

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

FIRST AND FOREMOST, we thank our immediate and extended families, without whose love and support this project and our lives as mothers in academia would not be possible. In addition, we thank the many feminist activists-scholars who have paved the way for us to produce scholarship, teach classes, and theorize motherhood in the flesh. Without the work of these women—many of whom are cited in the forthcoming chapters—the very concepts of mothering as a political, emotional, and personal act would be decidedly undertheorized. We are grateful to be part of a growing body of literature that has collectively generated and informed how we think and rethink our roles as parents, teachers, citizens, and intellectuals. We thank the amazing contributors to this volume for their thoughtful efforts to make their personal stories public as part of that legacy. We also thank the numerous other women who shared their stories as mothers in the academy, but who were not able to be part of this final publication due to limited space.

As with any edited anthology, there is a long list of people who made this book possible. We thank the peer reviewers, staff, and editors (Jennifer Perillo and Stephen Wesley) at Columbia University Press for their insightful and productive feedback; Annie Barva for the copyediting; the University of Massachusetts–Amherst and Five Colleges community, especially the Department of Communication; the Department of Communication at the State University of New York–Plattsburgh, especially Shakuntala Rao; Bohyeong Kim for research assistance; the National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies and the *Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambios Social* for accepting conference presentations on the topic; and a large network of extended family and friends who provided feedback and support throughout the process of editing the book.

In addition, Kirsten owes an enormous debt of gratitude to Mari for asking her to be part of this project at a time when such pursuits were crucial to her emotional and professional well-being. As a recent graduate and a new mom with sixteen-month-old twins, Kirsten had just found out that one of her daughters had a rare and fatal degenerative disease. Specific staff members, faculty, and students at the Weismann Center for Leadership at Mount Holyoke College were instrumental in helping her transition to parenthood within academia under extremely trying circumstances; thanks also to Dr. Lois Brown, Michelle Deal, Kim Parent, Janet Lansberry, Patricia Scigliano, Jennifer Curran, and many fabulous students from the Speaking, Arguing, and Writing Program. Lori Walters-Kramer gave a careful reading of previous versions of this manuscript, and Eric Ronnis offered thoughtful conversation about being a parent in academia. Much appreciation and love to the Elson-Patch family, who provided necessary respite and haven in some very beautiful places as we planned, wrote, and organized this book project. Kirsten has tremendous love for and gratitude to her partner, Tom Schicker, who for more than twenty years has been a source of companionship, encouragement, frustration, laughs, and unconditional support. Without his constant care and attention to their daughters, Sylvie and Uma, this book may never have come to fruition.

Mari thanks Kirsten for her compassionate engagement in the process of writing and editing this volume as well as for embodying a truly feminist demeanor of heartfelt collegiality and friendship. She also thanks Las Profes Online Writing Group (Mérida Rúa, Lorena Garcia, Amanda Lewis, Martha Fuentes-Bautista, and Jillian Baez) for their encouragement throughout this life-changing endeavor, the UMass Post-ISHA women's group (especially Betsy Krause), and Susan Davis for planting the seed for this project long ago in her doctoral communication course at the University of California–San Diego. Mari is also grateful to her family: her mother, Guadalupe Hernandez, who reared her and her four siblings (Veronica Jiménez, Andrés Castañeda, Margarita Luna, Joaquín Castañeda) under difficult circumstances but persevered with boundless love and a fierce commitment to continuing *en la lucha*, as well as her siblings, her in-laws (Chris Jiménez, Vanessa Castañeda, Orlando Luna), and her nieces and nephews (Devina and Alma Jiménez; Tessa, Sienna, and Andrés Castañeda; Emilio and Elias Luna), who provided her with an enormous amount of joy and reprieve from academic life. Last but not least, Mari is full of gratitude to and love for her husband, Joseph Krupczynski, a co-conspirator in life and in social

justice struggles inside and outside academia, and her teenage son, Miguel Angel Paredes. Mijo, you went to grad school with me, moved three thousand miles so I could begin my professorial career, and have seen the joys and challenges of academic life. Your love has sustained me all these years, y sin tí, este libro no sería posible. Te quiero mucho.

Mil gracias to all!

Mari Castañeda, Amherst, Massachusetts

Kirsten Isgro, Plattsburgh, New York

MOTHERS IN ACADEMIA

INTRODUCTION

Speaking Truth to Power to Change the Ivory Tower

Mari Castañeda and Kirsten Isgro

WE MET in the autumn of 2000 in western Massachusetts, when both of us were embarking on new academic journeys: Mari was beginning her first professorial job fresh out of graduate school (a Chicana from the University of California–San Diego), with a five-year-old son in tow, and Kirsten was returning to her doctoral studies after a decade-long hiatus from graduate school. Mari relocated her family from Los Angeles, and Kirsten relocated from Vermont with her partner of five years and her aging dog. Both of us became parents while in graduate school, albeit with a fifteen-year age gap and at different points of our lives. Like most of us who become parents, we did not fully anticipate the delight, exhaustion, intense love, ambivalence, and distress that come with raising a child.

It is not coincidental that this project was spawned at a time when notions of motherhood were once again being contested at the turn of the twenty-first century. In 2004, Susan Douglas and Meredith Michaels's witty and controversial book *The Mommy Myth* came out, quickly becoming a best-seller. As communication scholars, we found this book incredibly useful in its critical assessment of the cultural representations of mothers in the media. This "new momism," as Douglas and Michaels call it, "is a set of ideals, norms, and practices, most frequently and powerfully represented in the media, that seem on the surface to celebrate motherhood, but which in reality promulgate standards of perfection that are beyond your reach" (5). How does this momism affect women professionally, especially those of us who have chosen careers in higher education? For many of the authors who contributed to this anthology, life as a parent and as an employee in institutes of higher