin 70). Méndez's illustration of Joaquin's rundown home provides evidence of these communities, known as *colonias*, and the harsh living conditions therein. Poverty becomes visible through the images.

Joaquin's mother explains that they were forced to flee to the United States to escape poverty in Mexico. There was no other option but to cross the water in hopes of finding a better life for herself and her son. Anzaldúa makes no reference to *polleros*, *coyotes*, or *pateros*, who help smuggle people across the border. It is likely that she

omitted these details because of the audience of the picture books. All the reader knows is that Joaquin and his mother had to cross the river to get to the United States, and thus we can assume that they are not legal immigrants. The United States supposedly offered better paying jobs and an improved standard of living for Joaquin and his mother. But, as Joaquin says to Prietita, "It's the same on this side" (Anzaldúa, *Friends* n. pag.). There is a certain irony here. Amy Cummins explains, "One of the reasons for this continued poverty is that undocumented migrants experience prejudice in the type of work they can obtain and exploitation due to low pay and dangerous working conditions" (65). Anzaldúa explicitly points out that, despite the idea that life is better in the United States, for many Chicanas/os and Mexicans very little changes once they cross the border.

As mentioned in the first chapter, early migration to the United States took place at the beginning of the twentieth century when the violence of the Mexican Revolution forced Mexicans north in search of safety. For decades, the immigration policy in the United States has oscillated between welcoming Mexican immigrants and rejecting them. The immigration of Mexicans has been tightly controlled by self-serving economic policies, which have allowed the United States government to loosen its reins when labour is in demand (St. John 202). The reality of being an undocumented Mexican in the United States is depicted when a neighbour comes running out yelling: "La migra" and "The Border Patrol's coming" (Anzaldúa, *Friends* n. pag.). The scene of the deportation of illegal immigrants painted in the picture book is not new. Over the years, the number of Mexicans apprehended by the Border Patrol has increased significantly. As George Borjas and Laurence Katz point out, "It began to increase soon after the Bracero Program

ended. In 1964, for example, the Border Patrol apprehended only 41.6 thousand Mexican illegal aliens. By 1970, apprehensions were up to 348.2 thousand annually. In 1986, about 1.7 million Mexican illegal aliens were apprehended" (16). The ease and difficulty of crossing the border have varied greatly depending on the political climate in the United States. The harshness of the border is real and should not be downplayed. Tiffany Ana López and Philip Serato suggest that Anzaldúa's work represents a "translation of border philosophy into children's literature" that ultimately urges "empathetic outreach" (208). The book dramatizes the dangers and the hardships caused by the border in a way that the children can understand and appreciate the hardships and courage of their parents and earlier generations.

Méndez uses a double-page spread to show the complexity of the borderlands when la Migra arrives. Prietita, Joaquin, and his mother are fleeing their rundown shack, with a broken chair and tattered clothes hanging on the clothesline, and running towards an open gate, with a beautifully painted house and a well-kept garden. The ajar gate foreshadows the empathy and kindness of the herb lady who seems to anticipate their visit. This is not the first group of people that la curandera has helped hide. This picture book deliberately blurs the lines of legality, and what is considered right and wrong. Prietita and la curandera do not condemn Joaquin and his mother for their illegal status in the United States, nor do they attempt to call in the authorities. They take action out of compassion and empathy towards the boy and his mother. Anzaldúa is not the only children's book writer to examine the subject of illegal immigrants; the protagonist's mother, in Juan Felipe Herrera's *Super Cilantro Girl,* who is detained at the border,

comes face to face with the harsh reality of not having adequate papers to remain in the United States. Pablo Ramirez looks at the "borderland's ethical stance" in which "sympathy abolishes distinctions between legal and undocumented residents" (51). This idea is complicated because children's literature by nature is didactic. As a genre, it has been used to educate children about what is supposedly correct and incorrect. At the same time, Chicana/o children's books perform a greater purpose, and that is to create a body of work that questions the morality of laws that have been created to control a population deemed sometimes necessary to the American nation's ongoing economic shuffle and at other times alien or even sub-human.

The community performs its own type of counter-surveillance, as Prietita and the herb woman watch the border patrol cruise through the neighbourhood. La Migra stops and asks, "Does anyone know of any illegals living in this area?" (Anzaldúa, *Friends* n. pag.). Anzaldúa makes direct reference to the "Chicano *migra.*" It is interesting that she singles him out as the "Chicano" officer rather than as just a border patrolman. The man is dually defined by his Chicano identity and his employment, which makes him find and expel undocumented Mexicans. It is perhaps a corrosive comment on the American "melting pot" ideology, unusual in a children's book, that his professional identity as la migra forces him to turn in people who share the same ancestral roots and who are only looking for the "better life" that he has allegedly found. There is another political but also comical moment between la migra and the other Chicanas/os when a woman yells, "Yes, I saw some over" there (n. pag.), and points to the gringo side of town. As Tey Diana Rebolledo suggests, "This Chicano perspective that the Americans are the illegals

is understood by all, even the Chicano border patrolman" ("Prietita" 281). This exchange between the Chicana and the patrol man alludes to the loss of Mexican lands and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in the late nineteenth century.

After la migra leaves, Joaquin and his mother come out of la curandera's bedroom, where they were hiding; her room is adorned with pictures of La Virgen de Guadalupe, San José el Santo, candles, skulls, and snakes—all symbols of the community of origin. La curandera offers them some peppermint tea to calm their nerves, a common cure-all. Her kitchen is filled with dried flowers and plants, a sundial, and a large gas stove; and on the top of the doorframe is written "Dios bendiga este hogar"[24] as a plea to God for continual blessing. Méndez's illustrations of the home of the herb lady, in which the two find refuge, offer insight into the shared Chicana/o and Mexican traditions. Once they finish drinking the tea, the herb woman says to Prietita, "I'm going to show you how to prepare these herbs in a paste you can use to heal Joaquin's arms. It's time for you to learn. You are ready now'" (Anzaldúa, *Friends* n. pag.). The book again performs its transmission of cultural knowledge, as it tells and teaches about telling and teaching. We see the herb woman cupping some hibiscus flowers, Prietita kneeled close to the maguey plant, and Joaquin crouched low picking some leaves of an unknown plant. Anzaldúa ends the book with the herb woman passing her wisdom onto the next generation to signify the importance of cultural transmission.

Prietita's bravery demonstrates to the herb lady that she is ready to become her apprentice. It is a rite of passage similar to that of the unnamed protagonist in *Relatives*

[24] The English translation is: God bless this home.

with Roots. The act of helping an undocumented boy and his mother signifies to the Chicana tradition keeper that her protégé is perceptive and discerning not only to learn about traditional healing but also about cultural agency. As Soto Huerta and Riojas-Cortez contend, "Possessing knowledge of medicinal herbs has historically contributed to the funds of knowledge of the Mexican-American community. Within the Mexican-American culture, the medicinal effects of herbs are valued knowledge that is transmitted through the generations" (39). Prietita is ready to learn from the herb lady so that one day she will be able to pass along their traditional knowledge onto the next generation, and defend and protect the rights of immigrants. As Seyla Benhabib observes, "Culture is valuable [...] because it enables a meaningful range of choices in the conduct of our lives, and because it forms the horizon against which we form a life plan in the first place" (407). The young girl has gained a deeper sense of purpose in her life from her deep bond with la curandera, and sacred knowledge required for cultural survival.

Reimagining La Llorona

Prietita and the Ghost Woman, which is Anzaldúa's second children's book, was illustrated by Maya Christina Gonzalez and published by Children's Book Press. The colorful pictures show the special bond between Prietita, la curandera, and the animals that she meets along the way, and of course La Llorona. The text and images come together to tell the reader about two culturally affirming bonds in this story: Prietita and la curandera, and Prietita and La Llorona. La curandera passes her wisdom on to Prietita not only to help the young girl save her mother, but also to enable her to learn how to heal the next generation. By imparting her wisdom to Prietita, she is passing along

a tradition and heritage of healing. As Genny Ballard writes, "Prietita learns from the curandera so that she can save her mother and perhaps save her culture" (176). Both la curandera and La Llorona represent the respected Chicana abuela. The English text uses Spanish code-switching to introduce the reader to Spanish words such as *curandera, remedio, ruda, mijita, doña, La Llorona, venadita, salamandra, palomita, jaguarundi, luciérnagas*, and *señora*. Cultural, historical, psychological, and territorial elements of nation-building are at the forefront of the book as Prietita departs on a perilous journey and continues to learn about healing powers from la curandera. Gonzalez's images are so detailed that the reader can interpret the story even without the written word, and comes to understand the complexities of transculturation.

There are many different versions to the myth of La Llorona. Some parents use the story to warn their children to be careful when they walk alone because La Llorona might come and take them away. Another legend associates her with a woman named Maria, who once found out that her husband was cheating on her. That night, full of rage, Maria went to the river and drowned her children, then took her own life. She is known to kidnap children that look like hers, and often appears at night near bodies of water such as rivers, lakes, or oceans. Domino Pérez notes how La Llorona is "known for her mutable manifestations, which range from ghostly hag to beautiful seductress, a number of cultural productions emphasize the latter, thus reinforcing her position as a sexual object and particular threat to men" (25). The sexualization of La Llorona has been equally deployed to promote and maintain patriarchy within the Chicana/o nation. However, Chicana feminists have more recently adopted La Llorona as a symbol of

agency. As Ana Carbonell points out, "[She] emerges as both a figure of maternal betrayal and maternal resistance. While she is most often imagined as a destructive figure, contemporary Chicana writers […] have propagated and vitalized the set of tales about maternal resistance" (54). In her book Anzaldúa subverts some of the traditional narrative about La Llorona, and reconfigures her as a fictive grandmother who helps Prietita find her way. This rediscovery of cultural potential is what Stuart Hall refers to as "[h]idden histories." Hall urges us to refrain from neglecting "the act of imaginative rediscovery" ("Cultural Identity" 224). *Prietita and the Ghost Woman,* like *Our Beautiful Lady, Relatives with Roots,* and *Call of the Fiddle,* evokes nostalgia as an imaginative expression that revisits the collective past.

The interconnectedness of words and images comes together as a creative process, which leads to social activism as La Llorona is reimagined visually and textually. Gonzalez shows a woman with long silver and white hair, dressed in white, with a yellow aura leading a young girl with long black hair dressed in every day t-shirt and jeans who is holding a plant in her hands. They are standing in a field with tall bush and mesquite. There is a barbed wire fence that separates them from the river as a constant reminder of the border. The title appears in the top right hand corner, first in English and then in Spanish. From the title, we assume that the older woman is La Llorona and the girl is Prietita, and that the story will likely be about their relationship. The image on the front is also repeated within the text, and is one of the most powerful illustrations created by Gonzalez because it captures the soft, gentle, guiding, and grandmotherly aspects of La Llorona often overlooked in preceding depictions. Anzaldúa and Gonzalez, then, both

refresh and alter the legend to carry new cultural knowledge forward from ancient narratives: the importance of the grandmother as teacher and cultural transmitter and the importance of telling and retelling as the generations require.

Prietita and the Ghost Woman moves quickly from domestic peace to crisis, demonstrating traditional herbal knowledge's special ability to save lives. Prietita is working in la curandera's garden when her sister Miranda abruptly interrupts her and says to Prietita, "Can you ask *la* curandera to help?" (n. pag.). As the apprentice, Prietita is the link to the curandera. In this book, la curandera is only referred to as "la curandera" or "the healer," whereas in *Friends from the Other Side* Anzaldúa uses the "herb lady" as a synonym for curandera. This distinction denotes the different powers associated with curandismo. In *Prietita and the Ghost Woman* the role of la curandera is to teach Prietita how to heal her mother, and save her life; she is a *herbalista*, healer, and *espiritualista*.

I take Gonzalez's detailed depiction of the healing figure to represent the high costs of wisdom. This authenticity is especially central in a marginal culture constantly struggling for identity and knowledge against the hegemony of a vastly dominant culture. The artist draws la curandera with long brown hair but grey highlights, matching her vitality of cultural knowledge with increasing vulnerability. She is dressed in a vibrant red dress, and silver round earrings adorn her ears. However, the lines on her face, which Gonzales draws, show age and with it the risk of disappearing knowledge. It is almost as if every crease and fold on her face symbolizes her infinite wisdom not only about plants but also about life in general, life in the contact zone.

When Prietita asks la curandera for assistance, the older woman immediately

complies. Anzaldúa uses space/place to subvert traditional representations of female space like the kitchen. Edna Acosta-Belén writes how, over the years, the kitchen has shifted from a location that confined women to, currently, a place that empowers women. "Traditionally a site of confinement and domesticity for women," she goes on to say, the kitchen "has been turned upside down by feminist writers and critics alike, as a site where women also have the potential to assert their individuality, put together their own concoctions, and subvert their ascribed domestic roles through the power of creativity and imagination" (Acosta-Belén i). The kitchen becomes a learning pharmacy, or a lab that allows Prietita to learn about traditional healing. However, soon after they begin making the remedy they realize that they are missing the key ingredient: the rue.

The only place that la curandera knows to find the plant is on King Ranch—a symbol of the highly contested historical contact zone. As Rebolledo notes, "King Ranch was one part of a Mexican land grant, stolen from Mexicans and legitimized after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo" (282). King Ranch was an immense piece of land in Texas owned by rancher Richard King. Ranger groups were set-up to patrol the large ranches in Texas and Arizona. Incidentally many Rangers took their role too far and terrorized Chicanas/os (n. pag. *Border Bandits*). Their hope was to drive out the Chicana/o population. La curandera sketches out the rue on a sheet of paper for Prietita but tells her that it is not safe to go looking for the plant. This scene is a moment of knowledge about knowledge. La curandera warns Prietita of the dangers in the area, stressing that they "shoot trespassers" (Anzaldúa, *Prietita* n. pag.). Despite the warnings, Prietita takes on the challenge, which could also be viewed as an act of disobedience. At the same time,

she is a strong, courageous, and tenacious young girl, and the exact role model that Chicanas require because she seeks to control her own destiny.

The book's focus on female characters and female agency is central to representing Chicanas' as strong cultural contributors to the nation. King Ranch, once a barren land, is a reminder of how land was taken from Mexico. Prietita climbs through the barbed wire fence because she is determined to find the rue no matter what the cost; it could mean the difference between life and death for her mother. By squeezing through the fence, Prietita is breaking the rules, trespassing, and ignoring significant boundaries that have been arbitrarily created. Once inside King Ranch, Prietita stays close to the fence at first. But as she becomes more confident, she makes her way deeper into the forest (n. pag.), standing amidst long grass, cacti, and saguaros. Gonzalez draws Prietita with her hair pulled back, ears showing, to show that she is listening to something. Prietita thinks she hears the sound of a woman crying. Instantly, she recalls the story of La Llorona: "Her grandmother said that *La Llorona* appeared at night by the rivers or lagoons, crying for her lost children and looking for other children to steal" (n. pag.). She is scared because she is unaware of other retellings of La Llorona, as a helper and a guide, but she continues on her way, determined to locate the plant.

Anzaldúa uses repetition of story lines as a literary device to strengthen the plot. As Prietita attempts to find her way out of the bush, she encounters different animals. She asks each of them if they have seen the rue. First, she sees a deer, and asks her if she has seen the plant. Prietita thinks she hears the deer tell her to follow her, but soon Prietita is separated from the animal when she gets caught in huisache filled with thorns—a

reminder of the fierce local environment. Landscape becomes symbolic. Prietita fights against the mesquite, prickly pear, and dense bushes. The terrain is a visible reminder of the physical and emotional complexities that are played out in the borderlands. When she looks up, she sees a salamander. Anzaldúa writes, "[Prietita] knew from her nature books that salamanders have no voice" (n. pag.). Despite this, she asks the tiny reptile for some help. The salamander leads the girl to a dove sitting in a mesquite tree. As Prietita begs the dove to show her the way out of the forest, it flies away. She begins to cry. Prietita is scared and sad, but somewhere she finds the strength to persevere for her mother's sake. Prietita climbs a tree to get a better look at the lay of the land and comes face to face with a jaguar: "He looks like the pictures she had seen of the jaguars in ancient Mexico. She dropped to the ground and followed him. But soon he, too, was gone" (n. pag.). The jaguar, an enduring symbol of Mexico, has now become a rare sight in North America. "By including Mesoamerican imagery in her books and personal art," Mira Reisberg observes, "[Gonzalez] crosses the borders of time and space to show ongoing relationships/influences/experiences of heritage and culture, perhaps questioning the dimensions of time, which may be occurring simultaneously in parallel dimensions" (58). Gonzalez makes the cultural connection between a proud past and a fragile present by including the black jaguar and other Mesoamerican animal figures. Anzaldúa's repetitive text, whereby different animals provide guidance, allows the reader to anticipate what will happen next. This textual device is commonly used in children's texts, including the Métis picture book *Flour Sack Flora*, which I examined in the previous chapter, to create curiosity and helps the emergent reader.

As the night gets longer and longer, Prietita becomes more worried that she might never find her way out of the forest. Her fear is exacerbated when she remembers what la curandera told her about the fate of trespassers. When she sees lights, she is terrified. For some readers, the apparent danger of the light might go unnoticed. The light is a reminder of the border patrols and their duties to find and export undocumented migrants. Prietita is Chicana and a legal citizen of the United States, but without any supporting documentation, she could encounter real legal trouble, even deportation. The lights become a symbol of both the unknown and the hegemonic State apparatus. At the same time, they also represent the realities of fear in the world outside a children's picture book. It is not until Prietita is able to identify the lights that she can calm down. They are not the glow of the border police, but rather the beams of fireflies. The seasonal insects are a welcomed sight in comparison to the fearful border patrol as they guide Prietita to La Llorona.

Cultural knowledge is transmitted through the relationship that Prietita forms with La Llorona. As Prietita wanders farther into the woods, she comes to a river where she hears a faint cry, different from that of the dove; it sounds like a woman: "She wanted to run away, but she forced herself to walk toward the sound" (Anzaldúa, *Prietita* n. pag.). As she makes her way towards the sound, "she [sees] a dark woman dressed in white" coming out from behind the trees (n. pag.). Gonzalez draws a terrified Prietita, on the far left corner of the page, staring at the dark woman dressed in a long white and yellow gown, hidden by branches and leaves in the top right hand corner of the page. The river separates the two women. Gonzalez places the two women as far apart as they can be on

the page to demonstrate the angst of Prietita. Despite the fear, instilled by stories that she has heard, Prietita walks towards the woman—a brave act. On the following page, Anzaldúa writes, "In a trembling voice, Prietita called out to the ghost woman. 'Please, Señora, can you help me find some rue?'" (n. pag.). Gonzalez shows a confident young girl kneeling on the ground, and La Llorona flying above, guiding Prietita. La Llorona presents Prietita with the rue. The girl breaks off a few branches and thanks the ghost woman. In the last picture of Prietita and La Llorona, Gonzalez paints Prietita with the rue in hand and La Llorona with her arms around the young girl leading her to safer grounds. There is a bright yellow aura surrounding the ghost woman as they make their way through the fields to the barbed-wire fence. La Llorona represents a sort of fictive grandparenting as she guides Prietita out of the forest. Anzaldúa uses this bond to reimagine the role of La Llorona within the Chicana/o community as a helper.

As Prietita crosses the fence, she sees her sister Miranda, her cousin, la curandera, and two other people, who have been looking for her. Gonzalez draws the warm embrace between Prietita and her sister, and the look of relief on their faces. Prietita explains, "A ghost woman in white was my guide" (n. pag.). Her cousin Teté is astounded saying, "La Llorona. […] But everyone knows she takes children away. She doesn't bring them back" (n. pag.). Anzaldúa uses the voice of la curandera to envision a new future for La Llorona: "Perhaps she is not what others think she is" (n. pag.). This simple yet important sentence references the many ways that others have constructed La Llorona's identity. Prietita rejects the assumptions and stereotypes associated with the Ghost Woman, and Anzaldúa encourages readers to do the same.

The story ends with Prietita giving la curandera the rue branches. There is a new self-assurance to Prietita, and even her younger sister looks up to her. La curandera is pleased with Prietita, almost as if she knows that she has found someone to carry on her traditions. She says to the girl, "Tomorrow, I'll show you how to prepare the healing *remedio* for your mother. […] I am very proud of you. You have grown up this night" (n. pag.). As Ballard observes, this knowledge in Latina/o children's literature creates a rite of passage for young female protagonists. Prietita becomes empowered through her relationship with herbs and the mentorship of la curandera (Ballard 168). Prietita learns self-confidence as a Chicana through the connection that she forms with la curandera, who imparts traditional wisdom about remedies and herbal medicine, and comes to recognize that there is more to La Llorona than the stories that she has heard. Anzaldúa's book invokes what Jaime Campbell Naidoo and Sara Park Dehlen refer to as "cultural competence" because it teaches the Chicana/o reader about their culture (xiv). There is a strong nation-building quality to this children's book as it marks Chicana/o self-articulation as print culture and provides a child-friendly version to La Llorona.

Anzaldúa's re-telling and reclamation of a once vilified Ghost Woman reconfirms the crucial bond between this generation and the next generation, and illuminates how Chicana/o authors use picture books to envision a future mentor for one of their deeply regarded ancestral mothers (Hartley 150). I borrow from Mora's *Nepantla: Essays from the Land in the Middle,* which compares the Chicana writer to the curandera, to draw Chicana/o writers in not only creating a Chicana/o literary legacy but also a counter literary response:

> [The] Chicana writer seeks to heal cultural wounds of historical neglect by providing opportunities to remember the past, to share and ease bitterness, to describe what has been viewed as unworthy of description, to cure by incantations and rhythms, by listening with her entire being and responding. She then gathers the tales and myths, weaves them together, and if lucky, casts spells. (131)

This project affirms that Chicana authors and illustrators use their words and images to create self-validating picture books as tools for recovery, assertion, and transmission.

Never Forget Your Roots

My Diary from Here to There is written by Amada Irma Pérez, illustrated by Maya Christina Gonzalez, and published by Children's Book Press; it also received the Pura Belpré Honor Book Award in 2004. The Pura Belpré Award, established in 1996, is named after Pura Belpré, the first Latina librarian at the New York Public Library. Pérez's book is made up of beautifully painted pictures accompanied by English and Spanish text. Pérez alternates between beginning each page with the English and Spanish versions of the story. There is no preference given to one language over the other. I analyze this picture book because of its articulation of the complex dynamics of transculturation, immigration, diaspora, borderlands, and home. I have selected it because it shows how the physical separation of granddaughter and grandmother cannot destroy their strong emotional and cultural bond. In this text, Pérez complicates the notion of cultural identity and the complexity of citizenship, as Amada and her family leave Mexico for a new life in the United States.

In addition to this picture book, Gonzalez and Pérez have collaborated on two other works: *My Very Own Room/Mi propio cuartito* (2000), which won numerous awards, including the prestigious Tomas Rivera Children's Book Award (2000), and *Nana's Big Surprise/Nana, Que Sorpresa!* (2007). After teaching for twenty-five years, Pérez left her career to pursue writing. Today, she continues to be a strong advocate for learning. Gonzalez has illustrated other books by Chicanos/as, such as Anzaldúa's *Prietita*; Francisco Alarcón's *Laughing Tomatoes and Other Spring Poems* (1997), recipient of the Pura Belpré Honor Award and the National Parenting Publications Gold Medal Award; *From the Bellybutton of the Moon and other Summer Poems* (1998); *Angels Ride Bikes and Other Fall Poems* (1999); *Iguanas in the Snow and Other Winter Poems* (2001); and *Animal Poems of the Iguazú* (2008). She has also written and illustrated *My Colors, My World/Mis Colores, Mi Mundo* (2007), winner of the Pura Belpré Honor Award (2007), and *I Know the River Loves Me* (2009). Gonzalez was born in Lancaster, California, in the Mojave Desert. In the following passage she details what it was like growing up as a Chicana in a predominantly white world where she could never find a book where the protagonist looked like her:

> I often found myself drawing my image onto the blank pages in the backs of books, seemingly because I needed some place to draw. […] As a grown-up and an artist, I have worked to reconcile the effects of not seeing myself reflected in the "real world" as a child. […] I now fill all the pages with my own paintings and words, exactly where long ago and far away I intuited that I belonged, fully reflected page upon page. Doing this over and over has

> changed me. […] I believe every child needs to hold a book in their hands that feels true... a book to find themselves, their face...a book in which to land and rest and then to dream. ("I Am All" 1-2)

Gonzalez's images allow Chicana/o children the opportunity to see themselves reflected in the books that they read. She paints the characters in different shapes and sizes, with darker and lighter complexions. While Chicanas/os share a certain cultural identity, there is no one-way to look Chicana/o. Gonzalez's illustrations act as a counter-balance and form of cultural determination in contrast to the negative and ascent images of Chicanas/os in picture books.

Throughout *My Diary from Here to There* the image of a butterfly is present as a sign of change and transformation. Gonzalez draws the butterfly on almost every page to symbolize moving through different life cycles and rebirth. "The monarch butterfly represents the immigration of fragile souls from their native home in Mexico across the U.S. border to places unknown," notes Jamie Naidoo. "Yet, just like the monarch, many Mexican people will return to their country for periods of rejuvenation and growth" (31). The butterfly in the book is reminiscent of the annual Monarch migration, during which millions of butterflies make their way from Canada and the United States to Michoacan, Mexico. However, unlike the open skies that welcome the butterflies, the border crossing in *My Diary for Here to There* is not as inviting with its tall unwelcoming and dangerous barbed wire fences. Pérez dedicates the book to her family and "To Maya and Dana for their many hours of work and dedication and for believing that my immigrant story is one that needed to be told" (*My Diary* n. pag.). The story is based on Pérez's family's journey

from Mexico to the United States: "When I was only five years old […] we left Juárez behind, stayed with my Nana in Mexicali, waited breathlessly for my father's letters—was exciting, but also painful. I didn't know then that I, like many other economic and political refugees, could survive in a completely new place" (Pérez n. pag.). The author engages with historical events and actual places. By telling her story, Pérez gives a voice to other children who have crossed the Mexican border into the United States, and she validates that this is a story worth telling, publishing, and hearing.

The cover jacket of the book is divided into two different scenes. On the front, a young girl holds her diary tightly in her arms as she watches a blue car packed to the gunnel drive through the desert at night. The tall green saguaros line the sides of the road. On the back cover there is a map of the Southwestern United States and Northwestern Mexico. There is a dotted line that plots out the route from Ciudad Juárez through Mexicali, Tijuana, San Ysidro, Los Angeles, El Monte, and Delano. The bold black line that separates the United States from Mexico is a visible reminder of the outcome of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. At the same time, the line acts, like many official representations of space, as a tidy fabrication of lies because it does not express complex and cruel reality of the border, and the unstable encounters present in the contact zone.

The story begins with the protagonist, Amada, hiding under the covers writing in her journal not in English but Spanish: "Sé que ya debería estar dormida pero no me importa"[25] (Pérez n. pag.). The girl is concerned about a conversation that she overheard between her parents proposing a move to the United States. She is worried: "They were

[25] This translates into English as "I know that I should be sleeping, but I do not care."

talking about leaving our little house in Juárez, Mexico, where we've lived our whole lives, and moving to Los Angeles in the United States" (3). Leaving her home is terrifying, and is exacerbated by the thought of going to a new country with different customs and even a new language. Amada spends the night in a state of worry. The next morning Mamá calls the family together to inform them that Papá has lost his job. The family has mixed emotions about emigrating. While the boys are excited about the possibilities of new life in El Paso and the chance to live out the "American Dream," the young girl does not feel the same. Pérez uses these sentiments to point out that everyone has different feelings about change, and offers insight into the reality of leaving one's home in search of a better life. Amada confides her deep sadness to her friend Michi. The two girls commemorate the past, and promise to never forget each other. Michi also tells Amada how lucky she is that all of her family, Amada's parents and brothers, is going to the United States with all of her family members. Michi is not as fortunate. Some of her family lives with her in Mexico, while other members live on the other side of the border. Smadar Lavie and Ted Swedenburg argue that "[d]iasporic populations frequently occupy no singular cultural space but are enmeshed in circuits of social, economic, and cultural ties encompassing both the mother country and the country of settlement" (14). The interaction between Michi and Amada reveals the harsh truth of migration and split households, as families negotiate displacement, diaspora, and transnationalism.

As the family packs up, Mamá and Papá explain that they can only take what fits in the car. Gonzalez's detailed picture of the family, moving boxes with Spanish words indicating the contents: *cocina, frazadas, libros, fotos,* and even *gato*. Kitchen items and

blankets are symbolic of what will sustain the family, and the books and the photographs are a reminder of what the family is leaving behind. The subtle reference to the cat is used for comedic purposes considering that emotional and mental toll of relocating. As they fill the boxes with the content of their lives, Papá pulls Amada aside in attempt to address her fears: "Amada, *m'ija,* I can see how worried you've been. Don't be scared. Everything will be all right" (11). Papá explains to Amada that when he was a young boy, his parents moved from Arizona to Mexico. I find it curious that Pérez does not elaborate on why his family left the United States. In representing this original migration, the author indirectly refers to them as a diasporic family with dual loyalties and ties. Terms such as immigrant, migrant, and citizen are further complicated in this picture book when we consider the history of the Southwestern United States.

The term diaspora has often been associated with forced dispersion, and more specifically the exodus of Jewish people from their traditional homelands (see Safran). It usually presupposes a significant geographical separation and an unlikely return. However, in the current global context, diaspora is associated with terms like border, *frontera,* and displacement, and I employ the term to analyze the relationship between Amada's family in Mexico and later in the United States. I focus on diaspora as described by James Clifford, who insists, "The language of diaspora is increasingly invoked by displaced peoples who feel (maintain, revive, invent) a connection with a prior home. This sense of connection must be strong enough to resist the erasure through the normalizing process of forgetting, assimilating, and distancing" (310). Clifford's main argument is useful in analyzing *My Diary from Here to There* because it demonstrates the

deep ties between Mexicans and Chicanas/os. In the case of Papá, it could be speculated that his parents returned to their home in Mexico after the family's financial needs were met, or that they were forced out of the United States. Regardless of the motive, this book complicates the notion of homeland and hostland because Papá is Chicano, whereas his parents and children are Mexican.

The physiological and cultural differences created by the geographical marking of the border is ever-present in Pérez's work. After the family departs, Gonzalez draws them huddled in the blue car: five in the back and Mamá, Papá, and one of Amada's brothers in the front. "We drove right along the border, across from New Mexico and Arizona. Mexico and the U.S. are two different countries," says Amada, "but they look exactly the same on both sides of the border, with giant saguaros pointing up at the pink-orange sky and enormous clouds" (Pérez 13). The girl seems surprised at the similarities between the two countries. The author does not expand on historical, political, and cultural differences between the two nations but keeps the texts focussed on the physical landscape between northern Mexico and south-western United States, which is relatively identical. The next morning, Papá leaves for Los Angeles. Gonzales shows Mamá and Nana looking on as the blue car leaves down a winding road. There is a large barbed wire fence with spiral spikes on the top left-hand corner of the page. Gonzalez draws a definitive border. Tall steel barriers are used for reinforcement. The harsh physical manifestation of the actual dividing lines between the United States and Mexico is a stark contrast to the previous page on which there appeared to be no differences between the two countries.

The border is revisited in *My Diary from Here to There.* But it is more than a physical barrier that separates Chicanas/os from their families in Mexico; many Chicana/o writers have alluded to the difficulty of crossing the border, both physical and emotional. Amada's grandmother reminds the family: "Papá is a U.S. citizen, so he won't have a problem getting 'green cards' from the U.S. government" (Pérez 17). Again, the author makes a direct reference to the diaspora and documented migration. The distinction between documented and undocumented immigrants is later revisited when Amada, her mother, and brothers cross the border to be with their father. Gonzalez creates a border crossing with dozens of people of different ages, sizes, hair colours, and skin colours. The physical differences as depicted in Gonzalez's images provide insight into an actual border crossing as a transcultural space. Pérez uses simple language to explain the chaos of crossing the border in a way that the child reader can understand. The harsh reality of the contrast between documented and undocumented immigrants is different in *My Diary from Here to There* compared to *Friends from the Other Side*. Amada notes in her journal, "One woman and her children got kicked off the bus when the immigration patrol boarded to check everyone's papers. Mamá held Mario and our green cards close to her heart" (27). This explicit representation of legal realities in the contact zone allows children to critically engage with a topic that can be difficult to understand. As Gail Murray suggests, "children are neither innocent nor sinful. They should not be protected from the reality because they can develop the ego strength to overcome alienation and pain" (194). For children who have experienced crossing the border, this book provides a picture of the events that often transpire.

Most significantly, this picture book becomes explicitly political—more so than the others examined here—by representing the dangerous struggle for rights and survival in the contact zone's oppressed world of migrant labour. After a few weeks, Amada and her family receive a letter from Papá. He explains that he has found a job in the fields of Delano, California, picking grapes and strawberries. The notes states, "There is a man here in the fields named Cesar Chavez, who speaks of unions, strikes, and boycotts. These new words hold the hope of better conditions for us farmworkers" (19), thus introducing the reader to the heroic Chicano farm worker and labour activist.

In 1962, Chávez organized the National Farm Workers Association in Delano. His efforts were devoted to farm worker self-determination. Through strikes, boycotts, pilgrimages, fasts, and protests, Chávez used his deep faith and prayer to achieve his goal of drawing attention to the injustices faced by many of the workers. Along with other union leaders like Delores Huerta and Jessie de la Cruz, Chávez sought to affirm the rights of the farm workers regardless of gender. As Alaniz and Cornish explain, "It was difficult for male chauvinists to deny leadership to women because Chicana and Mexicana farmworkers labored side by side with the men in the fields" (153). Throughout the Unites States, Chicana/o, and Mexican farm workers were drawing attention to their plight.[26]

The authors and illustrator dedicate a two-page spread with large clusters of grapes, a life source crop for many migrant farm workers, to pay tribute to the Chicano

[26] Scott A. Beck's "Children of Migrant Farmworkers in Picture Storybooks: Reality, Romanticism, and Representation" urges educators to avoid using single book representations of the migrant experience. His work is an in-depth analysis and offers an exhaustive list of twenty-books the Mexican farmworker reality.

champion of rights and elicits further investigation into this significant period of Chicana/o history. As Jamie Naidoo maintains, "This fruit is often used to represent Mexican immigrants who work as *campesinos* (farm workers) in the fields of California" (31). The large bunches of grapes suggest the many sacrifices that Chicanas/os have endured over the centuries. These graphic codes and intertextual references point back to a specific period in Chicana/o history that was instrumental in nation-building, and engage a level of cultural politics and identity politics not so overtly seen in mainstream children's picture books.

Amada details all of her adventures, from here to there, in her diary. She writes about her fears of leaving Mexico, packing, visiting with her grandmother, and arriving at their final destination. The references to writing and keeping a diary denote the importance of sharing and telling one's story, and at the same time validate the significance of print culture in nation-building. Regarding the reunion with her grandmother, Amada notes that they "welcomed us with a feast of *tamales,* beans, *pan dulce,* and hot chocolate with cinnamon sticks" (Pérez 14). "Food is not only something edible and sustaining," Meredith E. Abarca and Nieves Pascual Soler explain, "it is also a cultural object about which information can be gathered from diverse fields" (1). The diary becomes a record of her family's cultural identity as they share traditional foods. Tamales have their early roots in Mexico and Central America in 5,000 BCE (Ballard 175). In this picture book, the tamales become objects that directly link the reader to history and culture. Sharing traditional food is detailed in most of the Chicana/o and Métis books in this project.

Perhaps the most defining moment in Perez's book takes place the night before Amada and her family leave for Los Angeles as Nana pulls her granddaughter aside to give her a *consejo.* Nana displays what Weibel-Orlando refers to as cultural conservator grandparenting. The geographical distance that has always separated them, will soon be complicated by the psychological, cultural, and linguistic barriers created by crossing the border. Nana says to Amada: "Never forget who you are and where you are from. Keep your language and your culture alive in your diary and in your heart" (23). Nana wants to remind Amada that in order to retain her cultural history, as well as her personal history, she must write it down. Story-telling, or in this case diarizing, becomes a crucial element for cultural transmission as well as cultural assertion. Nana wants to reinforce the importance of remembering their shared language. She encourages her granddaughter to keep her Spanish alive so that the two of them will be able to communicate. These words insinuate that language and culture are uniquely intertwined. Nana knows that by going to the United States, Amada will become Chicana, but she does not want her granddaughter to forget what it means to be Mexicana. Her identity as a Chicana cannot be separated from *Mexicanidad.* In *My Diary from Here to There* the crucial connection between this generation and the next in relation to transcultural Chicana identity is less overt than in the other books, as the title of displacement indicates. Amada takes the counsel that she receives from Nana and keeps their cultural connection close to her heart and mind. The writer implies that as a Chicana the young protagonist will never forget about her Mexican identity because the history and culture are intricately woven together. Her transcultural Chicana identity is a product of the contact zone.

Once the entire family is united again, Amada feels joy. She writes back to Michi in Mexicali about her new experiences, but also says, "I think about home—Mexico" (Pérez 29). Amada complexly occupies two spaces now: she will always feel a deep connection to her homeland and her family who still reside in Mexico, especially her Nana, even as she becomes Chicana. Through the diary that she received from her grandmother, Amada expresses her fears, excitement, and deepest thoughts. Acts of writing sustain her in this picture book, just as the cultural practice of literature sustains her minority group's larger identity. In the end, it is implied that Amada has a greater understanding of the sacrifices that her father has made for his family. Her family has journeyed long and far to make a better life for themselves. Amada embraces the new challenges of life in the United States, and at the same time, makes a promise to honour her grandmother's consejo and never forget her Mexican identity even as she becomes Chicana. It is even implied that she will become a Chicana writer like the author of the picture book, and share her story with the next generation.

Conclusion

My analysis of Chicana/o picture books has uncovered some important contextual similarities that are played out in the physical representations of the characters, the spaces and places they occupy, and the cultural markers that these texts reproduce. The historical transcultural convergences of the contact zone can be observed in all of the texts, and Pratt's transculturation proves useful when comparing the role of history in retaining and refashioning Chicana/o identity. Pratt's contact zone emerges from the formation of an imagined cultural identity that recognized the fluidity of cultural convergences. The

contested contact zone is exemplified in the Chicana/o stories as continual moments of negotiation and asymmetrical relations. The contact zone emphasizes a sense of belonging to a given period in history, a particular event, or a cross-cultural moment that is shaped by a transcultural experience such as Tepeyac in *Our Lady of Guadalupe,* King Ranch in *Prietita and the Ghost Woman,* the Rio Grande in *Friends from the Other Side,* and the multiple border cities in *My Diary from Here to There.* These actual events, locations, and periods evolve from situations when citizens define themselves. The authors and illustrators also work together to trace back their roots to a shared lineage to reclaim religious, mythical, and historical figures like La Virgen, La Llorona, and César Chávez. They provide Chicana/o children with the opportunity to identify with events and people that have informed the making of their cultural identity. These stories dramatize the internal and external conflicts that the Chicana protagonists experience owing to their transcultural identities. The moments of transcultural consciousness are constructed and re-constructed in the contact zone. These picture books serve as literary contact zones as the heroines negotiate what it means to be a transcultural person living in the United States. Pratt's contact zone, represented in these literary and visual productions, allows transcultural identities to imagine and re-define themselves.

All the Chicana authors in this project use Spanish as a means to write back. Through Spanish code-switching and side-by-side translations, the reader can engage with Spanish. For many, Spanish is the Indigenous language of Chicanas/os. Spanish, while obviously not an Indigenous language, has become one of and sometimes the only language for Indigenous Peoples in the Americas (Riegelhaupt et al. 129). Despite the

longevity and number of speakers of the Spanish language in the United States, English remains the primary language. By using Spanish, Chicanas/os are writing back and writing themselves back into the linguistic prism that is the United States.

In many ways, Spanish is a decolonizing language for Chicanas/os when we consider punishment, and/or mistreatment in the public school system because of language discrimination. In 1970 the United States Commission on Civil Rights documented the racist practices of schools for children of Mexican descent in a series of six reports titled *Mexican American Education Study* (1978):

> Controlled by Anglos, the curricula reflect Anglo culture and the language of instruction is English. In many instances those Chicano pupils who use Spanish, the language of their homes, are punished. The Mexican American child often leaves school confused as to whether he should speak Spanish or whether he should accept his teacher's admonishment to forget his heritage and identity (United States Commission on Civil Rights 11).

The erasure of Spanish in the United States, as mentioned in Chapter One, was intentional, being an attempt at both deculturation and assimilation. This was accomplished by punishing students and hitting them for speaking their mother tongue (Riegelhaupt et al.132). Anzaldúa remarks on the absurdity of language censorship: "Attacks on one's form of expression with the intent to censor are a violation of the First Amendment. El Anglo con cara de inocente nos arrancó la lengua. Wild tongues can't be tamed, they can only be cut out" (*Borderlands* 54). At present, many Chicanas/os are learning and re-learning Spanish, and today there is a resurgence of the language,

especially within the area of children's literature as evidenced with all of the picture books that I have analyzed. This renaissance differs significantly from the experience of Moraga in the 1940s and 50s, which I examined in Chapter One, who was discouraged from learning her ancestral language by her parents.

Spanish in these picture books performs as a sort of colonial undoing or active resistance, and allows for Chicanas/os to assert their own self-identity, restoring cultural practices, thinking, beliefs, and values that were once deemed insignificant, as was the case for Moraga and other Chicanas/os. I would like to point out that there is no incorporation of any Indigenous languages in any of the Chicana/o picture books that I analyze, and in fact there are few children's books that incorporate Indigenous languages. *América Is Her Name* by Luis J. Rodríguez intersperses some Mixteca. Today, more and more Chicana/o poets use Nahua and Maya (M. López 30); it is likely that in the future there will be more Chicana/o children's books that incorporate Indigenous languages, especially as more readers become fluent in Spanish or become more familiar with Chicana/o cultural identity and retrace their roots.

Chicana/o picture books are more than tools of socialization filled with imagination and creativity. These cultural artifacts are crucial devices that allow Chicanas/os to see themselves and their identity reflected. Picture books written and illustrated by Chicana/o authors and illustrators can give Chicana/o children a different perspective about the Chicana/o nation that what has been historically represented in traditional school textbooks. Chicana/o children's "[l]iterature must also serve as a mirror reflecting the readers' own cultural values, attitudes and behaviours" (Bishop,

"Teaching" 37). Chicana authors like Mora, Anzaldúa, and Pérez have been successful in helping Chicana/o children connect the past and the present, and provide a positive imagining for the future as an act of self-articulation. In these books the "Abuelitas serve not only as a backdrop to heritage," suggests Rebolledo, "but also as a mirror image of the past for the writer herself" ("Abuelitas" 154). The role of Chicana/o children's literature is therefore to allow children to look at their own lives and know that they are not alone, and they are part of a greater community.

CONCLUSION

"Being Métis made her feel like there was something special about [Jenneli] after all."

—Elizabeth Denny, *Jenneli's Dance* (2008)

"Never forget who you are and where you are from. Keep your language alive in your diary and in your heart."

—Amada Irma Pérez, *My Diary from Here to There* (2002)

For too long, children's literature published in North America has been dominated by white Euro-American protagonists; Métis and Chicana/o literature was created to fill a void, replace stereotypes, and create texts with Métis and Chicana/o characters. The social consciousness-raising of the 1960s and 70s can be categorized as a period of national restructuring and self-determination for both the Métis and Chicanas/os. At this time, political organizations were formed and gave birth to national printing presses that later allowed these two collectivities to create artistic productions, and impart and project a sense of cultural belonging. Publishing houses like Pemmican, the GDI, Theytus, Children's Book Press, Quinto Sol, Caracol, El Grito del Sol, Maise, Mango, Descalzo Press, Tejidos, and La Palabra provided, and continue to provide, the space for Métis and Chicanas/os to tell their stories and produce their own images of themselves. Even with national printing presses, in the 1960s for Chicanas/os and in the 1970s for Métis, it was not until the 1990s that picture books from these two collectivities began to be published by small publishing houses. Although some authors, like Pat Mora, have had success with

mainstream publishers such as Alfred A. Knopf, most Chicana/o children's literature authors have relied on publishing houses like Children's Book Press and Piñata Books that are dedicated to multicultural literature for children. Métis children's book writers have relied on Pemmican, the GDI, and Theytus and organizations like Goodmines.com, Strong Nations, and American Indians in Children's Literature to circulate their works.

These independent printing presses have been crucial in promoting national self-expression. According to Dennis López, "For the editors of Quinto Sol, the fight for self-determination, self-government, equality, justice, and political autonomy" was at the forefront of creating the press (184). One of the founding editors of Quinto Sol, Octavio Romano-V., explains why the Chicana/o presses were so important: "We needed some kind of outlet to express ourselves that would not be edited and modified. […] I dreamed of our own magazine where all this could be expressed and where we could publish our short stories, poetry and essays" (qtd. in Muñoz 171). The same can be said for the Métis. Greg Young-Ing contends, "Aboriginal peoples have historically been blocked from equitable participation in the publishing industry" (181). According to the Métis writer Beatrice Mosionier the emergence of Métis specific presses "has been one of the most effective and immediate tools in helping to create a more positive image of Native people" (Culleton, "Images" 48). Prior to the existence of these publishing houses, many Métis authors were discriminated against by larger publishing houses (M. Cohen 125-26). In the 1970s, the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) sponsored a series of publishing ventures, which led to the creation of Pemmican Publications (Smulders 80). Its mandate was to produce "creative and educational texts to provide cultural and pedagogical

material for the Métis people of Manitoba" (Suzack 297) and to "instil a sense of pride and more positive self image among the Metis, especially among Metis school children" (Kienetz 14). The importance of these self-made printing presses cannot be overlooked because they created opportunities for self-determination and allowed Métis and Chicanas/os to assert their own nation-building through the creation of literary works.

Another major issue at hand for North American New Peoples has been their blatant exclusion from curricula and textbooks. Until the 1980s, Métis were either omitted from children's educational books, or were derogatorily depicted visually and textually.[27] Leah Dorion and Darren Préfontaine observe that "In the past, most curricula and textbooks failed to address the contribution and participation of First Nations and Métis peoples in Canadian Society" (31). The same occurred to Chicanas/os. For decades, Dennis López maintains, "Universities, colleges, and mainstream presses discriminated against Mexican American communities through exclusionary policies and prohibitive practices as well as through the production and distribution of scholarship and creative fiction that promulgated racist ideologies, stereotypes, and images" (184). These marginalizing practises illustrate the failure on the part of educators and publishers to teach children about New Peoples, and the desire of the dominant Anglo society to deny Métis and Chicana/o authors to write their own history.

In addition to the omission of New Peoples, for centuries many school textbooks used to educate the future generations of North America depicted racist images and

[27] Emma LaRocque's *Defeathering the Indian* (1975), based on her research in the summer of 1974, looks at the curricula used in Alberta schools up until the 1970s. Her findings suggest that Métis and other Indigenous Peoples were not only excluded from certain textbooks but also stereotyped.

portrayals of Métis and named Caucasians as innately superior to all other races (Culleton, "Images" 48). In "Images of Native People and Their Effect," written in 1987, Mosionier reveals what it was like to read picture books that did not reflect her reality as a young Métis girl growing up in Manitoba. She writes about her own experience as a child reading about the negative construction of her Indigenous roots; she does not name specific texts but rather details how she felt as a young girl reading texts that made her feel less than human (Culleton, "Images" 48-51). In order to combat these psychologically damaging images, Mosionier has written many different works of literature that span a variety of genres, including the children's book *Unusual Friendships: A Little Black Cat and a Little White Rat* (2002). This picture book depicts the friendship between a cat and a rat with subtle references to Métis cultural practices. Likewise, Métis writer Howard Adams contests these politics of oppression and exclusion: "As native children grow up, these white-supremacist images become more alive, but natives are powerless to do anything about them. Consequently, the children internalize inferior images as a part of their true selves, often with strong feelings of shame" (15). Such representations created feelings of worthlessness as Métis children saw themselves and their communities reflected negatively. Kearns argues that many Métis "did not have the opportunity to learn as much about our ancestors, their stories and knowledge as we would have liked. Many of us find ourselves looking to thread together pieces of our inherited culture and learn more for ourselves and future generations" (62). These images can be attributed to the systemic racism in Canada as illustrated, for example, by the residential school system.

Chicanas/os have faced a similar experience. Historically, Chicanas/os have also been depicted in harsh stereotypes that have been accepted and perpetuated because of the systemic racism in the United States that has been corroborated through segregated schools, incarceration based on skin color, deportation, and lynching. According to Juan Bruce-Novoa, "The canonizers had a preestablished image of what that identity was supposed to be" (136). In 1970, a survey completed by the Council of Interracial Books for Children "found most Mexican-American characters were migrant workers, illiterate, passive, and always very poor" (Murray 206) and "cast either as bandits or lovable rogues; as hot-blooded, sexually animated creatures or as passive, humble servants" (Ortego y Gasca 193). This is evidenced in *Don't Tell Lies! A Cautionary Tale* (Cox 2004). In this book the protagonist borrows a bike from her friend but faces an unfortunate predicament when she crashes it into a tree. Rather than tell the truth, Lucy says that a bandit with a big sombrero and serape jumped her. The stereotype of the Mexican bandit[28] emerged in the 1900s and as Charles Ramírez Berg elaborates, "*El bandido* is dirty and unkempt […]. Behaviorally, he is vicious, cruel, treacherous, shifty, and dishonest; psychologically, he is irrational, overly emotional, and quick to resort to violence. His inability to speak English or his speaking English with a heavy Spanish accent is Hollywood's way of signalling his feeble intellect" (68). By using a bandit in *Don't Tell Lies Lucy! A Cautionary Tale*, Phil Roxbee Cox stereotypes Mexicans and Chicanas/os as malicious and nasty. Another example of this type of Othering can be

[28] In "Visualizing Everyday Racism: Critical Race Theory, Visual Microaggressions, and the Historical Image of Mexican Banditry," Lindsay Pérez Huber and Daniel G. Solorzano show how the troubling Mexican bandit and variations of the stereotypes continue to be perpetuated in media, film, and other everyday representations.

found in *A Day's Work* (1997) by Eve Bunting, a prolific children's book writer whose work is often used in schools throughout North America, in which people of Mexican ancestry must lie and fight off others to get to work where they are later reprimanded and made to feel ashamed. These damaging images, similar to the depiction of the Métis, are harmful.

The inaccuracies produced in literature, as well as the blatant omission of Métis and Chicanas/os, have led to misunderstandings that continue to prevail. It is not surprising that of the picture books that I examine, many of their authors or illustrators have been involved in education, including Dorion, Burton, Patton, Fleury, Flamand, Farrell Racette, Anzaldúa, Mora, Pérez, and Gonzalez. The authors, illustrators, and translators that I have discussed throughout this dissertation are committed to changing educational materials that are taught in schools across North America in order to combat the historically stereotyped characters, and to write New Peoples into curricula. Métis and Chicana/o children's literatures also create the critical and creative space for authors not only to imagine but also to re-interpret the struggles and self-articulations of these two nations.

As I have shown throughout this project, Métis and Chicana/o picture books are born out of struggle for social justice. These counter-narratives are crucial to recuperating practices and values that were destroyed through decades of discrimination and give Métis and Chicana/o children the opportunity to connect to their respective nation. Representation of Métis and Chicana/o characters are needed to foster self-worth and literacy (Garza de Cortéz and Battle 65). As Bishop observes, "Literature transforms

human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in the books" ("Mirrors" xi). In her thesis, "Literature as Mirror" (2004), Ruth Quiroa expands on the work of Bishop to look at the responses of children of Mexican origin to recently published Chicana/o themed picture storybooks. Her study speaks urgently to the importance of providing Chicana/o children with not only Chicana/o cultural specific texts but also the necessary tools to bridge home and school literacies. She concludes that Chicana/o picture books can create a sense of pride for the readers who see themselves reflected in the story they are reading.

By creating self-validating literature, Métis and Chicana/o authors promote visual and textual literacy, motivate children to learn technical skills like reading and writing, and encourage cultural continuance. Kimberly Blaeser asserts, "Native stories have goals beyond entertainment just as their predecessors in oral literatures. They work to make us into communities, form our identity, ensure our survival" (65). Children need to be able to and want to identify with the images that they see on the pages (see Banks; Grant and Sleeter; and Nieto and Bode). Donna Norton argues that "identification" is a "process [that] requires emotional ties with the model; children believe they are like these models and their thoughts, feelings, and characteristics become similar to them" (20). Métis and Chicana/o children's literature fosters this identification and self-actualization. As stories unfold, "readers frequently relate fictional events to their personal experience and 'understand' characters' emotions by connecting them to relevant emotionally charged

memories" (Nikolajeva 275). In the picture books that I analyze, the authors offer words and the illustrators create careful pictures to co-compose pieces of literature that foster this positive self-awareness. As Adir Cohen notes: "Writers have become aware that, for the child, a book is a source of satisfaction that derives from identification and participation, and an expansion of his own experience" (31). Alma Ada writes about the detrimental effect of excluding Latinos in *A Magical Encounter: Latino Children's Literature in the Classroom* (2003). I argue that her observation can be applied to Métis and Chicanas/os:

> Latino children in the United States have suffered a great deal from the ways in which their culture, particularly in its most creative and representative aspects, has been rendered invisible by the mass media and within the school curriculum. […] Latino children seldom have an opportunity to see these representations of their culture. This silence […] erodes their self-esteem. (xiv)

Ada's research illuminates the harmful effects of excluding cultural groups from children's literature. Métis and Chicana/o children's literature is required to draw attention to the homogeneity of the nation, which is central to nation-building, but greater attention needs to be placed on the voices within the communities that continue to be marginalized including those who identify as LGBTQI2S.

The purpose of this comparative North Americanist project has been to address the critical gap that exists surrounding the critical analysis of Métis and Chicana/o picture books. My hope is that this dissertation, which engages original research and cultural

analysis, will impress upon publishers, academics, teachers, librarians, and parents the centrality of these picture books not only for the nation-building of these two nations, but also for a greater transcontinental understanding of North America's New Peoples and their literary traditions. In recent years, larger printing presses have started to publish multicultural literature, including a few Chicana/o books. However, Métis picture books still tend to be published by national and Indigenous presses. Publishers must take an active role in increasing the overall number of Métis and Chicana/o picture books. This is important because often only the works published by "established" publishers make the "lists" that recognize supposedly worthy literature.

Historically, the state education systems have not been effective sources for the socialization of Métis and Chicanas/os considering the historical negative effects on New Peoples. Rather, the Canadian and the United States governments have used state curricula to destroy the stories and histories of these nations. "Education has worked as an agent of colonial subjugation with the long terms objective of weakening Indians' nations," Longman argues, "by causing the children to lose sign of their identities, history, and spiritual knowledge" (23). Furthermore, "the Mexican American experience" was written out of the textbooks of core curricula for primary and secondary schooling (Urrieta 12). However, as Paul Hanohano points out, "If education is truly to be transformed for Native people, then the challenge for our institutions, and for educators, is to find ways for these practices and beliefs to become a normal part of the educational experience" (218). I would take Hanohano's plea one-step further and argue that, in order for Métis and Chicana/o children to have the opportunity to have their nations reflected in

North American curricula, we have to include the voices and participation of the transcultural identity keepers and their progeny, and write them back into not only the picture books, but also the school curricula. Métis and Chicana/o picture books must be included on the syllabi at post-secondary institutions, especially in faculties of education; academics have the opportunity to influence how the next generation of librarians, teachers, policy makers, and parents interact with these respective nations. Teachers have a role to meet the needs of the Métis and Chicana/o children in their classrooms by validating their cultural reality, and to teach non-Métis and non-Chicana/o students about the significance of these New Peoples. Teachers can use the classroom as a "contact-zone" where cultural knowledge exchanges can occur.

Librarians, too, play an important role as they influence the works that are purchased by schools and community libraries. They can engage in education reform to make sure that these groups are represented in the textbooks and curricula to "give back to parallel cultures their histories and cultural identities" (Cai 130). I was curious to see what books from this project could be found at my local libraries, the Edmonton Public Library and the Okanagan Regional Library, because I wanted to know what kind of access children had to Métis and Chicana/o "culturally conscious" texts. The Okanagan Regional Library only had copies of *Fiddle Dancer* and *Jenneli's Dance,* and a few other works by Métis writer Delaronde and Chicana author Mora. The Edmonton Public Library, on the other hand, has a slightly better selection including *Relatives with Roots, Jenneli's Dance,* the Nolin trilogy, and a few other works by Delaronde, Dorion, and Mora and Pérez. Neither library had any works by Anzaldúa, which is troubling,

considering the commitment that she has made to Chicana/o children's literature. I would therefore argue that parents have the responsibility to give children access to these rich literary legacies, and provide them with meaningful engagement with Métis and Chicana/o picture books even when they cannot be found at the local libraries.

When I began this dissertation, I was interested in Métis and Chicana/o children's literature to empower the next generation of learners to become more socially aware of the impact of New Peoples in North America and avoid the risk of what Adrienne Rich as deemed "passive collusion." I wanted to create a project that could be used by teachers and instructors bring the literatures of these two collectivities into the classroom to disrupt the dominant discourse. However, since becoming a mother on November 16, 2013, the same day that commemorates the death of Louis Riel, and then for a second time on September 19, 2015 there seems to be a lot more at stake; I feel more deeply and personally connected to this dissertation. I want to make sure that my children have the opportunity to engage with and learn about Métis and Chicana/o cultural through their children's literature. I firmly assert that Métis and Chicana/o children must know their stories, their languages, their histories in order to know themselves. Through picture books, and the crucial bond between grandchild and grandparent, the next generation will be able to take pride in their rich cultural legacy.

For Métis and Chicanas/os who have been historically ignored and even mocked, I posit that seeing themselves and their nations portrayed visually and textually as important New Peoples of North America is crucial for validation. These picture books are prisms to personal discovery, an "inquiry into life" that allows Métis and Chicana/o

children the opportunity to seem themselves and their nations (Short, “Reading” 50). They are also “a resource that aids in the exploration of self, others and knowledge of the world” (Arizpe et al. 241). It is my hope that these interactions, as well as the evidence provided in this project, will be a catalyst for further discussions on Métis and Chicana/o picture books and that my study will validate the need for further comparisons these New Peoples’ rich children’s literary legacies.

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