

Examining Mental Health and Latinidad in *Gabi: A girl in pieces* (2014)

Latinidad (Anzaldúa) is multifaceted and allows space to examine its complexity as we consider the various worlds in which Latinx inhabit and how one navigates, and pushes, related “borders.” Despite its intersectionality, mental health is often not discussed within Latinidad, at least not explicitly. When mental health is discussed, it is often in relation to the LGBTQ community or even broader, psychology or medical fields but not as it related to young adult literature. Multicultural literature is one way in which we can critically engage in how the Latinidad and mental health coincide, specifically in Latinx youth. Using Isbael Quintero’s *Gabi: A girl in pieces* (2014), I examine how multicultural young adult literature can open dialogues with youth about mental health and Latina identities. I draw on LatCrit frameworks and “borders,” along with storytelling and restorying (Thomas and Stornaiuolo), as a way for Latina youth to construct (counter)narratives to consider the various worlds in which they live, to push against “borders” to critically engage mental health as part of Latina identities. By framing my analysis through LatCrit, I examine mental health illnesses, eating disorders and body image as social justice issues. Based on year-long dialogues with Latina youth, I argue that such conversations encourage Latina youth to share their (counter)narratives, to humanize and destigmatize mental health issues and discuss eating disorders and body image within their evolving Latina identity.

Works Referenced

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. 3rd ed. Aunt Lute, 2007. Print.