

"This Is No Slum!"

A Critical Race Theory Analysis of Community Cultural Wealth in Culture Clash's *Chavez Ravine*

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MANAZAR: I want to talk about this photograph right here. (*Manazar points to the photo hovering above him.*) I see uncles, primas, I see my sister, mira, there's Joe Guerra and his brother Johnny, I see Father Tomas. See that morenito kid right there in the middle? That's me with my carnal, they used to call me Nonio. . . . If you look closely at the photo, some of the señoras are wearing army hats, and on the hats are little stars. Those little stars are for their sons and daughters who were away—over there—serving their country. Some of the fellas never made it back. My neighbors were Italians, Slavs, Russians, and some Germans but for the most part, era pura Mexicanada, puro frijol. And on holidays, pura aroma de tamal y menudo, y los compadres tocando la guitarra til late at night. That was our community; that's something you can never erase from your cabeza. (27–28)¹

This excerpt from the 2003 play *Chavez Ravine* by the Chicano-Latino theater group Culture Clash introduces the history of the former Los Angeles community of Chavez Ravine.² In remembering the three neighborhoods of the Ravine, the play takes a perspective that is very different from the view shared by many social scientists and historians. Through the play, Culture Clash unapologetically provides a critical, revisionist historical account of institutional racism, cultural resilience, and community resistance. For us, this theatrical approach parallels the academic insights of critical race theory (CRT). Indeed, our appreciation of Culture Clash's deliberate emphasis on race and culture leads us to examine their play *Chavez Ravine* using a CRT lens.

The play's narrator, Manazar (played by Herbert Siguenza), represents the late poet Manazar Gamboa, who lived in the Chavez Ravine neighborhood of Bishop. He invites the audience to visualize Chavez Ravine, beginning in the early 1900s when immigrant families from Mexico built their homes in these hills north of downtown Los Angeles.³ Against a backdrop of enlarged black-and-white pictures hanging above the stage, Manazar fondly reconstructs this predominantly Mexican community so audiences can begin to understand what was lost in the destruction of the three neighborhoods—La Loma, Bishop, and Palo Verde—that made up Chavez Ravine. As he notes the mothers' hats commemorating World War II soldiers, Manazar places this community as "American," yet he code-switches back and forth from English to Spanish to describe the predominantly Mexican, economically poor, but culturally wealthy community.⁴

The economic poverty evident in these neighborhoods in the late 1940s led the City of Los Angeles to condemn Chavez Ravine as a "slum" and to plan a major public housing project, Elysian Park Heights, to clear the "blight" (Avila 2004, 156, 164). Historian Ronald Lopez explains that this "'blighted area within a mile of downtown' represented a 'problem' to advocates of urban redevelopment and public housing, [yet] to the Mexican immigrants, Mexican Americans, and other people who lived there, it represented a home and a refuge from a hostile and racist society" (1999, 9). We argue that institutionalized racism contributed to the destruction of the three neighborhoods, specifically because city officials failed to "see" the cultural wealth present in these communities.⁵ Our collaboration here uses CRT as an analytical framework that affirms the continuity of community cultural wealth in its many forms within Chicana/o communities.

Inspired by the transdisciplinary tradition of Chicana/o studies, we weave together our work in sociology, education, history, and performance studies to demonstrate how Culture Clash's *Chavez Ravine* reveals the community cultural wealth that went unrecognized in these Los Angeles neighborhoods. Specifically, the play exhibits at least six forms of "capital" that make up this community's cultural wealth. We also find that the play itself personifies community cultural wealth in reclaiming a history of resistance against oppression from the perspectives of Mexican Americans in general and Mexican American women in particular. We begin with an introduction to CRT as a framework that effectively challenges cultural deficit approaches by acknowledging a continuity of cultural assets and resources fostered in Chicana/o communities.

Critical Race Theory

CRT questions the purpose and methods of academic inquiry by shifting the research lens to focus on People of Color, recounting history from the perspectives of those at the margins of society, and mobilizing toward positive social change. Because we have noticed CRT recently surfacing as a catchall phrase or buzzword to describe any scholarship that mentions race, we take a moment here to outline its historical antecedents and our use of this framework.

As an outgrowth from critical legal studies in the 1980s, critical race scholarship sought to recognize the dignity in the lives and experiences of those "at the bottom of society's well" (Bell 1992, v). This conscious validation of society's marginalized voices, which are rarely considered in mainstream history and social science research, reverberates in feminist and ethnic studies scholarship (hooks 1990).⁶ Over the last decade, CRT scholars in schools of education have built on the strength of this progressive scholarship to examine and challenge the ways that race and racism impact social structures, practices, and discourses. Acknowledging some of CRT's intellectual origins in academic and activist traditions such as Chicana/o studies, educational sociologist Daniel G. Solórzano (1997) identifies at least five themes that characterize this framework:

1. The intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination. CRT begins with an examination of how race has been socially constructed in US history and how the system of racism functions to oppress People of Color while privileging whites (Barnes 1990; Bell 1987; Matsuda 1991; Russell 1992). Scholars have expanded CRT discussions to focus on racism's intersections with other forms of subordination based on gender, class, sexuality, language, immigrant status, and surname (see, for example, Arriola 1997, 1998; Crenshaw 1989, 1993; Delgado and Stefancic 2000, 2001; Espinoza 1990, 1998; Montoya 1994; Valdes 1997, 1998).

2. The challenge to dominant ideology. CRT challenges notions of "neutral" research or "objective" researchers and exposes deficit-informed historical accounts that silence, ignore, and distort the perspectives of People of Color (see, for example, Bell 1995; Delgado Bernal 1998; Gotanda 1991; Ladson-Billings 2000).

3. The commitment to social justice. Acknowledging the intrinsically political nature of social institutions such as schools, CRT views education as a tool to eliminate all forms of subordination and empower oppressed

groups, thereby transforming society (see, for example, Freire 1970, 1973; Solórzano and Delgado Bernal 2001).

4. The emphasis on experiential knowledge. CRT finds the experiential knowledge of People of Color legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination. CRT regards this knowledge as a strength and draws explicitly on the lived experiences of People of Color by analyzing oral traditions, corridos, poetry, films, *actos*, and humor (see, for example, Bender 2003; D. García 2006a, 2006b; Yosso 2002).

5. The transdisciplinary perspective. A CRT analysis of racism and other forms of oppression offers historical and transdisciplinary perspectives that move beyond, not just between, traditional disciplinary lines (see, for example, Delgado 1984, 1992; Gutiérrez-Jones 2001; Olivas 1990).

Individually, CRT's tenets evidence insights drawn from ethnic studies, US and third-world feminisms, Marxism and neo-Marxism, cultural nationalism, internal colonialism, and critical legal studies. Collectively, they make up a unique analytical approach. This critical race methodology is, as law scholar Mari Matsuda explains, "consciously both historical and revisionist, attempting to know history from the bottom" (1989, 2323–24). Drawing on multiple disciplinary research tools, critical race scholars seek out "sources often ignored: journals, poems, oral histories, and stories from their own experiences of life in a hierarchically arranged world" (2323–24). CRT's insistence on listening to the voices of those injured by racism reminds us of the tradition of Chicana/o *teatro*, which brings the dignity of these voices to the stage through culturally nuanced, politically poignant, and humorous portrayals.

In previous work, Tara J. Yosso (2005) uses CRT to challenge deficit interpretations about the role of social and cultural capital in racially unequal schooling outcomes (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). Uncovering the white privilege embedded in these misinterpretations of cultural capital, she outlines cultural knowledges, skills, networks, and abilities developed by Chicana/o students and parents, which maintain value (capital) rarely recognized or acknowledged by schools. She further argues that these cultural resources bolster Chicana/o community resilience and resistance to racism and other forms of oppression. While Yosso's work adds to the growing body of CRT literature in education and social science, our collaboration extends critical race scholarship to the study of Chicana/o history and theater.

Critical Race Theater

Rooted in the Black Power and Chicana/o movements of the 1960s and 1970s, teatro's politically inspired artistic performance connects physical and verbal comedy to social protest with a dual goal of entertainment and education. According to theater scholar Harry J. Elam Jr., these performances emerged from "marginalized peoples and oppositional struggles" and functioned as "counterhegemonic strategies through which under-represented groups challenge the dominant social order and agitate for social change" (2001, vi). Elam asserts that social protest theater affirmed Black and Chicana/o cultural identities by presenting a revisionist history. David G. García expands on this research to demonstrate how Culture Clash's work has evolved to fulfill the functions of social protest theater for a new generation. Building on scholarship that examines the creation and exhibition of theory in Chicana/o teatro (Broyles-González 1994), García examines Culture Clash's historically informed satire through a CRT lens. In chronicling the group's evolution over two decades, he finds that the playwrights and actors "place the experiences of People of Color and their cultural resilience and resistance center stage," and ultimately, their work exhibits the tenets of a *critical race theater* (D. García 2006a, 118).

Culture Clash originated on May 5, 1984, and consists of performance artists Ricardo "Ric" Salinas, Herbert Siguenza, and Richard Montoya. Between 1984 and 1993, the trio wrote and performed four original plays that mixed autobiography and biography with slapstick humor and social commentary.⁷ In 1994, Culture Clash's theatrical approach shifted, and over the next nine years they wrote and performed six ethnographic, site-specific plays.⁸

Though Culture Clash has been the most renowned Chicano-Latino theater troupe in the United States for over two decades, García's study is the first book-length project to examine their work, and the first to apply a CRT lens to the study of Chicana/o theater.⁹ Previously, theater scholars have noted that Culture Clash's work "addresses issues of multiculturalism and hybridity both in form and content" while maintaining "a consistent and unwavering commitment to the political possibilities of theatre" (Glenn 2002, 68). Dorinne Kondo compares the work of Culture Clash to that of contemporary African American playwright Anna Deavere Smith, explaining, "both Smith and Culture Clash center the stories of people of color, authorizing all of us to take center stage. And both offer a gesture of alliance in their versions of cross-racial, cross-gender performance,

offering potential connections across multiple lines of difference" (2000, 105). Kondo further argues that Culture Clash's work challenges essentialist notions of race, gender, and sexuality by crossing cultural borders and performing transracial theater. García extends this scholarship and uncovers CRT's tenets in Culture Clash's "satirical, lyrical, historical, hysterical" theater.¹⁰

Since 1994, Culture Clash has developed playwriting methods similar to the research tools used by critical race scholars. While they do not claim to be historians, they ground their theater in historical research and recount the perspectives of marginalized communities. To begin a new play, they conduct individual interviews with a cross-section of residents in a specific US city. To add breadth and depth to their interviews, they examine social science and humanities scholarship as well as popular press coverage and judicial records related to these urban communities. Finally, Culture Clash collectively transforms their findings into characters and scenes for the stage, culminating in social satire from a uniquely Chicano-Latino perspective. In their play *Chavez Ravine*, they continue this *critical race theater* by illuminating "the lives and histories of marginalized communities while consciously challenging social and racial injustice" (D. García 2006a, 118).

Deficit Thinking in Mainstream History and Social Science

Culture Clash uses the stage as a professor might use her or his classroom, albeit with more overt humor. Their plays expose and challenge racism and other forms of social inequality. Similarly, critical race scholarship exposes deficit thinking as one of the most insidious and prevalent forms of racism shaping social structures, practices, and discourses (Yosso 2006). During the 1950s, when the destruction of Chavez Ravine took place, biological and cultural deficit traditions overtly informed social and legal policy, justifying de jure racial segregation until midway through the decade. Framed by the deficit approach, the history and social science "lessons" imparted to Mexican American students began with the assumption that their communities lacked the values, skills, and attributes necessary for social progress. Scholars such as Ozzie Simmons and William Madsen made similar assertions and published historical and anthropological accounts steeped in deficit discourse.¹¹ For example, Simmons wrote:

Let us consider a few of the stereotypical beliefs that are widely used on general principles to justify Anglo-American practices of exclusion and subordination. . . . One such general belief accuses Mexican-Americans of being unclean. . . . It is largely true that Mexican-Americans tend to be more casual in their hygienic practices than Anglo-Americans. . . . The belief that Mexicans are unclean is useful for rationalizing the Anglo-American practice of excluding Mexicans from any situation that involves close contact with Anglo-Americans, as in residence, and the common use of swimming pools and other recreational facilities. (1974, 391–92)

According to Simmons and the deficit model, Mexican parents socialize their children with inappropriate values and skills and teach them to passively accept failure as a way of life.¹² Schools in the 1950s sought to “Americanize” these “culturally disadvantaged” Mexican students (González 1990, 1997; Sánchez 1993). Simmons further notes that:

Not all Anglo-American images of the Mexican are unfavorable. Among those usually meant to be complimentary are the beliefs that all Mexicans are musical and always ready for a fiesta, that they are very “romantic” rather than “realistic” (which may have unfavorable overtones as well), and that they love flowers and can grow them under the most adverse conditions. Although each of these beliefs may have a modicum of truth, it may be noted that they tend to reinforce Anglo-American images of Mexicans as childlike and irresponsible, and thus they support the notion that Mexicans are capable only of subordinate status. (1974, 391–92)

Even in his supposedly objective observations, Simmons continues to mirror the cultural deficit–laden mainstream historical accounts of the era.

Two decades beyond the 1950s, history texts used in US high schools continued to reflect this deficit view. For example, in 1977 the Council on Interracial Books for Children found that high school history textbooks were usually written by white men and exhibited a narrow, Eurocentric perspective. The texts included “third world people and women” by singling out a few “great” individuals and listing what “minorities” contribute to “us” or to “our” nation. Furthermore, the books placed the blame on People of Color “for their own oppressed conditions,” mentioning protest movements as recent developments while emphasizing intra- and intergroup divisions (Council on Interracial Books for Children 1977, 125–29). These accounts of US history showed a pattern of dealing with discrimination, racism, and sexism “as aberrations, as isolated mistakes of the past,” an approach that created “victims, but no victimizers; exploited, but no exploiters” (128–29).

Fast-forwarding another two decades, in 1995 sociologist James W. Loewen further established that high school history texts present a “Disneyland” version of US history—a version where, more often than not, a white hero saves helpless poor People of Color and ensures a happy, romantic ending to an exotic adventure (35). Scholars such as Jesus Garcia (1980) and Linda Salvucci (1991) also found that contemporary secondary-school textbooks oversimplify the complexities of US history by ignoring the historical contributions of Mexicans and Mexican Americans. Loewen asserts that such distortion promotes “blind patriotism” (1995, 14) while omitting any real discussion of the structural nature of social and racial inequality. As a result, these texts tend to silence racialized, gendered, and classed histories of marginalized communities.

The overt “Americanization” of the 1950s school curriculum eventually gave way to a more subtle yet no less insidious deficit approach to teaching history and social science in primary, secondary, and postsecondary classrooms. In 1998, for example, sociologists Eric Margolis and Mary Romero found that mainstream graduate school curricula in the social sciences largely ignored People of Color. Within and beyond the formal school curriculum, deficit approaches to history encourage whites to enjoy a false sense of supremacy while People of Color are stigmatized as culturally and racially inferior. Such limited access to a “people’s history” stunts our democracy and perpetuates racial divisiveness (Zinn 1995).

Cultural Deficit Thinking and Cultural Capital

Rooted in models of cultural and biological determinism, deficit approaches to social science and history tend to distort Chicana/o experiences and “see” only deprivation in Communities of Color (Valencia and Solórzano 1997). Using CRT as an analytical lens, we can identify, analyze, and challenge such erroneous cultural notions as we learn from community memory and collective histories in these communities. For our purposes here, *culture* refers to behaviors and values that are learned, shared, and exhibited by a group of people. Culture is also evidenced in material and nonmaterial productions of a people. As a set of characteristics, culture is neither fixed nor static (Gómez-Quíñones 1977). Some social science and historical research equates culture with race and ethnicity, while other work views culture through a much broader lens that encompasses various characteristics, social histories, and identities. Cultural deficit thinking in social science perpetuates an incomplete and distorted view of Chicana/o

communities, and this can be most clearly seen in contemporary deficit interpretations of Pierre Bourdieu's social capital theory (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977).

Bourdieu asserted that privileged groups in society possess and inherit an accumulation of knowledge, skills, and networks, which he referred to as social and cultural capital. He explained that acquisition of cultural capital (i.e., education, language), social capital (i.e., social networks, connections), and economic capital (i.e., money and other material possessions) occurs through family socialization practices and/or formal schooling. Dominant groups within society maintain power and restrict social mobility by limiting access to these forms of capital.

Bourdieu's insightful theory of how society reproduces hierarchical power relations has since been interpreted through a deficit lens. Such interpretations seem to misunderstand Bourdieu's theory, which presents a critique of society, not a "how-to" guidebook for social mobility. In the case of US history, Bourdieu's model describes how society replicates white, middle-class culture by rewarding very specific forms of knowledge, skills, abilities, and networks. But deficit applications of Bourdieu uncritically view white, middle-class culture as the standard and dismiss forms and expressions of cultural knowledge that do not match this "norm." The argument follows that if People of Color acquire and exhibit the social and cultural capital of the dominant class, they too can enjoy social mobility. Whiteness remains unquestioned as the center of this assertion. In short, a deficit interpretation of Bourdieu claims that the cultural knowledges, skills, abilities, and networks of People of Color hold very little, if any, value.

However, as we decenter whiteness and recenter the research lens on People of Color, we can validate often-overlooked forms of cultural knowledge forged in a legacy of resilience and resistance to racism and other forms of subordination. Centering our analytical lens on the experiences of Communities of Color in a critical historical context allows us to "see" the accumulated assets and resources in the histories and lives of marginalized communities. This act of reframing builds on an extensive body of critical social science research that has consistently identified culture as a resource for Communities of Color, rather than as a detriment. For example, scholars have found that Latina/o families create and draw from communal funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al. 1995; Gonzalez and Moll 2002; Moll et al. 1992; Olmedo 1997; Vélez-Ibáñez and Greenberg 1992). Here, predominantly working-class Mexican immigrant families create and share multiple forms of knowledge, and these "funds" help sustain communities even in adverse

environments. Concha Delgado-Gaitan (2001) adds to this research in demonstrating how Mexican immigrants and Chicana/o families pass on culturally imbued knowledges that help mobilize communities for equal education. Furthermore, Dolores Delgado Bernal (2001) also extends this work by documenting various cultural pedagogies of the home that Chicana/o students draw on to navigate college. Building on the cultural knowledges, skills, and abilities they learned at home further motivates Chicana/o college students to use their degrees to “give back” to their communities.

Below, we challenge deficit interpretations of social and cultural capital and extend the funds of knowledge concept with a kaleidoscope model of community cultural wealth (fig. 1). We define community cultural wealth as an array of knowledges, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed and used by Communities of Color to survive and resist racism and other forms of oppression (Villalpando and Solórzano 2005; Yosso 2005, 2006). We further assert that community cultural wealth comprises at least six forms of capital: aspirational, linguistic, social, navigational, familial, and resistant.¹³

A kaleidoscope includes a primary lens, a tube with pieces of colored glass inside, and a screen at the end of the tube that lets in light. One shifts the tube while looking through the primary lens to watch the light reflect off the glass and create designs of varying colors and shapes at the end of the cylinder. As an analytical tool, our kaleidoscope begins with a CRT lens, focused on the lived experiences of People of Color. Examining Communities of Color through this primary lens, we can see at least six dynamic and overlapping forms of capital. The interplay of aspirational, linguistic, social, navigational, familial, and resistant capital constructs community

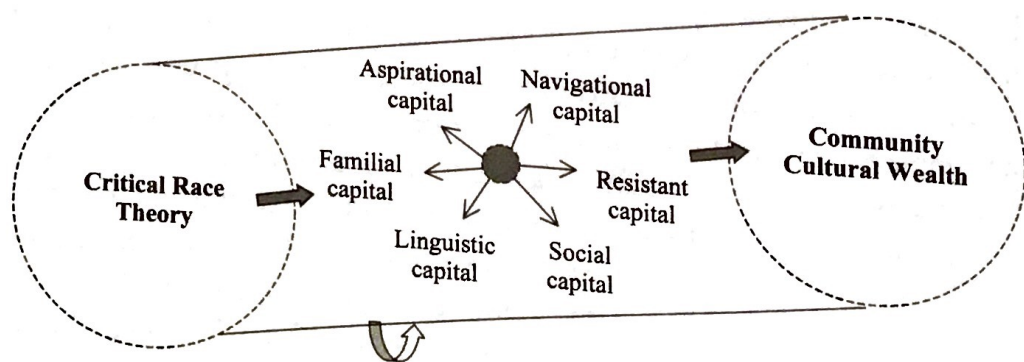


Figure 1. A Kaleidoscope of Community Cultural Wealth. Adapted from Villalpando and Solórzano (2005) and Yosso (2005, 2006).

cultural wealth. This multifaceted portfolio of cultural assets and resources facilitates the survival and resistance of Communities of Color, a process that is evident in Culture Clash's *Chavez Ravine*.

Cultural Wealth in Chavez Ravine

Learning from nearly a decade of creating ethnographic, site-specific theater, Culture Clash began the process of writing *Chavez Ravine* by interviewing former residents of La Loma, Bishop, and Palo Verde, as well as Los Angeles policymakers from the 1950s. To contextualize these oral histories, Culture Clash examined newspaper accounts from the time period, archival materials including maps of the area, photos of the communities, and city documents, along with scholarly analysis on Chavez Ravine. Informed by these multiple sources, the play critically analyzes the racism and classism experienced by Mexicans in 1950s Los Angeles. *Chavez Ravine* is the first of Culture Clash's plays to offer a critical account of a historical event in chronological, narrative format.

Chavez Ravine recounts the events surrounding the displacement of almost 3,800 Los Angeles residents for a public housing project in the 1950s (Lopez 1999, 68).¹⁴ The Los Angeles City Housing Authority (CHA) identified these neighborhoods as "the most blighted area in the city" and claimed eminent domain over the properties (Avila 2004, 156). The CHA promised residents a fair price for their homes and guaranteed them first priority in the new Elysian Park Heights housing project. While many residents hesitantly took the city's offer and began moving, others flatly refused to sell and instead mobilized against the CHA.

Despite homeowner protests, the city continued plans for the housing project, condemning the properties and issuing eviction notices. Recognizing an opportunity to privatize and profit from the Ravine's prime real estate, a group of Los Angeles power brokers conspired to undermine the CHA and derail the Elysian Park Heights project. The *Los Angeles Times* initiated a publicity war against the CHA, branding subsidized housing projects and their advocates part of a socialist conspiracy—a threat that resonated in the "red scare" climate after World War II. While a number of families vehemently defied eviction orders, and the CHA scrambled to defend its loyalty to the United States, the *Los Angeles Times* and power brokers turned their attention to the 1953 mayoral race. Their puppet candidate, Norris Poulson, carried out their sabotage plans by canceling the housing project once he became the new mayor. The end of Elysian Park

Heights meant permanent dislocation for Ravine residents. The backroom politics that led the city to negate its promises to these residents paved the way for private interests to prevail in the Ravine.

With an eye on the almost vacant Ravine, Los Angeles County supervisor Kenneth Hahn started courting baseball team owner Walter O'Malley to convince him to relocate the Brooklyn Dodgers to Los Angeles (Lopez 1999, 140–45). Los Angeles City Council member Rosalind Wyman joined the cabal with Mayor Poulson to promote a deal with the Dodgers (Acuña 1984, 76–77). Further political scheming and support from Hollywood celebrities such as Ronald Reagan facilitated the narrow passage of Proposition B, a measure that approved a city contract essentially gifting the Ravine land to the Dodger Corporation. In this sweetheart deal, the city granted 315 acres to O'Malley and subsidized the leveling of the land in preparation for Dodger Stadium.¹⁵ On May 8, 1959, sheriff's deputies removed the defiant remaining Chavez Ravine residents by force and the city bulldozed their homes.

The Culture Clash trio invited actress Eileen Galindo and three musicians, John Avila, Randy Rodarte, and Scott Rodarte, to help portray the layers of history largely untold about Chavez Ravine. This ensemble brings Chavez Ravine to life through more than fifty different composite characters and a combination of music, comedy, and satire on a set dressed with enlarged black-and-white photos from the original neighborhoods (Normark 1999).¹⁶ Manazar (Siguenza) narrates, while the composite characters of Maria Ruiz (Galindo), her mother Señora Ruiz (Montoya), and her brother Henry "Hank" Ruiz (Salinas) recount a dramatic counterstory of overt racism, red scare McCarthyism, and community resistance. Because the opening scene features Fernando Valenzuela (Siguenza) pitching, it appears that the entire play takes place in Dodger Stadium.

The characters of the Ruiz family collectively personify twelve actual families who refused to sell their homes and were forcefully evicted from Chavez Ravine. In particular, Señora Ruiz and her daughter Maria closely resemble the real-life women of the Arechiga family, Avrana Arechiga and her daughter Aurora. The eviction of sixty-two-year-old Avrana Arechiga, her seventy-two-year-old husband Manuel, and their family garnered mass media attention. On May 8, 1959, it took four sheriff's deputies to physically remove the Arechigas' daughter, Aurora Vargas, from the family home, with two holding her by the arms and two by the ankles. Eleven other families were also forcefully evicted and their homes were bulldozed. But the Arechiga family's experience, broadcast on television and documented

in newspapers and still photos, captivated audiences and inspired the Ruiz family characters created by Culture Clash.

Henry Ruiz is a Mexican American World War II veteran with a young family and a desire to pursue the "American dream." The Ruiz family lost their older brother Arturo in the war, and their father is not present. Henry's younger sister Maria carries a deep love for her community, which fuels her activism to protect the neighborhoods of Chavez Ravine. Henry and Maria's defiant mother, Señora Ruiz, asserts her right to remain in the Ravine and defends her home in a dramatic showdown with the sheriff's deputies and bulldozers.

Culture Clash does not claim to tell the definitive story of Chavez Ravine, nor does a theatrical format allow the group to present an exhaustive history. Still, the trio interprets historical materials just as an academic historian might sift through the archives and oral accounts to offer her or his own interpretation. Some of the dialogue in the play quotes verbatim from interviews with former Chavez Ravine residents and figures such as the CHA site commissioner, Frank Wilkinson.

Culture Clash also takes literary license to combine characters and to paraphrase quotations gleaned from newspapers and other historical accounts. For example, in August 1951 the *Los Angeles Times* interviewed three of the women who challenged the city's plans for their neighborhood: Mrs. Agnes Cerda, Mrs. Angie Villa, and Mrs. Arechiga. Each questioned the assumption that they lived in a "slum." The article quotes Mrs. Arechiga as saying, "I know nothing of slums. I only know that this has been my home and it was my father's home and I do not want to sell and move. I am too old to find a new home, here is where I live. Here. In Chavez Ravine."¹⁷ This quote evidently inspired a scene in the play portraying a community meeting where Wilkinson (Montoya) describes his plan to transform the Ravine from a "slum" into a new affordable housing project. An Elder Woman (Siguenza) vehemently disagrees with Wilkinson and questions the condemnation order, saying, "This is no slum! This has been my home, and I do not want to sell or move or be chased out like a pack of wild dogs. I'm too old to find a new casa" (61).

In listening to the voices of former residents and questioning deficit discourse, the play projects a view of Chavez Ravine consistent with the tenets of CRT. Specifically, *Chavez Ravine* illuminates the lived experiences of a predominantly Mexican American community and consciously challenges the social and racial injustice that led to its destruction. This production of critical race theater allows audiences to witness the community cultural

wealth fostered in the three Mexican American neighborhoods. Below, we define each of the six forms of capital that make up community cultural wealth and identify excerpts of *Chavez Ravine* that further exemplify these rarely acknowledged cultural assets and resources.

ASPIRATIONAL CAPITAL

Aspirational capital refers to the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers. This resiliency is evident in those who allow themselves and their children to dream of possibilities beyond their present circumstances, often without the objective means to attain those goals (Auerbach 2001; Ceja 2004; Delgado-Gaitan 1992, 1994; Gándara 1982, 1995; Solórzano 1992). Aspirations develop within social and familial contexts, often through *cuentos* (stories) and *consejos* (advice) about maneuvering through and challenging oppressive conditions. Therefore, social, familial, navigational, linguistic, and resistant capital all inform and overlap with aspirational capital.

In *Chavez Ravine*, aspirational capital is expressed by Señora Ruiz, who hopes that she and her *familia* will all continue to live together even though the city has condemned their neighborhood and is claiming eminent domain to move them out. The tension between this hope and the real obstacles to such an outcome surfaces in a Christmas Eve argument between Henry and his mother over Henry's decision to take the city's offer, sell his house, and move out with his wife, Soledad, and their children. Señora Ruiz pleads with her son: "Well I don't want to move out of here. This is where you were born, this is where your abuelos died. . . . This is where my compadres are, Henry" (38). Maria tries to inject herself into the argument, but her mother interrupts in a pained voice:

SRA. RUIZ: Callense los dos, already. Hank, do what you have to do, you have your own familia now. Your sister and I are staying put. But do me a favor, si vendes tu casa, if you dare sell that little house that your father built with his hands and sweat and blood, don't look back mijo, because you will never set foot in this house again, me entiendes? (40)

Henry's aspirations to progress with his family actually coincide with his mother's dreams for her family. Yet his experiences as a World War II veteran shift his view of his predominantly Mexican community. He has begun to view himself more as a Mexican American, with an emphasis on American, and even warns his sister that in fighting the city's eminent

domain ordinance, she is spending too much time "hanging around those pachucos and the Reds at the Union Hall" (39). Maria runs after her brother and unsuccessfully tries to convince him to stay.

MARIA: You're taking the kids away from mama.

HENRY: It's a free country little sis, I'm taking my GI Bill and the City dough and never looking back. I'm gonna give my kids more than footprints in the dirt and chicken shacks. It's a goddamned slum up here.

MARIA: You don't mean that Henry.

HENRY: Sure I do Maria, there's a world over this hill. I fought for it and I want my kids to see it. We're gonna move west Maria. . . . There's nothing here.

MARIA: We have everything here. (41–42)

Henry buys into the city's deficit view of the Ravine and its residents, and even though racial segregation and discrimination may continue to limit his options, he seeks to realize his aspirations outside of this community. Señora Ruiz and Maria refuse to "sell out" to the city (fig. 2). Even in the face of real and perceived barriers, they maintain hope for their *familia* and for the Ravine.

LINGUISTIC CAPITAL

Linguistic capital includes the intellectual and social skills attained through communication in multiple languages and/or language styles.¹⁸ The residents of Chavez Ravine nurtured linguistic capital among their peers and families. Culture Clash emphasizes the ways in which the Ravine's children engaged in a storytelling tradition that included listening to and recounting oral histories, parables, stories (*cuentos*), proverbs (*dichos*), and comedy (Auerbach 2007; Burciaga 1997).¹⁹ They suggest some of the characters' repertoire of storytelling skills and the legacy of linguistic capital by mentioning some of the hundreds of nicknames the residents recall giving each other.

MANAZAR: See, we all had nicknames back then. . . .

ALL: La Living Monster, Nonio, Little Blackie, Headlights, Six Pack, Mocosó, and Once.



Figure 2. "Your sister and I are staying put." Scene from *Chavez Ravine*, 2003. Left to right: Eileen Galindo as Maria Ruiz, Richard Montoya as Señora Ruiz. Photograph © 2003 by Craig Schwartz; reproduced by permission.

MANAZAR: We called him Once—Eleven—because he always had a runny nose. . . . Sometimes they called me El Peludo, the hairy guy. When we would go skinny diving, the guys would see the hairs all over my body, they said I looked like—

ALL: King Kong! (29–30)

Linguistic capital also refers to the ability to communicate through visual art, music, or poetry.²⁰ Culture Clash honors this form of community cultural wealth by highlighting the life and work of Manazar, the late poet from Bishop. Manazar narrates the play and bilingually guides the audience through the history of Chavez Ravine.

MANAZAR: Our backyard, a hand that touched a still wild river, home for paloma, coyote, and carrizales, the green smell of moss outside my window. Later, barricaded by boulevards, freeways, clouds of high-octane smoke and a ceaseless roar. (135)

SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social capital can be understood as networks of people and community resources. The play demonstrates how residents in Chavez Ravine's three neighborhoods sustained themselves by cultivating multiple networks of this type. These peer and other social contacts provided both instrumental and emotional support, which in turn helped residents navigate society's institutions (Gilbert 1980a, 1980b; Stanton-Salazar 2001).

The interaction between Uri the Shepherd (Salinas) and Maria demonstrates the interplay of social and navigational capital. Maria brings her Russian neighbor some tamales during the Christmas holidays in 1950. Uri shares some of his vodka with Maria, and they discuss the looming enforcement of the city's eminent domain clause.

URI: I'm sorry to hear about your brother.

MARIA: The city shouldn't be able to force people away from their homes, off their land. Goddamnit, Uri.

URI: Take it from a communist, it's un-American.

MARIA: I agree. (*Maria gulps remaining vodka.*)

URI: "It is better to die on your feet than to live on your knees."

MARIA: Is that Russian?

URI: No, Emiliano Zapata say this. (*Maria's spirits are lifted for the moment.*)

MARIA: What do we do?

URI: Well, at the Workman's Circle, Maria, we are talking about building coalitions.

MARIA: I heard Carey McWilliams speak about that last week at the Figueroa Hotel.

URI: Good. Strength in numbers!

MARIA: What if we form a Homeowners coalition?

URI: Now Maria is thinking. (51-52)

With this scene, *Culture Clash* shows how neighbors exchanged knowledge, skills, and tools to provide both instrumental and emotional support for one another in Chavez Ravine.²¹ The following scene opens at the Santo Niño church hall, where Maria welcomes her other neighbors to the “first Palo Verde Home Owners Protective Society fundraiser” while musician Pete Seeger (Montoya) leads them in a chorus of Woody Guthrie’s song “This Land Is Your Land” (54; see fig. 3). This *mutualista*, or mutual aid society, established to organize the homeowners in Chavez Ravine against the city’s ordinance, exemplifies one of the ways in which immigrants have historically created and maintained social networks.²²

NAVIGATIONAL CAPITAL

Navigational capital refers to skills in maneuvering through social institutions. Historically, this implies the ability to maneuver through institutions not created with Communities of Color in mind. Indeed, People of Color draw on various “critical navigational skills,” both social and psychological, to strategically move through structures of inequality permeated by racism (Solórzano and Villalpando 1998).

In a sort of epilogue to the play, Maria speaks to the audience and describes some of the barriers her predominantly Mexican community faced in their struggle to save their homes (fig. 4).

MARIA: My students often ask me, Professor Ruiz, then why was the fight for Chavez Ravine so important? Look, I’m standing here on Bunker Hill, City Hall is there, the LA Times, Disney Hall going up over here, the Federal Courthouse there, the new Cathedral just behind me and none other than the Department of Water and Power across the street. How did we ever have the audacity to take on this civic crucible? (139)

Maria’s monologue acknowledges individual agency within institutional constraints. Her remarks demonstrate an overlap between navigational and resistant capital. She goes on to say,

It’s true we lost, but what’s more important is that we helped create a culture of resistance. The struggle for Chavez Ravine prepared me for Civil Rights, the Farmworkers Union, my labor work with Bert Corona and the Chicana Movement. Chavez Ravine was huge for me. It made me the person I am today. So do me a favor, remember Chavez Ravine, eh? (139–40)



Figure 3. "This Land Was Made for You and Me." Scene from Chavez Ravine, 2003. Left to right: Herbert Siguenza, Ric Salinas, Randy Rodarte, Scott Rodarte, and John Avila as community members, Richard Montoya as Pete Seeger, Eileen Galindo as Maria Ruiz. Photograph © 2003 by Craig Schwartz; reproduced by permission.

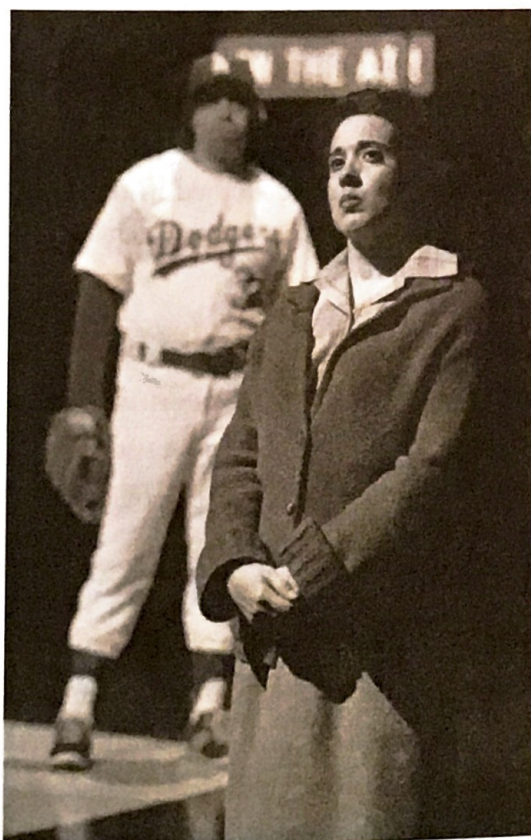


Figure 4. "Remember Chavez Ravine." Scene from Chavez Ravine, 2003. Background left, Herbert Siguenza as Fernando Valenzuela; foreground right, Eileen Galindo as Professor Maria Ruiz. Photograph © 2003 by Craig Schwartz; reproduced by permission.

Navigational capital also builds on social capital, specifically through social networks that facilitate community movement through places and spaces including schools, the job market, and the health care and judicial systems.

FAMILIAL CAPITAL

Familial capital refers to those cultural knowledges nurtured among *familia* (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition (Delgado Bernal 1998, 2001, 2002; Villenas and Moreno 2001). This form of cultural wealth engages a commitment to community well-being and expands the concept of family to include a broader understanding of kinship. In contrast to the racialized, classed, and heterosexualized notions that make up traditional understandings of “family,” familial capital is nurtured by our extended and chosen family, which may include immediate family (living or long passed on) as well as aunts, uncles, grandparents, and friends whom we consider part of our *familia*.

In *Chavez Ravine*, neighbors like La Sobadora nurture familial capital.

MARIA: La Sobadora's name was Juana de los Perros, she was a full blooded Yaqui Indian. She was the lady in the neighborhood that could help you when you ate too many green apples or peaches from la Moore Park.

HENRY: Gohlee, some babies were born right on the kitchen table, te acuerdas little sister?

MARIA: Sure I do. When babies were born, when people died in their homes, La Sobadora, la Juana de los Perros was there every time. These are sacred lands you're pitching on Fernando. (5)

From these kinship ties, Maria has received *una educación* in which she learned the importance of maintaining a healthy connection to her community and its resources (Gonzalez et al. 1995; Moll et al. 1992; Olmedo 1997; Rueda, Monzo, and Higareda 2004; Vélez-Ibáñez and Greenberg 1992).²³

Family members also model lessons of caring, coping, and providing, which helps us develop our emotional, moral, educational, and occupational consciousness.²⁴ This consciousness can be fostered within and between families, as well as through sports, school, religious gatherings, and other social community settings. Isolation is minimized as families “become connected with others around common issues” and realize they are “not alone

in dealing with their problems" (Delgado-Gaitan 2001, 54). The families struggling to save their homes in Chavez Ravine faced extreme barriers, but they were not alone. Maria reiterates the interplay of familial, social, and navigational capital when two detectives (Salinas and Montoya) interrogate her.

DETECTIVE 1: Maria Salgado Ruiz?

MARIA: Who's asking?

DETECTIVE 2: Oh, just the Los Angeles Police Department. . . .

DETECTIVE 1: Are you the ringleader up in the Ravine?

MARIA: I don't know what you're talking about.

DETECTIVE 1: We don't believe you. . . . Where did you get this little book by Karl Marx? . . . Tell old lady Arechiga and the last families to get off the hill.

DETECTIVE 2: Do it fast and do it quiet.

DETECTIVE 1: Or else.

MARIA: Or else what?

DETECTIVE 2: The Punch and Judy show.

DETECTIVE 1: Who else you been talking to, Maria?

DETECTIVE 2: Names, now!

DETECTIVE 1: Spill!

MARIA: You want names? I'll give ya names. Blackie, Bimbo, Bubbles, Captain Marvel, Cakes, Chema, Blue Moon, B-19, El Dopey, Chavela, Chacha, Buttermilk Sky. . . . (128–30)

Maria's response connects back to the beginning of the play, where the audience learned that youths in Chavez Ravine maintained a tradition of nicknaming each other. In the face of these threatening detectives, Maria utilizes her linguistic capital and holds on to the notion that she and her former neighbors are *familia*, insisting that the communal bonds fostered in the Ravine deserve to be respected and protected.²⁵

RESISTANT CAPITAL

Resistant capital refers to those knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality (Delgado Bernal 1997; Giroux 1983; Freire 1970, 1973; Pizarro 1998, 2005; Solórzano and Delgado Bernal 2001). Though resistance can take on many forms, *Chavez Ravine* portrays overt resistance against injustice, mainly through the composite characters of Maria and Señora Ruiz. As mentioned above, these two characters personify the real-life Arechiga family and eleven other families whose refusal to move out of the Ravine led to their forced eviction. In the play's climatic scene, Manazar narrates as sheriff's deputies carry Maria out of her family's home. She shouts "Sí, se puede!" as the rest of the ensemble hold up enlarged archival photos of the actual Chavez Ravine residents, the former neighborhoods, and the forced eviction (fig. 5).

Though this scene replicates much of the actual televised footage of the Arechiga eviction, for dramatic purposes Culture Clash portrays Señora Ruiz with a shotgun. Her strong voice rises over the commotion and quiets the crowd (fig. 6). Pumping the gun in a threatening stance, she declares,

We are not the Mulhollands. (*We hear the pump action of a shotgun.*)

We are not the Lankershims or the Van Nuys. (*We hear the pump action of a shotgun.*)

But you'll remember this name, Arechiga. (*We hear the pump action of a shotgun.*)

Cabral, Casos y Lopez. (*We hear the pump action of a shotgun.*)

Perez. (*We hear the pump action.*)

Ramirez. (*We hear the pump action.*)

You took our sons to fight your war, and now you take our homes. (*We hear the pump action of a shotgun.*)

Our land. (*We hear the pump action of a shotgun*)

. . . Mi casa no es tu casa. Sabes que? Why don't you tell the pinche sheriff to build a stadium in his own goddamn backyard. (*We hear bulldozer / siren and city sounds.*) (133–35)

Though the city displaced the families for the "greater public good" and eventually handed over the land to the Dodger Corporation, Chavez Ravine residents continued to nurture resistant capital. City officials and



Figure 5. Chavez Ravine eviction, May 8, 1959. Los Angeles Times Photographic Archive, Collection 1429, "Chavez Ravine evictions." Photograph courtesy of the Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

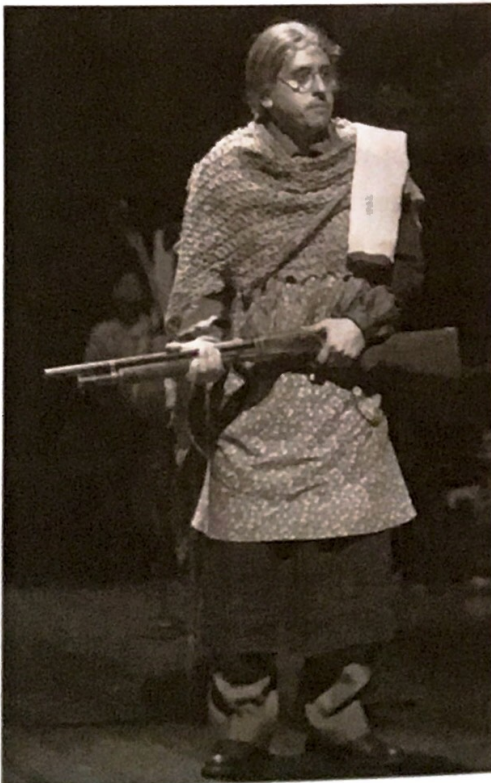


Figure 6. "Mi Casa No Es Tu Casa." Scene from Chavez Ravine, 2003. Richard Montoya as Señora Ruiz. Photograph © 2003 by Craig Schwartz; reproduced by permission.

Los Angeles power brokers failed to “see” the cultural wealth present in Chavez Ravine, and they did not anticipate a decade of community resistance. Manazar reminds the audience that community resistance to oppression is part of the complexity and humanity of Los Angeles history. He holds a picture of the removal of Chavez Ravine residents high over his head and exclaims, “Memory cannot be flattened. Memory is history singing in tune with the stars, and no sheriff’s baton can reach that high” (132).

Culture Clash’s culminating scene, back at Dodger Stadium, reiterates that the knowledges and skills garnered through this resistance informed and inspired a generation of activists, many of whom participated in the Chicana/o civil rights movement of the following decade. Indeed, as a cultural production *Chavez Ravine* both depicts and adds to the legacy of Chicana/o community resistance. The play itself becomes part of the knowledge base of resistant capital for Chicana/o communities.

Discussion

MARIA: It’s easy to romanticize the working class residents of Chavez Ravine, but we should not, many of us were immigrants or first generation sons and daughters of immigrants. And what does the immigrant want? The immigrant doesn’t want trouble, he wants to make it, he wants his little piece of land. (139)

As Maria’s monologue reminds audiences, *Chavez Ravine* does not try to aggrandize the actions of the former residents, but the play does reclaim this collective history as part of a legacy of resistance against oppression. Culture Clash emphasizes the importance of documenting community histories and carrying on oral traditions as they present this narrative to Fernando (Siguenza) when he begins his career with the Dodgers in 1981. Fernando symbolizes the resilience of Mexican communities in the United States. Few Dodger fans know the history of the Mexican families whose neighborhoods once stood where Dodger Stadium stands now, so the brief link to Fernando reminds audiences of the continuity of a Mexican presence in this part of Los Angeles.

Chavez Ravine illuminates the racialized experiences of former Palo Verde, Bishop, and La Loma residents while challenging deficit notions of Mexican communities as passive. The decade-long battle to save these neighborhoods mirrored struggles across Los Angeles over the next decades, as Mexican Americans challenged the city’s plan to build freeways, a prison, and a sewage plant in their Eastside communities (Acuña 1984). *Chavez*

Ravine "revives the struggle over land rights, socioeconomic privilege, and ethnicity" and "functions as a combination of ethnography, history, fiction, and art" (Lucas 2006, 90–91).

In documenting the backdoor politics of 1950s Los Angeles, the play exposes a pattern of institutionalized racism, informed by a deficit view of Communities of Color. In a 2003 interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, former city councilmember Rosalind Wyman reiterated this ignorance and disrespect for the vibrant community cultivated in Chavez Ravine. She remarked, "I wanted my city to be big league. Chavez Ravine just sat there, nonproductive" (Boehm 2003). Wyman's arrogant and incorrect assumption reverberates throughout US history as the same justification used to violently claim land, revoke landholding rights, and break treaties between the government and indigenous communities. Such deficit framing about whose culture has capital and whose does not limits the insights to be gained from social science research and restricts the scope of historical accounts.

In contrast to this deficit approach, CRT begins with the perspective that Communities of Color are places with multiple strengths. Grounded in the experiences of Communities of Color, CRT challenges mainstream historical accounts that tend to disregard the cultural assets nurtured in Chicana/o communities. Using examples from Culture Clash's *Chavez Ravine*, we describe six rarely acknowledged indicators of cultural wealth in Chicana/o communities: aspirational, linguistic, social, navigational, familial, and resistant capital.

We do not identify this portfolio of community cultural wealth to facilitate mainstream society's further co-optation or exploitation of the strengths of Communities of Color.²⁶ Deficit interpretations of Bourdieu's theory urge individuals to accumulate and claim exclusive ownership of cultural capital. In contrast, the characters of *Chavez Ravine*—Maria, Uri, Señora Ruiz, and Manazar—demonstrate the shared and collective nature of cultural wealth.

Culture Clash's satirical, gendered, and bilingual portrayal of the complex battle for Chavez Ravine depicts and personifies the cultural knowledges, skills, abilities, and networks that Los Angeles city officials and businessmen failed to see in the 1950s.²⁷ Recalling the deficit rhetoric of the time, real-life former Ravine resident Lou Santillan remarks, "They made it sound like a bunch of shacks. Not really. They were pretty good houses. They needed renovations, but they weren't shacks. . . . It's something we have to instill in our children and grandchildren, never to forget what happened up there" (Boehm 2003). Through the play, Culture Clash expresses

these same sentiments. *Chavez Ravine* honors the lives of the former Ravine residents and publicly reclaims the historical significance of their struggle for social justice. Richard Montoya explains, "The Taper stage certainly isn't a classroom, but we feel a great responsibility with this piece to get the facts straight, because the collective memory of a community is a precious thing" (Boehm 2003). We agree, and humbly offer this article as another reminder of the many ways Chicana/o communities share cultural wealth to facilitate survival and resistance.

Notes

1. *Chavez Ravine*, written by Culture Clash and directed by Lisa Peterson, premiered in May 2003 at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles. Since the dramatic script has not yet been published, all excerpts in this essay are from the version filed at the Taper titled "Final Taper Draft, July 12, 2003."
2. Though the play is grounded in historical research on the Chavez Ravine community using oral histories, archival records, media accounts, political memoirs, and academic analysis, this essay focuses on the theatrical production *Chavez Ravine*. For a more comprehensive account of the historical events and figures shaping the City of Los Angeles and the Chavez Ravine community during this period, see Acuña (1984), Avila (1997, 2004), and Lopez (1999).
3. In the 1830s Julian Chávez moved from New Mexico to Los Angeles and settled in the Ravine. The Mexican governing council officially granted him the land around 1840, and the area eventually became known as Chavez Ravine (Avila 1997, 114; Lopez 1999, 9).
4. We use the terms Mexican and Mexican American interchangeably throughout this article. In Chavez Ravine, some families were recent immigrants, while others had lived in Los Angeles for generations and had children and grandchildren born in the United States. While these communities may not have used the term Chicana/o to refer to their progressive political identity, they certainly contributed to the struggle for Chicana/o civil rights (see D. García 2006a).
5. For further discussion of the liberal, well-intentioned, yet racialized and paternalistic approach to urban redevelopment, see Lopez (1999, 7–9).
6. Critical race theory originated in schools of law with a group of scholars seeking to examine and challenge race and racism in the United States legal system and society. They argued that critical legal studies did not acknowledge the lived experiences and histories of People of Color. For example, Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman asserted that without analyzing race and racism, critical legal scholarship could not offer strategies for social transformation (Delgado 1995). Outside schools of law, scholars in social science, history, ethnic studies, and women's studies engaged

in similar discussions. For further CRT historiography specifying some of the roots in Chicana/o studies, see Yosso and Solórzano (2005).

7. These plays include *The Mission* (1988), *A Bowl of Beings* (1991), *S.O.S. Comedy for These Urgent Times* (1992), and *Carpa Clash* (1993).

8. These plays include *Radio Mambo: Culture Clash Invades Miami* (1994), *Bordertown* (1998), *Nuyorican Stories* (1999), *Magic Mission Mystery Tour* (2000), *Anthems: Culture Clash in the District* (2001), and *Chavez Ravine* (2003). Between 2002 and 2005, the trio performed *Culture Clash in AmeriCCa*, an anthology show that includes scenes from their ethnographic, site-specific plays. They premiered two additional original plays in 2006, *Zorro in Hell* and *Water & Power*. For further detail of Culture Clash's production history, see D. García (2006a, 8–13).

9. Cultural studies and theater scholarship tend to mention Culture Clash only briefly or in passing while discussing Chicana/o popular culture (see, for example, Morales 2002, 196–98; Roman 1997; Shohat and Stam 1994, 77, 205, 338–41; Tatum 2006, 132–33).

10. Quoted from the cover page of the performance program for *Culture Clash Anthology: A 15-year Retrospective*, Los Angeles Theatre Center, April–May 2000 (written and performed by Culture Clash, directed by Culture Clash and Sam Woodhouse).

11. Simmons wrote his doctoral dissertation in history at Harvard University in 1952 under the title "Anglo Americans and Mexican Americans in South Texas." He later published the dissertation as a book with the same title (1974). William Madsen graduated from the University of California at Berkeley with a doctorate in anthropology in 1955 and went on to write the bestselling book *Mexican-Americans of South Texas*, in which he asserts, "A good many of the Mexican-Americans who go to college don't seem to know what they want out of an education. This lack of purpose is particularly characteristic of Latinos who are seeking a higher education than their parents received" (1964, 108).

12. Cecilia Heller's remarks exemplify these deficit assertions. She writes, "Parents, as a whole, neither impose standards of excellence for tasks performed by their children nor do they expect evidence of high achievement" (1966, 37).

13. We recognize that the notion of capital may be associated with capitalism, an exploitative system that has historically functioned to oppress Communities of Color. We use the word "capital" here to refer to the value of cultural assets and resources nurtured in Communities of Color specifically to survive and resist such oppression. These multiple knowledges, skills, abilities, and networks have long been undervalued, seen as cultural deficits and indeed as forms of cultural poverty (Lewis 1959).

14. Ronald W. Lopez notes that by claiming eminent domain over the area, the City of Los Angeles removed 1,100 families from Chavez Ravine. He also explains that developers planning the proposed public housing projects for the area based their designs on a total population of 3,769 people.

15. Historian Eric Avila notes that O'Malley also received mineral rights, a ninety-year land lease, \$4.7 million in land preparation costs, and all revenues from parking and concessions (2004, 162).

16. In addition to photos from the Los Angeles public library archives, these reprints drew heavily on photographer Don Normark's collection, taken in 1949; see Normark (1999).

17. This seemingly empathetic article appears quite disingenuous because the Chandler family, owners of the *Los Angeles Times*, covertly and overtly supported the cancellation of the housing project, knowing it would lead to the permanent displacement of Ravine residents. Later, while advocating the construction of Dodger Stadium at this same site, the *Los Angeles Times* openly denounced the Arechiga family for refusing to leave the Ravine.

18. Many thanks to Rebeca Burciaga, who identified linguistic and familial capital and added important dimensions to the concept of cultural wealth. Her late father Jose Antonio "Tony" Burciaga was an original member of Culture Clash and performed with the group from 1984 through 1986. Tony's work documents and comments humorously on Chicana/o culture. His stage routines, art, and writing exemplify the linguistic capital nurtured in Chicana/o families and communities (Burciaga 1993, 1995, 1997).

19. For further discussion of the social and academic skills Latina/o children build as translators, see Faulstich Orellana (2003).

20. We appreciate Pablo Gallegos, Moises Garcia, Noel Gomez, and Ray Hernandez, whose research conceptualizing graffiti and hip-hop poetry as unacknowledged sources of community cultural wealth has expanded the concept of linguistic capital.

21. This resonates with more recent ethnographic research in the Mexican immigrant community of Carpinteria, California, which found that "families transcend the adversity in their daily lives by uniting with supportive social networks" (Delgado-Gaitan 2001, 105).

22. For further discussion of *mutualistas* and immigrant social networks, see Gómez-Quíñones (1973, 1994) and Sánchez (1993).

23. Chicana scholars note that in Spanish, *educación* holds dual meanings (Delgado-Gaitan 1992, 1994, 2001; Elenes et al. 2001). A person can be formally educated with several advanced degrees, but may still be rude, ignorant, disrespectful, or unethical (immoral), and thus *mal educada*. On the other hand, a person with only a second-grade formal education may be *una persona bien educada*—a well-mannered, kind, fair-minded, respectful, and moral individual.

24. For further discussion of moral capital passed on by Latina/o parents, see Auerbach (2001, 2007). For more on the contexts and development of emotional, educational, and occupational consciousness, see Elenes et al. (2001).

25. For discussion of the ways racial desegregation broke the communal bonds cultivated within African American communities, see Morris (1999).

26. Robert A. Williams (1997) notes that in academia, scholars tend to act like "vampires," metaphorically siphoning the life-blood of marginalized communities through disrespectful research practices.

27. For more on the phrase "the battle for Chavez Ravine," see Hines (1957, 1982) and Lopez (1999, 26).

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