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Composing a Chican@ Rhetorical Tradition:  
*Pleito* Rhetorics and the Decolonial Uses of Technologies for Self-Determination

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

by

Elias Serna

June 2017

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Vorris L. Nunley, Chairperson

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The Dissertation of Elias Serna is approved:

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## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my chair Dr. Vorris Nunley for the mentorship, inspiration and guidance navigating the seas of rhetoric and getting through this project. I would also like to thank Dr. Tiffany Ann Lopez for her work getting me started on the path to doctoral studies. An excellent group of professors instructed and inspired me along the way including Dylan Rodriguez, James Tobias, Keith Harris, Jennifer Doyle, Susan Zieger, Devra Weber, Juan Felipe Herrera and many others. The English department advisors were loving and indispensable, especially Tina Feldman, Linda Nellany and Perla Fabelo. Rhetoric, English and Ethnic Studies scholars from off campus including Damian Baca, Jaime Armin Mejia, Rudy Acuña, Juan Gomez-Quiñonez, Irene Vasquez, Martha Gonzales, Anna Sandoval, George Lipsitz, Cristina Devereaux Ramirez, Laura Perez, Reynaldo Macias, Aja Martinez, Iriz Ruiz, Cruz Medina and many others inspired me through their scholarship, friendship and *consejo*. My community of friends and fellow graduate students – mostly in English and Ethnic Studies departments - made learning exciting and fecund, and will remain unnamed, but they know who they are. To my crime partner Joelle Guzman and road dogs Johnavalos and Oscar de la Torre: tlazos! Dr. Tomas Carrasco was a key counselor, strategist and champion of the cause. Spirit tlazocamati to the Blue Buffalo lodge.

Without my family, I would be nowhere. My children Alise and Che are my guiding stars and my greatest source of happiness. My mother Victoria Serna and siblings Rafael, Carolina and Victoria raised me and taught me to love, persevere, excel, fight to the end, and “no seas dejado.” Tania Fischer has always stood in my corner with material,

emotional and spiritual support and a special debt of gratitude will always be hers.

I hereby recognize my Chicano roots growing up in Santa Monica attending Saint Annes' School with siblings and all my buds. I thank the Chicano Movement for getting me to college. My friends and the student movements we participated in, especially at Berkeley, UCLA, Tucson, Los Angeles, and currently the UCR Ballet Folklorico and MEChA, continue to give me inspiration and vision. Findings in this dissertation are a product of Tucson's Raza Studies struggles and the Ethnic Studies Now movement, and appeared previously in print and appear here with permission of the publishers. Early writings appeared in ARE's journal *Regeneración*, *The Urban Review* and *Brooklyn and Boyle*. My article "The Eagle Meets the Seagull: the Critical, Kairotic & Public Rhetoric of Raza Studies Now in Los Angeles" appeared first in *Reflections: Public Rhetoric, Civic Writing and Service Learning* (Vol. 13, no. 1, Fall 2013. Pp 80-93) edited by the wonderful Cristina Kirklighter. "You Can Ban Chicano Books, But They Still Pop Up!": Activism, Public Discourse, and Decolonial Curriculum in Los Angeles" was published first in *"White" Washing American Education: The New Culture Wars in Ethnic Studies*, (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2016. Pp 133-156) edited by Denise Sandoval, Anthony Ratcliff, Tracy Lachica Buenavista and James R. Marin.

I thank CCCC's for the Scholar of the Dream Award, and the Tomás Rivera Library, the Antiquarian Bookseller's Association and the Library of Congress for awarding me first place in the 2013 National Book Collecting Contest. It was a high archival honor and provided my family a most memorable excursion.

## **Dedication**

*Para las semillas... Alise, Che, Vienna, Mia, Lucas ...*

*For the elders Victoria, Joe ...*

*Y toda la familia ...*

*In memory of Isaias Serna, Dolly Fischer & Mama Rosa ...*

*For the special warriors of Tucson, Los Angeles, Kechengna, the Bay Area, Ayotzinapa,*

*Chiapas and everywhere people fight for dignity, happiness and justice ...*

*With Cachum, the 7 Generations, and the 7 Directions...*

*All my relations ...*

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Composing a Chican@ Rhetorical Tradition:  
*Pleito* Rhetorics and the Decolonial Uses of Technologies for Self-Determination

by

Elias Serna

Doctor of Philosophy, English  
University of California, Riverside, June 2017  
Dr. Vorriss L. Nunley, Chairperson

This dissertation uses archival research, Chicana/o Studies scholarship and a rhetorical framework to map a genealogy of Mexican American writing/rhetoric from the post-Mexican-American war era into the present, paying special attention to how rhetors define community, their interaction with technology, sociotechnical conditions, and the epistemic dimensions of this rhetorical activity, particularly the production of Chicana/o Studies departments in the late 1960's. Steven Mailloux's work on rhetorical histories and academic tradition broadly inform how I look at how Chican@s/Mexicans addressed audiences and defined community, such as social bandit Tiburcio Vasquez' utilization of the photograph in the 1870's, the journalism of exiled Mexican revolutionaries' in Los Angeles during the 1910's, and the use of plans and poetry by students during the Chicano movement. James Crosswhite's work helps me understand the "deeper rhetoric"



of these moments – a rhetoric concerned with shaping principals, ideologies and community direction – and contributes a rhetorical dimension to Chicana/o historiography. Through the rhetoric of the image, the newspaper, poetry, manifestoes and eventually the internet, the Chicana/o rhetorical tradition has always involved a repurposing of technology for a community’s own collective agenda and desires, as sociotechnical conditions always shape how Chicana/os use communication technologies to persuade and inform. Building on ethnic rhetoric scholarship of Damian Baca and Norris Nunley, I elaborate on the multi-lingual, poetic style of parrhesia (dangerous speech) employed by Chicanos, which I call *pleito* rhetoric. The post-Mexican-American war rebellions and the militant bi-lingual polemic of the Mexican Liberal Party (PLM) help me trace a militant rhetorical tradition that resurfaces in students’ calls for Chicana/o Studies in the 1960’s. Pleito rhetoric operated alongside an actual militancy, and took place within the *kairos* (“the opportune moment”) of civil rights movements nationally and third world liberation movements globally. In this period, Chicana/o Studies argued itself into existence by rhetorically developing a dialectical critique of U.S. history, colonization and institutionalized racism (particularly in schools), and initiated a unique epistemic historiography of the Chicana/o experience. My last chapters delineate epistemic tenets of the discipline while examining current challenges and dangers such as the criminalization of Ethnic Studies in Arizona.

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## Introduction

The mapping of a Chican@ rhetorical tradition is the chief concern of this dissertation. Taking inventory of a genealogy of Mexican American rhetorical acts and community-oriented arguments requires special attention to race, space, history and technology. My study departs from the effects of geo-political transformations of space after the expansionist Mexican American War (1846-1848) and tracks rhetorical moments of resistance, revolution, advocacy, identity formation and community definition. The composition of this genealogy purposefully leads up to the building of Chican@ and Ethnic Studies in the late 1960's and its growing but troubled status into the present. This rhetorical history and its trajectory contribute rhetorical and epistemic insights to a historiography of the Chican@ experience. While the dissertation research digs deeply into the archeology of Chican@ communication the versatility of my rhetorical theoretical framework meditates constantly on technology and its relationship to the contemporary sociotechnical conditions and imaginaries. While Chican@ indigenous methodologies are rooted in ancient concepts, they perform epistemic work uniquely in the present. And while rhetoric and visual culture theory, as well as recent scholarship on digital rhetoric and "screen literacies" help me explain Chican@ uses of technology over time they also help me connect this tradition to a versatile and multi-modal Chican@ rhetoric operating today.

While Mexican American voices in the United States are frequently overlooked, erased or distorted within historical narratives, my dissertation will argue that a unique

Chican@<sup>1</sup> rhetorical tradition exists in the U.S. Southwest since the Mexican American War (1846-48), impacted by historical upheavals, state repression, and styles of contestation and leadership - and that it continues to operate into the present. A Chican@ rhetorical tradition (ChRT) contains defiant elements (what I call pleito rhetoric), and is composed of indigenous and Western ways of signifying, as well as traditions organic to Mexico and the Southwest. Within this tradition rhetors have repurposed communication technologies during different eras, and produced a record of dialectical rhetorical activity that contests political realities and traditional narratives about their experiences. This ChRT has produced generative effects for civil and human rights, cultural identity, land and sovereignty, advancement of communities, and decolonial ways of living and knowing.<sup>2</sup> The contemporary forms of this tradition – found in everyday speech, literature, arts, Chican@ Studies, political struggles, protest and other forms of advocacy - have meaningful precursors in at least three earlier eras: the post-Mexican-American War period, the Mexican Revolution, and the Chicano Movement.

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<sup>1</sup> I choose the term Chican@ to capture the Mexican American experience, gender inclusivity, new digital territories, and to recognize the early Chicano Movement's impact on education, access and epistemology. I use the terms Chicano, Chicana/o, Chican@, Mexican American and Xican@ interchangeably; the terms Chican@ and Xican@ often imply an "openness" of identity that highlights politicization, indigeneity or decolonization. I also use the term Latina/o to include Central American and other Latino populations. Although the term Latinx is currently in circulation, I don't use it here as its broad acceptance, meaning and effect continue to be debated.

<sup>2</sup> My understanding of decolonization is informed by Franz Fanon, Jose Montoya and Chican@ writers who understand a dialectical ontology of decolonization: that decolonization regards individuals and collectives challenging *external* social relations and phenomena related to colonization, but also works on correcting or healing individuals' *internally*-directed undertandings of self/being and social conditioning.

By revisiting these three periods and investigating specific moments of Mexican/Chican@ rhetorical activity and uses of technology, I plan to examine a deeper rhetoric in the way James Crosswhite describes the horizontal and vertical axes of “big rhetoric” and “deep rhetoric.” For Crosswhite, “big rhetoric” is a historical (horizontal) axis in which the field of rhetoric assumes “institutional shapes” over time, the disciplining of the field where institutional expectations are set, constraining the reach and function of rhetoric studies. A “deep rhetoric” along a functional (vertical) axis explains rhetoric’s deeper philosophical and moral dimensions (from which it has been traditionally constrained), rhetoric’s role in conducting everyday interactions as well as social life, particularly its connection to philosophy (long broken by Aristotle and classical scholars’ “disciplining of rhetoric,” marking the hard distinction between the two fields). The deeper rhetorical philosophy informing this dissertation, in fact, is shaped by experiences, theories and concepts connected to studies of race, gender, de/colonization, technology and self-determination.

Viewing rhetoric as an “art of logos,” Crosswhite also recognizes that if “it is the special power of logos to lead the soul, the art of logos, rhetoric itself, is the art of leading souls... not much different from a philosophical dialectic.”<sup>3</sup> He explains how rhetorical activity “generates ideals of freedom and reason and nonviolence... which reach beyond specific situations and generate motives for changing them.”<sup>4</sup> Instead of simply and mechanically analyzing speech-making or rhetorical appeals in Chican@ history, this

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<sup>3</sup> Crosswhite, James. *Deep Rhetoric: Philosophy, Reason, Violence, Justice, Wisdom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. P. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. Pp. 27-28.

dissertation aims at a richer understanding of Chican@ rhetoric that is concerned not simply with rhetors, powerful speeches or kairotic moments in history (although it does include these). It also aims for an understanding of the deeper work of Chican@ rhetoric, one which works outwardly - contesting invasion, labor exploitation, institutions, sexism, racism, etc. – and which also works inwardly on Chican@ organizations and audiences, helping shape identity, morality and historical consciousness, operating morally in and beyond specific historical moments.

This project responds in part to calls from current Latino and ethnic rhetoric scholars to re-examine, disrupt, and re-configure a Western rhetorical tradition that too often excludes or marginalizes U.S. non-white communities, and has been traditionally cast in a rigid East-to-West “civilizing” Eurocentrism. My analysis purposefully tracks an intellectual tradition leading up to the Chicano Movement of the 1960’s and 70’s and the (rhetorical) creation of the discipline of Chican@ Studies. Rhetoric’s ties to epistemology are useful in my theorizations on Chican@ Studies’ arrival at the university – particularly with regard to the rhetorical strategies of student activists and the discipline’s unique epistemic tenets. In this regard, a rhetorical history of Chican@ Studies deepens an understanding of Chican@ history and narrates how Chican@ Studies argued itself into existence. And specifically, how it manufactures knowledge.<sup>5</sup> In short, to not fully

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<sup>5</sup> Mailloux, Steven. *Rhetorical Power*. Ithica, New York: Cornell University Press, 1989. Mailloux explains how tropes work as political arguments, and usefully defines rhetoric as “the political effectivity of trope and argument in culture” (xii). Here, though, I am drawn to his project of writing a “rhetorical history” of literary criticism in this text, one that explicates the persuasive elements of academic disciplines and gives them a “persuasive authority” (22).

understand Chicano Movement rhetoric, and how it brought the Chican@ Studies discipline into being, is to not fully understand the movement nor the discipline.<sup>6</sup>

By defining and composing a Chican@ Rhetorical Tradition I hope to illuminate an intersecting geography which carves a space for Chican@ literature and discourse to be studied more closely. Certain questions will be addressed: What are the unique qualities, characteristics and practices of a Chican@ rhetoric? How has a Chican@ Rhetorical Tradition operated over the centuries and what characteristics have remained constant? What is the relationship of Chicana/o literature to the ChRT? What role has technology played historically in Chican@ rhetorical acts and what does this imply for teachers and students in our contemporary digital era? How do we study and produce multimodal/multimedia forms of Chican@ rhetoric within the composition classroom? How can a new understanding of a native ChRT help us to better reach Chican@/Latin@ students and teach composition in general?

At the heart of the project is a study of a tradition that set the stage for Chicano student movement rhetoric of the 1960's and 70's. The dissertation will first argue for a Chicano rhetorical tradition by looking at Mexican/Chican@ cultural production in the United States during two earlier eras (each approximately half a century apart): the Mexican American War (Tiburcio Vasquez' photographs from jail alongside Maria Ruiz de Burton's novel *The Squatter and the Don*) and the Mexican Revolution (the Partido Liberal Mexicano newspaper *Regeneración* in Los Angeles). A third section looks at the epistemic effects of what was often combative student rhetoric during the Chican@

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<sup>6</sup> I am indebted to the mentorship of Dr. Vorris Nunley here, for helping me arrive at these and many other arguments through our conversations.



Movement (specifically the *planes*/manifestos, poetry, and the construction of Chicano Studies). My conclusion brings this tradition into the present by taking a close look at the rhetorical contours around the struggle to defend Chican@ Studies in Tucson, Arizona. These sections illustrate most clearly what I have called a “pleito rhetoric,” a combative style of communication combining Chicano vernacular forms (codeswitching, caló, Chicano slang, and “fighting words”) with a standard, “administrative” English spoken in universities.<sup>7</sup> Moving beyond merely disruptive or “combative speech,” I explain how pleito rhetoric - and its counterparts of activism and organizing - evolved during a unique space and time, when Chicana/o students arrived at the university in significant numbers, and while third world revolutions influenced local movements. Pleito was a Chican@ dialectic which, alongside African American protest and other Ethnic Studies movements, challenged – and continues to challenge - the Eurocentric world view of the university. The Chicano movement is considered part of a broader “civil rights movement” in the United States during the 1960’s and 1970’s, but Chican@ rhetoric both complicates and deepens our understanding of said movement and its relation to self-determination and decolonization within the United States. Following this introduction, I will further elaborate on pleito rhetoric. In my conclusion, I also consider current epistemic, pedagogical, technological and political implications around pleito rhetoric, and its connection to the future of a Chican@ Studies epistemology.

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<sup>7</sup> Serna, Elias. “Tempest, Arizona: Criminal Epistemologies and the Rhetorical Possibilities of Raza Studies.” *The Urban Review*. 45(1), March 2013. Pages 41-57. Cristina Devereaux Ramirez. *Occupying Our Space: The Mestiza Rhetorics of Mexican Women Journalists and Activists, 1875-1942*. Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 2015. Pages 132-159. Ramirez utilizes my concept of “pleito rhetoric” to analyze Mexican revolutionary feminist Juana Belen Gutierrez de Mendoza’s combative style of journalism.

Rhetoric is foregrounded in my methodology for three major reasons (which are): epistemological, historical and practical.

First, emerging theories on rhetoric, and ethnic rhetorics in particular, stress the productive function of language; namely, that “words do work” in the world and especially around epistemology.<sup>8</sup> Rhetoric and its dialectical activity in argument and truth claims are the grounds for epistemology, and rhetorical methodology helps me understand and explain Chican@ ways of knowing, knowledge production and the purpose(s) behind this activity. Rhetorician Richard L. Wright for example insists that African American rhetorical style works to “prepare the ground for the seeds of Black liberation.”<sup>9</sup> By critiquing how scholars have privileged the scientific realist epistemological tenets within Western rhetoric studies<sup>10</sup> – “big rhetoric”- he reveals how the intra-related worlds of discourse, ideology and epistemology ensnares people into prescribed social locations,<sup>11</sup> and excludes African American language and its unique way of constructing truth and creating collective consciousness.<sup>12</sup> Political struggles play out ultimately in the field of language, and are as effective as the group’s discursive strategies and “rhetorical vision” are in articulating desired outcomes. Rhetorical methods allow me to study effective uses of language to educate and mobilize communities as well as to construct the epistemological project of Chican@ Studies.

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<sup>8</sup> Wright, Richard L.. “The Word at Work: Ideological and Epistemological Dynamics in African American Rhetoric.” In *Understanding African American Rhetoric: Classical to Contemporary Innovations*. Ronald L. Jackson II and Elaine B. Richardson, Eds.. New York: Routledge, 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. P. 86.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. Pp 88-87.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. Pg. 91.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. Pg. 93.

Secondly, rhetorical histories of Chican@s and of the influential Chicano Movement are lacking. In one of the only textbooks on Chicano Movement rhetoric, *A War of Words: Chicano Protest in the 1960s and 1970s*, John C. Hammerback and Richard J. Jensen set out to understand movement rhetoric by analyzing the speeches and styles of speaking of four key leaders (Cesar Chavez, Reies Tijerina, Jose Angel Gutierrez and Rudolfo Corky Gonzales).<sup>13</sup> This approach, however, overlooks the participation of women, poets, students and the nuanced moments of rhetorical encounters – such as the Third World Strike or the *Plan de Santa Barbara* conference. The Chicano Movement depended heavily on the rhetoric of its leaders but also on students, artists and participants in order to educate masses, mobilize these, and articulate the direction of the movement. In its artistic and political fusion, Tomas Ybarra-Frausto notably called this the “Chicano poetic consciousness,” insisting how the discursive style of political poetry and the repurposing of various medias were central to the politicization and radicalization of the masses of movement participants.<sup>14</sup> This rhetorical activity, Ybarra-Frausto emphasized, was bilingual/bicultural, contained a working class aesthetic, and re-purposed existing forms and technologies with a unique Chicano style, *rasquachismo*.<sup>15</sup> Applying a rhetorical lens on these eras also allows for closer

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<sup>13</sup> Hammerback, John C. and Richard J. Jensen. *A War of Words: Chicano Protest in the 1960s and 1970s*. Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1985.

<sup>14</sup> Ybarra-Frausto, Tomas. “The Chicano Movement and the Emergence of a Chicano Poetic Consciousness,” *New Directions in Chicano Scholarship*. Eds. Ricardo Romo, Raymund Paredes. La Jolla, CA: Chicano Monograph Series (U.C. San Diego), 1978. Pp. 81-109.

<sup>15</sup> *Rasquachismo* is itself a Mexican barrio re-purposing of tools and forms for immediate needs. Chicano culture is often recognized as a “cultural manipulation” not unlike bricolage, and compared to punk rock’s DIY, do it yourself, aesthetics. See Marita

examination of how rhetors identified with their audiences, and how they adjusted to urgent rhetorical situations (kairos). Rhetoric scholarship helps us understand how literature, arts and technologies are used to interpret political reality within discourse communities, how language transforms reality, and specifically how students argued a discipline into existence thereby changing the face of the university.

Subsequently, the third reason to emphasize rhetoric in this study is to assert that this unique rhetorical tradition is key to educational outcomes of diverse U.S. classrooms of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Damien Baca's work on *mestizo@* rhetoric asserts that US Latinos have unique rhetorical traditions rooted not chiefly in ancient Greece but in indigenous and mestizo traditions - such as codices, ritual dance, murals - and the bi-lingual/ bi-cultural modes of communication in the Southwest.<sup>16</sup> Whereas *Chican@* students are conditioned by schools and policies to see themselves as inadequate or deficit in language learning<sup>17</sup>, *Chican@* composition spaces recognize the rhetorical funds of knowledge these bilingual students bring to the classroom. This speaks to the role of Chicano Studies in Composition pedagogy and the education of the burgeoning Latino student population nationally.<sup>18</sup> While traditional literacy and composition practices emphasize

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Sturken and Lisa Cartwright. *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. Pp 78-80.

<sup>16</sup> Baca, Damian. *Mestiz@ Scripts, Digital Migrations, and the Territories of Writing*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Republican-sponsored Proposition 227 in California in 1997 banned bilingual education in public schools, essentially telling young Latinos that Spanish was a crime and to "leave their culture at home."

<sup>18</sup> Los Angeles Unified School District's most recent Profile shows that 73.4% of all students in 2009-2010 were Chicano/Latino. Latino first graders make up a larger percentage. <http://search.lausd.k12.ca.us/cgi-bin/fccgi.exe>. The "Latino Education Crisis" report (2010) states: "... the growth in college degrees for Latinos is almost flat. The failure

the linguistic/cultural assimilation of Latino students, a mestizo@/Chican@ rhetoric recognizes a deeply rooted regional tradition, unique and indigenous to the Southwest, which foregrounds “invention between different ways of knowing.”

Like other rhetoric scholarship, I recognize rhetoric’s epistemic work, especially the dialectical function of Chicano rhetorical activity within political discourse and within movements involving Mexican communities. My dissertation in fact aims to elaborate on how this dialectic and epistemic activity is part of a contestation of colonization that seeks to articulate a self-determined vision for a community. This activity has historically been a combative one, and I will elaborate on the dialectical, rhetorical and decolonial aspects of the Chican@ Rhetorical tradition in the next chapter dedicated to an explication of pleito rhetoric. Below, I lay out four general theoretical areas that concern my dissertation: theorizations relating race and space to rhetoric and epistemology; the historical trajectory and historiographic dimensions of my project; contemporary Chican@ indigenous methodologies rooted in ancient concepts that interpret rhetoric and perform epistemic work uniquely; and recent scholarship on digital technology and “screen literacy” which helps explain Chican@ uses of technology over time and compliments my conception of Chican@ rhetorics as a versatile and multi-modal style of composing. This is followed by a summary of dissertation chapters.

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over more than three decades to make any progress in moving more Latino students successfully through college suggests that what we have been doing to close achievement gaps is not working.” (<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/feb10/vol67/num05/The-Latino-Education-Crisis.aspx>)

## Rhetoric, Race and Space: A New Look at Chican@ Studies Epistemology

My analysis begins with an understanding that Chican@ rhetoric has always happened and continues to happen in spaces; rhetorical activity is effected by race and space. Building on Damian Baca's tenets around a "mestiz@ rhetoric," and Jaime Mejia's work connecting Composition Studies (rhetoric) to Chicana/o Studies<sup>19</sup>, this dissertation ultimately seeks to build avenues for bridging rhetoric, Composition Studies and Chicana/o Studies.<sup>20</sup> Baca's groundbreaking text *Mestiz@ Scripts Digital Migrations and the Territories of Writing* (2008) delineates a Chicano rhetoric tradition in the Southwest – which he calls "mesitz@ rhetoric" – by building on Gloria Anzaldua's concept of mestiz@ consciousness as a worldview encompassing multiple languages and identities. Baca brings powerful concepts to the table: invention from "different ways of knowing"; the conflation of colonial religious (ideological) conversion of Indians with the modern assimilation and education policies effecting Chican@s/Latin@s in U.S.

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<sup>19</sup> Mejia, Jaime. "Bridging Rhetoric and Composition Studies with Chicano and Chicana Studies: A Turn to Critical Pedagogy" in *Latino/a Discourses: On Language, Identity and Literacy Education* (Michelle Hall Kells, Valerie Balester and Victor Villanueva, Eds.). Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, 2004. Recalling his arrival as a Chicano compositionist, Mejia begins to bridge Chicano literature and criticism to a critical composition pedagogy, addressing the literary and literacy, through memoire, criticism and Chicano poetry.

<sup>20</sup> The use of terms Chicano Studies, Chicana/o Studies and Chican@ (or Xican@) Studies aims to differentiate three stages of Chicana/o Studies: the initial nascent period of the field, often dominated by male scholarship; the on-going internal developments of the discipline, specifically with attention to gender and sexuality equality; a more current stage where the field attempts to return to early tenets like community connection as well as to indigenous epistemology even as it moves among new digital formats and methods. Reynaldo Macias has recently addressed this issue from the position of a pioneer/"veterano" in the field looking towards the future. "Entre el Dicho y el Hecho: From Chicano Studies to Xican@ Studies" in *Race and Ethnicity Commons; SJSU ScholarWorks*. NACCS Opening Plenary, March 15, 2012. <http://network.bepress.com/social-and-behavioral-sciences/sociology/race-and-ethnicity/page45>

schools; a critique of Eurocentric histories of “the rhetorical tradition,” adding a North-to-South hemispheric perspective to challenge the traditional East-to-West civilizational narratives; recognition of terms such as “Chicano” and indigenous practices as resistant and containing de-colonizing energies. In this way, Baca, like Jaime Mejia, makes an argument for bringing Chican@ literature and language traditions formally into histories of rhetoric.

Mejia makes a crucial argument in his essay “Bridging Rhetoric and Composition Studies with Chicano and Chicana Studies,” that room needs to be made within composition instruction for Chicana/o literature, Chican@ Studies and Chican@ ways of learning. His essay opens with the infamous Chicano Movement poem “Stupid America” by Denver poet Abelardo, which criticizes – and “flunks” - American schools for misunderstanding the Chicano/Latino student who is “tracked” by the schools into prison, economic exploitation, failure and death. My analysis enters his essay as a spatial argument: schools as public spaces have been historically hostile to Mexicans, and Chican@ Studies was particularly significant in that it carved out space for Chican@ language and knowledge to be studied and generated. I tether this insight with Norris Nunley’s versatile interpretation of rhetoric as ontological, epistemological, and tethered to culturally-specific spaces.<sup>21</sup> Nunley argues that “rhetoric and episteme are inextricably linked to space and place... and so is race” (Nunley 39). His text *Keepin it Hushed: The Barbershop and African American Hush Harbor Rhetoric* explains the contours of spaces where Black knowledge and tradition are practiced, taught and generated. These spaces,

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<sup>21</sup> Nunley, Norris. *Keepin’ It Hushed: The Barbershop and African American Hush Harbor Rhetoric*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2011.

or “hush harbors,” “are rhetorical free zones of emancipatory possibility precisely because they are internally directed, working from the terministic screens of African American life and culture.”<sup>22</sup> These insights help me explain how Chican@ Studies classrooms operate similarly to hush harbors because they are places where Chican@ rhetorical traditions and culture are welcomed, practiced, studied and generated. In these spaces practitioners study moments of dangerous speech (parrhesia), practical wisdom (phronesis), customs, *dichos*, and their own *mascons* (“a commonplace that exudes massive concentrations of Black symbolic energy”).<sup>23</sup> Like hush harbors, Chican@ Studies classrooms (ideally) recognize the inhabitants as bringing with them “funds of knowledge,” and do not ask them to “leave their identities at the hegemonic gate.”<sup>24</sup> Unlike hush harbors, though, Chican@ Studies classes are also institutionalized and (frequently) public spaces, and although their history and practice can be understood as counter-hegemonic, they exist under the rules and regulations of universities (or public schools), and occupying these spaces is restricted to enrolled students and influenced by public policy as well as political currents.

While this project examines the intersections between rhetoric, race, epistemology, gender, space and technology, the scholarship on sophist and ethnic

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid. P. 34.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. P. 47.

<sup>24</sup> Serna, Elias. “Tempest, Arizona: Criminal Epistemologies and the Rhetorical Possibilities of Raza Studies.” *The Urban Review*. 45(1), March 2013. Page 50. In this article about rhetorical activity in the Raza Studies struggle in Arizona, I compare Nunley’s observations of teacher Beverly Silverstein at Crenshaw High School with Curtis Acosta’s teaching Chicana/o Literature in Tucson. Also see Vorriss Nunley, “From the Harbor to da academic hood: Hush Harbors and the African American rhetorical tradition.” *African American Rhetoric(s)*. E. B. Richardson and R.L. Jackson II (Eds.). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2007. Pp. 221-240.



rhetorics informs both my method and analytical tools. My attention to rhetorical issues of invention, identification, *nomos* (customs), and *logos* are deeply informed by Sophist scholars such as Robert L. Scott, David Timmerman and Susan Jarratt. In *Rereading the Sophists* (1991) Jarratt explains how the Sophists emphasized *dissoi logoi*, the counter-argument, within discourse as “a means of discovering *a* truth rather than the expression of a distance from a separate, single Truth within phenomena.”<sup>25</sup> Indeed, Chicano and Ethnic Studies programs within universities have operated historically as a racial and methodological *dissoi logoi*, providing counter-stories to dominant narratives and constructing new ways of reaching social and historical truths. Like Ethnic Studies scholars, sophistic scholars look to *nomos* (customs, habitual practice, shared interests) and view rhetoric as a social dialectic, a discursive means by which a people determine truths, their political direction or a collective vision. Jarratt also works to re-establish the status of *nomos*, or custom(s), especially for women and minorities. She recognizes *nomos* as a rhetorical and democratic force, “a process of articulating codes, consciously designed by groups of people” and opposed to hierarchical “handing down (of) decrees” (Jarratt 42). Her re-centering of customs and collective rhetorical activity mirrors the pedagogical work within Chican@ and Ethnic Studies classrooms.

Ethnic rhetoric scholarship such as Richard L. Wright’s concept of *nommo* (words doing work) and Lu Ming Mao’s concept of “illocutionary force” are also central to how I understand *pleito* rhetoric and the ChRT. Wright in particular evokes language’s productive potential by explaining how *nommo* “plows the earth,” suggesting how

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<sup>25</sup> Jarratt, Susan C.. *Rereading the Sophists: Classical Rhetoric Refigured*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991. P. 49.

language and discourse prepare us for social change and are also the seeds that produce action in the world. Chican@/Latin@ rhetoric scholars such as Damian Baca, Cristina Ramirez, Jaime Mejia, Emma Perez and Victor Villanueva also assert that U.S. Latinos have unique rhetorical traditions rooted not chiefly in ancient Greece but equally so in mestiz@, indigenous traditions and bi-cultural (decolonial) modes of communication in the Southwest. While traditional composition practices encourage linguistic/cultural assimilation of Latino students, a Chican@ rhetoric recognizes multiple identities and foregrounds decolonial “invention between different ways of knowing.”<sup>26</sup>

Mary Pat Brady also deepens my understanding of rhetoric by explaining how gender and space depend crucially on the notion of articulation. Her “theoretics of space” recognizes how literary texts contain spatial insights, and their “countercartographies” theorize new conceptualizations of space. Gender and space, in other words, are never outside of the cultural and of language (and vice versa). Like Nunley and Baca, Brady calls for expanding our understanding of space in studies of rhetoric and literature. Chicano spatializations, spaces as ontological and epistemic, ideological spaces, co-existing territorialities and a new “re-mapping of rhetoric” that recognizes co-evolutionary rhetoric traditions – Western and Indigenous – are concepts that surface throughout my dissertation.

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<sup>26</sup> Baca, Damian. He makes the point that Chican@s think and invent from “the intersection of Iberian, Nahuatl and Anglo European traditions” (pg. 16), and “from a space of memory” and resistance (pp. 60-61).

## **Historiography and Tradition: Where Generations, Community Identity, and Narrative Meet**

“... it is equally important to recognize that research will not only provide Chicanos with action-oriented analysis of conditions, it will also aid significantly in politically educating the Chicano community. That is, it will help measurably in creating and giving impetus to that *historical consciousness* which Chicanos must possess in order successfully to struggle as a people toward a new vision of Aztlan.”<sup>27</sup>

- *El Plan de Santa Barbara* (1969)

The founding of Chicano Studies was significantly a rhetorical and epistemic disruption in the dominant historical narrative of the nation-state; it interrogated “American exceptionalism.” It also became a central archive where a collective Chican@ history and culture could be stored. As chapter four will explain in more detail, early expressions of Chicano Studies were anchored in historical arguments – that traditional histories of the United States distorted or erased Mexican Americans from the narrative – and these arguments were rhetorical cornerstones for establishing Chicano Studies programs in universities. Chican@ history, in other words, is a key component of Chican@ knowledge production, it is a central tenet of Chican@ Studies epistemology, and its purpose is clearly and seriously stated in the quote above from the pages of *El Plan de Santa Barbara* (1969), one of the foundational documents of this nascent period.

The Chican@ rhetorical tradition delineates a genealogy of rhetoric as decolonial struggle - culminating in the modern era, with the Chicano Movement of the 1960’s and the state of Chicano and Ethnic Studies in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>28</sup> The Chicano

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<sup>27</sup> *El Plan de Santa Barbara*. Oakland: La Causa Publications, 1969. P. 78. My italics.

<sup>28</sup> My use of genealogy here is influenced broadly by Michel Foucault’s “archeology of knowledge,” and more specifically Emma Perez’ use of Foucault’s “interstitial” spaces to track the hidden histories of Chicanas. The genealogy I look at aims to bring people and groups out of the shadows of these interstitial places in history and recognize their epistemic role in shaping the Chican@ rhetorical tradition.

movement was informed and influenced by the Civil Rights movement in the South, Black nationalism, Cuba and Third World revolutions globally, as well as a unique Chicano/Mexican regional history of social justice struggles. In this sense it had a radical, cultural, anti-oppression and anti-imperialist impulse: in short, it was decolonial. The Chicano rhetorical tradition, then, is quite distinct from what might be called a Latino or Hispanic rhetorical tradition. This critical attitude entails not simply instructing students about this tradition, but making connections between the tradition and the present, with special regards to race, the nation, polemics, identity, gender politics, technology and community organization.

The deployment of a historical trajectory in this dissertation is informed by the role of Chicano Studies historians like Rudolfo Acuña, their dialectical and epistemological role in crafting the discipline, as well as Cedric Robinson's analysis of W.E.B. DuBois' revolutionary historiography in *Black Marxism*.<sup>29</sup> While challenging the ideological mysticism of Calvinism and Manifest Destiny, Robinson recognizes how DuBois re-centers the Black masses as a primary agent of social change. This helps me theorize on the rhetorical history of Chicano struggles, the ChRT, and the importance of Chicano/Latino youth as a "mass," a subject of study, and as an important audience of Chicano rhetoric. Ultimately, historiography, historical perspective and re-interpreting

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<sup>29</sup> Like Chicano historians during the establishment of Chicano Studies, Du Bois was inspired by Marxism, and importantly challenged the dominant narrative of American "exceptionalism" as explained by Cedric Robinson in *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Pp 196-197). For instance, the flight of masses from the South during the Civil War were re-interpreted as a Mass Labor Boycott, and the victory of the North was attributed to this as well as the participation of Black soldiers in the North's war effort, information previously neglected and denied by Anglo US historians.

history (rhetorically) are central to a needed “decolonial imaginary” that Emma Perez theorizes. According to Perez, history must constantly be re-visited and re-articulated in a way that excavates voices lost in *his-story*’s “interstitial spaces,” and re-imagines the past for the purposes of decolonizing and liberating people in the present. Perez’ decolonial imaginary addresses new and changing audiences, as a way to “see (history) with another ‘I/eye.’”<sup>30</sup> This is also important for those of us who understand what it’s like to re-teach a course or subject several times and to search for new ways to make the “old” material “fresh” and relevant, or to redesign a course’s readings entirely for purposes in the present.

Additionally, my rhetorical project has contributions to make to Chican@ historiography. For example, in chapter four (Nascent Epistemologies) I argue that early Chican@ Literature employed a “patchwork” reconstruction of Mesoamerican, Mexican and Southwest figures, tropes and histories to construct a new decolonizing Chicano history, one that would help mobilize masses of youth activists and participants. This purposeful re-arrangement of narrative I refer to as a “prosthetic history.” In examples such as Corky Gonzales’ epic poem “I am Joaquin” or Silvia Morales’ film “Chicana,” prosthetic histories were a rhetorical device, attaching together sections of Mesoamerican, Mexican, U.S. and Southwest histories in order to visualize the past for a movement in the present. Prosthetic histories were central to the persuasive arguments that constructed Chican@ Studies. Rhetoric and history, ultimately, are grounds for ideological (dialectical) analysis and polemics that transform knowledge. This is tied to

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<sup>30</sup> Perez, Emma. *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas Into History*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999. Pp. 4-7.

Sharon Crowley's argument in "Of Gorgias and Grammatology" that rhetoric is not an art of seeking truth nor a "slave of description"; instead it is an art of the use of language, "in order that language may be exploited to its fullest potential as a medium for creating illusions and exciting the emotions."<sup>31</sup> While many might immediately respond that campaigns for Chican@ and Ethnic Studies were centrally about other goals, rhetoric uniquely recognizes that the visceral effects in "creating illusions and exciting emotions" were in fact necessary steps in motivating and mobilizing groups to accomplish these goals. In a similar argument Susan Jarratt challenges the privileged position of *logos* in rhetoric by foregrounding the community-building aspects of *nomos* – customs and collective knowledge.<sup>32</sup> For Jarratt, *nomos* privileges the historical wisdoms of community in discursive negotiations. Bringing rhetoric's creative and polemic attributes into sharper focus helps bring into view the dialectical operations of this tradition, its way of challenging dominant and dominating narratives.

Historian Emma Perez' *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas Into History* also strongly informs my historiographical methods and rhetorical analysis as well.<sup>33</sup> While she critically excavates a history of Chicanas and delineates four modes of interpretation traditionally used in Chicana/o historiography, she pays special attention to interpretation, rhetorical dialectics of Mexican women revolutionaries, and terministic screens. Her analysis is influenced by rhetoric theorist Kenneth Burke's concept of

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<sup>31</sup> Crowley, Sharon. "Of Gorgias and Grammatology." *College Composition and Communication*. Vol. 30, No. 3 (Oct., 1979), pp 279-284.

<sup>32</sup> Jarrat. Pp 31-61.

<sup>33</sup> Perez, Emma. *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas Into History*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999.

language as a “terministic screen” which selects, reflects and deflects realities expressed by language.<sup>34</sup> Perez recognizes how historians traditionally rely on tropes to articulate history, and generate a “hierarchy of significance” by choosing certain events and omitting others. Her style of searching the interstitial spaces of history, among “the shadows,”<sup>35</sup> allows her to elaborate on Mexican women’s rhetoric and write them back into history. Perez work on Mexican women in the PLM notably highlights women’s strategy of starting a revolution within a revolution - what she calls a “dialectics of doubling”<sup>36</sup> – working from a precarious social space, “trapped between the imaginary rhetoric that declared their freedom and the imagined reality that ignored it.”<sup>37</sup> Perez’ critical approach to history and historiography, and her attention to tropes and the dialectical work of women’s rhetoric provide a framework for my own critical excavation of Chican@ rhetorical acts.

### **Xican@ Epistemic Concepts: Indigenismo, Nepantla, Ollin and the Xican@ Paradigm**

If rhetoric is the counterpart to dialectic, as Aristotle formulated, we can deduce that, in our present, the production of knowledge in universities and other cultural spaces

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<sup>34</sup> Burke, Kenneth. *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1966. Pp 44-57.

<sup>35</sup> Perez, *The Decolonial Imaginary*, p. 6, 12. Vorris Nunley emphasized the concept of “the shadows” in a 2012 seminar at UC Riverside to bring attention to terministic screens and dominant interpretations or erasures of things deemed excess. Latino groups such as the Association of Mexican American Educators (AMAE) have also employed this metaphor to describe the marginalized status of contemporary Latino and undocumented youth in schools.

<sup>36</sup> Perez, *The Decolonial Imaginary*, p 59.

<sup>37</sup> Perez, *The Decolonial Imaginary*, p 65.

is accomplished in part if not primarily through formalized and rigorous rhetorical exchanges. The public and private university in the United States is the place where knowledge is vetted and produced according to the Western tradition. I want to build on this enthymeme by arguing that Chican@ Studies and Ethnic Studies emerged not only as adjuncts of social movements, but that these fields produced a disruptive critique and a dialectical challenge to the Eurocentric tradition of academia in the United States. As Chicana/o Studies developed groups of scholars, a body of literature and a multidisciplinary critical style, it established a disciplinary tradition housed in American universities (some would argue in the basement of academia, but nevertheless in the house). The multidisciplinary and intersectional critique around race, culture, class, gender, sexuality and history that emerged from Chican@ and Ethnic Studies spaces have also contributed the “rigorous rhetorical exchange” to the epistemological tradition of the north American university. But Chicana/o Studies is also an evolution of an indigenous Chican@ rhetorical tradition: regional and hemispheric indigenous concepts have been at the center of Chican@ customs (*nomos*) and methods of knowledge production. Below, I want to focus on several concepts that influence my thinking of epistemology, particularly non-Western Chican@ concepts grounded in indigeneity and decolonization.

A more contemporary and indigenous expression of Chican@ identity is the spelling of the term with and X. This expression is rooted in the early 1970’s San Diego group “Toltecas en Aztlan” involving the Fresno poet Juan Felipe Herrera, but was re-introduced by a new generation of student activists and artists in the late 1980’s and early



1990's in Berkeley and Los Angeles.<sup>38</sup> "Xican@" emphasizes indigenous identity and decolonization, and some say at the expense of geographic boundaries; the term is not tied exclusively to Mexicans although it is derivative of the term "Chicano," and rooted in the geography of the heavily Mexican and indigenous U.S. Southwest region. As such it captures the more fluid expression of Chican@ identity, also found in Chicana feminist and queer concepts such as Ana Castillo's concept of "Xicanisma," and Gloria Anzaldúa's "mestiza consciousness" (albeit without the troubled history of the term mestizo, associated with a genocidal erasure of indigenous communities in mid 20<sup>th</sup> century Mexico).<sup>39</sup> I use this spelling of the term in this section and in my conclusion to signal current evolutions in Chican@ identity and the growing emphasis on indigeneity and decolonization within Chicana/o Studies and the Chican@ rhetorical tradition.

Like the reverberations of the feminine turn in the term "Chicana," theorized by Norma Alarcon, the term "Xican@" also evokes disturbances in ways of understanding history, culture, gender, sexuality and knowledge systems. When the term took flight in the early 1990's it progressively became associated with movements of that period such as the 1992 Quincentennial consciousness-raising, the 1992 LA Uprising, the 1993 UCLA student hunger strike for Chicano Studies, the massive high school walkouts

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<sup>38</sup> Herrera, Juan Felipe. *rebozos of love we have woven, sudor de pueblos on our back*. San Diego, CA: Toltecas en Aztlan Publications, 1974. The earliest spelling I have recorded is in the dedication, last page of this book. As early as 1989 members of U.C. Berkeley MEChA, Chicano Secret Service and Chispas magazine produced zine covers, art work, graffiti, tattoos and buttons using the term "Xicano." Friends in the hip hop group Aztlan Underground migrated the concept to Los Angeles soon after, printing t-shirts and creating Xicano Records and Film.

<sup>39</sup> Bonfil Batalla, Guillermo. *Mexico Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1996. Pp 108-120.

against anti-immigrant Proposition 187 in California, pro-Zapatista uprising protests and other phenomena. The Quincentennial context was especially influential in raising critical consciousness around race, colonization, Eurocentricity, and indigenous identity. Protests and events like the hemispheric “Peace and Dignity Run” (uniting indigenous communities in the Americas) politicized masses of youth, bringing them into history’s spotlight and into a meditation on an increasingly indigenous Xican@ identity. The writer Elizabeth “Betita” Martinez reflected on this exact concern in *Z Magazine* after the success of the UCLA hunger strike:

“If a new movement is to emerge it needs an agenda that will... move beyond narrow cultural nationalism and see itself as Raza or Latino, not just Chicano. It must also ... build serious non-sectarian coalitions with students of color and whites. It needs to be internationalist - grappling with class contradictions - while remembering a powerful need for a sense of positive group identity, especially among youth. Such an agenda needs to take on sexism and homophobia... Above all it must address the realities of poor and working class Latino life today, including the impact of immigration... *Indigenismo* without opportunism could sustain a new movement of young Chicanas and Chicanos by giving them an empowering sense of self-discovery with responsibility. It could encourage new organizations that attract youth on the basis of life’s inter-connectedness and idealism rather than the military-style titles and attire that speak of domination”<sup>40</sup>

Martinez’ dialectical criticisms of past terms, worldviews and political organizing expressed a self-critical attitude necessary for Xican@ culture and epistemology to advance. A key dialectic discussed here is the tension between maintaining a Mexican/Chican@ culture and historical memory, and the increased diversity of the Latino population due in part to interventionist military campaigns in Central America

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<sup>40</sup> Martinez, Elizabeth. “Seeds of a New Movement.” *Z Magazine*. 1993, p. 56.

during the 1980's. Grounding a term's meaning in decolonization and indigeneity therefore may be more substantial than the grappling over capricious colonialist borders.

*Nepantla* is another powerful concept, coined by Aztecs - undergoing worldview transformations during Spain's early colonization - that captures the "in-between-ness" of Chicana@ reality. The Aztec concept was appropriated widely by Chicana@ artists and writers such as Gloria Anzaldua. I choose the term *Nepantla* over a similar concept – "mestizo@ consciousness" - because the term "mestizo" is troubled with colonialist legacies and genocidal intent.<sup>41</sup> *Nepantla* encapsulates much of Anzaldua's writing on "mestiza consciousness," and also brings in various commentators including artists. Anzaldua explains how the Aztec *nepantla* meant "torn between ways" and contains epistemic operations, especially in her description of how Xicana@s operate in "pluralistic modes:"<sup>42</sup>

La mestiza constantly has to shift out of habitual formations; from convergent thinking, analytical reasoning that tends to use rationality to move toward a single goal (a Western mode), to divergent thinking, characterized by movement away from set patterns and goals and towards a more whole perspective, one that includes rather than excludes (79).

Describing these shifts and "ways of seeing" explains how *nepantla* does the dialectical work of synthesis in a Chicana knowledge production, particularly in how it enters spaces of conflict and embraces ambiguity and contradiction in order to understand elements and

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<sup>41</sup> Bonfil Batalla, Guillermo (note 18). Also see Forbes, Jack D. "The Mestizo Concept" (unpublished essay). <http://inxinachtliinmilpa.blogspot.com/2013/01/the-mestizo-concept-product-of-european.html>

<sup>42</sup> Anzaldua, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1987. Pp 77-91. See also, Anzaldua, G., "Chicana Artists: Exploring *Nepantla*, el Lugar de la Frontera" in *The Latino Studies Reader: Culture, Economy and Society*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 1998. Pp 163-169.

challenge oppression. Anzaldua is widely read and recognized by rhetoric scholars – included as the sole U.S. Latin@ entry in *The Rhetorical Tradition* - as exemplary of a Chicana@ “borderlands rhetoric.”<sup>43</sup> Anzaldua has entered critical conversations on Chicana@ and Native American tensions and connections<sup>44</sup>, connected Chicana@ culture and identity to writing<sup>45</sup>, tied writing and culture to spirituality<sup>46</sup>, and ushered or commented on other epistemic concepts like *conocimiento* (a spiritual process of inquiry), *la facultad* (the ability acquired through hardship to reach deeper understanding, similar to DuBois’ double consciousness), and Coyolxauhqui (based on the Aztec moon goddess “torn apart” by her brother, the war god, this metaphor contains both Chicana fragmentation and reconstruction).

In the usage of indigenous language and knowledges and multi-lingual codeswitching, Anzaldua is preceded by numerous noted poets and writers such as Jose Montoya, Alurista, Jose Antonio Burciaga, Lorna Dee Cervantes, Luis Valdez, Ricardo

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<sup>43</sup> Bizzell, Patricia, and Bruce Herzberg, eds.. *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1990. Also see Interview with Andrea Lunsford. Damian Baca in *Mestiz@ Transcripts* provides a valuable critical assessment of Anzaldua’s injunction into the second edition of the canonical text *The Rhetorical Tradition*; in particular, he discusses how much of rhetorical scholarship, including the text, sees the field “triumphantly advance(ing) East-to-West across the planet,” her entry as the sole “indigenous Chicano” person, overlooking her “intervention” in Western global/rhetorical expansion. Pp 122-132.

<sup>44</sup> Hernandez-Avila, Ines. “Speaking Across the Divide.” *SAIL: Studies in American Indian Literatures*. Series 2, Vol 15 (3 & 4). Fall 2003- Winter 2004. Pp 1-22. Hernandez-Avila’s introduction is followed by an interview with Anzaldua addressing questions of Indian ancestry, Chicanos as Indians, why Chicana@s go to Aztec legacy, accusations of Anzaldua appropriating Indian identity, and other tensions and intersections between Indians and Chicanas/os.

<sup>45</sup> Anzaldua, Gloria. *Borderlands*. especially “Tlilli, Tlappalli: The Path of the Red and Black Ink.” Pp 65-75; See also “Putting Coyolxauhqui Together: A Creative Process.”

<sup>46</sup> Anzaldua, Gloria. “now let us shift ... the path of *conocimiento*... inner work, public acts” in *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*. Gloria Anzaldua and A. Keeting, Eds. New York: Routledge, 2002. Pp 540-578.

Sanchez and Juan Felipe Herrera. Presently, much scholarship and pedagogy exist around Xican@ indigenous concepts. Cherrie Moraga continues to produce scholarship weaving together writing, liberation and indigenous ways of knowing.<sup>47</sup> Laura Perez' work on Chicana art conflates Chicana artists as tlacuilos/tlaminimes (Aztec scribes/scholar/rhetors), contemporary visionaries who "interpret the signs of the time." Emerging scholars such as Silvia Toscano Villanueva and Heidi M. Coronado apply what they call "indigenous modalities" interweaving Chican@ Literature, writing, dreams and indigenous ceremony into teaching.

In the present, Xican@ educators continue to excavate, recover and operationalize ancient indigenous customs and knowledge systems in the service of writing, teaching and producing knowledge. In a special issue of the education journal *The Urban Review*, Silvia Toscano Villanueva was one of the first to apply and document the use of the "Xican@ Paradigm," a four-part pedagogical methodology invented and practiced by teachers from the now-defunct Mexican American Studies Department in Tucson, Arizona.<sup>48</sup> Based on the ancient Mesoamerican Nahui Ollin ("the Four Directions"), the Xican@ Paradigm emphasizes practices of self-reflection, knowledge, the will to act, and transformation, and recasts the four eras represented in the center of the Aztec Calendar

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<sup>47</sup> Moraga, Cherrie. "Out of Our Revolutionary Minds: Towards a Pedagogy of Revolt." *Loving In the War Years: lo que nunca paso por sus labios. Second edition.* Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2000. Pp 170-190. *The Last Generation.* Boston, MA: South End Press, 1993. From this text "Queer Aztlan: The Re-Formation of Chicano Tribe" is influential and widely read.

<sup>48</sup> Toscano Villanueva, Silvia. "Teaching as a Healing Craft: Decolonizing the Classroom and Creating Spaces of Hopeful Resistance through Chicano-Indigenous Pedagogical Praxis," *The Urban Review: Issues and Ideas in Public Education; Special Issue: Book Banning, Censorship, and Ethnic Studies in Urban Schools.* Vol. 45, No. 1, March 2013. Luis Urrieta Jr. and Margarita Machado-Casas, Eds.. Pp 23-40.

as metaphors for these energies. The concept of ollin in particular, associated by the Aztecs with earthquakes and movement, visually captures the entanglement between two elements and resembles the twisted sections of barbed wire (see figure below). It was widely utilized and reproduced by artists and cultural activists during the early Chicano Movement (as in the term MEChA where M stands for Movimiento/movement). Its association with great historical changes or eras (visibly detailed within the Aztec Calendar) was adopted by a dynamic generation involved in a historical “movement” to re-name, re-invent itself and change the world. Indigenous Chican@s including Tupak Enrique (co-founder of the Tonatierra group in Phoenix) and members of MEChA convened in Bakersfield in the early 1990’s to reevaluate the movement’s goals with special regard to the purpose of education. During follow up discussions they outlined three of the four quadrants of the Xican@ Paradigm. Years later in Tucson, teachers involved in these earlier discussions collaborated with Tupak Enrique and continued building on this model, adding a fourth quadrant, to establish the Xican@ Paradigm. In 1998 Sean Arce began teaching “American History/Chicano Perspectives.” The demand for the classes grew, and the Hispanic Studies Department (later changed to Raza) was established. The Xican@ Paradigm methodology soon led to unprecedented success. Studies by Nolan Cabrera and Christine Sleeter later demonstrate how the Raza Studies classes led to increased student engagement, self-knowledge, self-esteem, an academic identity, high test scores and a high college enrollment rate.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Cabrera, Nolan L., Jeffrey Milem, Ozan Jaquette, and Ronald W. Marx. “Missing the (student achievement) Forest for all the (political) Trees: Empiricism and the Mexican American Studies Controversy in Tucson.” *American Educational Research Journal*.

Tucson's Xican@ Paradigm was the central methodology operating in their classrooms.<sup>50</sup> The four quadrants contained Aztec deities representing the four "energies" which in turn represented stages or processes in the classroom. The paradigm was not treated as a mechanical predictable process, but was tied to lessons and pedagogy, energies often overlapping, as well as the experience of individual students moving along their educational journey. The first quadrant, Tezcatlipoca ("smoking mirror") represents "self reflection," often a starting point, calling on students to center and reflect on their own experiences and identity before moving forward. The second quadrant, Quetzalcoatl ("feathered serpent") stands for "precious knowledge," and represents the discovery of self-knowledge through the content of curriculum, texts, readings, materials, but also importantly it stands for the experiences and funds of knowledge each student brings into the classroom, as well as the recognition of communities being a source of wisdom and knowledge. The third quadrant, Huitzilopochtli ("hummingbird on the left") represents "the will to act" and calls attention to learning's ultimate demand for action, praxis, captured in the image of the beating heart of the hummingbird furiously flapping its wings. Classroom learning in Tucson connected to student lives and communities and frequently led to work/interaction outside of the classroom. The fourth quadrant, Xipe

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December 2014, Vol. 51, No. 6, pp 1084-1118. Sleeter, Christine E.. "The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies: A Research Review." Washington, D.C.: The National Education Association, 2011. These studies were cited by lawyers during the programs 9<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeals case in January of 2015.

<sup>50</sup> Acosta, Curtis. "Developing Critical Consciousness: Resistance Literature In a Chicano Literature Class." *English Journal*. Vol. 97, No 2 (Nov. 2007). Pp 36-42. Also see Sean Arce. "Xicana/o Indigenous Epistemologies: Towards a Decolonizing and Liberatory Education for Xicana/o Youth." In forthcoming *Whitewashing American Education: The New Culture Wars in Ethnic Studies*. Praeger Publishers, 2016.

Totec (the “flayed skin god”) represented “transformation” and renewal, calling attention to observing the effects of the will to act, evaluation of activity, or following through on action in order to manifest change in the world. The transformation could also be observed in the transformation of the student her/himself.

These examples demonstrate how Chican@ artists, activists and educators have recovered indigenous concepts and reformulated them as epistemic concepts that uniquely produce knowledge. As Native Americans, Latin@s and Xican@s in the U.S. continue to identify with their indigenous roots, these concepts and metaphors will increasingly operate in culture and the epistemological project of Chican@ Studies.

Finally, these concepts also contribute to my thinking of Chicano rhetoric, dialectical activity and knowledge production in Xican@ Studies as co-evolutionary with Euro-American traditions. In the concluding chapter to *Mestiz@ Scripts*, Baca critiques Eurocentricism’s myth of modernity (that European colonization justifiably brought progress, rhetoric and civilization to a barbaric “New World”),<sup>51</sup> referencing Walter Mignolo’s ideas on co-existence, that rhetoric and other technologies in the pre-Hispanic Americas existed in a “co-evolutionary” relationship with the West. A Chican@ rhetoric – or a Xican@ rhetoric – therefore utilizes indigenous concepts that are not derivatives or strict corollaries of European concepts but function in parallel or unique cultural ways. While the work of ollin, for example, resembles the dialectic and does the work that dialectic activity does, it is not fair to say that it is the “indigenous equivalent.” We can say however, that ollin is a Xican@ dialectical activity, a concept describing “movement”

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<sup>51</sup> Baca, Damian. *Mestiz@ Scripts*. Pp. 143.



or tension between two parts. Ollin also differs in its way of signaling two entities in tension, yet potentially co-existing in an interrelated harmony. This gesture is reminiscent of Jameson's emphasis on synthesis, the active part of the dialectic, where the hard thinking, work and follow through occur. In Jameson's allegory of the ship stuck in the ice, a "stoppage" calls attention to the contemplative aspect of synthesis, the focusing of attention on not only the problem at hand but on understanding opposing sides and arguments as a prerequisite to moving into action. The self-reflection requires acquired knowledge, further study, intuition (a type of reliance on custom), community interaction (*nomos*), and organization (of resources and community) before and while stepping into action. And while self-reflection should lead to transformative action, this action must be understood as consequential; action, in other words, must be taken accompanied with accountability and a vision towards transforming and decolonizing the world.

### **Technology "Invents" Community: Photography, Newsprint, Internet & Multi-Modal Composition Theory**

Another central theoretical consideration in this dissertation is the role of technology in the Chican@ rhetorical tradition, how rhetors and groups accessed and repurposed the available means to communications technology of the period in order to arrange and disseminate arguments, messages or calls to action. Traversing three recent centuries of rhetorical activity is a challenge that requires theoretical versatility and a meditation on contemporary shifts and innovations around technology and technology use by Chican@s. I weave into this analysis emerging concepts of multi-modal composition in order to understand how composition scholars might grapple with and

utilize emerging technologies in the composition classroom. Rhetoric scholars currently look to multimodal composition as an avenue for understanding how multi-media, technology and rhetoric converge in composition classrooms. By recognizing and centering multimodal composition, instructors embrace emerging and popular technologies but don't relinquish the focus on invention, communication, literacy, arrangement, craft, clarity and persuasion. Tethering technology to multi-modality allows for me to connect a historical analysis of Chican@ technology use to contemporary technologies, including but not limited to digital technologies. The entire dissertation, in fact, investigates but also meditates on the intersections of rhetoric, composition, and technology use by Chican@s over the last three centuries.

Early Chican@ polemicists and interlocutors interacted uniquely with communication technology of their respective eras as they sought to defend, unify or empower Mexicans in the United States. A rhetorical self-awareness proves fruitful because it has the capacity to understand the relationship of literacy, language and technology in social movements, and to reflect critically on how rhetoric does “work” on audiences, and how its circulation (through technology) contributes to knowledge production (epistemology) and imagining communities. Rhetoric and literary scholars are key to understanding how Mexicans in the Southwest interacted with technology to “imagine community” (Benedict Anderson) and produce “structures of feeling” (Raymond Williams) that were often counter claims, *dissoi logoi* (Susan Jarratt) to Anglo American narratives of nation, the other, and Manifest Destiny. Specifically, I look at photography, the printing press (novels, newspaper, pamphlets), film and ultimately the

internet as technologies utilized by Chican@s rhetors over three centuries. A “Chicano poetic consciousness” in the 1970’s, for instance, was the result of Chican@s innovating discursive methods, repurposing technologies and art forms, and emitting a unique style (rasquachismo) within a temporal *kairos* (the opportune moment) that politicized that generation. Ultimately, I consider the critical and rhetorical role of youth and students in creating culture, producing knowledge and building Chicano Studies. By reading the ideological development of students in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, with an eye on emerging technologies, I track the progression towards a more critical and innovative Chicano/Ethnic Studies epistemology, one that interacts with a generation fully immersed in digital culture.

Multimodal composition theory, like digital pedagogy theory in general, is a fledgling and fast-developing body of work, but it provides a critical and versatile way to look at the role of digital technology and earlier technologies in rhetoric and composition. In her introduction to *Multimodal Composition: A Critical Sourcebook* (2014), Claire Lutkewitte defines multimodal composition as “communication using multiple modes that work purposely to create meaning.”<sup>52</sup> Brittany Van Meale adds, “multimodal texts are works that use more than just words and letters to communicate a thought— that may include audio, video, photographs, drawings—basically, any visual element used to supplement the text in some purposeful way.”<sup>53</sup> Shipka adds that multimodal texts may include “print texts, digital media, live or videotaped performances, old photographs,

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<sup>52</sup> Lutkewitte, Claire. *Multimodal Composition: A Critical Sourcebook*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2014. P 2.

<sup>53</sup> VanMaele, Brittany. “Digital Life Place Narratives” (blog). 2011. <https://multimodalcomposition.wordpress.com>

‘intact’ objects, repurposed (i.e., transformed or remediated) objects, etc.” The multimodal can be the building blocks of a composed message or they can be any visual, digital or audio element used to supplement the text in some purposeful way.

Multimodal composition thus allows for a critical look at technology but does not limit itself to our current technologies, and this allows for a historical recognition of the effects of various technologies on communication over time. While current digital technologies flourish in a vicious market that rapidly re-invents the ways we communicate daily (not to mention how different age groups and social groups use technologies differently within the same period), multimodality allows me to return to classical rhetoric’s more stable faculties of invention and arrangement. “Invents” stands above in quotes because rhetorical inventing like imagining, as explained by Benedict Anderson, is a process of messages being socially and technologically constructed. As a social construct involving politics and power, rhetoric and technology are capable of turning citizens into patriots, of persuading individuals to see enemies in strangers, and of convincing audiences into risking death by enlisting their lives for the idea of a “united” nation, an imagined community. On the other hand, communities can be real; that is, based on real traditions and histories, or based on shared experiences, real oppressive conditions, or struggles over real resources and privileges. My project therefore requires the versatile and critical approaches that multimodal composition theory makes possible at the intersection between technology, rhetoric and invention.

But technology is itself also an invention, in the rhetorical sense: it is put together and made to operate by individuals, groups, to persuade audiences, even as the

technological message is also interpreted and re-shaped by listening audiences. Technological messages are aimed at specific audiences and these are interpreted in various ways, shift from their original motive, are made malleable and meaningful by individuals and audiences, and made to operate possibly differently than originally intended by the inventors of the technology, or by the rhetors. The lifetime of a technological message, like an 1874 photograph of Tiburcio Vasquez, travels through time and space to take on different meanings.<sup>54</sup> In our time, schools are named after Mexicans once considered anti-American terrorists (Tiburcio Vasquez), and an academic journal at a major university is recently named after a Mexican revolutionary newspaper (“Regeneración”) whose editors this country persecuted, convicted as spies and transformed into martyrs. Although technological access has always been an issue, the manner in which Chicano rhetors and audiences interact with technology is always political, often economically constrained, and unique in meaning-making.

A Chican@ rhetorical tradition takes cues from the experiences and studies of other groups in the Americas effected by colonization, particularly Native Americans and African Americans. Conversely, my project takes cues and benefits from insights gleaned from African American and other Ethnic rhetoric scholars. In *Race, Rhetoric and Technology*, Adam Banks describes how many wrongly presume technology to be neutral even as (lack of) access to technology by African American and other ethnic groups has

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<sup>54</sup> Ironically, a lynching photo of Vasquez does not exist. His portrait, however, does and contains new meanings in the present. Ricardo Flores Magon’s friends also used the postcard, of his body in vigil in Los Angeles, to raise funds for the delivery of his corpse to central Mexico. “Ricardo Flores Magon: muerte, traslado y honras funebres” video lecture by Dr. David Flores Magon, 2015; <https://vimeo.com/123464751> (28:00).

been conveniently overlooked. He writes: “African American rhetorical practices call attention to the ways that the interfaces of American life... have always been bound up in contests over language, and have always been rhetorical... toward demonstrably tangible ends” (45). He calls this issue of unequal access the Digital Divide, and argues for a “meaningful access” that aims to transform how we see and use technology. He neatly lays out three key reasons for reading African American rhetoric traditions technologically, aside from the traditional curricular precept of “appreciation of Black contributions to, challenges to, and even transformations of, the nation.”<sup>55</sup> First, a technological reading provides a “richer set of tools for analyzing speeches and texts” in the tradition. Secondly, technological content brings a “wider set of texts, images, sounds, and issues” to the classroom. Thirdly, this union of an Ethnic rhetorics and technology produces “the chance to develop the arguments and policies that will end the Digital Divide.” His analysis of how Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. rhetorically interacted with technology (television in particular) informs my work, particularly Malcolm X’s “jacking access” – or a functional access – to new technology, his critical awareness of television’s demand for sensationalism, and his interjection of Black critical thought and public pedagogy into a popular discourse controlled by Euroamericans.<sup>56</sup> Banks’ work illuminates how I analyze strategic uses of technology by Chican@s – whether they be Tiburcio Vasquez’ use of the photograph, Ricardo Flores Magon’s use of the newspaper, or Arizona students’ use of the internet - and how these

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<sup>55</sup> Banks, Adam J.. *Race, Rhetoric, and Technology: Searching for Higher Ground*. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 2005. Pp 39-45.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. Pp 47-61.

uses have everything to do with power, access, circulation and intervention (“jacking access”).

Numerous scholars on the visual inform my work, in particular work on circulation and the accumulation of meaning in iconic images by Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites.<sup>57</sup> Similar themes are addressed in the work of Roland Barthes, in particular his essay “Rhetoric of the Image,” which elaborates on the juxtaposition of image and text, the relationship between its denotation and connotation, and the circulation of meaning in mass media.<sup>58</sup> Susan Sontag (*On Photography*) explains the meaning-making technology of photography and how photographs can contain a mysterious agency of their own.<sup>59</sup> The connection between ancestral indigenous ceremony (particularly the *tlamatini* sacred Aztec rhetors), Chicana artists and delivery of meaning is the focus of work by Laura Perez (*Chicana Art*). The work of W.T. Mitchell (*The Pictorial Turn*), Ken Gonzalez-Day (*Lynching in the West*), and Benedict Anderson (*Imagined Communities*) help me theorize around image and technology in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Tomas Ybarra-Frausto’s work, especially his oft-cited essay “The Chicano Movement and the Emergence of a Chicano Poetic Consciousness” helps me explain how media technology was used in the mid twentieth century to persuade and politicize mass Chican@ audiences. More current work on technology in urban schools, such as the work of Arizona MAS teachers and emerging scholarship like *Critical Media Pedagogy: Teaching for Achievement in City Schools* (2013) by Garcia and Morrell, help me look at how current students interact with new

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<sup>57</sup> Lucaites, John and Robert Hariman. *No Caption Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

<sup>58</sup> Barthes, Roland. *Image, Music, Text*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977.

<sup>59</sup> Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973.

medias and what a critical media pedagogy that bridges generations and technologies might look like.

Finally, Kathleen Blake Yancey, in her influential Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) Chair's Address in 2004, "Made Not Only in Words: Composition in a New Key," brought critical attention to a "literacy of the screen," the conditions of digital technology, and the possibilities for a new "model of composing." Her lecture-turned-paper expressed some of the lessons of multi-modal composition: the "deicity" of current composition, that the meaning of a composition changes over time and space and interface.<sup>60</sup> Arguing for this "screen literacy" to stay in the charge of rhetoric and composition, even as composition instructors need learn technology use from students, Yancey emphasized a pedagogy that recognizes "a writing that is social," raising issues around pedagogy, circulation, interaction, intertextuality and revisiting rhetoric. This last lesson, for instance, points out how composition instruction which once abandoned two of the five canons of rhetoric - memorization and delivery – needed to recover and re-interpret delivery for this new technologic age of writing. Her definition of "envisionment," the re-purposing of technology, helps me study how texts/artifacts (like Tiburcio Vasquez' image or el Plan de Santa Barbara) function rhetorically in their moment as well as through other times, spaces and interfaces. Critical

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<sup>60</sup> Yancey, Kathleen Blake. "Made Not Only in Words: Composition in a New Key" in *Multimodal Composition: A Critical Sourcebook*. Claire Lutkewitte, Ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2014. Pp 62-88. In the published form of the lecture, Yancey explains how the three versions – the 2004 CCCC speech accompanied by two power point slides running simultaneous, an online presentation, and the published version of the speech – all reach different audiences, at different times, in different ways, with different meanings and effects.



awareness of circulation, human activity, the speed of technologies, and intertextuality – the way writers and audiences reference other writers, speakers, texts and medias – is key to new understandings of how a Chican@ rhetorical tradition repurposes technology, as well as how rhetoric and technology interact within composition instruction. Composition “in a new key,” in other words, has everything to do with re-purposing pedagogy as well as technology.

The first chapter continues the theorization of my dissertation by elaborating on the dialectic, spatial and rhetorical contours of my theory of pleito rhetoric. Student activists from the 1960’s to the present frequently operated through a dialectic of militancy and language. As a method of persuasion on its own terms, with an emphasis on a group’s self-determination, *pleito* speaks truth and desire to power, as in Malcolm X’s emphatic message that a community will achieve its goals “by any means necessary.” The etymology of the term *pleito* is rooted in a legal conflict, or entering into a legal dispute with someone. Although the word originated in Spain/Europe, its etymology in the Americas has a much different content. *Pleito* rhetoric employed three key rhetorical “languages”: the bilingualism (spanglish, calo) of Raza communities, “street fighting words,” and academic standard English (especially expressions used by university administration). The counterpart to *pleito* rhetoric was organizing and militancy as in the legacy of the Third World Strikes of 1969 which initiated the construction of Ethnic Studies. But *pleito* rhetoric is not only a rhetoric of violence and, like mestiz@ rhetoric, invents from oppositional and decolonizing ways of thinking in the Southwest. Thus,

*pleito* is also informed by Gloria Anzaldua, especially concepts like *la facultad*, *conocimientos* (a spiritual form of inquiry) and opposition to “linguistic terrorism.” Similar to Lu Ming Mao’s explanation of the discourse of *shu* (reciprocity), where conflict marshalls a bi-directional discursive engagement via face-work, *pleito* rhetoric is invested in productive conflict that leads to self-determination. This chapter connects this rhetorical self-determination to third world liberation movements, Frantz Fanon and Chicano poet Jose Montoya.



Figure 1.1: Original cover of Ruiz de Burton novel. Figures 1.2 & 1.3: Portraits of captured Vasquez.

The second chapter of my dissertation delineates an early moment of the Chican@ rhetorical tradition by looking at the period following the Mexican American War, the social status of Mexicans in the Southwest and their response to subjugation. This project aims to revisit this era of U.S. expansion, as well as the dissonant rhetoric of 19<sup>th</sup> century Mexican writers and the social bandit Tiburcio Vazquez. I wish to highlight Vasquez because his politically charged pronouncements against US invasion of Mexican territories innovatively used of the latest Victorian technology, photography, for

persuasive purposes. This chapter examines rhetoric's interaction with technology and the epistemological contributions of Vasquez' visual rhetoric to the Chican@ rhetorical tradition.

Edward Said helps me launch a discussion into the role of text and image in colonizing projects. Discussing textual invasions reveals key concerns in this project, such as the role the image, the photograph, and stereotypes play during colonization or invasion. In *Orientalism*, a seminal text on literature and colonialism, Said identified "orientalism" as a European hegemonic discourse, the West's production of knowledge about (and thus power over) its first colonies in the Middle East. These "scholarly invasions" were an epistemological project that sought to define and control geographic space as it described the bodies and practices of the native occupants (the Other). By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, generations of European leaders and scholars had effectively deployed a "mobile army of metaphors" capable of spreading "truths" which Nietzsche explained are simply illusions embodied in language (Said 203). This kind of production of knowledge is not unlike the popular rhetoric produced in the Southwest of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century spread through travel literature, postcards and a fledgling English language newspaper industry.

Vasquez' portraits embody the dissonant rhetoric of social tensions. While English language newspapers indicted his image based on physiognomy's pseudo science, Vasquez' multiple and dignified "pose of the condemned" served as a dissonant visual rhetoric which Mexicans identified with, contributing to the "public sentiment

(that) must be aroused" that Ida B. Wells believed could change laws and attitudes.<sup>61</sup> Ken Gonzales Day's work in *Lynching in the West* sheds light on large scale lynching of Mexicans during this era through his investigation of public records, literature and postcards, and moves towards the "picturing of theory" that W.T. Mitchell insists on. Similar work, such as Sandra De La Loza's public art also tampers with image, archive and historical narratives, engaging a critical discussion on the history of the West. In one piece she contrasts conflicting historical narratives and public sentiments, counter-posing the Anglo-American "Los Angeles Star" coverage of the lynching of Los Angeles rebel Juan Flores (and his "gang") with the account by the Mexican newspaper "El Clamor Publico." Unlike the demonization of Mexican crime by the LA Times, the rhetoric of "El Clamor Publico" privileged the desire to defend institutions of democracy, and sought to influence something they believed to be (at times) more powerful than the law, namely, public sentiment.

This project conjures the multiple poses of Tiburcio Vasquez and the image of the condemned man awaiting sentencing, signing photographs and selling them to visitors at the window of his cell. This money paid for his legal defense, which kept him alive for a year. Susan Sontag's *On Photography* informs these photographs and their "grammar and ethics of seeing." Photos manipulate, interpret, and since the outset of the technology, are used by the state for validating and evidence. The photograph, she writes, also has a predatory quality "in its ability to turn people into objects that can be symbolically (and

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<sup>61</sup> Wells, Ida B.. "Lynch Law in All its Phases." In *With Pen and Voice: A Critical Anthology of Nineteenth-Century African-American Women*. Shirley Wilson Logan, ed.. Carbondale, Ill: Southern Illinois University Press, 1995. Pg. 96.

ultimately) possessed.” In institutions of control such as the police and family, photos validate important documents. Photographs, however, also are complicit with action, they have a way of “at least tacitly, often explicitly, encouraging whatever is going on to keep on happening.” The ways that photography created “material realities ... richly informative... (and a) potent means for turning the tables on reality” helps me theorize how an incarcerated Vasquez used technology to identify with multiple audiences and transmit subversive messages that traveled well beyond his historical present.

While Nat Turner, John Brown and Tiburcio Vasquez were silent at the gallows, each managed to perform a lasting dissonant rhetoric against the political tide that swept them up. Vasquez’ use of textual and visual rhetoric can be understood as an allegory for a modern rhetoric that sees all means available not simply to persuade, but to create knowledge for communities that continue to witness and experience social violence and trauma.<sup>62</sup> *Lynching in the West* works rigorously and imaginatively on various levels to put Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans and even whites on the map of this gruesome history. In the process, the text theorizes and practices an effective visual rhetoric. A rigorous Chicano visual rhetoric can do the same work, re-narrating historical traumas for the purpose of uncovering hidden histories, and relating them to social patterns (ie. incarceration and homicide rates of men of color) in our present.

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<sup>62</sup> Vasquez granted three interviews, one for the Los Angeles Star, and two with the San Francisco Chronicle. I recently emailed a friend that is related to a direct descendent of Vasquez. I am arranging an initial interview with a great, great, grandson.



Figure 2.1: *Regeneración* newspaper, circa 1911. Figure 2.2: PLM women on cover of Los Angeles Times, circa 1912. Figure 2.3: Prisoner Ricardo Flores Magon.

The third chapter takes a close look at the print activism of Ricardo Flores Magon and the anarchist Mexican Liberal Party (PLM) – via the pages of *Regeneración* newspaper. Publishing in Los Angeles during 1911, this newspaper captures the critical analysis, high ideals, race and gender equality aspirations, and the direct action effectiveness of a group of revolutionary agitators that have been called “the architects of the Mexican Revolution.” The PLM operated for over a decade in Los Angeles and had a radical, if often overlooked, impact on the polemical tradition of Mexicans in the U.S.. Like Vasquez in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the PLM made use of the latest communications technology of the period to transmit messages aimed at decolonizing not only Mexicans in the Southwest, but all workers of the world. Initially aimed at deposing the dictator Porfirio Diaz for his privatization of the Mexico’s land and resources, the PLM’s newspaper became increasingly global, radical and anarchist in its political outlook, and provided a platform for the voice of women.

Operating in exile out of Los Angeles and other cities in the Southwest, the PLM’s chief instrument of organization was the perennially policed newspaper

*Regeneración* (1903-1918). The newspaper created, in the words of Benedict Anderson, “imagined communities,” whose members consolidated themselves against a dictator and around a nationalist labor activism to the point of enlisting their lives in war.

*Regeneración* and the PLM, however, are much more complicated than the nationalisms Anderson writes about. Unlike the early nationalisms of independence movements in the Americas, articulated and spread through newspaper and the novel – what Anderson calls a “print capitalism” - or 19<sup>th</sup> century “official nationalisms” of Europe that pre-date modern nations, the PLM anarchist “nationalism” foregrounded a multi-racial, anarcho-syndicalist ideology and the empowerment of workers of all nations, women and Indians. Unlike the examples in Anderson’s text, the Mexican anarchist newspaper had global aspirations, collaborated across borders and race lines, promoted feminism, bilingualism and proposed that the ultimate nation was “la tierra” (earth). The 1911 take-over of Baja California, the apex of PLM activity, is a dynamic and (I argue) rhetorical battle, equally ideological as military, which was decided on the pages of newspapers as much as on battlefields across the border. Two texts importantly shape my critique. Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* discusses the central role of “print capitalism” in recruiting citizens and constructing nations. Juan Gomez-Quinonez’ *Sembradores: Ricardo Flores Magon Y El Partido Liberal Mexicano: A Eulogy and Critique* is a thoughtful and critical long essay on the role and legacy of Magon and his newspaper in the United States and Los Angeles. Along with the archive of *Regeneracion* newspaper and a new body of research on Magon and the PLM, these texts help us understand how these late Victorian media and

communication technologies were re-purposed to imagine a Mexican “internationalist nationalism” during the turbulent turn of the century in Southern and Baja California, the Southwest, and Mexico.

To their credit these Mexican anarchists, utilizing Victorian technologies, dislodged the dictator Porfirio Diaz, challenged the nationalist print capitalism of the *LA Times*, and launched a “revolutionary invasion” of Baja California. The PLM leadership eventually splintered, and by 1920 was ultimately contained through imprisonment, violence and repatriation. Their longer term legacy included sustained radical journalism, ideologically initiating and defining the Mexican Revolution agenda, supporting feminism, practicing solidarity across race, and promoting a “reading class” of Mexicans on both sides of the border. The group’s versatile rhetorical strategies had long-term effects on radical labor in the Southwest as well as a long-term memory for Chicano ideology.



Figure 3.1: Berkeley Third World Liberation Strike. Figure 3.2: El Plan de Santa Barbara, original cover. Figure 3.3: Corky Gonzales speaks to college students, CSU Northridge.

Half a century later, Chicano students and their rhetoric were central to the Chicano Movement. Most of the movement’s leadership and membership during the late



60's and early 70's were students and of college age. The fourth chapter highlights organizational aspects of Chicano@ student rhetoric, and the impact of *El Plan de Santa Barbara* (1969) in defining a Chicano@ Studies epistemology. By investigating the rhetorical practices of Chicano@ student activists – rhetorical vision, the reconstruction of a Chicano history (what I call a “prosthetic history”), militancy, poetry, and the arrangement of arguments in the *Plan de Santa Barbara* (1969) – I hope to bring an analysis of a constantly evolving Chicano@ Studies epistemology into the present.

As Berkeley MASC (later MEChA) president and *Third World Liberation Front* leader Ysidro Macias observed, students came to view themselves as a “vanguard group,” and the unification of Chicano student groups in the Southwest under the name MEChA, accomplished at the April 1969 conference at Santa Barbara, signaled their political maturity, militant style and historical potential. *El Plan de Santa Barbara*, published soon after the conference, became a blueprint for starting programs, and has been called an album of nascent ideologies among Chicano/a students and educational leaders at the time. I consider intellectual precursors of Chicano Studies and identify key moments of Chicano student activism. By looking at original student documents, plans, Movement periodicals, early assessments, scholarly articles in early journals (such as *El Grito* and *Aztlan*), MA theses, PhD dissertations, recent scholarship and academic texts on the subject, my research tracks an early discourse around community self-determination, epistemology, methods, paradigms, the shifting role of students and women, and the evolving mission of Chicana/o Studies. While clearly influenced by a gendered nationalism, the early movement was also influenced by Marxist historians, Black

nationalism, internationalism, and feminist critiques. Rhetorical analysis helps highlight critical ideological breakthroughs of the early student movement discourse and the organizational aspect of the rhetoric of Chicano/a students.

Employing rhetorical theory is productive in order to delineate how rhetorical strategies shaped Chicano Studies epistemology, how groups are seen to espouse a “rhetorical vision” that Douglas Thomas writes about, which looks backwards with a critical eye at history, and looks forward with an eye on dangers and possibility. While Tomas Ybarra-Frausto highlighted the “poetic consciousness” of the Chicano Movement – that literary arts were key to educating and mobilizing the brown masses – I intend to emphasize the critical *rhetorical* role of *students* in re-interpreting history and culture, producing knowledge, and specifically, building Chicano Studies, perhaps the most lasting and productive institution of this period. This approach also allows for a closer reading of the ideologies of these students, and helps track the progression towards a more critical Chicano and Ethnic Studies. A rhetorical self-awareness proves fruitful, I assert, because it has the capacity to understand the role of literacy and language in social movements and how rhetoric does “work,” how it functions as knowledge production (epistemology). The chapter’s delineation of six central tenets of Chican@ Studies epistemology lays down important groundwork in defining and understanding this disciplinary field. In addition, a focus on the intersections of rhetoric and Chican@ Studies opens new possibilities for the teaching of composition within Chican@/Ethnic Studies programs.



Figure 4.1: UNIDOS takes over school board, 2015. Figure 4.2: Tucson protest. Figure 4.3: A Xican@ pop-up book.

In my conclusion I look to recent activism around Arizona’s struggle to save an Ethnic Studies program and activist innovations that point to new directions for Chicana/o Studies. By glimpsing at a Chicana/o Literature class reading Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, Dr. Cintli’s online activist journalism, student civil disobedience, and the Xican@ Paradigm, I survey new ways Xican@s are inventing from different ways of struggle. I interpret current Xican@ Studies activism in a dialectical relationship to the university as well as technology. Like Fredric Jameson’s allegory of the ship stuck in the ice, the reflective work of Xican@ Studies must continue to synthesize variegated issues, ideologies and discourse as it continues to re-invent itself. A renewed Xican@ Studies methodology – one that is rhetorically versatile, connected to indigenous culture, and capable of re-purposing technology - can help navigate the discipline into new oceans of possibility and development. Tucson’s struggle for Raza Studies proved to be a shot in the arm for the discipline, shedding light on the real threat from conservative politicians,

but also on the practices of an innovative educational program, and the spread of activism and the message of indigenous self-determination across the Southwest and nationally.<sup>63</sup>

The political upheaval in Arizona is significant because it has mobilized activists nationally and awakened many to the threats faced by Chicana@ Studies and the multiple programs and disciplines that fall under the concept of Ethnic Studies. While rhetorical debates play out inside and outside of schools, on streets, in mass media, federal courts and in the realm of public discourse, the ongoing activist rhetoric contributes epistemologically to a Chicana@ rhetorical tradition that enacts a critical, dialectical way of knowing. Chicana@ and Ethnic Studies continue to disrupt mainstream discourse and neoliberal rationalities that tend to gloss over colonialist histories and justify carceral politics and status quo racism. Culturally relevant curriculum, critical pedagogy and Xicana@ ceremony like the “spiritual runs” also evoke issues around “presence effects” operating outside of Western traditions and hermeneutical meaning, and are highly capable of persuasion and transformation.<sup>64</sup> Bridging a Chicano rhetorical tradition to composition instruction challenges the traditional “deficit thinking” around what students of color bring to the classroom. Exposing students to this rich tradition via methodologies like the Xicana@ Paradigm, and utilizing digital and multimodal methodologies

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<sup>63</sup> In response to Tucson’s defeat, calls for Ethnic Studies curriculum and graduation requirements materialized in Santa Monica, LAUSD, San Francisco USD, Sacramento, Azusa, El Rancho Unified, Woodland, Oakland, Chicago, Nevada, South El Monte, Montebello, El Paso, Houston and numerous other districts. In a December 2014 *U.S. News and World Report* article titled, “Look for These Subjects to Spread at High Schools in 2015,” Ethnic Studies is at the top of the list. <http://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/high-school-notes/2014/12/29/look-for-these-subjects-to-spread-at-high-schools-in-2015>

<sup>64</sup> Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich. *The Production of Presence*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004.

(integrating student's "screen literacies") can empower students to construct knowledge and meaning in productive new ways that effectively bridge schools to their communities and realities.

In the face of technological revolutions, neoliberalism's hollowing out of the public, and the growth of the prison industrial complex, a Chicana@ - or perhaps a Xicana@ - rhetorical tradition continues to push forward through alliances, *pleitos* (internal as well as external), militant protest, the arts, technological innovation and education. Seen rhetorically, these activist practices signal a multimodal Chicana@ rhetorical tradition that is not static, but widely produced, and continually becoming. It is stubbornly aware of an indigenous past, immersed in ceremony as much as in technology, focused on a decolonial project, and extraordinarily in the present. The Chumash/Chicana poet from Northern California, Lorna Dee Cervantes, vividly captures this stance in a recent poem, titled simply "A Chicano Poem" dedicated to the *Librotraficante* (a Texas group protesting Arizona's attack of Chicana@ Studies):

They tried to take our words,  
Steal away our hearts under  
Their imaginary shawls, their laws...

They burned the sacred codices  
And the molten goddesses rose anew  
In their flames...

When is our kingdom come? They claim our  
Reclamations; our reparations, a thing of our  
Imaginations. I discover this truth  
To be self-evident: In the beginning  
We were here.

I declare us here today  
And speaking.<sup>65</sup>

Cervantes' sacred codices and "being here" in the beginning assert Chican@ indigeneity. Like the closing declaration to her "Chicano Poem" this dissertation also asserts emphatically that a unique Chican@ rhetorical tradition – operating through multiple medias and in a dialectical opposition to colonialism's oppressive effects - exists and continues to speak out and declare its presence.

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<sup>65</sup> Cervantes, Lorna Dee. "A Chicano Poem," *Sueño*. San Antonio, TX: Wing Press, 2013. Pp 92-93.

## Chapter One

### Pleito Rhetoric: Decolonial Fighting Words

“Every impressive reflection, every weighty word must be employed. There must be added a delivery that is free from monotony and forceful and rich in energy, animation, pathos and reality.”

- Cicero, *On Oratory – Book II* (p 253)

“The strikers stood shoulder to shoulder, blocking the path beneath the wrought-iron arch of Sather Gate. They were mostly Black, Latino, and Asian, and many wore olive-green army surplus jackets, combat boots, and black gloves... A blond-haired student hurrying to class tried to cut through. The pickets shoved him back, knocking his volume of Cicero’s *Orations* to the ground.”

- Seth Rosenfeld, *Subversives* (p 418)<sup>66</sup>

“I think what you see around this country if not around the world (is) the same strategy, the same tactics being implemented again and again... because it works, because it’s functional, because it gets the point across. We’re serious. We know what we want, and we’re going to get it – (pause) – or it doesn’t go on.”

- Roger Alvarado, S.F. State Third World Liberation Front (TWLF)<sup>67</sup>

“We’re going to take the university back to the barrio, brick by brick.”

- Jaime Soliz, Berkeley Third World Liberation Front (TWLF)<sup>68</sup>

Centering my project along a radical rhetorical tradition allows for me to theorize what I conceptualize as “pleito” rhetoric. Pleito rhetoric is a dialectical method of communication, persuasion, identification and dangerous, plain, outspoken, direct speech. I anchor pleito rhetoric in the Southwest United States where it contests power and

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<sup>66</sup> Rosenfeld, Seth. *Subversives: The FBI’s War on Student Radicals and Reagan’s Rise to Power*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012. Pp 418-446. The chapter “At Bayonet Point” describes governor Reagan’s (rhetorical) conflict with the militant Third World Strike primarily at Berkeley and his apparatus of police and FBI infiltration.

<sup>67</sup> Alvarado’s statement opens the documentary film “Activist State” about the 1968-69 San Francisco State College Third World Strike and appears to be inside a university hall.

<sup>68</sup> Jose Montoya. Interview with author April 25, 1997 (at *Chicano Cultural Critique*, UC Boulder).

colonizing narratives.<sup>69</sup> *Pleito* rhetoric, I will argue, is a key style or operation within the tradition of Chican@ rhetoric. While the term originates in Spain/Europe, its etymology in the colonial-era Americas possesses a distinctive articulation. Looking to the Third World Strikes in the Bay Area and the nascent period of Chicano and Ethnic Studies, this dissertation aims to more broadly theorize *pleito* as a rhetorical dialectic, a decolonial argument (a combative polemic at times), and a rhetorical style which identified problems, framed these ideologically, mobilized mass bodies, and confidently asserted a vision of social justice.

Pleito rhetoric cannot be simplified to “fighting” or even “fighting words.” As this chapter will elaborate, at the center of pleito rhetoric is a dialectical activity that engages with groups in power or institutions of power. Pleito is disruptive, but in a constructive way. Pleito disrupts classical rhetoric’s hierarchy of the mind over the body: by recognizing the racial body’s historical ethos pleito proposes a different evaluation of pathos that is not subservient to logos. Like SF State TWLF spokesperson Roger Alvarado’s expression of TWLF demands couched in a threat, or Jaime Soliz’ savvy codeswitching, pleito rhetoric challenges the authority of a bureaucratic American Standard English, asserts a racial confidence and insists on new rules of negotiation.

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<sup>69</sup> Serna, Elias. “Tempest, Arizona: Criminal Epistemologies and the Rhetorical Possibilities of Raza Studies.” *The Urban Review: Issues and Ideas in Public Education; Special Issue: Book Banning, Censorship, and Ethnic Studies in Urban Schools*. Luis Urrieta Jr. and Margarita Machado-Casas, Eds.. Vol. 45 (1) March 2013. Pages 41-57. This *Urban Review* edition was dedicated to the Ethnic Studies struggle in Tucson. In *Occupying Our Space: The Mestiza Rhetorics of Mexican Women Journalists and Activists, 1875-1942*, Cristina Devereaux Ramirez cites my concept, referring to the combative borderlands journalism of Juana Belen Gutierrez de Mendoza (Pp 134-137).



Another example of disruptive aspects of pleito rhetoric during this period is the re-construction of Aztlan, the ancient homeland of the wandering Aztecs, as a Chicano homeland. Fernando Delgado writes that Aztlan was one of the major ideographs of the Chicano Movement, a popular term or phrase working like a capsule of ideology, helping to unite and educate movement participants.<sup>70</sup> The concept of Aztlan defiantly challenged a militarist patriotism during the Vietnam war by hailing a generation to pledge allegiance to Aztlan, a Chicano “homeland,” and recruiting youth into the movement.

From the children of Aztec nobles to Mexican authors of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, from *Californio* female authors to pachucos to Chicana student activists, for example, *pleito* rhetoric has deployed elements of advocacy, (legal) contestation, combat and vision. The term *pleito* contains legal connotations – sometimes translating as a lawsuit or dispute - and can refer to argument requiring juridical intervention. *Pleito* also translates as “quarrel” or “brawl,” and in Chicano usage connotes “street fighting.” In this way it more closely approximates my contemporary understanding of student activist rhetoric that combines bilingualism, militancy, *barrio* assertiveness, and “administrative” (or bureaucratic) Standard English. This more modern style of argument has unique origins in the 1960’s and 70’s, when Chican@ students combined academic language with radical political concepts and *barrio* terms into their discursive repertoire, as they clashed with administrative gatekeepers of the ivory towers they sought to enter and transform.

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<sup>70</sup> Delgado, Fernando Pedro. “Chicano Movement Rhetoric: An Ideographic Interpretation,” *Communication Quarterly* 43 (4), Fall 1995, pp. 446-454.

The ideograph, a rhetorical theory developed by Michael Calvin McGee, refers to how keywords and phrases are used in speech and documents to shape political consciousness, bringing audiences – at times through manipulation or vagueness - into a “collective subjectivity.”<sup>71</sup> McGee’s work explains how words like “freedom,” “liberty,” “terrorism” have strong political power but are ill-defined, and points to the relationship between rhetoric and ideology. McGee also proposed that, in the case of the ideograph, style (one of the rhetorical faculties) was epistemic and “the sum and substance of social and political interaction.” The ideograph of Aztlán did not emerge from politicians but took root among movement participants. It disrupted Anglo-American time and space and was in dialectical opposition to U.S. imperialism and the Vietnam War: instead of following the Pentagon’s agenda, Chicano youth proclaimed their own peoplehood, pledged allegiance to a more ancient homeland, Aztlán, and proclaimed that “la batalla esta aqui” (the war is here at home).<sup>72</sup>

By tracing theories of rhetoric’s role in knowledge construction, this chapter also explains how pleito rhetoric’s dialectical activity is epistemic. By grounding pleito rhetoric’s genealogy in the Third world student strikes that created Ethnic Studies, I hope to clarify how this decolonial epistemology contains a unique style, purpose, positionality and a historical kairos. Frantz Fanon’s influential *Wretched of the Earth* (1963) was a

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<sup>71</sup> McGee, Michael Calvin. “The ‘Ideograph:’ A Link between Rhetoric and Ideology,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech Communication* 54, 1990, pp. 274-89. Carol Corbin (ed.), *Rhetoric in Postmodern America: Conversations with Michael Calvin McGee*. New York: The Guilford Press, 1998. Pp. 10, 16-18, 116.

<sup>72</sup> Oropeza, Lorena. *¡Raza Sí! ¡Guerra No!: Chicano Protest and Patriotism during the Viet Nam War Era*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005. One of the major themes of the text is this Chicano nationalist proclamation of dissent.

psychological and political critique of colonization in Northern African countries as well as a detailed portrait of decolonial liberation movements which also referenced Vietnam and Cuban revolutions. The text informed the language and tactics of the Third World Liberation Front student strikes in the Bay Area that produced one of the first Ethnic Studies departments in the country. The student disturbances learned lessons and shared concepts from these Third World revolutions. The communicative style of Chicana@ and “Third World” students, artists and activists emerged from and was nurtured by these movements, and is the place where contemporary forms of pleito rhetoric are delineated.

### **A Pathos with Ethos: *Pleito* as Dialectic Between Body and Mind**

Rhetoric scholar Edward P.J. Corbett, in his 1969 article “The Rhetoric of the Open Hand and the Rhetoric of the Closed Fist” attempted to make a similar distinction about the militant rhetoric of student activists in the 1960’s, “Blacks and minorities” in particular.<sup>73</sup> Outwardly biased towards Anglo administrators at the time, Corbett associated the “open hand” with “reasoned, sustained, conciliatory” discussion, rooted in classical rhetoric’s emphasis on logic and the close union of rhetoric and dialectic. Corbett defined the “closed fist” rhetoric as “persuasive activity that seeks to carry its point by non-rational, non-sequential, often non-verbal, frequently provocative means,” and suggested the “closed fist of the black-power militant” as a fitting emblem. While he suggested that marches, boycotts, sit-ins and riots were a “muscular” or “body” rhetoric

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<sup>73</sup> Corbett, Edward P.J.. “The Rhetoric of the Open Hand and the Rhetoric of the Closed Fist.” *College Composition and Communication*. Vol. 20 (5), Dec. 1969, pp. 288-296.

that were contained in the emblem of the closed fist, he mostly derided this activity as unreasonable, coercive and unethical. Corbett observed three interesting qualities of closed fist rhetoric: the non-verbal aspects (music, dress, “occult insignia worn as pins,” flags, signs), the participatory group-oriented rhetoric, and a reliance on more coercive rather than persuasive tactics. The editors also chose, in a conciliatory gesture, to attach a segment from Robert L. Scott and Wayne Brockriede’s preface to *The Rhetoric of Black Power* at the end of Scott’s essay, a quote which recognized the “hypocrisy in the system” and expressed the hope that the democratic tradition could work out “accommodations... and substantial solutions to the social ills of which Black Power is symptomatic” (without going into specifics as to these accommodations or solutions).

While Corbett’s thesis relied on distinctions between classical Socratic dialectic and combative rhetoric of the 1960’s, I would like to emphasize connections between the two traditions. Corbett obviously fails to connect the Black and Brown Power movements to rhetoric and ideologies emanating from decolonial Third World liberation struggles, connections that were disturbing but obvious. To an established Euro-American male English professor at a major university (Ohio State University) the rhetoric of the closed fist was directed at Euro-American male professors and administrators like him, as well as a social order that likely benefited Corbett. Pleito rhetoric’s pun on Plato points to how the Socratic method expresses the combative work of the dialectic, especially Plato’s depiction of Socrates’ contesting, often accusatory, style (*Against the Sophists*, *Gorgias* and the *Phaedrus*). Plato’s claim to truth and knowledge through persistent dialectical examination resembles the positionality, the political defiance of activists that does not

relinquish or take for granted the ethos of anger nor the “energy” of bodies. Plato’s three part allegory of the soul in “Phadreus,” for instance, figures the charioteer exerting control over the two horses - one representing reason/logos, the other pleasure/pathos - by means of the repression of one (pathos) beneath the other (logos). Pleito rhetoric would counter that both horses possess equivalent rhetorical force and ethoistic impact. It recognizes the body’s affective presence and its reaction to colonization or other forms of oppression - reactions based on an embodied racialized ontology. Pleito also recognizes the privileged position of white administrators that would prefer an “open hand” rhetoric which domesticates or silences resistant and radical racialized bodies that don’t follow their rules. Whereas Plato’s rhetoric cleaves the body from the mind, pleito rhetoric recognizes their relationality. Racism is something that cannot only be theorized “logically” because racism is also an embodied experience.

### **Going Back to Your Country: The Temporal Reach & Rhetorical Space of Aztlan**

The rhetoric of Corky Gonzales can be understood as one of the fountains of pleito rhetoric in the 1960’s. A former boxer turned political activist, his rhetoric circulated widely and informed confrontational tactics of the Chicano student movement. He played a central role uniting student activists throughout the Southwest, particularly during the 1969 Chicano Youth Liberation Conference. His epic poem, “I am Joaquin,” provided the movement a nationalist anthem with a historical consciousness, and, alongside the militant stances of the Crusade for Justice (of which he was director), bolstered his widely recognized ethos within movement discourse. Gonzalez notably

enacted a rhetoric that deployed militancy, self-determination and a spatial epistemology of indigeneity (ie. “Aztlán” as a Chicano homeland). Although San Diego poet/educator Alurista penned the now famous preamble to the “Plan de Aztlán,” the complete document was arranged during and inspired by the 1<sup>st</sup> annual National Chicano Youth Liberation Conference, organized by Gonzales and his group, the *Crusade for Justice*, in 1969. Influenced by Mexican revolution “plans,” Gonzales authored a “program” to which the poem was attached as the preface, and called for self determination, “revolutionary acts,” and defense of culture, family and home.<sup>74</sup> Though Alurista’s poetic preface often stands alone as the entire “Plan de Aztlán,” and the electricity of the historic gathering contributed to the plan’s gravitas. For working class and underclass Chicano youth with little knowledge of their past, erased and invisible in school textbooks as well as frequent victims of racist nativism, “Aztlán” captured the troubled history of the Southwest from a decolonized and indigenous Chicano point of view. The content of Aztlán was effectively filled in by Gonzales’ “I am Joaquin” written previously in 1967, a Chicano history reaching back to pre-hispanic times, sutured together with heroes, villains and episodes from indigenous, colonial, Southwest and Mexican histories. Codices and history books have defined Aztlán as the ancient homeland of the migrating Aztecs, a place they left in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. It was located vaguely “to the north” of modern day Mexico City. In Aztlán, Chican@s found dignity, history and the birthplace of a people. In finding their ancient if mythical homeland, Chicanos could now reason

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<sup>74</sup> Vigil, Ernesto B.. *Crusade for Justice: Chicano Militancy and the Government’s War on Dissent*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999. Pp 97-100.

that they were indeed on their native lands and that it was the “gringos” who were the actual newcomers.

Fernando P. Delgado cites “Aztlán” as one of the three major “ideographs” that operated during the Chicano Movement to unite, activate and “constitute” a community. According to Delgado, these terms unified, educated, organized and established cultural values that distinguished the group.<sup>75</sup> Ideographs closely resemble tropes in the way they circulate and encapsulate specific concepts, but ideographs are more specifically ideological, manipulated (by speakers), and are aimed at audiences or communities that potentially constitute a collective or “a people.” Taking Michael Calvin McGee’s concept of the ideograph, Delgado effectively analyzes the force of key words or phrases circulating during the movement, specifically how new rhetorics and discourses emanated from writers and activists involved in the radical youth movement, and how these terms effectively contained historical and ideological content.<sup>76</sup> Delgado’s rhetorical analysis of Chicano ideographs is a versatile analysis that points out how ideologies were embraced by groups, as well as how individuals, writers, students and artists embraced and appropriated these concepts. Although the geographical location of a historical place called Aztlán remains shrouded in mystery, and though the concept stepped on the toes of living indigenous groups and tribal nations throughout the

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<sup>75</sup> Delgado, Fernando Pedro. “Chicano Movement Rhetoric: An Ideographic Interpretation.” *Communication Quarterly*, Vol. 43, Number 4, Fall 1995. Pages 446-454. The other ideographs are the term “Chicano” and “La Raza.” “Chicano” is notably a Nahuatl-based term.

<sup>76</sup> McGee, M.C.. “The ‘Ideograph’: A link between Rhetoric and Ideology.” *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 66 (1), 1980. Pp 1-16.

Southwest, the ideograph profoundly shifted Chicano conceptualization of space, history, identity and raised new spatial contestations.

Informed by Frantz Fanon, Third World Liberation movements globally, and the Black Power Movement more locally, Chicano student activist rhetoric in the ensuing years embraced a radical anti-colonial nationalism as it worked to carve out public space at universities through demands for increased enrollment, resources and new epistemologies in the form of Chicano and Ethnic Studies programs. Ethnic student rhetoric was often accompanied by confrontation, and this confrontation was not unrelated to a history of macro and micro confrontations, which worked to form what LuMing Mao and Morris Young call the “illocutionary force” of ethnic rhetorics. Mao and Young’s examination of Asian American rhetoric in *Representations: Doing Asian American Rhetoric* (2008) is helpful in expanding our understanding how ethnic rhetoric “gathers and disseminates the illocutionary force of past practices” (5). Borrowing from James Paul Gee the notion that “words have histories,” they emphasize how ethnic specific use of words have been part of (historical) events with “potential situated meanings,” and that these meanings have traveled. With the “Plan de Aztlán” and the creation of MEChA groups (whose acronym stood for “Chicano Student Movement of Aztlán,” and literally translated as “spark”), Chicano students strategically resisted the spatial logic of the United States by deploying and declaring allegiance to the nation of Aztlán. The deployment of this term referring to the 11<sup>th</sup> century Aztec homeland, generally located north of the Mesoamerican plateau, occurred during a time when radical students were going as far as declaring solidarity with the Vietnamese



revolutionaries (Oropeza 102). This deployment by Gonzales, Alurista and Chicano students was also an answer to the stigma associated with being Mexican in the United States, captured in the nativist epithet instructing Mexicans/Chican@s to “go back to your country.” In the MEChA name, as well as poetic works like “I am Joaquin” and “Poem in Lieu of Preface,” Chicanos proclaimed that they had re-discovered their ancient Indian origins, had redrawn (or erased) national borders, and had indeed gone back to where they were from: they had returned to their ancient homeland – Aztlan - in epic fashion.

Titled after the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century California social rebel Joaquin Murrieta, the poem “I am Joaquin” was widely read, mimeographed, recited at meetings and protest rallies, published in a Bantam Pathfinder edition in 1972, and made into what is regarded as the first Chicano film by Luis Valdez in 1969.<sup>77</sup> The fourteen-page poem sutured together a “prosthetic history” of events leading up to a Chicano present (I will expand on this concept of “prosthetic history” below). The poem defines Chicano oppression and spans a hemispheric history of Chicano heroes beginning with the last Aztec emperors Nezahuatcoyotl and Cuauhtemoc, up to leaders of Mexican Independence, the Mexican Revolution and Southwest rebels. Gonzales identified the opportunity for persuasive speech, and fundamentally understood that, as Richard L. Wright explains of the Marxist relationship between ideology and communication, discourse prescribes people’s social

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<sup>77</sup> Chon Noriega. “Between a Weapon and a Formula: Chicano Cinema and its Contexts,” in *Chicanos and Film: Representation and Resistance*. Chon Noriega, ed. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1992. Page 142.

location.<sup>78</sup> The generation of college-age Chicanos in the late sixties urgently needed a language that could frame, structure and reveal the intricacies of oppression and the familiarity of barrio life, and Gonzales answered them.

The movement culture also welcomed and often privileged the aesthetics and language of varrio street toughs, the cholos or “vatos,” evident in the code-switching Spanglish (calo), a culturally assertive varrio style, and familiarity with acts and protocol of physical confrontation, as in TWLF student Alvarado’s epigraph. The Spanish word “pleito,” meaning to fight, contest or dispute, captures this aesthetic. While early, even colonial, usage connotes juridical practices (“to enter into a legal dispute”)<sup>79</sup>, later street level usage refers bluntly to the equivalent of a (potentially) violent confrontation or “street fight.” Taking cues from Fidel Castro, Malcolm X and contemporaries like the Black Panthers, Chicano Movement speakers frequently employed an organic cultural aggression in the militant confrontational rhetoric of the period. Like Plato’s distrust of sophist rhetoric, the rhetoric of *pleito* was an assertive rhetorical opposition to the elitist point of view and the standard –or “bureaucratic”- English of the university, the media, and the State. The poetics of Chicano student activism notably embraced the work these kinds of words did for them in spaces of white power and privilege. Without the rhetoric of *pleito* and the actual *pleito* (demonstrations, sit-ins, and violent confrontations with

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<sup>78</sup> Richard L. Wright. “The Word at Work: Ideological and Epistemological Dynamics in African American Rhetoric.” In *Understanding African American Rhetoric: Classical to Contemporary Innovations*. Ronald L. Jackson II and Elaine B. Richardson, Eds.. New York: Routledge, 2003. P. 91.

<sup>79</sup> E. Bradford Burns. The UCLA professor of Latin American history provided his students in 1986 with a reader of letters from colonial days, evidence that the Aztecs and children of the nobles frequently wrote letters to the crown and governors, petitioning for fair treatment and against abuse by Spaniards.

police) to back it up, the student movement would not have likely achieved so much in so little time.

Tomas Ybarra-Frausto, in his landmark essay “The Chicano Movement and the Emergence of a Chicano Poetic Consciousness” (1984), describes how poetry and arts were an important vehicle in the political education of Chicanos, describing the aesthetic and improvisational technologies (teatro, newspapers, silk screen art) of “rasquachismo” (a do-it-yourself style of creating the most from the least). The confrontational and militant aspect of this rhetoric, however, has been under theorized. While I appreciate the insights provided by his essay and other lenses – notably linguistics’ work on “codeswitching,” Gloria Anzaldua’s “mestiza consciousness,” Delgado’s ideograph, literary and aesthetic concerns in the term “rasquachismo” – to describe Chicano Movement rhetoric, they inadequately describe the affect and effects of the rhetoric, its force, and how it framed confrontation with the university. What I wish to emphasize here is that Chicano militant rhetoric emerged from an organic cultural repository that was creatively and dynamically deployed when arriving at the university. This rhetoric and discourse and its illocutionary force disrupted and unhinged the discourse of the university (among white students, administrators, and faculty) during the struggles for Ethnic Studies. When EOP programs “took the kid out of the barrio,” the barrio effectively came to the university. This was also a discursive transfer.

## **The Wretched of Aztlan: Fighting Words & the Illocutionary Force of TWLF**

“The native’s work is to imagine all possible methods for destroying the settler... for the native, life can only spring up again out of the rotting corpse of the settler.”

-Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*<sup>80</sup>

The combative force of pleito rhetoric was clearly a reflection of Third World liberation struggles, particularly in Vietnam, Algeria and Cuba. Various Chicano students in the Bay Area and in multiple Chican@ organizations were military veterans returning from Vietnam, where Chicano casualty rates were high. This violence and the critical reflection upon the war caused many to identify with the natives of the Third World and to recognize the United State’s role as the colonizer or “settler.” The literature by revolutionaries and of writers like James Baldwin, Malcolm X, Albert Memmi, Che Guevara and Frantz Fanon helped focus this critique. This antagonism was transferred to student movements in the Southwest along with the willingness to employ protest, civil disobedience, militancy and violence. Early Chicano Studies historians and scholars in fact borrowed Fanon’s concepts to build the “internal colony” thesis, that Chican@s existed as a colonized people within the U.S. Southwest, sharing many of the conditions and aspects of colonized people throughout the Third World. Revolutionary signals from Third World struggles converged with an emerging Chicano historical awareness and fueled the combative tone of pleito rhetoric.

When a brown beret-wearing Chicano member of the Berkeley Third World Liberation Front (TWLF), Jaime Solis, proclaimed at a rally that the Chicanos were going to “take the university back to the varrio, brick by brick,” he had essentially brought the

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<sup>80</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 1963. Page 93.

Chicano rhetoric of *pleito* into the university.<sup>81</sup> Revolutionary prescriptions for violence informed Third World student activists at San Francisco State and Berkeley and were echoed in their speeches and programs. The Third World Strikes at San Francisco State (which lasted from November 1968 to March of 1969) and U.C. Berkeley (from January to April of 1969) are two of the more violent representations of how Ethnic Studies programs and departments came into being.<sup>82</sup> Influenced by an earlier Third World Strike at San Francisco State University the semester before, Berkeley's ethnic student activists provide a valuable example of how students engaged the university utilizing a rhetorics of *pleito*, and how their rhetoric worked on the spatiality of the university. Starting off slowly with tentative solidarities as groups combined their agendas, the TWLF consolidated Black, Asian, Chican@ and Native American student groups and escalated tactics for a Third World Strike to "open it up or shut it down," demanding that the university establish a Third World College with departments for each group. Protests turned violent as groups of students attempted to block the Sather Gate entrance to student traffic, and neighboring police were called in leading to skirmishes with students who were often beaten (some severely). As had happened in San Francisco, when police violence escalated, student and public opinion turned towards the TWLF. For the first time in history, Governor Ronald Reagan called in the National Guard to battle with

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<sup>81</sup> Also see online archive of Manuel Delgado, [www.manuelrdelgado.com/TWLF](http://www.manuelrdelgado.com/TWLF) and his book *The Last Chicano*. AuthorHouse(self-published), 2009.

<sup>82</sup> Although little has been published of the Third World Strikes, this paragraph is informed chiefly by the Berkeley's student paper, *The Daily Californian* during this period, "Aoki: A Documentary Film" (2009), and the extensive online collection of MASC leader Manuel Delgado ([www.manuelrdelgado.com/TWLF](http://www.manuelrdelgado.com/TWLF)). See also works by Margaret Leahy, Jason Ferreira, Ysidro Ramon Macias, Harvey Dong, Fabio Rojas, William Barlo, Peter Shapiro and Seth Rosenfeld.

students and a military helicopter fired tear gas canisters from the air. The photo of Richard Aoki, Charles Brown and Manuel Delgado, hands clasped together defiantly, with silk screen “unity” posters of Malaquias Montoya in the background (see image), has become an iconic image in various organizing efforts to bring students of color together. Protests continued until property damage, widespread endorsement of student demands and a scorched public image forced administrators to concede immediate plans to begin an Ethnic Studies Department and an African Studies Department in the Fall of 1969.

The echoes of the Third World Strikes in the Bay Area, the 1968 East Los Angeles Walkouts, and the Los Angeles Chicano Moratoriums resonated throughout the Southwest and nationally during student movements to establish Chicano and Ethnic Studies programs. The Third World Strikes in the Bay Area are notably some of the first university protests to succeed in establishing programs, and although they possess a unique collaboration involving different racial groups, Chicano/Latino participation and leadership is significant. Violent protest involving Chicano students also occurred at schools like San Mateo Community College, CSU Fresno, UCLA, UC Santa Barbara, UC San Diego, Cal State Northridge and Cal State L.A. to name a few. At some campuses students employed *pleito rhetoric* without exerting force. At U.C. Riverside, for example, in the spring of 1969 the *administration* invited students to the table to establish Chicano and Black Studies B.A. programs. The first Chicano Studies department chair, Carlos E. Cortez, recalls the work of “psychic contagion” at work: the chancellor had seen the violence of the Third World Strikes on *television* and was determined to “cut it off at the

pass,” and avoid a violent student protest.<sup>83</sup> Pleito rhetoric was a language of combat and social change, and equally important it was a language that circulated widely to produce material effects.

### **Dialectic and Epistemology: *dissoi logoi* and Mobile Armies of Metaphors**

Pleito rhetoric’s role at the university can also be understood as a deeper meditation on the dispute between language and truth. Building this project alongside specific fountains of rhetoric –its classical principals, New Rhetoric and Ethnic rhetorics - helps me explain the productive potential that can be found on the bridges built between rhetoric and Chican@ Studies. Studying a Chican@ rhetorical tradition, in other words, means looking at the ways rhetoric scholars understand the interaction between language and knowledge in the context of conflict. This step helps us understand the ways Chican@s have traditionally contested dominant versions of the “truth” (colonizing narratives), and how they have articulated community in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. This leads back to studying the philosophical quarrels over the dialectical role of rhetorical activity in history, in writing courses, and how Chican@ scholars – and students - uniquely approach and contribute to epistemology.

Aristotle’s premise that “rhetoric is the counterpart to dialectic” emphasizes that the search for truth(s) (through philosophy and dialectical challenge) is impossible without the study of the laws of language in action at its side. While the concept of truth itself (in some ecclesiastic, universal or essential sense) underwent devastating challenges in the

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<sup>83</sup> Cortes, Carlos E.. *The Making – and Remaking – of a Multiculturalist*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2002. Page 5.

19th and 20th centuries, it is inescapable to recognize that early principals of rhetoric maintained an essential role in the various studies of knowledge, language and reality over the centuries. In other words, language use - arguments, appeals, logic, truth claims, customs, opportune moments, the way speakers create identification with audiences, the interpretation of rhetoric by audiences, actions and effects of language use - is at the heart of persuasion, knowledge construction and everyday life negotiations. Josue David Cisneros states it eloquently in his text *The Border Crossed Us*:

I define rhetoric as persuasive communication addressed to public audiences. Rhetoric extends beyond the podium or lectern to describe any number of symbolic practices that contribute to public identity and public culture. Rhetoric does not refer just to public speeches but to a broad array of discourses that address publics, including public rituals, mass media, visuals and even public monuments... Rhetoric constitutes identity, incites emotions, motivates actions. More than hot air or manipulative language, rhetoric refers to the power of symbols when performed to move people to collective beliefs, identifications, and actions.<sup>84</sup>

Rhetoric is important because it focuses our attention on the illusive site of struggle: language as “symbolic action.” As Kenneth Burke argues, humans are symbol users as well as symbol misusers, and we sometimes forget that rhetorical constructs are not the thing itself but only its articulation, a symbolic construction, and the place where things like knowledge, truths, experiences, politics and conflict get negotiated.<sup>85</sup>

As Nietzsche explained in his 1873 essay “On Truth and Lies” - and as Edward Said and rhetorician Douglas Thomas have pointed out when they cite Nietzsche – truth

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<sup>84</sup> Cisneros, Josue David. *The Border Crossed Us: Rhetorics of Borderlands, Citizenship and Latina/o Identity*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2014. Page 6.

<sup>85</sup> Burke, Kenneth. “Definition of Man” in *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1966. Page 6.



or truths are not absolutes but beliefs or formulas constructed with words and imperfectly passed on through generations by imperfect humans. Rhetoric (or academic discourse), in other words, is *a priori* to truth, is the “father of truth.” Nietzsche’s cynical and critical assessment at the time also explained how “truths” over time could transform into “illusions of truth.” While Thomas quotes Nietzsche to enhance our self awareness of language’s symbolic, superficial and temporal nature, Said’s use of the same citation speaks more specifically to Chican@ connections to rhetoric, historiography and colonization. In one of post-colonial studies’ classic texts, *Orientalism*, Said uses the quote to emphasize Europe’s discursive construction of the Middle East, an intellectual project that was a counterpart to military invasion, essentially a myth-making practice necessary to justify and facilitate European colonization and control over the “bible lands,” their resources, and ultimately the peoples inhabiting these lands. Said understands rhetoric as a tool that can liberate but one that has also colonized, as in the scholarly invasions of the Middle East or the U.S. Southwest.<sup>86</sup> Nietzsche’s metaphors of war and his temporal insights give the citation a lasting meaning. He writes:

“What then is truth? It is a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms and anthropomorphisms, in short, a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed and embellished through poetry and rhetoric, and which after long use seem fixed, canonical and binding to a people. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions.”

What Nietzsche does here, alongside a frontal assault on truth claims, is clear the

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<sup>86</sup> Antonia Castaneda in an earlier essay described these scholarly invasions in “The Political Economy of Nineteenth Century Stereotypes of Californianas”. *Between Borders: Essays o Mexicana/Chicana History*, Adelaida R. Del Castillo, Ed. Encino, CA: Floricanto Press, 1990. Pp 213-236.

fog around the epistemic work of language, making clear that “truths” and even knowledge are social constructs made with “movable” symbols (language) and effected by power, time and complacency. A century later, Burke would elaborate on these aspects of language through his concept of “terministic screens,” explaining the capacity of language to *select* particular parts of reality to articulate, and in the process to *reflect* this reality while *deflecting* other realities.<sup>87</sup> While Burke calls attention to the “symbolic action” of language, that rhetoric is concerned with signs and symbols always at play, his work also emphasizes that language is never the thing itself, and that persuasion, while tied to the consubstantial, is always an imperfect activity, always tied to the contingent.

While Thomas, Said, and Nietzsche help me point out the deeper quarrel with epistemology that pleito rhetoric enacts, Robert L. Scott explains the necessity of this quarrel and contributes tenets and responsibilities of pleito and epistemic rhetoric. Scott’s 1967 essay “On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic” established rhetoric’s foundational function in knowledge construction, and provided lasting tenets for the “New Rhetoric” emerging in mid 20th century universities. It also helps frame current debates and issues around Chican@/Ethnic Studies in the United States.<sup>88</sup> Scott’s essay initiated a lively and ongoing discussion on rhetoric’s role in knowledge production while it questioned philosophy’s claim that truth exists a priori to language. Scott, and later Jarratt, also put a

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<sup>87</sup> Burke, Kenneth. “Terministic Screens” in *Language as Symbolic Action*. Pages 44-62.

<sup>88</sup> Scott, Robert. “On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic.” *Central States Speech Journal*. Vol. 18, No. 1 (1967). William D. Harpine, “What Do You Mean, Rhetoric Is Epistemic?” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* Vol 37 (4) 2004, pp 335-352. Harpine challenges the field’s general acceptance of Scott’s claim especially around definition of terms including “rhetoric,” “knowledge,” “certainty,” and “truth.” This debate leads us back to Crosswhite’s argument that “it is the special power of logos to lead the soul, the art of logos, rhetoric itself, is the art of leading souls... not much different from a philosophical dialectic.”

spotlight on the Sophists, some of the earliest and often degraded (as manipulators of language) rhetoric instructors of ancient Greece, their critical questioning stance, and their high praise of *dissoi logoi* - counter claims - as a central element in rhetorically questioning reality. *Dissoi logoi*, contradictory claims, should be understood as a dialectical fulcrum in rhetoric, and a method of critically challenging injustices, so-called “truths,” descriptions of reality, knowledge or things taken for granted. Scott’s essay also ended with tenets for how to approach rhetoric as epistemic, emphasizing the “will to act” and taking responsibility for one’s words. While Scott’s essay highlighted rhetoric’s central role in constructing knowledge he also questioned the hierarchy of truth claims in a similar way that Ethnic and Chican@ Studies question American Eurocentric exceptionalism.

Susan Jarrat’s *Re-reading the Sophists* looks to the early Greek rhetoricians as pioneers of this questioning posture towards language. She elaborates how Sophist rhetoric placed emphasis on this realm of doubt, the interrogation of truth claims, especially through their use of *dissoi logo* (the counterargument). Sophists’ playfulness with truth and language was disparaged by the classical Greek philosophers who laid claim to truth through philosophy - which the Sophists understood as more of a pedagogical activity, as opposed to an empirical or ‘terminal’ activity. Using Protagoras’ famous edict, Jarratt reminds us that “what is real is not communicable, if it is communicable it cannot be named, if it is named it cannot be understood.” Jarrat’s text importantly ends with her association of feminists, scholars of color and critical pedagogy scholarship to this critical Sophist tradition. These groups are the modern

equivalent to the Sophist challenge to dominant notions of truth and knowledge in ancient Greece.

Echoing this critical posture, James Berlin's history of writing instruction in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, *Rhetoric and Reality*, reminds us that "rhetoric exists not merely so that truth may be communicated... (but) so that truth may be discovered" (165). Berlin begins by establishing that literacy instruction has traditionally relied on a "rhetorical triangle" where interlocutor, audience and language communicate or make sense of reality. He surveys differences in rhetoric and writing instruction, identifying three theoretical approaches that dominate composition instruction in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His explanation of objective theories, subjective theories and transactional theories, move from traditional approaches (that truth exists a priori to language) towards instruction that prioritizes interaction and arriving at truths or the probable collectively through interaction (Berlin 15). Berlin's approach is useful to me because it provides a window into evolutions and trends in the teaching of composition and writing, and acknowledges the significance of what he names "discourse communities," which carries implications not only for the classroom but for the study of rhetoric's role in times of conflict and community building. Citing the works of diverse thinkers, including Said, Fredric Jameson, Sharon Crowley and Roland Barthes, he makes clear that "the elements traditionally considered the central concerns of rhetoric – reality, interlocutor, audience, and language – are the very elements that are involved in the formation of knowledge" (Berlin 184). Whether we are talking about 19<sup>th</sup> century border conflicts, Mexican revolutionary newspapers, Chicano student manifestos, or 21<sup>st</sup> century classrooms, most will agree that "the contact

of minds affects knowledge ... rhetoric is epistemic because all knowledge itself is a rhetorical construct” (Berlin 165).

Discussing the rhetorical theory of Michael Leff, Berlin elaborates on the epistemic role of rhetoric:

meaning emerges ... from individuals engaging in rhetorical discourse, in discourse communities – groups organized around the discussion of particular matters in particular ways. Knowledge, then, is a matter of mutual agreement appearing as a product of rhetorical activity, the discussion, of a given discourse community ... Knowledge is dialectical, the result of a relationship involving the interaction of opposing elements (Berlin 165-166).

In a similar argument Fredric Jameson writes about the powerful role of dialectical thinking and its return in our contemporary critical analysis.<sup>89</sup> His tome on the evolution of thinking about this approach to science and analysis of reality, *Valences of the Dialectic* (2009), directs us towards three ways of thinking about “dialectic:” seeing “the dialectic” (notice the definite article) as a single and empirical philosophical system with singular claims to the truth (associated with Hegelianism); (many) “dialectics” recognizes the valences, or varieties of dialectical opposition over space and history, starting notably with Karl Marx’s dialectical materialism turning Hegelian philosophy on its head (as well as Western Marxism’s “claim to place culture and the superstructure on a plane of significance and determination as equal to the economic.” Jameson 6); and finally the “dialectical” in adjective form points to dialectical activity in everyday life, such as the recognition “that the problem itself becomes the solution, and that the opposition in which we are immobilized like a ship in the ice must itself now become the object of our

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<sup>89</sup> Jameson, Fredric. *Valences of the Dialectic*. London: Verso, 2009.

thinking” (Jameson 51). In this description of its evolution – the “valences of the dialectic” - Jameson indicates how the dialectic (as a *theoretical* concept that I will relate to rhetoric) is characterized by the theoretical opening up to praxis, to this way of thinking/communicating requiring a completion (the work of synthesis).

Berlin and Jameson are important since they grasp the dialectic from philosophy’s rigid hold and deliver it into the more versatile activity of theory and rhetoric. Looking at the varying forms of the dialectic, its progression over history, its various ideological handlings evoke the various rhetorical strategies of nations, groups and individuals in arranging arguments, structuring societies and defining communities. Reconnecting rhetoric to dialectic in this way helps me to investigate and clarify how Chicano movements in history may have invented an identity, arranged arguments, and activated polemics in dialectical opposition to colonial and oppressive social relations, and towards emancipatory and decolonizing projects.

By looking to the genealogy of Chican@ and Ethnic Studies during student movements of the 1960’s we see how the “contact of minds” at the university proved to be a rhetorical field where new truths could be discovered through agonistic, Pleito rhetoric. Protest produced “*planes*” – Spanish for plans - which produced academic departments, operating as a *dissoi logoi* (counter claim) to histories of U.S. exceptionalism and traditional methods of discovering truth. The seminal document, *El Plan de Santa Barbara*, collectively invented and authored by student activists and a handful of professors in 1969, activated movements for Chican@ Studies programs throughout the Southwest and importantly defined early tenets as to how and why

Chican@s would produce knowledge. Delineating these epistemic tenets is an ambitious and controversial task, yet one that rhetoric is qualified to take on. In chapter four I elaborate on several central tenets that emerged from the early years of the discipline: Chican@ history, a Chican@ worldview, self-determination, taking the university back to the community, student agency, and Chicana feminism. The first tenet, for example – Chican@ history – contains a rigorous dialectical argument that was central to initiating Chican@ Studies and ensured the field’s longevity. Rudolfo Acuña, one of the “godfathers” of Chican@ Studies, wrote one of the first Chican@ history books, *Occupied America*, composing a history as an argument on which the new discipline could make a stand.<sup>90</sup> Traditional versions of the Mexican American War promoted a narrative where Mexican troops crossed the Rio Grande, shot at and provoked a U.S. military response, a “self defense” version of the war. Acuña and other Chican@ historians challenged this tradition’s “terminal screen,” explaining the war as an imperialistic invasion by the United States. Unearthing congressional records and accounts on both sides of the contested border, they proved that U.S. legislatures and the military had their eye on the Southwest, ideologically promoted Manifest Destiny, provoked Mexico by entering contested territory, and had in fact invaded Mexico. The disruptive counter claim with which Chican@ historians effectively established the field of Chican@ Studies was significantly a *quarrelsome* dialectical, epistemic and rhetorical operation.

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<sup>90</sup> Acuña, Rodolfo. *Occupied America: The Chicano's Struggle Towards Liberation*. New York: HarperCollins, 1972.

Numerous articles and recent works by Emma Perez, Rudolfo Acuña, Michael Soldatenko and Meilei Blackwell investigate this early period, but many overlook the disruptive epistemic, dialectical and rhetorical techniques of Chican@ Studies founders. Acuña's *The Making of Chicana/o Studies: In the Trenches of Academe* (2011), is the most comprehensive historical account of this period but its theorization of the field is secondary. Perez' theory of Chicana history as a "decolonial imaginary," however, uncovers an archeology within "interstitial spaces" of (Chicano) history for decolonial work in the present. A critical essay by Reynaldo F. Macias, "Entre el Dicho y el Hecho: From Chicano Studies to Xican@ Studies," explores the history, tenets and ideographs of Chicana/o Studies, utilizes rhetorical theory, and even produces a concept similar to pleito: "choques" (crashes, head-on confrontations). Macias does not elaborate on this concept, but his essay is an important review of recent literature, a reflection on the field and possible directions.

Dolores Delgado Bernal's much-cited article "Using a Chicana Feminist Epistemology in Educational Research," is the most elaborate meditation on Chican@ Studies epistemology. She delineates a new way of looking at knowledge production through methods of intersectionality (of class, race, gender, sexuality, and other forms of oppression), methods that center Chicanas, and methods that maintain connections to community and indigenous roots.<sup>91</sup> She adds that Chicana feminist scholars have introduced unique terms and concepts - such as mestiza consciousness, nepantla, borderlands and Xicanisma - and employ a "cultural intuition" that gives meaning to

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<sup>91</sup> Delgado Bernal, Dolores. "Using a Chicana Feminist Epistemology in Educational Research." *Harvard Educational Review*, 68 (4), 1998. Pp 555-579.



epistemology uniquely, involving one's personal experience, existing literature (of a field), professional experience, and the analytical research process itself (Delgado Bernal 563). Delgado Bernal's understanding of epistemology insists that methodology must be more complicated and consider purpose, and how researchers locate themselves within their questions. Chicana feminist epistemology centers intersectionality and "challenges the historical and ideological representation of Chicanas, (relocates) them to a central position in research and asked distinctively Chicana feminist research questions" (559). Her use of focus groups also produces group/community interaction, storytelling/testimonio and positions participants as creators of knowledge (Delgado Bernal 573). I understand this methodology as an important evolution on the earlier tenets of "taking the university to the community." While Chican@ Studies spotlights the need of the university to serve the people, it has also always recognized community members as critical funds of knowledge and experience. Delgado Bernal's work lays important theoretical groundwork that establishes Chicano communities as epistemological mines, experiential wells of knowledge to draw from.

While I look critically at rhetoric's work in epistemology I intend to tie this work ultimately to writing instruction. Working at one of California's only writing program's situated within a Chican@ Studies department, rhetoric-composition scholar Renee Moreno, in her essay "'The Politics of Location': Text as Opposition" makes clear the connections between culturally relevant literature, students of color and their role in epistemology.<sup>92</sup> In a section of her essay titled "A Race and Ethnicity Writing Course,"

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<sup>92</sup> Moreno, Renee. "'The Politics of Location': Text as Opposition" in *College Composition*

she writes, “I have always told my students that we all have stories to tell, something to say, that the classroom is a place where we listen to these stories, where we begin to co-construct knowledge and meaning” (229). Her use of Ethnic and Chicano texts are critical tools used to connect to students that have traditionally seen the classroom as a hostile space intent on wiping out their culture and way of speaking and replacing it with “standard English.” By rejecting deficit-theory models, and recognizing and centering a Chicano rhetorical/literary tradition in writing classes, Moreno insists that teachers can make connections with students by recognizing their way of talking, giving it legitimacy and relevance, and acknowledging its unique way of constructing knowledge in the classroom. Delgado Bernal and Moreno’s methodology elaborates on Berlin’s discourse communities and corresponds to the work of the K-12-level Mexican American Studies Department in Tucson, Arizona, which was recently destroyed by Arizona lawmakers, a topic I will take up in my conclusion. This unique stance on Chican@ culture and epistemology also corresponds to rhetoric scholarship on *dichos* (aphorisms) by Mary Carmen Cruz and Ogle Burks Duff, and the current work on Chican@ rhetorical strategies in the classroom by Cruz Medina. Cruz and Burks Duff emphasize the power of using *dichos* as the “moral teachings of a community” and how these recognitions build strong bridges between student’s homes and communities, and the classroom.<sup>93</sup>

Understanding knowledge as a social and rhetorical construct, and understanding the dialectical role Chican@/Ethnic Studies programs and departments have played

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*and Communication* 54:2 (Dec 2002). Pp 222-242.

<sup>93</sup> Cruz, Mary Carmen and Ogle Burks Duff. “New Worlds, Old Wisdom.” *The English Journal*. Vol. 85, No. 7, November 1996.

within universities provides a rich theoretical ground on which to revisit discursive moments in Chican@ history as well as to discuss developing pedagogical strategies for writing instruction in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. The critical re-evaluation of composition history and the writing of Chican@s/Latin@s back into it has been taken on in works by Villanueva, Christina Kirklighter, Diana Cardenas, and most recently by Iris D. Ruiz.<sup>94</sup> These important discussions rhetoric, epistemology and composition opens up to what Damian Baca calls a hemispheric “rhetoric of the Americas” or “mestizo@ rhetoric.”

### ***Verbo: Self-Determination & the Decolonization of Rhetoric***

“Because (the native intellectuals) realize they are in danger of losing their lives and thus becoming lost to their people... (they) relentlessly determine to renew contact once more with the oldest and most pre-colonial springs of life of their people.”

- Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*<sup>95</sup>

While I hope to have made clear the ties of rhetoric to epistemology, and the place of Chican@ rhetorical traditions in the composition classroom, I need to elaborate how this tradition and Chican@ identity emerges at the university in a way that elucidates the work of Chican@ self-determination in education and knowledge production. While decolonization implied re-invention, Chican@s typically reached to their history and to Mexican, Indian and working class culture, including pachuco/cholo youth culture and

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<sup>94</sup> Villanueva, Victor. *Bootstraps: From an American Scholar of Color*. NCTE, 1993. Cristina Kirklighter, Diana Cardenas and Susan Wolf Murphy, *Teaching Writing with Latino/a Students*, New York: State University of New York Press, 2007. Iris D. Ruiz, *Reclaiming Composition fro Chicano/as and Other Ethnic Minorities: A Critical History and Pedagogy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

<sup>95</sup> Fanon. Pp 209-210.

vernacular (from which I borrow the term “verbo,” meaning a “way with words”) to construct a new way of communicating with each other and with the world.<sup>96</sup>

As many Chicano Movement scholars have acknowledged – notably Rudolfo Acuna and Jorge Mariscal – the Chican@ movement was informed by a regional history of struggle but also deeply influenced by the Black Power and American Indian movements and third world revolutions, particularly in Cuba, north Africa, China and Vietnam. Writers like Frantz Fanon in particular defined decolonization and self-determination and influenced early radical Chican@ scholarship. Fanon insisted that these movements were driven by the tenets of decolonization and self-determination; the idea that a community will take it upon itself to shake off ideological and imperialistic bondage and take on the revolutionary work of determining its own destiny. During the 1960’s and 70’s Chican@ activists, scholars and artists rearticulated these concepts to fit their own plans and realities.

Frantz Fanon in particular detailed how this revolutionary way of thinking required a violent disruption of the status quo even while it invoked a necessary responsibility to step into a spotlight and speak a new language. His *Wretched of the Earth* can be interpreted through rhetoric, explaining the process of third world revolutions and how the rhetoric of liberation acquired revolutionary ethos through total commitment.<sup>97</sup> Suggesting a decolonial re-arrangement, he warned: “decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world, is, obviously, a program of complete disorder” (Fanon 36).

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<sup>96</sup> This term was brought to my attention by Efrain “Cobra” Gonzalez (rest in peace) during the Summer Arts Program I directed at the Pico Youth and Family Center, Santa Monica, 2014.

<sup>97</sup> Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 1963.

Decolonization required “the need of a complete calling into question of the colonial situation... (and it) will only come to pass after a murderous and decisive struggle between the two protagonists... (and) can only triumph if we use all means to turn the scale, including, of course, that of violence” (37). His polemical style carried an illocutionary force: “for the native,” he wrote, “life can only spring up again out of the rotting corpse of the settler” (93). Decolonization is a cleansing force freeing the native from his inferiority complex, despair and inaction and restoring his/her self-respect. The transformative power of decolonization places agency and responsibility in the hands of the natives, putting them in the drivers seat of history: “yesterday they were completely irresponsible, today they mean to understand everything and make all decisions... the action which has thrown them into a hand-to-hand struggle confers upon the masses a voracious taste for the concrete” (94). Fanon’s revolutionary responsibility suggested the opportunity to address the world audience:

“Decolonization never takes place unnoticed, for it influences individuals and modifies them fundamentally. It transforms spectators crushed with their inessentiality into privileged actors, with the grandiose glare of history’s floodlights upon them” (36).

The call for self-determination, then, also aligns with rhetoric’s call for invention and arrangement of language and symbolic action. However, Fanon situates these movements in historical context as something revolutionary and novel whose time has come: “It brings a natural rhythm into existence, introduced by new men, and with it a new language and a new humanity.” While third world decolonial revolutions propelled this new language, Fanon was one of its main disseminators.

Fanon's insights and polemical style influenced ways of seeing as well as ways of speaking. His attention to the role of arts and literature produced by "native intellectuals" in the service of revolution, a "muscular action," preceded methods in postcolonial and cultural studies. His chapter "On National Culture" raised issues of the native intellectual (or "cultured individuals"), arts and literature, concern for dignity and the return to history. Distinguishing them from the politicians, Fanon describes these artists and poets:

"For these individuals, the demand for a national culture and the affirmation of the existence of such a culture represent a special battlefield. While politicians situate their action in actual present day events, men of culture take their stand in the field of history" (209).

Finding a dignity in rehabilitating ancient cultures and civilizations, he writes, these artist-intellectuals "relentlessly determine to renew contact once more with the oldest and most pre-colonial springs of life of their people... with greatest delight... they discovered that there was nothing to be ashamed of in the past, but rather dignity, glory, and solemnity" (210). Fanon, here, makes one of his classic and profound observations on the dynamics of racial oppression and colonization:

"Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it. This work of devaluing pre-colonial history takes on a dialectical significance today" (210).

Although Fanon centered his studies on the liberation struggles in Algeria, north Africa and the Mau Mau rebellion, he made various references in this chapter to Aztec civilization, Mexico, Blacks in the United States, Cuba and Latin America.

This recognition of how a people's history has been "distorted, disfigured and destroyed" and how it is rediscovered and rehabilitated by artists/intellectuals captures the purpose of Chicano Movement rhetors and even points to the more current pedagogical work of decolonizing writing instruction.<sup>98</sup> Continuing upon Fanon's line of argument, Chicano movement poet/artist/educator Jose Montoya explains:

"Ever since the middle sixties... Chicano artists have been using their art to educate our people in ways that were not always in accord with the methods advocated by professional Chicano educators... artists dedicated themselves to the task of using their talents to instill in Chicanos a sense of their own self-worth. Epic poems dispelling the historical biases found in public school textbooks... Heroic murals depicting our past accomplishments; posters and film presentations, extolling our new found energies and symbols were offered as alternative to the false and stilted views put forth by the Anglos."<sup>99</sup>

Like Fanon, Montoya saw the rescuing and dissemination of culture and knowledge as key to uplifting Chican@s, particularly the student youth. Indeed, the language of Fanon and the concepts of self-determination echo throughout Chicano Movement documents, such as *El Plan de Santa Barbara*. In *Occupied America, A History of Chicanos*, Rodolfo Acuna concluded, "generally, *Chicanismo* meant both pride of identity and self-determination, in all their ambiguities" (Acuna 315). Montoya recognizes the destructive or deconstructive aspect of decolonization, which he calls a "de-educating" process, and directly connects the cultural project to the productive aspects of self-determination:

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<sup>98</sup> In fact, educator Ron Espiritu performed a close reading of this quote to explain how he taught an African-American and Chicano Studies high school class during a lecture at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual *Raza Studies Now* conference, July, 2014 at the Pico Youth and Family Center in Santa Monica.

<sup>99</sup> Montoya, Jose. "Thoughts on La Cultura, the Media, Con Safos and Survival." Stanford University first annual Chicano film series, 1979. Mimeograph.

“In other words, it was a commitment that focused not so much on educating as on de-educating — on designing a deprogramming process that would allow our people to develop new powers of perception in positive and realistic ways, more in harmony with the natural rhythms peculiar to the postulates of our own worldview.”

The connection between decolonization and self-determination then was a dialectical principal of the Chicano Movement, intent on challenging (or “de-educating”) the dominant Eurocentric narrative in schools and inflecting its own revolutionary ethos found in a re-discovered and re-articulated past.

As Fanon and Montoya illuminate, self-determination had culturally specific and localized expressions. As Chican@s developed a more radical identity than past generations, their cultural expressions re-invented past customs, histories and commonplaces into a radical *nomos* within what I call a “prosthetic history” (see Chapter 4). This *nomos* – rediscovered, re-articulated and disseminated by activists, scholars and artists - grounded and operated alongside Chicano Movement rhetoric giving it a powerful credibility and a unique rhetorical force. It was also fertile ground for the invention of new concepts, scholarship and a transformed identity where self-determination and cultural (re-)invention became guiding tenets of the formal expression of a nascent albeit native (ancient) epistemology: Chicana/o Studies.



## Chapter 2

### **Tiburcio Vasquez and the Mexican-American Dialectic: Technologies of Affect, Messages with Effects**

“The people of the Salinas Valley were crestfallen over his capture... Thousands of people visited Vasquez in prison... He sold cards with his picture and a short biography printed on them. Through a newspaper he appealed for funds to pay for his defense. A small purse was collected.... C.B. Darwin... and P.B. Dully... were employed to defend him.”

- “Tiburcio Vasquez” Ernest R. May (1947)

“TO THE PUBLIC: Wounded, a prisoner, and in the shadow of approaching death, or a more to be dreaded incarceration, an unfortunate and sinful man appeals to the charitable among men, of whatever nation, to contribute to a fund to enable him to place his case fairly before the world and the jury to sit in judgment upon him, hereby asserting his innocence, of the higher crimes imputed to him, and his ability to establish the fact at a fair and impartial trial. TIBURCIO VASQUEZ. IN JAIL AT LOS ANGELES, May 22, 1874.”

- Los Angeles Star, May 22, 1874

“... A photograph allows the image to turn the tables...”

- Susan Sontag, *On Photography*

“‘The community does not see Tiburcio as a thief or a murderer,’ (retired teacher, member of naming committee) Estrada said. ‘We see him as a fighter for social justice of the Mexican-Californio whose rights have been deprived.’”

- “Villain or hero? Flap over California School Named for Bandit.”  
*CNN* January 3, 2013

“Given \$60,000 I would be able to recruit enough arms and men to revolutionize Southern California.”

- Tiburcio Vasquez<sup>100</sup>

In one of three interviews given to newspapers by Tiburcio Vasquez as he waited for his trial imprisoned in San Jose (a town founded by his grandfather), the *Californio* asserted his innocence on murder charges (he was known to hogtie victims), that he had always instructed his party to not take life nor violate women, and that he was what Eric Hobsbawm would call a “social bandit,” his actions motivated in part by the subjugated position of his “countrymen.” In this argument, and through the harnessing of photographic and newspaper technologies of his day, Vasquez produced a dialectical

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<sup>100</sup> As quoted by Pedro Castillo and Albert Camarillo. *Furia y Muerte: Los Bandidos Chicanos. Monograph No. 4*. Los Angeles: *Aztlan Publications*/(UCLA) Chicano Studies Center, 1973. Pp 15. Original in Truman interview (see note 35 below).

intervention in the public discourse around his life and the lifeworld of Mexican Americans living within newly conquered territories that were once northern Mexico. During the Chicano Movement renaissance of the 1960's and 70's, Chicano historians re-wrote the narrative, breaking from the traditional, purely criminal characterization of Vasquez in the hands of 19<sup>th</sup> century journalists and 20<sup>th</sup> century Anglo American historians:

As Chicano historians write the history of their people, the image of the Mexican “bandit” must be re-examined... The Chicano social bandit may be a gauge for measuring the sentiment and reactions of a people “removed from history” ... Vasquez’ life “outside the law” was a response to the conquest and a reaction to Anglo violence.<sup>101</sup>

Here, the ethos and logos of Chicano historians emerging in the 1970's intersected with the ethos of Chicano customs and folklore (the way Susan Jarratt and Vorris Nunley discuss *nomos*)<sup>102</sup>. The title of one of the anthems of the Chicano Movement, Rodolfo Corky Gonzales' epic poem “I am Joaquin,” was itself a reference to another California social bandit of this era, Joaquin Murrieta.

While Vasquez is typically resigned in early histories of the West to the role of criminal bandit, almost all historians up to the present acknowledge a dialectical conflict around his interpretation, that his activity and career were interpreted differently by Anglos and by the *Californio*-Mexicans. The former criminalized him as a social threat requiring arrest or disposal, while latter group often saw him (and continue to see him, as

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid. Pp 1, 3, 15.

<sup>102</sup> Nunley, Vorris. *Keepin' It Hushed: The Barbershop and African American Hush Harbor Rhetoric*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2011. Pp 67-68. Nunley explains that African American “social conventions and beliefs” (*nomoi/nomos*) focus on “communal good,” and differ from the more personalized concept of “morality.”

per Salinas school naming committee epigraph above) as a heroic resistance figure. His innovative use and manipulation of the Victorian technologies of the later 19<sup>th</sup> century – particularly the photograph and the newspaper – mark him as a unique and early Xican@ rhetor, one who repurposed the available, variegated and multi-modal means of persuasion to lengthen – and attempt to save – his own life (for ten months), and all the while issuing statements shedding a dialectical light on social conditions and the treatment of Mexicans in the era after the Mexican American war, statements whose echoes would ring many years after his passing. Although his life was not spared, Vasquez’ rhetoric delayed his execution well into the next year, and has traversed through the ages and even today echoes in calls for social justice.

This chapter performs a close reading of the multiple histories, photographs, artifacts, interpretations and appropriations – from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 21<sup>st</sup> century – of this foundational Chicano historical figure, and read alongside Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton’s novel *The Squatter and the Don* (1885), I recognize the contributions of early Mexicans and Mexican-Americans (Xican@) to a decolonial and dialectical rhetorical tradition that repurposed modern technologies of the day to enunciate a decolonial Xican@ subjectivity, one intersecting or moving against a colonial paradigmatic narrative. The rhetoric of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century U.S. nation required Mexicans to be understood as either criminalized “swarthy greasers” or a dying and inferior Spanish dynasty falling at the feet of an advanced Anglo American colonial hegemony whose “manifest destiny” it was to take over, advance and rule the indigenous and Mexican Southwest. To use Adam Banks’s concept about Malcolm X’s rhetorical savvy with

television, Tiburcio Vasquez was able to “jack access” to the latest communication technology, in this case the photograph and newspaper, and repurpose it in order to challenge the operations of the dominant narrative about Mexicans in the Southwest. In this move to preserve his life, the captive rebel articulated a genuine social tension in the early Mexican American experience, sowing seeds for a radical Xican@ rhetorical tradition of the future.

The significance of Vasquez’ dissonant rhetoric is due in part to his crafty repurposing of Victorian technologies of the time, but also to its dialectical resistance in the years after Anglo American invasion and expansion into the Southwest. If the trope of manifest destiny promoted the Anglo seizures of real estate and control of an expansive geography at the dawn of an inevitable Anglo American political order – a trope Ruiz de Burton’s novel challenged directly by unmasking political corruption and disparate racial treatment in the courts - the trope of degenerate or criminal Mexicans worked rigorously alongside it to disable and disenfranchise Mexicans and justify their policing in the Southwest. The rhetorical power of trope works alongside rhetorical conventions, human customs and law to render values, built into language, as natural. Concepts, metaphors and expressions – visual as well as textual – repeated so frequently that they become naturalized, begin to work on a critical mass of listeners to make manifest what has come to seem natural.<sup>103</sup> In the case of the Southwest, the criminalization of Mexicans, the

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<sup>103</sup> Nunley, Vorris. “George Zimmerman Never Saw Trayvon Martin.” Originally published in Los Angeles Review of Books. July 19, 2013. The author delineates how racial tropes in the present preordain the young Black male to “occupy the anxiety-ridden terrain of ... White imagination,” and led in this case to the murder of Trayvon Martin by George Zimmerman. The racially charged chat in the *Salon* version of this article reveals a

trope of the criminal Mexican disseminated in newspapers and literature - their representation of being racially impure, degenerate and prone to crime - contributed to the stripping away of Mexican lands and social rights, and the bodily incapacitation (through disenfranchisement, incarceration or execution) of rebellious Mexican subjects.

The irony contained in Vasquez's rhetorical signals is that they digressed from and challenged the stereotypes of Mexicans during the Mexican American War. The dissonant signals which Vasquez emitted during his incarceration, alongside other less-documented Mexican-*Californio* bandits – such as Joaquin Murrieta, Joaquin Valenzuela, “Three-Fingered Jack,” the “Jacks” (those appropriating the name “Joaquin”), Anastacio Garcia, Juan Flores, Pancho Daniel, Juan Soto, Procopio, etc. – contributes a telling counter-narrative, an ironic digression from traditional histories of the West concerning the Mexican experience after the Mexican American war. In Kenneth Burke's classic study of the “Four Master Tropes” – metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony - he associates irony with dialectic, asserting that irony has an indispensable role “in the discovery and description of ‘the truth.’” Irony as dialectic, he argues, requires a certain humility to achieve a “resultant certainty.” While newspapers and lawmen attempted to portray the captured Vasquez as a synecdoche, or a reduction, of rebellious Mexicans requiring their disappearance from society, Vasquez' interaction with media managed to produce an effective irony that worked on generations of Mexicans in California and the Southwest. Burke writes that irony requires “that all sub-certainties be considered as

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vociferous denial of trope's ability to effect racial violence.  
[http://www.salon.com/2013/07/21/george\\_zimmerman\\_did\\_not\\_murder\\_trayvon\\_partner/](http://www.salon.com/2013/07/21/george_zimmerman_did_not_murder_trayvon_partner/)

neither true nor false, but contributory.”<sup>104</sup> He explains that a true irony is based on a fundamental “kinship with the enemy,” that it is not merely outside of (the student of history) but “contains him within, being consubstantial with him.” Vasquez’ dignified pose, style of dress, his bilingualism, articulate expressions, explanations of socio-political motivations, and savvy use of technology permanently disturbed the stereotype of the “greaser bandit.”

If the English language newspapers of the period, and successive histories of the West produced years after, looked at Vasquez as a cold-hearted criminal deserving of the death penalty, Vasquez’ own words and communications, and the reception of these by a Mexican-Californio audience, contributed quite a distinct message, and disturbed evaluations of the “truth” altogether. And while Xican@ rhetoric here fulfills the role of helping “complete the truth” by contributing a point of view of those subjugated by colonization, Xican@ rhetoric also calls for its own world view, its own singularity and agency in claiming a tradition and style of communication.

Burke’s study of the role of master tropes in the discussion and description of “the truth” helps delineate the origins, motives and functions of a Chicano rhetorical tradition. Indeed, the mass-produced image of Vasquez alongside his version of events (both in English and Spanish) via newspaper interviews produced a rhetorical irony that resisted and challenged the villainous and stereotypical image of Mexicans found in newspapers of the day. Vasquez was a synecdoche of the Mexican population: in his racialized rebellion and his defiance of Anglo law many *Californios* (particularly the lower classes)

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<sup>104</sup> Burke, Kenneth. “Four Master Tropes.” *A Grammar of Motives*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1945. Pp 513.

identified with him, and although most would not pick up arms many *Californio* families provided him and other outlaws refuge. His rebellion was their rebellion. This identification with Vasquez, and its persistence over the years, testifies to a tradition of Chicanos understanding and articulating themselves as a people.

Within the U.S. nation-state Chicanos are often understood as a “minority within a minority,” one sub-group in the category of “U.S. Latinos” or “Hispanics” (although Mexican Americans are a massive 60% of this national “minority” group).<sup>105</sup> In a broader view, Chicanos are but one voice in a “sea of immigrants.” From a Latin America point of view, Chicanos are the northernmost group of Latin Americans. But Chicanos also see themselves as a singularity, a community (albeit with close ties Mexico, to African American neighbors, Central Americans, biracial identities, intermarriages, indigenous roots, etc.), a “Chicano nation,” to different degrees and in varying expressions.<sup>106</sup> Since the Chicano Movement renaissance of the 1960’s, many promote that Chicanos are primarily an *indigenous* group, historically de-tribalized, and currently operating in a period of cultural recovery. Burke’s irony-dialectic pair allows us to recognize all of these expressions, or worldviews, as “neither true nor false, but contributory” to a truer

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<sup>105</sup> Historian Rodolfo Acuna reflects on the 2000 census, naming and Chicano identity in his conclusion to *Occupied America* 5<sup>th</sup> edition, p 405. Also see the 2010 census: Latinos were 16% of U.S. population, Mexicans/Xican@s 64% of this Latino population. <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-04.pdf>

<sup>106</sup> Acuna’s “nation” argument points toward unity, explaining that if U.S. Latinos united they’d be the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest Spanish-speaking country in the world. Tupak Acosta and the group Tonatierra in Phoenix, Arizona have achieved indigenous nation tribal identity based on cultural practices and claiming ancestry from ancient migrants of Aztlan. Chicano Nation sweatlodge in East L.A. holds similar beliefs. Dr. Cintli explains that Chican@s have been culturally de-indigenized through Christianity, violence, a false history, and educational indoctrination, arguing for a decolonial education. Bonfil Batalla’s *Mexico Profundo* argues that most Mexicans are indigenous and Mexican culture still thoroughly indigenous.

comprehension of Chicano history and the Chicano experience. Starting this study with Tiburcio Vasquez, his communication via letters, newspapers and photographs, alongside the narrative of Amparo Ruiz de Burton, provides us a window into the dialectical rhetorical expressions of early Chicanos during their troubling initiation into the U.S. political body.

Below I briefly sketch a historiography of Tiburcio Vasquez and other Mexican American dissonant voices – including Amparo Ruiz de Burton’s novel and Spanish language newspapers - after the Mexican American war. Here I also take into consideration the structures of feeling operating within a period of colonization of the region that is the current U.S. Southwest. I also provide a brief comparative analysis with African American lynching to underscore how lynching in the West similarly yet uniquely contained Mexican bodies in a social space of second-class citizenship. I move on to Vasquez’ post-capture interaction with newspapers and photography studios, particularly how he repurposed these technologies to raise money to pay his attorneys, sway the public image, attempt his release, and challenge dominant and court narratives about himself and the Mexican experience. Gonzalez Day’s *Lynching in the West: 1850-1935* evaluates the criminalized “rhetoric of the image” of Vasquez in captivity<sup>107</sup>, but I choose to focus on Vasquez’ rhetorical self-determination, his motives and methods of re-purposing communication technologies. I conclude with contemporary re-appropriations of Vasquez’ rhetoric, considering a controversy over the recent naming of

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<sup>107</sup> Ken Gonzales Day. *Lynching in the West: 1850-1935*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2006.



Tiburcio Vasquez Elementary school in Salinas, and how his words and legacy resonate among contemporary Xican@s and his descendants.<sup>108</sup>

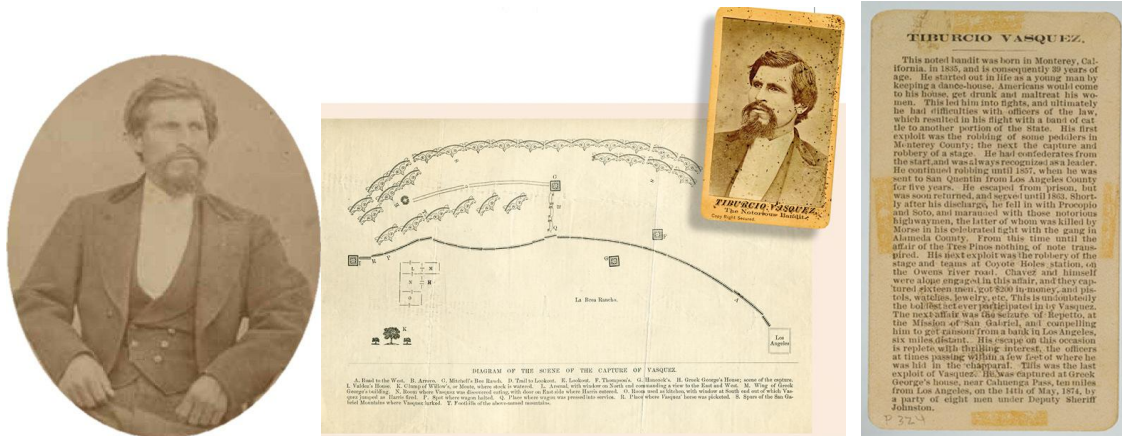
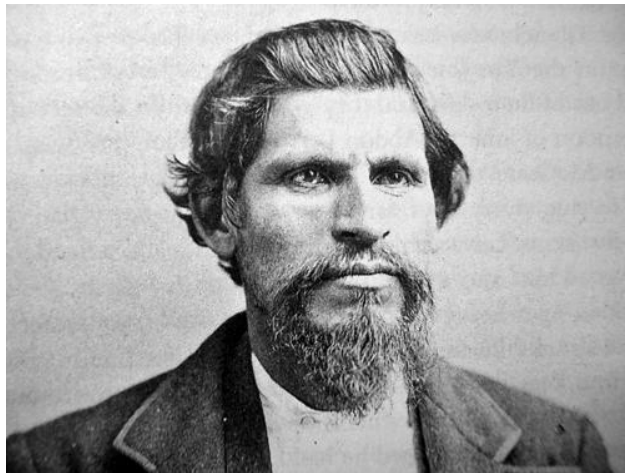


Figure 5.1: Vasquez photographed by Wolfenstein 3 days after capture on May 18, 1874, at Los Angeles Jail (for *Los Angeles Star*). Figure 5.2: Diagram of the scene of the capture of Vasquez in *Los Angeles Star* 5/23/1874. Figure 5.3: *Carte de visite* of Vasquez, bio on back, circa 1874 (source: *True West Magazine* 1/1/2007). Figure 5.4 (below): Vasquez photographed by Bradley and Rulofson in San Francisco.



<sup>108</sup> Salvador M. Galvan associates Vasquez with early Mexican settlers in the Santa Monica canyon whom he visited often. A photograph on page 27 of his Master's thesis (and page 52 here) depicts Vasquez with Rafael Blanco Marquez. *Latino Settlements on the Westside: A Pictorial History of West Los Angeles*. UCLA Master of Arts in Urban Planning, 2005.

## Structures of Feeling in Chicano History

“Photographs ... are a mute record of social performance. One can see in a glance what is not being said yet is a vital basis for identification and judgment.”

- Robert Hariman and John L. Lucaites, *No Caption Needed*

Raymond Williams lays out useful concepts to understand rhetorical production in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and how Vasquez’ rhetorical signals continue to emit meaning into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. His Marxist theory of literature, when applied to a rhetorical study of Tiburcio Vasquez, looks at language as a social activity - dynamic, creative and dialectical. He explains that “signification, the social creation of meanings through the use of formal signs, is then a practical material activity; it is indeed, literally, a means of production.”<sup>109</sup> It’s important to recognize that Vasquez was a central figure in this production of meaning: his *carte de visite* picture, for example, could not have circulated without his consent to pose, to allow the picture to be sold, to collect royalties and thus circulate as a commodity in the market of goods. Looking at media then as a means of producing meaning - which becomes part of the material world - helps us understand how, in the words of Vorris Nunley, a rhetoric with affect produces material effects.

Williams points out how much literary criticism and descriptions of the past are problematic because they “are expressed in a habitual past tense... this immediate and regular conversion of experience into finished products.”<sup>110</sup> The problem with seeing the past as a “fixed form,” or an activity that has already ended, is that it conceals essential elements of human cultural activity. As an alternative, he describes meanings and values

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<sup>109</sup> Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977. P 38.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid. P 128.

as “structures of feeling,” changes being actively lived, that exert pressure and limits on experience up to the present. Structures of feeling also invite readers to understand rhetoric as “a social experience or activity which is still in process.”<sup>111</sup> While many California lawmen and citizens expected that the execution of Vasquez in 1875 had brought his rebellious existence to an end, and had fixed his image into a rigid and settled past, we in the present continue to debate and re-interpret his motives and meaning, and his voice continues to disturb historical records or awaken communities. Linking rhetoric to William’s structures of feeling helps bring Vasquez’ rhetorical activity into focus in the present, and can help us meditate on how technology gets repurposed as a means of decolonial persuasion.

One of the first academic histories written of Vasquez is a twelve-page article, “Tiburcio Vasquez” by Ernest R. May, published in 1947 in the journal *The Quarterly: Historical Society of Southern California*. Based mostly on three early historical accounts of Vasquez and a few other documents and newspaper articles, May produces a good account of his adult life and list of crimes, mostly robberies. He lists the most accurate accounts of the period - where authors interacted with Vasquez - as those of Major Ben C. Truman (*LA Star* editor), Eugene T. Sawyer (*San Francisco Chronicle* reporter), and a more “fanciful” account by George A. Beers (also with the *San Francisco Chronicle*), a reporter present at Vasquez’ capture. Spanish language reporters may have been overlooked. In the early years of Chicano Studies in 1973, Pedro Castillo and Albert Camarillo published *Furia y Muerte: Los Bandidos Chicanos*, a collection of biographies

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid. P 132.

of Chicano “social bandits” of the 19<sup>th</sup> century following the Mexican American War. The opening chapter on Vasquez was a reprint of May’s article. Perhaps the most comprehensive and detailed study of Vasquez is John Boessenecker’s recent *Bandido: The Life and Times of Tiburcio Vasquez*. Boessenecker produces an in-depth narrative containing innumerable details and accounts, culled mainly from archives and English language newspapers, in his 411 pages of text.

Boessenecker’s meticulously researched account purports an objective historical evaluation, and is indeed well researched and thoroughly detailed, but the San Francisco attorney works to establish the criminality of the social rebel and discredits Vasquez’ ethos at almost every opportunity, while granting Anglo witnesses, reporters and lawmen unquestioned credibility. Even though Boessenecker is a lawyer, and very much a “law and order man” whose written “several books on crime and law enforcement in the Old West,” he fails to do his homework on race and critical race theory - a body of theory, much of it by law professors and education scholars, that studies human experience and how race, culture, gender and class intersect and play out in daily life, especially within the confines of law. He also dismisses Chicano Studies scholarship that more fully analyzes Vasquez’ historical context soon after the Mexican American War. The context of U.S. invasion and expansion, requiring disenfranchisement of American Indian and Mexican rights and properties and the criminalization and subjugation of any resistance, is considered but ultimately overlooked in his evaluation of Vasquez’ activity and tribulations. On the fairness of his trial Boessenecker writes:

Did Tiburcio Vasquez receive a fair trial? Under modern case law, he did not... Yet, even if the case had been retried... Vasquez would surely have been convicted.

While the Boessenecker account ultimately convicts Vasquez as primarily a criminal, his is unable to fully describe the “structure of feeling” surrounding the hunted and captive Mexican figure standing at the center of a historical crisis over the social and human status of Mexican living within the confines of a new Euro-American political order.

### **Colonizing California: Scholarly Invasions & Rhetorical Structures of Terror**

“... narrative is crucial to my argument here... stories are at the heart of what explorers and novelists say about strange regions of the world; they also become the method colonized people use to assert their own identity and the existence of their own history.”

-Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (xii)

“Texts incorporate discourse, sometimes violently.”

-Edward Said, *The World the Text and the Critic* (47)

In *Orientalism*, Said explains Europe’s textual construction of the East, the idea of what I will be calling “scholarly invasions” (nations as narratives). His concept of the worldliness of texts, and counter-narratives, helps me discuss with more clarity the rhetorical battlefield of the post-war Southwest, and how a unique Chicano rhetorical tradition emerged here. Like Benedict Anderson’s theories on “imagined” nationalisms, Said’s attention to the text operating in the world clarifies how texts have consequences in the world: “Texts have ways of existing that even in their most rarefied form are always enmeshed in circumstance, time, place, and society – in short, they are in the world, and hence worldly.”<sup>112</sup> More complicated than the private act of reading, Said

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<sup>112</sup> Said, Edward. *The World, the Text and the Critic*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983. Pp 35.

continues, the social status of a book, the way it circulates, the way it operates on society's values and specific groups' thinking, whether it is seen as inconsequential or as something to be outlawed or burned, all these matters have to do "with a text's being in the world," its worldliness.

Whether texts served as pedagogical instruction for conquering lands, or whether they were effectively miniaturizing Mohammed for European audiences, or establishing a scholar's (or institution's, or nation's) intellectual superiority through the writing of dictionaries or building of libraries, the production and amassing of textual knowledge over time contributed to an ideological authority that paved the way for Europe's effective rule over the Orient - and the Americas. Said points out that by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe had gained control over 85% of the globe, and academic activity was at the center of this accomplishment.<sup>113</sup> "Europe's collective daydream of the Orient," Said writes, was a textual relationship:

"...the Orient studied was a textual universe by and large; the impact of the Orient was made through books and manuscripts."<sup>114</sup>

Said's insight into the relationship between nation and narration is a building block to understanding the colonization of the Southwest, and the origins of a Chican@ rhetorical tradition. As much as soldiers and squatters, journalists and scholars were central figures in the scholarly invasions in the Southwest.

As Said's first quote above explains, the colonized also employ narrative to respond to invasion and assert their identity. *The Squatter and the Don*, written in 1885

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<sup>113</sup> Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. Pp 123.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid. Pp 52.

by *Californiana* Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton, is regarded as the first major Mexican American novel. Chicana/o Studies literary scholars such as Ramon Saldivar have made arguments that Chicano literature enacts critical dialectical work, revealing the tension between history and art (literary fiction), between being Mexican and living in the U.S..<sup>115</sup> Chicano literature also responds to negative tropes and stereotypes. Rosaura Sanchez and Beatrice Pita's introductory essay to the novel *The Squatter and the Don* classify it as one of the earliest historical romances on and by Mexican Americans.<sup>116</sup> The novel aimed to "textualize the grievances of the Californios," and likely played to Mexican and liberal Anglo audiences, much like Helen Hunt Jackson's successful romantic novel *Ramona* (1884) – a romance that raised awareness over abuses suffered by California Indians - did the year prior. Pointing out the racist historiography of the United States in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Ruiz de Burton's novel was part of a running battle over representation. Throughout the plot, *Squatter and the Don* also criticized discriminatory land laws that disenfranchised Mexicans, and the federal government's collaboration with capitalist monopolies such as the railroad. The fate of the patriarch Don Mariano Alamar, based on land-owning Mexicans who lost land titles during this period, captures a "central resentment" of the novel. When the Don's son Gabriel ultimately loses his

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<sup>115</sup> Saldivar, Ramon. *Chicano Narrative: The Dialectics of Difference*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990. The dialectical nature of Chicano literature as Mexican American history is discussed on pages 23-25; the dialectic between history and art is the topic of chapter 3 and explained on page 73.

<sup>116</sup> Ruiz de Burton, Maria Amparo. *The Squatter and the Don*. Houston, TX: Arte Publico Press, 1997. Originally published in 1885. Sanchez and Pita's introduction on pages 7-49 executes a biography of Ruiz de Burton, and a feminist, Marxist critical race reading of the novel, as well as the Homestead Act's violation of Indian lands, California's changing economy and political system, squatters, the structure of the historical romance, the commodification of "Spanish" women, the railroad, the monopoly capitalism of Huntington and Stanford, and the novel's interpellation of present day audiences.

family's ranch he also loses a job at the bank, and refusing aid from his Anglo wife's family Gabriel goes to work as a mason. "In that hod full of bricks, not only his own sad experience was represented, but the entire history of the native Californians of Spanish descent was epitomized... The natives of Spanish origin, having lost their property, must henceforth be hod carriers" (325). In synecdoche Ruiz de Burton presented a portrait of the conquered and their subjugation within the emerging system of industrialized labor.

Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton's novel *The Squatter and the Don* published almost four decades after the Mexican-American war ended, depicted the struggle of an aristocratic Californio land-owning family to defend their rancho from biased laws, unsympathetic courts, greedy unlawful squatters, and East Coast settlers. Ruiz de Burton's novel is regarded as perhaps the first novel written in the canon of Mexican American literature. Binding history and romance, the novel features the Alamars as an aristocratic household identifying with a Spanish heritage. In the second chapter the patriarch Don Mariano Alamar broods over the tenuous legal control he has over his ranch, and the unreliable protection of the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the war and established the legal status of Mexicans who stayed in the Southwest. His wife, Doña Josefa, agrees, "Mexico did not pay much attention to the future welfare of the children she left to their fate (sic) in the hands of a nation which had no sympathies for us" (65). Squatters join bankers and venture railroad capitalists like Leland Stanford as the main antagonists in the novel; Anglos who despise Mexicans and aim to make profits for themselves above all other matters.



In two critical essays about 19<sup>th</sup> century encounters between Anglos and Mexicans, Raymund Paredes and Antonia Castaneda help us understand how Anglo Americans imported ideologies, attained through literature, which operated politically on Mexican and indigenous peoples.<sup>117</sup> Paredes explains that first encounters in the Southwest were preceded by a combination of English settlers' negative views of Spaniards in Europe – particularly the racial hierarchy according to the “Black Legend” which casts Spaniards as the lowliest Europeans - as well as English texts which demonized Indian civilizations during Spain’s invasion of central Mexico. The settlers, Paredes argues, combined the racial impurity of Spaniards and the savagery of the Aztecs and attributed them to the population in northern Mexico, thus justifying racist attitudes and emboldening the invasion of Texas and the Southwest. Castaneda’s essay describes how the derogatory description of Chicana women in early travel literature written by white men justified colonizing the Southwest. The Europeanization of upper class Mexican women in this literature justified Anglo males marrying into their families to obtain land holdings, while working class women were depicted as dirty, loose, and non-European and rationalized the violation of their rights and invasion of the territory. The cumulative impact of these literatures was the production of tropes and stereotypes that stood in for a truer evaluation of Mexicans and their status before the law.

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<sup>117</sup> Castaneda, Antonia I.. “The Political Economy of Nineteenth Century Stereotypes of Californianas.” *Between Borders: Readings in Early Chicano History*. Ed. Michael R. Ornelas. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/ Hunt Publishing Company, 1991. Raymund Paredes, “The Origins of Anti-Mexican Sentiment in the United States.” *New Directions in Chicano Scholarship*. Eds. Ricardo Romo and Raymund Paredes, La Jolla, CA: Chicano Studies Program, 1978.

Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* also explains how the novel and newspaper contributed to global nationalisms throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Anderson details how these genres specifically "imagined communities," rhetorically producing shared values, histories and destinies. Texts constructed popular notions of a synecdochic "we" that distinguished itself from "others." Nations were narrated into existence.<sup>118</sup> These imagined nationalities drafted and invested millions of people (and settlers), themselves strangers to one another, into an imagined community, in the idea of a nation, into a consolidated social entity from which financial elites and political leaders could operate. While this operation could be and frequently was violent and repressive in the name of the nation, the power to narrate also had the dialectical power to liberate. Said alludes to the role of counter-narratives in liberation movements. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said writes that,

"when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who now plans its future – these issues were reflected, contested, and even for a time decided in narrative. As one critic has suggested, nations themselves are narrations. The power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them."<sup>119</sup>

As illustrated in Ruiz de Burton's novel as well as Vasquez' statements, Chicano rhetorical acts in this period frequently responded to the oppressive requirements – ceding land, rights, culture – of US imperialist myths.

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<sup>118</sup> Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso, 2006.

<sup>119</sup> Said. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993. Pp xiii.

*Squatter and the Don* also foregrounds the interracial unions, troubled masculinities and the gendered tensions of colonization. Reflecting her own background, Ruiz Amparo de Burton also describes Anglo families like the Mechlins and the Darrels who are depicted as benevolent and honest Anglo families, with whom the Alamar siblings ultimately intermarry and engage in real estate exchanges. Unfair treatment of Mexicans is counterbalanced by romantic courtships and the warmth of family gatherings. To complicate this tension, Ruiz de Burton identified as European, and distinguished her class from that of working class mestizos, Blacks and Indians. Sanchez and Pita also point out the debilitation of Mexican males in the novel, what they call “the handicapping of male agency,” and how the novel captured the commodification of aristocratic *Californio* women who, when tied to the land, became Anglo settlers’ means to acquiring territory. While *Squatter and the Don* provides a unique window into the inner dealings of Mexican deterritorialization from an aristocratic point of view, the larger Mexican underclass, mixed-race “pobladores,” Indian workers and the violence they encountered, are little more than background.

A Chican@ rhetoric tradition has roots in mestizaje, the mixing of races in the Americas, but is closely tied to indigenous experiences. Tiburcio Vasquez himself was of mulatto, mestizo and Ohlone Indian background.<sup>120</sup> In the Americas, Spain’s armies were also equipped with scholars, and colonialism’s project in the Americas is bound in the immense scholarly production of ecclesiastical texts, (perhaps the first ethnographic)

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<sup>120</sup> Boessenecker 4-7. Yaolt Mazahua of Aztlan Underground claims that Vasquez is a descendent of Tongva Indian healer and rebel leader Toypurina, who was captured in the 1785 revolt and imprisoned in northern California, and later married a soldier and settled in Monterrey. Several Ohlone indigenous people claim Vasquez as their ancestor.

manuscripts, and documentation, written largely by priests - often with the aid of indigenous scholars under the command of priests - invested in converting but also “knowing the Indians.”<sup>121</sup> Like Castaneda and Paredes explain, these early literatures contributed seminal tropes, stereotypes and narratives about indigenous groups, and informed discriminatory attitudes of the first Anglos in the Southwest. Unlike England and France in the Middle East, European colonization wiped out 94% of the indigenous population. Ideological (religious) conversion of Native Americans and mestizos was almost total, and the coupling of institutions of coercion and culture were highly effective. It was no coincidence that alongside every Spanish presidio in California a mission was also constructed. As stated by Said, sometimes violently, texts obeyed Orientalism’s “monstrous chain of command... express(ing) the strength of the West and the Orient’s [here, Mexican] weakness – as seen by the West.”<sup>122</sup>

In turn, the United State’s ideological work – what I have been calling a “scholarly invasion” of the Southwest - was a military and rhetorical project. Ultimately, texts functioned like rhetoric with a bodyguard, constructing bodies of knowledge as “truth,” the same truth which Nietzsche earlier described as “a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms ... a sum of human relations ... enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically.” Like the British in the Orient (described by Said), the colonizing Anglos in the Southwest, through their journalism, novels and histories, built a “formidable library against which no one ... can

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<sup>121</sup> Roa de la Carrera, Cristina. “Translating Nahua Rhetoric: Sahagún’s Nahua Subjects in Colonial Mexico” in *Rhetoric of the Americas: 3114 BCE to 2012 CE*, edited by Damian Baca and Victor Villanueva. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. Pp 69-87.

<sup>122</sup> Said. *Orientalism*. P 45.

rebel and which no one can avoid.”<sup>123</sup> While colonial scholarship dominated the discourse about the Southwest, Chicano Studies scholars in particular have begun to unearth dissonant voices on which to construct their discipline.

Raul H. Villa’s *Barrio Logos* recognizes Tiburcio Vasquez as one of the few social bandits to explicitly express his banditry as racially and politically motivated, a result of unequal social treatment of *Californios*-Mexicans after the Mexican American war. Villa’s text broadly explores Chicano expressions against community-destroying forces over two centuries. His opening chapter, titled “Creative Destruction,” focuses on early tensions between Anglos and Mexicans, the rise of social banditry and the construction of early repressive police structures, particularly their use of lynching as an effective “spectacle of violence.”<sup>124</sup> Throughout his text Villa emphasizes how, since the outset of colonization of the Southwest by Anglos, prevalent social operations continued into the present. He outlines three major subordinating practices of Mexican deterritorialization: physical regulation of space (laws and built environment), social control of space (law, courts and police), and ideological control of space (“interpellation of citizen-subjects through educational and informational apparatuses”).<sup>125</sup> Unlike Boessenecker, Villa outlines a more accurate sequential order that leads to the rise of social banditry and quasi-police repression after the war. Focusing on Los Angeles, he expands on the brief career of Juan Flores, and what came to be known as the “Juan Flores revolution” of the 1850’s to illustrate the persistence of Mexican resistance to

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<sup>123</sup> Said, *Orientalism*. P 157.

<sup>124</sup> Villa, Raul Homero. *Barrio Logos: Space and Place in Urban Chicano Literature and Culture*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000. Page 24.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.* Villa pp 3-4.

colonization, the rise of quasi-police forces, and the prevalent use of lynching as a strategic spectacle of “psychological intimidation” used to effectively quell rebellion and keep Mexicans in their second-class social space.<sup>126</sup>

The heroic ethos of Vasquez is understandable once this historical context of terror is factored in. Like many historians and Chicano polemicists before him, and as proof of Vasquez’ political motivations, Villa repeats one of the bandit’s most cited quotes:

“A spirit of hatred and revenge took possession of me. I had numerous fights in defense of my countrymen. The officers were continually in pursuit of me. I believed we were unjustly and wrongfully deprived of the social rights that belonged to us.”

The quote from Truman’s biography (which contain two interviews) calls attention to two major factors that make Vasquez a unique and significant figure for rhetorical study: he is one of the few Mexican bandits to be photographed, and one of the only ones to leave an extensive written (biographical and autobiographical) record and rhetorical argument. Primarily through interviews during his almost year-long incarceration, Vasquez’ clever and very literate rhetorical argumentation – via interviews published in newspapers, open letters, and photographs – provides a unique dialectic to the “scholarly invasion” of the Southwest. Vasquez was educated, very literate, and bilingual. In jail he demonstrated rhetorical and technological savvy: “jacking access” to the technologies of photography and the newspaper, and repurposing them in order to lengthen his own life and articulate injustices against Mexican Americans. His stance against Anglo government and legal/police force was resistant. In the face of media criminalization and judicial

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid. 24.

indictments, he maintained a dignified pose. In these ways he is an apt precursor to Chicano rhetorical traditions connected to the present.

Villa's study of Flores resonates with Vasquez' career, and captures the political milieu of Mexican rebellion of the period. Like Vasquez, Flores was imprisoned for a period, and his activity included defiant and daring acts against Anglo rule – including the ambush and killing of the sheriff of Los Angeles and two of his deputies – which were subsequently sensationalized in the press in order to drum up civic retaliation against the demonized Mexican figures. Both figures also enjoyed wide support from the Mexican community, which idolized them, frequently sheltered them, colluded in their escape from Anglo officers, and lamented their downfall. The campaigns to capture each resulted in wide spread acts of persecution of this same community, resulting in random lynchings and mob violence by Anglos against Mexican settlements.<sup>127</sup> John Rollins Ridge's dime novel on Joaquin Murrieta, often regarded as the most accurate record of the Murrieta legend, records over a dozen lynchings of innocent Mexicans as the posse closes in on the rebel.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Griswold del Castillo, Richard. *The Los Angeles Barrio, 1850-1890*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979. Griswold Del Castillo compares Flores to Vasquez, pp 105-115. Horace Bell, *Reminiscences of a Ranger: Early Times in Southern California*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999 (1881). Bell describes the Flores Revolt, pp 401-413. Kathleen and Gerald Hill, *Santa Barbara and the Central Coast: California's Riviera*. Guilford, CT: Insider's Guide, 2008. Describes illegal lynching of innocent Mexicans associated with Flores, p 239.

<sup>128</sup> Rollin Ridge, John "Yellowbird." *The Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murrieta*. Norman, OK: Universtiy of Oklahoma Press, 1955. Originally published 1854. Lynchings begin on page 122.

Juan Flores also ends his career at the gallows, part of the “sanguinary history” of colonizing Los Angeles and the Southwest.<sup>129</sup> Horace Bell writes that after a daring group escape from San Quentin after hijacking a steamer, a twenty year old Flores along with his lieutenant Pancho Daniel headed south “with a party of fifteen or twenty followers and made known their intent to go to Los Angeles, raise the standard of revolt and rid the country of the hated gringos.”<sup>130</sup> Kathleen and Gerald Hill write that newspaper attention helped consolidate and publicize a gringo-*Californio* alliance against what came to be known as the “Flores Revolution.”

In a Chicana reconstruction of Los Angeles history, Sandra de la Loza revisited newspaper reports of the lynching of Juan Flores in the 2007 “Phantom Sightings: Art After the Chicano Movement” exhibit at the LA County Museum of Art.<sup>131</sup> Her installation “Fort Moore: Living Document” calls into question the one-sided Anglo version of “civilizing” Los Angeles history by unearthing more complicated episodes of racial conflict and conflicting versions of history. She juxtaposes newspaper reports of the execution by the English-language *Los Angeles Star* next to the Spanish-language *El Clamor Público*. The *Star* reports that a vote taken by “the people of this city... without a dissenting voice” decided that Flores should hang, and proceeded immediately to the jail, led Flores to the scaffold, from where he spoke a few words, and was hung. The article ends describing Flores’ “protracted struggle, very painful to behold,” due to

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<sup>129</sup> Bell, Horace. *Reminiscences of a Ranger: Or, Early Times in Southern California*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999 (originally published in 1881). Chapter XXXII pp.401-410.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid. P 384.

<sup>131</sup> Tucker Neel on “Phantom Sightings: Art After the Chicano Movement”. <http://www.hijadela.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/phantomneel.pdf>



improper methods. In contrast, the *Clamor Publico*'s opening paragraph emphasizes that the gathering was unlawful, not conducted by the proper authorities, and that some in the crowd unsuccessfully called for the lynching of three more Mexicans for horse-stealing. After a description of the execution the author cautions that the death should serve as an example for those deviating from a "path of virtue."<sup>132</sup> For the record, the lynching of Juan Flores is historically recorded as a mob lynching, as opposed to a "legal" execution carried out by courts of law.

De la Loza's installation resonates with some of the objectives of mapping a Chican@ rhetorical tradition. While she draws attention to more than one way of seeing Flores' execution, she reveals that Mexicans too utilized communication technologies, and often worked them differently. The installation itself cleverly exposes that the dialectics of Mexican and Anglo conflict are found not only in the historical record, but in the rhetorical operations of mass media technologies of the period. While the Flores episode was described exclusively by journalists, two decades later Vasquez was able to imbricate himself within journalism's arguments, including the deployment of a visual rhetoric. Unlike Vasquez, no photo exists of the Los Angeles rebel and none of his words were recorded to elaborate his beliefs or substantiate his motives. Vasquez, on the other hand, managed to emit signals that continue to register within Chican@ communities two centuries later.

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<sup>132</sup> Clamor Publico. February 21, 1857.  
<http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p15799coll70/id/244/rec/79>

## Repurposing Technology: Tropes, Photographs and Newspaper Interviews

“One such portrait was made into a souvenir with a biographical sketch on one side and his picture on the other. Tiburcio sold these to the general public and obliged any number by personally signing them in his meticulous hand. In these days he appeared elegantly clothed, looking more like a grandee than a man waiting trial for murder. Two competent lawyers were retained for his defense, P.B. Tully, and a former Judge, W.H. Collins.”

- Robert Greenwood, *The California Outlaw: Tiburcio Vasquez* (1960)

“We are looking at a rhetoric of affect, that has effects.”

- Norris Nunley

As Greenwood’s quote above details, Vasquez was not simply an object of technology, but interacted and manipulated technology, from behind prison walls, in a rebellious rhetorical act of technology use. Chiefly through newspaper interviews and photography (in its early years), but also through prison visits and signing photographs, Vasquez engaged with this new technology and re-purposed it to manufacture a unique, if improvised, message, one that could persuade distinct audiences. His messages traveled via word of mouth, photography, and English and Spanish language newspapers, and were principally aimed at winning over native Mexican Californios as well as swaying the growing Anglo public of his innocence on charges of murder. In the era of “frontier justice” – what some Mexican journalists called “lynchocracia”<sup>133</sup> – and the demonization of Mexicans, Vasquez communicated an image of a “caballero,” or gentleman, articulate and cultured. Whereas images were just beginning to be used by law and media to indict a criminalized figure, Vasquez was simultaneously repurposing this technology in order to humanize his image, and through synecdoche, all Mexicans.

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<sup>133</sup> A play on “lynching” and “democracy.” Acuna, Rudolfo. *Occupied America* 5<sup>th</sup> ed.. 137. The footnote there cites the LA Spanish language newspaper *El Clamor Publico* 4 and 16 April 1857.

Ken Gonzales-Day's *Lynching in the West: 1850-1935* breaks ground in putting the lynching of Mexicans in the West on the historical map.<sup>134</sup> Gonzales-Day closely reads the dark legacy of lynching, lynching postcards and meditates on the production of the "(wonder) gaze" produced by this culture, the violent imagining of the Latino social body's place in the expanding Anglo American empire. The author documents 352 known mob lynchings in California between 1850 and 1897 (not counting "legal" executions by lynching by the state), including 132 of Mexicans and 41 of American Indians. While a more terrifying 3,753 lynchings of Blacks occurred in the South between 1889-1918 (recorded by the NAACP) only 8 African Americans were lynched during the colonial period in the West according to the author. Gonzales-Day draws on this history to revisit the technological impact on mass culture that the photograph had. The postcard, or *carte de visite*, became the most popular method of circulating photography in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, spurred by the desire to possess images of national leaders and Civil War heroes starting in 1861.<sup>135</sup> The popularity of the *carte de visite*, sometimes referred to as "cardomania," also signaled the advent of a visual technology that reflected and retained in graphic detail the violence of the Victorian era, producing what Franny Nudelman called a "rhetoric of presence." As nation-states emerged and engaged in civil and national wars, photography found a popular medium via the *carte de*

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<sup>134</sup> Acuña and Carey McWilliams before him also foregrounded this legacy but only recently have scholars attempted to unearth numbers. Carrigan and Webb also published a recent text on the subject, *Forgotten Dead* (2013).  
<http://mobile.nytimes.com/2015/02/20/opinion/when-americans-lynched-mexicans.html?referrer&r=2>

<sup>135</sup> Gonzales-Day 114.

*visite* which captured the images of war heroes and battle deaths.<sup>136</sup> Later that century, the most popular mass-produced photos were images of presidents, celebrities and lynching victims, in that order.<sup>137</sup> While the lynching postcard was intended to be, like the lynching, a warning to would be criminals, it also circulated as a “trophy photograph” to recollect the sensational occasion. While most lynching photographs captured the scene of lynching, often including the mob or crowd, another typical card was a portrait of the condemned man or criminal (as they awaited legal or extra-legal execution). Ultimately the lynching photograph was an icon of a rigid racial order meant to terrorize non-white groups into subservience to Anglo law and social order. The public humiliation and mutilation of a Black or Brown body – and the circulation of its mass produced image – could serve as an effective and synecdochic “deadly warning” to the whole group. Vasquez’ use of his own *carte de visite* is an unprecedented use of technology, repurposed to circumvent its initial function and deadly purpose.

Gonzales-Day dedicates a section of his book to Tiburcio Vasquez, illustrating Vasquez’ unique case of interrupting “the lynching scene”:

... he was able to parley the impending spectacle of his own death, signified by the photographic image, into a forum from which to address the Mexican American experience—transforming his infamy into what may be among the most overtly race conscious statements to be credited to a Mexican American in the English language press of the nineteenth century... Like a flash of light in nearly a century of darkness, his interviews, published in newspapers and pamphlets, transformed his celebrity from that of a phantom threat... to a media spectacle that... supplied Vasquez with a very different

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<sup>136</sup> Franny Nudelman, *John Brown’s Body: Slavery, Violence, and the Culture of War*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004. P 105.

<sup>137</sup> Gonzales-Day 95.

kind of opportunity for speech making that the Western lynch mob had so successfully denied to better men.<sup>138</sup>

Gonzales-Day surveys details of his life, quotes and dedicates most of his analysis to the racialized interpretation of his countenance as it appeared in Anglo American newspapers of the time. One article reporting on his case was titled “The Bandit: Arrival of the Greaser Horse Thief.” Relying on the pseudo sciences of “phrenology” (the study of foreheads and head shapes to determine intelligence and moral character) and “physiognomy” (reading the face or “countenance” as an index to the character) reporters customarily used the visible characteristics of black hair, dark skin, “a low forehead,” Indian blood visible in his “contour,” clothing and facial hair to “scientifically” establish the criminal character of a “swarthy Mexican.” According to Gonzales-Day, some criminals seemed a “shave away” from innocence. While the author effectively analyzes the racialized reading, and the state’s collusion with the mass media apparatus attempting to destroy the bandit, the dialectical work of Vasquez’ message going in the other direction is for the most part left out. For the young Anglo American state, nevertheless, it is clear how the newspaper and the photograph served as instruments meant to contain and repress any rebellious elements in the newly annexed population.

The evolutions of technology in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century – in this case the newspaper and the photograph – contributed a legibility and credibility to the expanding nation, and they also helped give birth to figurative images (tropes), like the *bandido*, that would criminalize Mexicans and “put them in their place.” The image of the Mexican bandit, both literal and figurative, was one that was beginning to develop into a popular

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<sup>138</sup> Gonzales-Day 143.

trope that could help colonize and order the fledgling West, and that has had a lasting function, even into our present. Vorriss Nunley vividly describes the power of trope and how it operates around matters of race, life and death in his article “George Zimmerman Never Saw Trayvon Martin.”<sup>139</sup> He compares two powerful examples of people seeing “tropes” instead of the actual people: a Black law professor walking down the street with his son running into an initially apprehensive White colleague, and the fatal meeting between Trayvon Martin and George Zimmerman. In both cases the latter did not recognize the individual persons, but imagined a “super” criminal Black man to be feared and thus contained. Nunley explains,

A trope — whether in the form of an image, entity, symbol, speech act, or gesture — can emit dense concentrations of cultural, experiential, and political energy and effects (affects) — energy producing profound effects for particular audiences, altering, heightening, and increasing the persuasive weight and gravitas of cultural symbols, signs, and representations.

Like the trope of the Black male, modern tropes of criminal Mexicans have roots in earlier periods; the *bandido* trope was essential in suppressing Mexican rebellion and justifying the terrorizing of Mexican communities. While racialized and sensationalist descriptions of Mexican bandits abound in 19<sup>th</sup> century journalism, the story of Tiburcio Vasquez is a unique case of the trope speaking back.

Taking an inventory of existing photographs of Vasquez provides a unique window into the dialectical struggle over the masculine Mexican image and how Vasquez attempted to maintain his integrity and justify his career through photographic

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<sup>139</sup> Nunley, Vorriss. “Cicero’s Tongue: ‘Hey! It’s me, Trayvon!’: The Black body is guilty until proven innocent.” *Los Angeles Times Review of Books*. 19 July 2013. Retitled “George Zimmerman Never Saw Trayvon Martin” in *Salon*.

representations, which he openly welcomed, and interviews with Mexican and Anglo reporters. Although newspaper technology had not yet figured how to print photographs, the photo circulated separately as public art and political message in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century California. Vasquez' personal interaction with the photograph, selling and signing these from his jail cell, was a unique repurposing of the "trophy" photograph, bringing the owners of these into a new camp, a discourse community attempting to elude the gallows. Boessenecker's text provides a detailed background of most of these images.

In all, four sets of pictures exist of Vasquez, producing 9 photographs in total. A decade before his capture, in 1865, Vasquez at thirty years of age took a photograph at a San Francisco studio. He is captured in a standing pose, dapperly dressed, one leg stylishly crossed over the other leg. Sporting a fancy suit, vest, tie, pocket watch with chain, and holding a typical Californio flat brimmed hat, Vasquez carries an air of sophistication. Many years later, after the infamous 1873 Tres Pinos robbery and murders that led to an aggressive statewide manhunt, this photograph was used to produce a woodcut image of Vasquez that circulated in newspapers and wanted signs, as newspaper technology did not allow for printing photographs until shortly after the turn of the next century. Photography, like video and social media today, was used to announce and verify, and its imperfect transfer to woodcut nevertheless produced images meant to capture not simply the likeness of the criminal, but the criminal himself.

Four days after his capture two photos were produced which would become the first *carte de visite* photos that he would sell to pay his lawyers. Still suffering from bullet wounds, Vasquez agreed to a deal proposed by San Francisco photography gallery

Bradley and Rulofson to reporter George Beers, in which the photograph would be reproduced to create multiple prints of a *carte de visite* which would provide Vasquez with 25% of profits. After Vasquez agreed, LA photographer Valentin Wolfenstein took two photos on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1874, a shot of his waist up and one from closer up. Both are grainy yet they clearly capture the image of Vasquez. Although he wears a suit and white shirt, his stare is grim and his goatee beard is long. Vasquez was recovering from serious injuries from multiple gunshots during his capture days before, wounds inflicted on his arms, leg, chest, head and neck. His pose masks much of this suffering and discomfort. After taking the photos, Wolfenstein refused to hand over the negatives and attempted to abscond with them. He was caught by gallery representatives in San Francisco as he disembarked from a steamer and beaten.

About two weeks later, after Vasquez was transported via boat to northern California, he was taken by officials directly to the Bradley and Rulofson gallery in San Francisco and photographed again. This sitting on May 27<sup>th</sup> produced four images that circulated widely: two of him sitting, two standing. In these more professionally taken photos, Vasquez appears more rested and elegant in pose and demeanor. Of all the photographs of Vasquez these four produce the most elegant and vivid images of the man. He stares seriously, eyes fixed slightly to the right of the camera. His hair, though slightly long, is neatly combed. His mustache and goatee are fully grown but not unkempt. He wears a three piece suit, with pocket watch and chain, over a clean, buttoned collarless white shirt which works to accentuate a dignified stare. Although Vasquez was described as a light to fair-skinned Mexican, he appears to have a dark



complexion, partly due to the contrast with the glowing white shirt and his rugged looks. His eyebrows seem to produce a slight frown, and his eyes stare directly without insinuating defeat or capture. His appearance expresses more of a determination than it does a surrender.

Ten months after his capture, on March 18, 1875, the day before his execution, the last two photographs are taken of Vasquez. One a close up and another a full body standing pose, capture a serious yet sophisticated gentleman, not one likely to be executed the next day. Taken ten months after the Bradley and Rulofson pictures, these two portraits, taken by San Jose photographer Wilbur Wright, again depict a dignified and elegant Vasquez. In a close shot of his bust, and another of the figure standing, Vasquez looks directly into the camera. His face seems relaxed and his expression is resolute, almost peaceful. His hair and facial hair are noticeably trimmed compared to the previous photographs. He wears the same or a similar suit but this time with a collared shirt and striped bowtie. In his standing pose one leg is crossed over the other, expressing a casual if gallant demeanor, much like the 1865 image. With his hand on his hip he seems to assure the viewer of his confidence, that the events of the day will resolve themselves in the annals of history.

The last two photo sessions - through a confident, gallant posture and contained if casual facial expression - evoke a resolute ethos in Vasquez. His self-representation, communicated through his posture, grooming and clothing, is that of a “caballero,” a gentleman. Juxtaposed with his consistent declaration in newspapers that he did not commit the murders at Tres Pinos, and that his men were instructed to not murder nor

violate women, Vasquez emitted a sound and coherent media message that he was not the “murderous bandit” or “greaser thief” that some stories were attempting to indict. Roland Barthes explains in his essay “Rhetoric of the Image,” how the power of a visual rhetoric operates through the interplay of denotation and connotation, and the relationship of text to image.<sup>140</sup> Barthes argues that a media image is consistently accompanied by text, and that “the text directs the reader” and is intended to “remote-control” the reader towards a preconceived meaning floating around the image. English language newspaper headlines and stories were clearly intended to indict the man, while the simultaneous circulation of the portrait of the condemned man – via the *carte de visite* - was intended to help seal the case against him. While most English language journalists described Vasquez as a ruthless murderer and “swarthy” Mexican clearly deserving the death penalty, Vasquez’ rhetorical retort, was a multimodal signal in the opposite direction: an image (circulating as a *carte de visite*) to be juxtaposed with his own claims of innocence on murder charges which appeared in interviews printed in newspapers. The *carte de visite*, in particular, was a visual technology Vasquez repurposed to counter the trope of the “swarthy Mexican.” While Bossenecker plays down these strategies, suggesting Vasquez’ narcissism was the chief motivation for taking photographs, it is more likely that the rebel elected to go as public with his case as possible, and that he believed he could persuade groups of *Californios* as well as Anglos of his genteel character through the image as well as testimony. He cordially welcomed throngs of visitors and signed the purchased photographs with his autograph, leaving both a courtly impression and a personalized

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<sup>140</sup> Roland Barthes. “The Rhetoric of the Image” in *Image-Music-Text*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977. Pp 32-51.

formal inscription. These countersignals circulated widely and effectively, extending his legal case, and challenging the journalistic criminalization with an articulate bilingual argument of innocence alongside the photographed posture of a refined and elegant Mexican.

If the photograph created a certain sympathetic response among audiences, it was the textual signals that cued them towards a disarming structure of feeling. Of the three interviews printed in the English language press – by Beers, Taylor and Truman – it was Truman’s interviews that produced quotes which would have long lasting impressions. Truman published a story in the *LA Star* on May 15 and an interview on May 16, 1874. These were published later as pamphlets. In the second interview Vasquez testified:

“My career grew out of the circumstances by which I was surrounded. As I grew up to manhood, I was in the habit of attending balls and parties given by native Californians, into which the Americans, then beginning to become numerous, would force themselves and shove the native born men aside, monopolizing the dance and the women. This was about 1852. A spirit of hatred and revenge took possession of me. I had numerous fights in defense of what I believed to be my rights and those of my countrymen. The officers were continually in pursuit of me. I believed we were unjustly deprived of the social rights that belonged to us... I went to my mother and told her I intended to commence a different life. I asked her for and obtained her blessing, and at once commenced the career of a robber.”<sup>141</sup>

The interview ends with a statement by Truman that “he protested frequently throughout the interview that he had never killed a man in his life.” The interview along with this statement likely established a widespread and credible doubt in his guilt of committing

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<sup>141</sup> Truman, Major Ben C.. *Tiburcio Vasquez*. Los Angeles: The Abbey San Encino Press, 1941. This collection of *LA Star* articles and interviews was first published in 1874 (while Vasquez was alive). Pp. 23-24.

murder. Perusing the long interview, which related details and context behind the feared criminal, readers likely developed a deeper understanding of the prisoner, and possibly some empathy. His reason for rebelling, and his explanation of his crimes in the context of a brutal Anglo expansion, may have moved readers and established a credible ethos if not doubt over his case. The description of the dances, the year 1852 and his seeking a blessing from his mother were details that contributed an authenticity to his testimony.

A subsequent interview, titled “Vasquez’ Case from His Own Standpoint,” begins with an extensive description of bullet wounds sustained during his arrest and his openness to numerous visitors, eliciting a sort of celebrity to the prisoner. He explained that Vasquez “understands English very well, but speaks it imperfectly, and the greater portion of the appended statement was obtained through Sheriff Rowland as interpreter.” A personality emerges when asked if a woman had anything to do with his capture; “(Laughing) No; I never trusted one with information that could harm me.” Here as in the earlier quote about “monopolizing women” at the dances, Vasquez reveals the subservient representation of women in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Mexican, and likely Anglo, women are objects or property of men, or Malinche-like characters capable of betrayal; here, women appear capable of turning Mexican men over to the Anglo officials. Simultaneously, Vasquez is depicted as a charming “ladies man,” who had various lovers, mistresses and admirers. This particular interview is interrupted by the author’s description of a visit by “a couple of ladies who wished to see the prisoner... (and are) sorry to hear of his capture.” “He thanked her again and raising his bandaged hands in a reverential manner said, ‘Que las bendiciones de Dias (sic) sean siempre contigo’ – May

God's blessings ever rain upon you." Truman again ends his story with a generous benefit of a doubt on Vasquez' side.

The interviews also establish heroic and exceptional aspects of the robber, what leads him to be seen later as a "colorful bandit," and to Chicanos as a historical figure fighting oppression. When he states, "I had confederates with me from the first, and was always recognized as leader," it is merely a brief description tossed between exploits. Elsewhere he describes his leadership qualities and also establishes credibility in his testimony by revealing details and aspects only an insider would know. He states: "I usually had no confidants. When I wanted a party of men I had no difficulty in finding the requisite number." His responses, methodical and interlaced with bravado, likely produced distinct effects on different audiences. When Truman asks him "I've heard that you said you could overrun this portion of the State if you had money. How would you have acted?" Vasquez answers with a terse but tactical response, a radical comment that would be widely cited by Chicana/o historians and polemicists:

With the arms and provisions that I could have purchased with fifty or sixty thousand dollars I could raise a force with which I could revolutionize Southern California.<sup>142</sup>

The response could have been intended by Vasquez to elicit fear amongst Anglos and the potential of a Mexican revolt in the face of future injustices, such as his impending execution. But it also contains a dose of bravado, likely to stir the wonder of audiences such as those at a zoo staring into the eyes of a caged lion. His defiant boldness also contains a rhetorical force aimed towards Mexicans and Californios of the period,

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid. p 42.

emboldening their rebellion and uplifting their social expectations. A century later, Chicano historians like Richard Griswold del Castillo would unearth this particular quote to declare conclusively that Vasquez, like Joaquin Murrieta (and Juan Flores),

“split the community into factions... had large followings... had the support of the rural campesinos, and both were captured on the verge of staging full-scale insurrections.”<sup>143</sup>

Whether savvy threat or fledgling revolutionary thought, bluster or bravery, Vasquez’ rhetorical signals stirred audiences and sold newspapers. His messages circulated widely for almost a year, and were substantial enough to live through the centuries and inflame social causes, some, literally, in his name.

By conjuring the multiple poses of Tiburcio Vasquez, the image of the condemned man awaiting sentencing, signing photographs and selling them to visitors at the window of his cell, we begin to understand the dialectical work of the *California*’s visual rhetoric: the photograph’s capacity to hold something captive, and the irrepressible flow of meaning through visual culture and among multiple discourse communities. Susan Sontag’s *On Photography* reminds us that photographs are “a grammar and ethics of seeing.”<sup>144</sup> They manipulate, interpret, and since the outset of the technology, were used by the state for validating and evidence. The photograph has a predatory quality “in its ability to turn people into objects that can be symbolically (and ultimately) possessed,” explaining the *carte de visite*’s popularity as photography’s main commodity during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In institutions of control such as the police and family, photos validate

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<sup>143</sup> Griswold del Castillo, Richard. *The Los Angeles Barrio, 1850-1890: A Social History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979. Pp.113-114.

<sup>144</sup> Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977. P 3.

important documents. Photographs, however, also are complicit with action, they have a way of “at least tacitly, often explicitly, encouraging whatever is going on to keep on happening.”<sup>145</sup> In a real sense they held the lynch mob away, and helped keep Tiburcio Vasquez alive for almost a year. Photography associates with beauty and “has the peculiar capacity to turn all its subjects into works of art.” As Vasquez continued to take photographs during his protracted campaign to win his freedom and escape the gallows, he seems to have understood Sontag’s insight that photographs “are material realities in their own right, richly informative... potent means for turning the tables on reality.”<sup>146</sup>

While Nat Turner, John Brown and Tiburcio Vasquez were silent at the gallows, each managed to effect a lasting dissonant rhetoric against the political tide that swept them up.<sup>147</sup> Vasquez’ use of textual and visual rhetoric can be understood as an allegory for a modern rhetoric that sees all means available not simply to persuade, but to create knowledge for communities that continue to witness and experience social violence and trauma. *Lynching in the West* works rigorously and imaginatively on various levels to put Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans and even whites on the map of this gruesome history. In the process, Gonzales-Day’s text theorizes and practices a visual rhetoric that reads the *carte de visite* deeply, and critiques English language journalists. Gonzales-Day, however, leaves Vasquez largely speechless. I found Elizabeth Alexander’s “‘Can you be BLACK and look at this?’: Reading the Rodney King

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid. Page 12.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid. Page 180.

<sup>147</sup> Nat Turner and Kenneth S. Greenberg. *The Confessions of Nat Turner: And Related Documents*. New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s Press, 1996. In Vasquez’ case, he wished to speak from the scaffold but, according to Eugene Taylor Sawyer, was instead persuaded by a priest to write three letters the day before as his last statements.

Video(s)” to be doing a critical reading more in my line of work.<sup>148</sup> Reading the history of violence on the black body, in the context of the King beating and the LA Uprisings - through the stories of the courts, sports figures, Fredrick Douglass’ autobiography, Emmet Till’s photograph, Muhammad Ali’s response, Malcolm X speeches and Pat Ward William’s art – she evokes a visual and visceral collective memory that persuasively calls for action – “somebody do something!” - and the critical agency of knowledge. A rigorous Chicano visual rhetoric, tethered to a critical Xican@ Studies, can do similar work, re-narrating historical traumas for the purpose of uncovering hidden histories, informing cultural production, and bringing into being an empowering Chicana/o epistemology.

### **Spatial Rhetorics: Echoes of Vasquez in Post-Mortem Landmarks**

The visual and multimodal rhetoric of Tiburcio Vasquez during the last year of his life resembles Lois Einhorn’s description of Native American rhetoric, particularly the distinction between traditional rhetorical standards set on immediate persuasion and results, and the long-range oral tradition of Native Americans, who frequently follow a paradigm of dialogue and negotiation, and “base their decisions on what is best for the next seven generations.”<sup>149</sup> Vasquez’ rhetoric may not have immediately succeeded in saving his own life, but it’s meaning was projected far ahead and it manifested over the

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<sup>148</sup> Alexander, Elizabeth. *The Black Interior*. Minneapolis, MN: Graywolf Press, 2004.

<sup>149</sup> Einhorn. Lois J.. *The Native American Oral Tradition: Voices of the Spirit and Soul*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000. Pp 70-71.



long term, particularly in Chicano art and folklore, in the revisionist project of Chicano history and Chicana/o Studies, and in social movements over space.

Looking back at my own paths into critical consciousness and Chicana@ scholarship, I recall my first glimpse of Vasquez, and recognize the rhetorical force that the first political books that captivated me possessed. My older brother attending community college brought home *500 Years of Chicano History in Pictures* (at that time a bicentennial “450” circulated), a text currently on Arizona’s banned Chicano book list, compiled largely by Elizabeth “Betita” Martinez. In it I found atypical messages, such as Mexican American history beginning thousands of years ago with indigenous civilizations. Columbus’ arrival, the Mexican American War, and the Chicano Movement were pivotal historical shifts. Following a page on vigilante lynching, a section titled “... And We Resisted” included profiles of six men. Under a large portrait of Vasquez, Martinez wrote:

Born in Monterey, Calif. In 1835, Tiburcio became a so-called “bandit” at the age of 16 when he fled to the hills to escape a *gringo* lynching party. With wide support from the *Mexicano* people, he robbed Anglo cattle owners and stage coaches. He was captured and hanged for murder but his real “crime” was resistance.<sup>150</sup>

Martinez’ unique arrangement contain a variety of stylistic elements within the paragraph. The summary contains essential details outlining his life, and the use of quotations convey irony and a critical interpretation of Euro-American history wrapped in a Chicano political sarcasm. Spanish words like *gringo* and *Mexicano*, interweaved in

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<sup>150</sup> Martinez, Elizabeth. *500 Years of Chicano History in Pictures*. Albuquerque, NM: Southwest Organizing Project, 1991. Pp 44.

the text, formalize the code-switching of Chicano speech, and evoke Chicano language agency. Martinez' compartmentalization of individuals, events and topics through pictures and concise paragraphs throughout the classic text may one day become a classic example of Chican@ rhetoric and composition style.

Enrolling at U.C. Berkeley after high school, I was drawn to the housing provided by Casa Joaquin Murrieta, founded by students after the Third World Strike of 1969. The Chicano appropriation of Murrieta's name further validated the rebellion of the Chicano "social bandits." In a Chicano History course I again read about him in more detail in Rudolfo Acuña's *Occupied America*, also a banned book in Tucson schools. Years later I read the chapter in *Drink Cultura* titled "Tiburcio Vasquez: A Chicano Perspective" by Jose Antonio Burciaga, a poet, painter, and professor at Stanford, and a founding member of the comedy group "Culture Clash." Here, Burciaga composes a syllogistic sequence to draw his profile of Vasquez.<sup>151</sup> First he demystifies and decriminalizes the Mexican "outlaw" through thorough research and details about his family genealogy, then describes the political climate of Anglo expansion and treachery, and finally explains how resistance was criminalized. He quotes historian Acuña to explain that "in stereotyping Vasquez, Anglos have purposely or unconsciously attempted to use satire to dismiss the legitimate grievances of Chicanos during the nineteenth century." "While one wrong does not justify another injustice," he deduces, "these circumstances cast him more in the light of a rebel and avenger than a common criminal." Indeed, Burciaga and Martinez' texts exercised critical thinking, interpretation and community building. Years

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<sup>151</sup> Burciaga, Jose Antonio. *Drink Cultura: Chicanismo*. Santa Barbara, CA: Joshua Odell Editions, 1993. Pp 119-128.

later, as a Chicana/o Studies instructor at Northridge, I used Burciaga's text to teach the Chican@ perspective.

Several years ago a friend of mine, Sal Galvan, working on his master's degree at UCLA shared that Tiburcio Vasquez had a connection to our barrio in Santa Monica. Early Mexican settlers in Santa Monica, it turned out, had befriended and provided Vasquez refuge. The archives of the local Marquez family even produced a unique photograph of Vasquez with a "favorite" Rafael Blanco Marquez, which Sal proudly displayed a slide show and in his thesis.<sup>152</sup> This more personal connection to my subject spurred a more personalized approach to the rhetorical study of Vasquez in order to bring the research into the present. I conclude this chapter with a more ethnographic exposition on my research, utilizing personal connections, the mode of pilgrimage, and a more personalized reflection on findings and research.

On a research trip to the Bancroft Library in northern California recently, I was fortunate to find several geographic sites, current and historic, that affirm and simultaneously complicate Tiburcio Vasquez' historic if contested legacy. The spaces and institutions bearing his name were a testament to the ongoing Mexican-American dialectics operating in the U.S. Southwest. His name continues to be interpreted differently by waves of Chican@s and Mexicans. Even family descendents have a unique manner of holding his memory, through the preservation of his name within the family, that asserts a rebellious yet dignified ethos.

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<sup>152</sup> Galvan, Salvador M.. "Latino Settlements on the Westside: A Pictorial History." UCLA Urban Planning Masters Thesis, 2005. P 27. Picture and story originally published in Daniel Kilgore Marquez, *Rancho Boca de Santa Monica*. New York: Vantage Press, 1977. P 68.

About forty minutes south of Oakland, I located the Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center in Union City, down the street from Cesar Chavez Middle School, where I was participating in a XITO (Xican@ Institute for Teaching and Organizing) institute sponsored by the New Haven Unified School District. A Chicana principal and several educators had pushed for more specialized Ethnic Studies pedagogy and curriculum in their schools, and I was invited (and honored) to present alongside the former teachers of Tucson's banned Mexican American Studies Department. Locals informed me that the health center was started in the early 70's by Chicano college graduates who had participated in Chicano Studies and El Plan de Santa Barbara, and had returned to their communities to provide affordable health services. It was located smack in the center of the varrio. Inside, the center was bustling, serving dozens of mostly Mexican and Latino families. Outside a large place name announced the "Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center Inc." and a beautiful mural adorned the entrance of the two story building. Taking pictures and walking inside, I thought of how important it is for Chican@s, Mexican@s, and Raza to have place names they can connect with, that give them a historical connection, recognition and significance.

This first stop also reminded me that Tiburcio Vasquez is not actually a Mexican nationalist name (like Emiliano Zapata or Benito Juarez) nor is it a U.S. patriotic name (like John Adams or Ronald Reagan). His is specifically a Chicano name, one whose story was rediscovered and popularized to a large extent during the Chicano Movement of the 60-70's, that gave Chicanos a history of rebelling against Anglo racism and oppressive unjust laws. Although many Anglo historians (like Beers, May, Bossenecker,

etc.) chiefly emphasize that he was a "crook" and not much more, for Chicanos the evidence of rebellion was always evident and significant. His quotes in newspapers revealed he had a social and historical consciousness: he responded to injustice against Mexicans, or "Californios." The "naming" of places recalls our real history that is too often erased, distorted and most often hidden in popular media, texts and schools. Our Raza youth don't feel part of the school because they aren't in the curriculum, or the spaces. Raza youth have almost no rhetorical ethos to draw from in the literature circulating in public schools.



Figure 6.1 & 6.2: Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center, Union City, CA. Figure 6.3: Tomb of Tiburcio Vasquez, San Jose, CA.

A few days later, moving south down the bay into San Jose, my son and I found the tomb of Vasquez at the Santa Clara Mission cemetery. It was uniquely placed diagonal to the surrounding tombs, as if rebelling against the linear order of the whole cemetery. The large blocked shaped tombstone was engraved with large letters spelling the last name, smaller letters of the first name, dates and a small portrait of the rebel. Flowers had been placed there in the recent past. Immediately behind his tombstone a large handsome palm tree rose towards the sky, as if serving as a landmark for his tomb. I dropped a handful of tobacco on the grave as an offering. May's essay recounts how

thousands of Mexicans in Monterey County and the Salinas valley “were crestfallen over his capture” (May 131). Bossenecker details how after his death his body was taken to his cousin Agustina Vasquez Bee’s house near San Jose and lay in vigil with hundreds paying last respects before burial. After hearing rumors, his sister Maria was so paranoid that his dead body would be exhumed by looters and the corpse decapitated, that she lay in vigil at the cemetery for days. A month later she had the body exhumed and was relieved that no one had dishonored the corpse (Bossenecker 364-365).

Journeying southward the next day to Salinas, my old college buddy Raul Rodriguez drove us to the newly named Tiburcio Vasquez elementary school, in East Alisal. A Chicano on the school board had led efforts to name the new school. The area, Acosta Plaza, was a tough part of “East Salas” (although the school was surrounded by new housing construction and fields). “You could get accosted in Acosta,” I joked with Raul. When we arrived at the school I wasn’t aware of it. To my surprise, there existed no signage, only new buildings and a flagpole. A plaque bearing his image and name were visible only when you approached the front doors, and inside a beautiful painting of a tree hung in the office.



Figure 7.1 & 7.2: Tiburcio Vasquez Elementary School, Salinas, CA. Figure 7.3: Salinas School Board meeting. Figure 7.4: Tree painting inside Vasquez Elementary.

Why the concealment? Shame? Controversy? The naming had been very controversial, aired in local newspapers, television and even CNN. Local police union officials led the attack. Some argued that an area with one of the highest homicide rates in the country shouldn't name a school after a "bandit murderer." I thought, didn't they know Vasquez was popular for the hog-tie technique, designed to avoid murdering victims, that he ordered his lieutenants not to murder or abuse women, and denied murdering anybody until his dying day? Speaking with the staff, a woman mentioned to me that a committee was forming to reconsider renaming the school.<sup>153</sup> I wondered, what must go through a child's mind: a mix of confusion, shame, rebellion? Why assign a name, and then erase it? Does it have anything to do with being Mexican? Of course it does. It did in 1874 and it does in 2015.

Mexican rebellion against a gringo-controlled narrative continues, and the Salinas school controversy is an example of it. Like the Chicano school board members, the Los Angeles group Xicano Records and Film (XRF), annual hosts of the counterhegemonic event "the Farce of July," also embrace Vasquez' legacy. Featuring bands, art, performance and indigenous ceremony, the yearly event began in the early 1990's as an ironic rejection of wartime patriotism. In 2001 XRF held the annual music and arts festival at Vasquez Rocks just north of the San Fernando Valley to pay tribute to the

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<sup>153</sup> Said, Samira. "Villain or Hero? Flap over California School Named for Bandit," CNN News, 3 January 2013. Huffington Post article ends with interesting reflection on interpretation and who has power when naming monuments. Also see 12/13/12 KSBW television report on the "mounting controversy": <http://www.ksbw.com/news/central-california/salinas/Salinas-school-named-after-outlaw/17772026>

*California* rebel. A group of ancestors of Vasquez unexpectedly arrived at the event and gave a special talk in his honor.

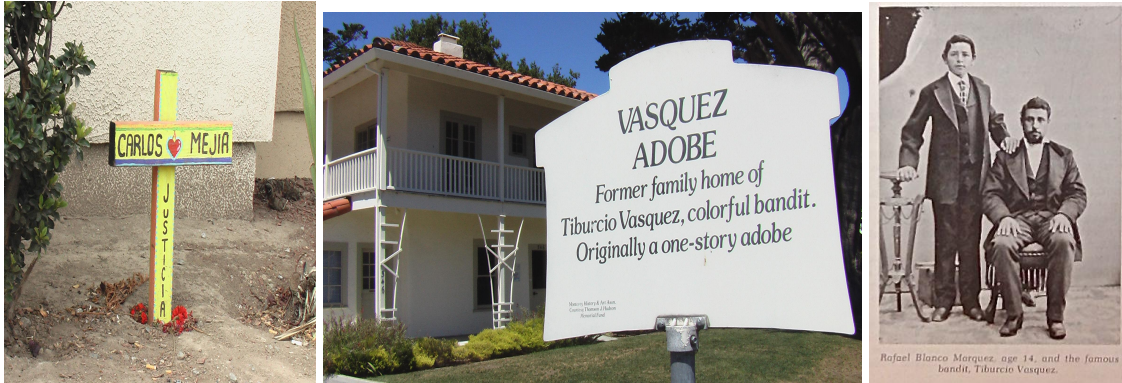


Figure 8.1: Cross, Salinas, CA. Figure 8.2: Vasquez childhood home, Monterrey, CA. Figure 8.3: Vasquez poses with Rafael Blanco Marquez.

At his family home in old Monterrey, a giant cypress tree rose adjacent to the adobe. Inside, the parks and rec staff sat behind desks. Across the street stood the jail, the parks administrator reminding me he spent days there too. The composition of the town communicated a relationship between Mexicans, history, crime, and the apparatuses of the state. The spatial rhetoric in the geographic layout seemed to officially communicate that Mexican resistance to injustice was policed and the state stood at the ready to contain them. Adjacent to the jail was the old civic center where the first California Constitution was hammered out. The second floor museum staff also held his memory, as “the colorful bandit.” But his legacy is watched over, controlled, and held tightly inside the confines of a criminal reputation. His home was across the street behind the old capital building, suggesting that if you take a good look around you will find the troubled Mexican past behind California’s re-invention as an Anglo state. In 2015 as in 1874, when thousands visited Vasquez in prison, bought his postcards with his photo on it to help pay lawyers fees, Raza/Californios continue to rebel against his criminalization and the distortions of



history. To Chicanos, he was much more than a criminal, he was a rebel against discrimination.<sup>154</sup>

When I was younger reading about him in Betita Martinez' *460 Years of Chicano History in Pictures*, and looking at this famed portrait, I found his story compelling, probably like many young Chicanos/Latinos. Latino students need to have heroes too, to read their stories, and our adults need to help pick them. Vasquez, for all his faults, represents rebellion against racial injustice. Another thing I noticed driving around Acosta Plaza were liquor stores, homes of hard workers, the Cesar Chavez library and a few murals of Chicano uplift. I also saw a yellow cross placed at the side of a store where a Mexican man, Carlos Mejia, was killed last year by police, and the words "Justicia" written vertically on it. At the time, the killing was added to the list of black and brown victims of police violence as the Black Lives Matters movement swept the country, bringing a more critical vigilance to high incidents and disproportionate rates of police killings of black and brown males. The modest yellow cross stood rebelliously as a marker of dignity against the state violence against "criminal" Mexicans.

During his imprisonment, and through the technological ethos of the photograph, Vasquez promoted a "caballero" image, insisting that at his core he was a gentleman and not a murderer. His grandfather had founded San Jose. When he was executed by the state, he was publicly lynched, much like the mobs lynched Mexicans in that era (the

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<sup>154</sup> Liz Gonzalez, "A Guerrilla Memorial for Tiburcio Vásquez on the Anniversary of His Hanging in San José's St. James Park." *Silicon Valley De-Bug* (online). 20 March 2015. CSU San Jose professor Luis "Xago" Juarez and students, responding to controversy over school naming, perform play in honor of Vasquez' legacy at site and on anniversary of his execution. <http://www.siliconvalleydebug.org/articles/2015/03/20/guerrilla-memorial-tiburcio-vasquez-anniversary-his-hanging-san-joses-st-james-park>

largest number of persons lynched in the West, according to Gonzalez-Day's book, were Mexicans, and many by mobs). Bossenecker admits Vasquez did not receive a fair trial (Boessenecker 348). In 1875, the execution must have left the Mexican community with a sense of injustice, what Alfredo Mirande has called "gringo justice," not unrelated to the Anglo mob violence that lynched Juan Flores in Los Angeles, and this legacy has not been washed away.

When the discussion over the name of Vasquez elementary continues, I hope the voices of East Salinas, Alisal's Mexican/Chicano community, and all of those hard working farmworkers toiling in the fields, get a good sound hearing on this decision. After all, it is their children filling those seats at the school. It would be the best justice.

### **Conclusion: Dialectics of Memory and Technology**

A telling irony exists in Plato's "Phadreus," when he interprets Socrates' critique of the emerging technology of the alphabet in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.. Socrates admonishes Phadreus on his lazy acceptance of the alphabet, claiming that it will not help memory but in fact destroy memory and wisdom, because the use of letters to remember and record history and culture will be misunderstood as *being* history and culture, and will actually prevent humans from practicing oral communication and memory. Ironically, we know only of this great meditation on technology because Plato actually used the alphabet to write it down and record Socrates' meditation on technology for posterity's sake. And the ironic meditation is a good place to begin to conclude this early chapter concerned with rhetoric and technology.

Socrates warns the rhetorician Phadreu, “You have invented an elixir not of memory, but of reminding; and you offer your pupils the appearance of wisdom, not true wisdom.” His warning against this new technology, which was likely threatening the political, educational and cultural traditions of classical Greece, should remind us of contemporary concerns over digital technology, where innovation in personal computers, smart phones, and other devices rapidly effects the way different generations communicate and interact – or interface – differently. I refuse to dismiss his warning as the irrational anxiety of an “old foggy,” because technology and innovations in communication media have always caused real cultural disruption in the societies they operate in. And so this meditation on technology, and its preservation through the technology it critiqued, provide a fitting allegory for lessons on rhetorical traditions and changing technologies, that although technological evolutions are inevitable, a rhetorical awareness enables a community to understand the continuity of content; rhetoric helps us understand how individuals and groups have re-purposed the operations of a technology to fit the customs or purposes of a community.

The technology of text, for example, has had a real effect in my own family. In indigenous culture, the concept of the “seven generations” relates a significant principal around family, memory, and sustainability. An individual or a generation, the concept holds, should be knowledgeable about their own family’s past seven generations, and should act in the present out of concern for their progeny seven generations ahead. My aging mother, born and raised in “el campo” (rural community, or “rancho,” in Mexico), was able, from memory, to recount specific details of individuals and elders seven

generations back. Neither I, raised predominantly in a textual culture, nor my son, raised in a digital age, can do this memory work. Our familial memory is not as developed as that of my mother who grew up in a culture where oral tradition was a central operation of family legacy and history. While textual knowledge and the digital seem, on the surface, an advanced technology, suited to help humans to access, collect and consume data, the technology also appears to impair other capabilities such as memory. Socrates' cynical - and ironic - warning against the technology of the text rings true from over the centuries: "For this invention will produce forgetfulness in the minds of those who learn to use it, because they will not practice their memory" (Plato 563).

Talking with a direct patrilineal descendent of Vasquez, Mario Vasquez-Ramos, whom I met through two Chicano activist friends I know who were themselves related to him, I was informed that within the family the name "Tiburcio" had been passed on. Mario explained that his grandfather and an uncle were named Tiburcio. In a familial naming ceremony, the memory of the rebel was maintained and passed down, much like a material heirloom. Mario's father was centrally involved in Chicano movement activity during the turbulent 1970's, and Mario and his cousin whom I know are active in theatrical, ceremonial and educational forms of Chicano culture. A personalized form of Chicano rebellion, in fact, has been passed on within the Vasquez family itself.

Kathleen Blake Yancey speaks to these Chican@ traditions and the contents of Vasquez' rhetorical archive, arguing that a multi-modal composition is one that repurposes other (visual) elements and genres and links them to textual composition to produce meaning, and that it is an important way to look at rhetoric and composition, as a

“social way” of composing messages in the digital era.<sup>155</sup> Yancey also explains the “deicity” of composition, that texts and their meanings circulate and change over space and time. Her attention to the “re-purposing of technology” helps us understand the method and meaning of Vasquez’ rhetorical activity, and provides some keywords and definitions that allow us to continue a deeper meditation on the connection between Xican@ rhetorical activity and contemporary discussions about the interaction between rhetoric and technology.

Even as we grapple with familial memory, or a people’s history, it is evident that digital technology, along with text and the image, will become a dominant tool in investigating, relaying and communicating information. Rhetoric can allow us to be aware of technology’s role in communication and in community building. If we meditate on the interaction between rhetorical traditions and technology – whether we are looking at the printing press, the photograph, the newspaper, the book, the novel, comics, radio, film, television, home computers, laptops, ipads, or smart phones - we see that technology has always played a role, and that it has been repurposed continually by individuals and discourse communities. This repurposing leaves an archive of a people’s activity, their resolve to communicate a collective agenda and to persuade members to band together. Technology effects human relations, and dialectically humans and discourse communities repurpose technology to serve their aims and desires.

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<sup>155</sup> Yancey, Kathleen Blake. “Made Not Only in Words: Composition in a New Key” in *Multimodal Composition: A Critical Sourcebook*. Claire Lutkewitte, Ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2014. Pp 62-88.

### Chapter 3

#### **The PLM and *Regeneración* Newspaper in Los Angeles: Radical Plans, Polemics and Traditions of Parrhesia**

But everywhere, in fact, as literacy increased, it became easier to arouse popular support, with the masses discovering a new glory in the print elevation of languages they had humbly spoken all along.

- Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (80)

On the day of delivery a group formed and the literate read to the non-readers. Discussion followed lasting hours, praise and criticism mixed; this would repeat itself for days. The word spread.

- Juan Gomez-Quiñonez, *Sembradores* (24)

Proletarians: take in hand the gun and gather behind the banner of the Partido Liberal (PLM), which is the only one which invites you to take possession of the earth for yourselves.

- Ricardo Flores Magon, “Cannon Fodder” (10/15/1910)

Due to their exile and activity in the borderlands, their use of diverse genres and technologies to communicate, their radical political activity, and their persecution, the PLM and Magon have been called precursors not only to the Mexican Revolution but to a radical Chicano ideological tradition as well. Chicano historian Juan Gomez-Quiñonez recognized them as “major contributors as ideologues and organizers to the intellectual climate and political process of the Chicano community... (who) left an imprint on the consciousness of Chicano workers.”<sup>156</sup>

At the turn of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century a popular uprising in Mexico converged with the technology of print and contributed to a radical rhetorical tradition among Mexicans in the United States. Via print technology’s community and literacy-building properties, and, as Anderson and Gomez-Quiñonez assert above, its democratization of the word (particularly the status-building and circulation of vernacular languages), Mexican

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<sup>156</sup> Gomez-Quiñonez, Juan. *Sembradores: Ricardo Flores Magon y el Partido Liberal Mexicano: a Eulogy and Critique*. Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, 1973. Pages 1, 60.

revolutionaries and writers brought the Mexican masses on both sides of the border into a volatile political discourse. Unlike Anderson's larger thesis that newspapers helped create nationalisms and a national identity, Magon and the Mexican Liberal Party (PLM) re-purposed print technology with the effect of bringing to the fore voices traditionally silenced by the currents of nationalism - patriarchy, colonization and government. These included the voices of the lower working class, women, mestiz@ peasants, miners, indigenous communities and the petite bourgeoisie. Like innovations today in social media, the PLM's versatile spread of insurrectionist ideas through the Victorian technology of print media – through pamphlets, plans, manifestoes, song books, plays, fliers and, of most prominently, the newspaper - signaled for many that the ideological innovators of tomorrow were simultaneously immersed in the technologic innovations of today. While Anderson considers how literate and elite classes employed the tools of “print capitalism” to imagine readers into a unified nation, the PLM writers consistently re-purposed this technology to challenge capitalist hierarchies in their ideal hopes to usher in a new government in the hands of workers. This rhetorical re-purposing of technology and the versatility and perseverance of their activity was a major and undeniable radicalizing force behind PLM polemics.

A basic history of the PLM and Magon – alongside the recognition that the revolution brought unprecedented scores of refugees into the Southwest - explain their significant place in a Chican@ rhetorical tradition. As the Mexican political system stabilized (following U.S. and French invasions during the mid 1800's) under president Benito Juarez, the policies of his successor, Porfirio Diaz, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century brought

increased industrialization, international trade, urbanization of the population, and privatization of national industries. With wealth came wealth disparities, and as Diaz' presidency stretched into the 20<sup>th</sup> century (winning 6 elections), political resentment developed over his system of control, polarized wealth, rigged elections, political favoritism, foreign expropriation of the nation's resources, and violent repression of dissident voices. Among the younger educated class, groups developed into a "liberal party" movement, from which the Flores Magon brothers (lawyers and journalists) emerged. Their political organizing, beginning around 1900, against the dictator moved alongside an increasingly combative and ideological journalism. As repression increased the "Partido Liberal Mexicano," or Mexican Liberal Party (PLM) went into exile first in Texas where they continued publishing "Regeneracion," their main organ for distributing information, spreading ideas/ideology, organizing and agitating for a revolution. From their bases in the U.S. Southwest, the group (often clandestinely) organized with Chicano workers and interacted with U.S. radicals, developing a counter-public sphere. Their interactions with radical labor – particularly the International Workers of the World (IWW) – pushed the PLM "junta" towards an "outlaw territory," where a more cynical view of government and capital moved the writers towards more radical anarchist principals. During 1911, from their headquarters in Los Angeles, the PLM orchestrated a daring invasion of Baja California that helped kick off the Mexican Revolution. Participant, *Regeneracion* English editor, and memoirist Ethel Duffy Turner called this year "Magon's High Noon," and subsequent defeats, divisions and arrests during this year led to Magon's isolation and the PLM's decline in influence and productivity.



Globally, the Mexican Revolution is recognized as a major revolution of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and it left in its path historical figures, dates and radical concepts which contribute to Mexican national identity as well as the Chicana@ rhetorical tradition. Through the newspaper *Regeneración*, the PLM spread influential ideologies and propaganda throughout Mexico and the U.S. Southwest, spending significant time in exile primarily in cities in Texas, (St. Louis) Missouri, Arizona and California. This chapter follows the technologic, political and rhetorical tracks of the PLM: I monitor the technologic and polemical operations and dispersal of *Regeneración*; I accompany the newspaper's evasive movement (avoiding Diaz repression and Pinkerton detectives north of the border) throughout the Southwest; and I decipher the rhetorical structures and strategies of newspaper journalism as well as of revolutionary "plans" and manifestos. The apex of their activity is the takeover of Baja California for 5 months in 1911 at the outset of the Revolution, coordinated from their base in Los Angeles (1910-1918). The PLM's rhetorical activity is unique for its unbending, versatile and pervasive practice of *parrhesia* – the exercise of dangerous speech in the face of power. The archive of the PLM newspaper encapsulates and enunciates a dynamic and versatile rhetorical legacy – characterized by militant agendas, rhetorical force and reach, technological savvy, evasive and tactical agility/movement, bi-lingual and bi-cultural engagement with radical Anglo labor (the IWW), the support for and development of a fledgling Mexican feminism, and ideological contributions to radical labor and Chicana@ thought. The PLM would have global and hemispheric impact, and the rhetorical performance of their vast

journalistic activity in Los Angeles marks a watershed ideological moment leaving lasting legacies for a radical Chican@ rhetorical tradition to draw from.

### **Technology, *Parrhesia* and the Borders of Pleito**

Thinking about the PLM's revolutionary work as a versatile rhetorical performance, in the way Andrea Lunsford and Marvin Diogenes reflect on the history of writing (and writing instruction) in the age of "mediated writing" (also referred to as or associated with digital rhetoric, multi-modal or multi-media literacy, screen literacy, the digital humanities, etc.), my analysis is informed by their critique that "traditional and familiar theories of writing have not focused... on the material conditions of production or accounted for the inclusion of aural and visual elements at every stage of the writing process."<sup>157</sup> Looking at the PLM's persistent, persecuted and persevering rhetorical production during political - as well as technological - revolutions, provides a rich well to draw from for this study of Chican@ rhetorical traditions. I also agree with Lunsford and Diogenes that "rhetoric seems ideally suited for making connections between what is old – the complex and shifting but also enduring relationship among message, text, audience, rhetor, and context – and what is new." This chapter will continue this dissertation's reflection on the unique and dynamic relationship between Mexican/Chican@ rhetors, their audience, text, technology, and the "material conditions of production" of the message.

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<sup>157</sup> Lunsford, Andrea and Marvin Diogenes. "Toward Delivering New Definitions of Writing." *From Theory to Practice: A Selection of Essays*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009. Pp. 80-92.

The rhetoric of the PLM are exemplary of parrhesia which is commonly defined by Michel Foucault as fearless or dangerous speech, and associated with “free speech” and truth through dialectic. Parrhesia also involves the element of risk, as did Plato’s Socrates and Plato, to speak freely, boldly and truthfully for the common good, even if at personal risk. Vorris Nunley’s use of parrhesia brings the concept closer to explaining the conditions which the PLM journalists worked under in exile and under constant pursuit by Mexican authorities and U.S. Pinkerton and Furlong agents. Nunley explains how parrhesia is a major principal of African American Hush Harbor rhetoric, being “important to any substantial notion of democracy that pushes beyond the procedural to fundamental questions of the good, justice and power.” Parrhesia, he writes, activates the “terror of precariousness” as it “requires the rhetor to put herself at risk in speaking truth to power, to the dominant political rationality, or to a hegemony that could result in the loss of status, influence, resources, legitimacy, or life.”<sup>158</sup> Like Socrates, Cuauhtemoch, and Malcolm X, Ricardo Flores Magon and the PLM can be held up as examples of individuals who took the ultimate risk – with their livelihoods and their lives – in speaking truth to power. In the face of dictators, judges and the media, the PLM revolutionaries consistently agitated for rebellion and many refused to relinquish their revolutionary and anarchist principals.

The parrhesia evident in *Regeneracion* newspapers and the PLM manifestoes also elaborates on pleito rhetoric. Unlike Tiburcio Vasquez’ combative gestures and comments, the PLM’s repeated call to take up arms against the dictator, and later against

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<sup>158</sup> Nunley, Vorris. *Keepin’ It Hushed: The Barbershop and African American Hush Harbor Rhetoric*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2011. Page 46.

foreign capital and the church, is an orchestrated, deliberate and planned-out rhetoric, replete with tactics, risks and consequences. Unlike a discourse of empty threats, the PLM actively organized groups mostly in Northern Mexico and the U.S. borderlands and armed them. The global anarchist movement encouraged a similar concept - “the propaganda of the deed” – which understood that a militant action could serve as an excellent form of propaganda, of encouraging individuals to join the struggle through militant activity. For anarchists, the “propaganda of the deed,” was “a specific political action meant to be exemplary to others” - and took the form of militant strikes, assassinations, bombings, or organized uprisings.<sup>159</sup> Like pleito rhetoric, it promoted an embodied rhetoric tethered to radical deeds; the dangerous speech of *Regeneracion* pushed for and required a fulfillment of the word through revolutionary action within an actual spatial geography, rhetoric materializing in mass protests, individual actions and actual fields of battle.

In Magon and *Regeneracion* we also have examples of a deeper rhetoric, involved in the “art of leading souls.” Crosswhite’s concept of “deep rhetoric” proposes that rhetoric in an expanded sense is always “ethical,” meaning that it is a way human beings “accomplish good and evil.”<sup>160</sup> The PLM’s ideological newspaper exemplifies this deeper

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<sup>159</sup> Benton, Graham. “Daydreams and Dynamite: Anarchist Strategies of Resistance and Paths for Transformation in *Against the Day*.” In *Pynchon’s Against the Day: A Corrupted Pilgrim’s Guide*. Jeffrey Severs and Christopher Leise, Eds.. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2011. Pp. 199-200. Benton explains anarchist Mikhail Bakunin’s dialectical creation-destruction formulation of “propaganda by deed” and how political violence figures prominently in *Against the Day*, Thomas Pynchon’s novel which features sections on the Magon brothers and PLM activity in the Southwest.

<sup>160</sup> James Crosswhite. *Deep Rhetoric: Philosophy, Reason, Violence, Justice, Wisdom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. Pp. 28-29.

rhetoric at work, easily found in the philosophical and moral dimensions of their messages and how they attempted to affect everyday behaviors and transform social life of Mexicans as well as all workers. Their very ethical rhetoric has often been dismissed as “idealist,” therefore unrealistic and impractical, but it also often takes on a messianic or spiritual dimension for some, still “leading souls,” well after their departure from the scene of battle, still leading audiences towards a greater good or an ideal society.

A Chicano rhetorical tradition may be unique to its geography of the Southwest, but it cannot be understood in a vacuum, or disconnected from Mexico and especially the tumultuous events like the Mexican Revolution. In *The Decolonial Imaginary*, historian Emma Perez writes, “I do not accept fixed notions of Chicana history that confine, stifle, obstruct, obligate, and limit studies to the boundaries of the continental United States as the center of the Americas,” explaining that the “illegal” history of the Mexican Revolution is tied to Chicano history.<sup>161</sup> The turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, like all millenniums, was anticipated with high expectations for the advancement of technology and the evolution of social institutions. Alongside these heightened expectations marched the hopelessness of dystopian outcomes. As industry, the railroad and labor activism expanded in the United States, Mexico experienced uneven development and entrenchment. While trade and industry grew and an elite class enjoyed the benefits, the masses of Indians, mestizos, peasants and workers continued to suffer under the growing dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz, a free market leader increasingly sponsored by foreign and U.S. capital. Beginning in the early 1900’s the escalating events of the Mexican

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<sup>161</sup> Emma Perez. *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999. Pp. 56.

Revolution sent masses of people to the battlefield, to their deaths and across the northern border as exiles and refugees. These refugees and subsequent generations of laborers in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century caused a tremendous growth of the Chicano population in the Southwest. The early exiles, members of the Mexican Liberal Party (PLM), also called Magonistas, would have a lasting impact on Mexican workers in the Southwest and their style of labor organizing, advocacy, communication and polemics.

The Magonistas were not simply a “faction” of the revolution, and many, including subsequent state narratives have labeled them the “precursors” to the Revolution, based on a journalist career beginning in the 1890’s. Others including Mexican historian Armando Barta calls them the “architects” of the revolution, largely due to their ideological influence on revolution leaders and masses<sup>162</sup>, their early calls for reform, but also their political devotion, tenacity, and their expeditious and prolific journalistic activity largely through the pages of *Regeneración*. Trained in law school, the leader Ricardo Flores Magón, alongside his two brothers, turned to the technology of journalism as the main arm of communication and of inciting the masses to revolt against the government. Their radical critique of dictatorship, government, its ties with foreign capital and the Roman Catholic church, were met with a violent and constant persecution causing their exile. While the PLM stressed collective struggle and indeed had a wide and talented network of visionaries, writers and activists, the leadership of Ricardo Flores Magon is undeniable. In “On the Orator,” Cicero points out that “in an orator we must

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<sup>162</sup> Armando Bartra. *Regeneracion, 1900-1918: La Corriente Mas Radical de la Revolucion Mexicana de 1910 A Traves de su Periodico de Combate*. Mexico: Ediciones Era, 1977.

demand the subtlety of the logician, the thoughts of the philosopher, a diction almost poetic, a lawyer's memory, a tragedian's voice, and the bearing almost of the consummate actor."<sup>163</sup> Cicero's description, minus the façade of the actor and plus the devotion of a prophet, fit the character of Ricardo Flores Magon most accurately.<sup>164</sup>

This chapter understands Magon's leadership but regards the newspaper *Regeneración* as a key organ of PLM's revolutionary agenda. This framework allows me to center a rhetorical discussion, and cast a wider net over related topics including women's dialectical work and participation, the role of print technology in persuasively imagining community, the visual and rhetorical war with the LA Times (at a time when the first photographs appeared in newspapers) and the powerful use of plans and manifestos. While figures such as Pancho Villa, Emiliano Zapata and the Adelitas (women fighters) figure prominently in Chicano popular culture, I choose to focus on the lesser known PLM, Magon and the newspaper for their unique and remarkable contribution to a radical Chican@ rhetorical tradition in the Southwest, particularly based on their ideological activity and articulations, innovative technology use, the fastidious and prolific rhetorical production, and their political expedition, at times like a spiritual pilgrimage, through the Southwest.

The pleito rhetoric of Mexican anarchists identified with anarchists around the world and was outright opposed to capitalism and wars to "replace government leaders" (especially as World War I era nationalisms developed). *Regeneración* newspaper was

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<sup>163</sup> Cicero. *On the Orator: Book I*. Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1948. Pp. 89-91.

<sup>164</sup> Pinkerton spy held similar evaluation of Ricardo Flores Magon. Silvestre Terrazas papers, Bancroft Library (U.C. Berkeley).

constantly moving, raising money, enlisting thousands to a war effort, and spreading anarchist militancy and ideals. Though anarchists condemned big government for its element of violent coercion, many also endorsed violent tactics against their enemies (including taking over towns, use of dynamite, assassinations, militant strikes, etc.), which anarchists termed the “propaganda of the deed.” The 1911 take-over of Baja California, the apex of PLM activity, is a dynamic and rhetorical battle, as much an ideological fight as a military struggle, which was decided as much on the pages of newspapers as on the far-off peninsular battlefields across the border.

### **Rhetoric and Technology: Plans and “Flying Papers”**

The significance of this mass ceremony (reading the newspaper) – Hegel observed that newspapers serve modern man as a substitute for morning prayers – is paradoxical. It is performed in silent privacy, in the lair of the skull. Yet each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet whose identity he has not the slightest notion.

- Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (35)

(Napoleon) is on record for saying that “Three hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets.”

- Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (13)

The rhetorical style and technology uses of *Regeneración* in the early 1900’s responded to the severe political and economic turmoil and subsequent persecution to opposition. While historians understand the PLM as a political group, journalists or even propagandists, I choose to study them as rhetors and their journalistic labor as a techne. Their skill and craft in persuading audiences through their unique polemical style – at times an underground, or “guerrilla journalism” - contributed and continues to contribute profoundly to a Chicano rhetorical tradition. Viewing them in the capacity of orators/rhetoricians, their activity provides a trove of tactics and lessons around the art,



craft and discipline of rhetoric. The PLM group developed innovative methods of disseminating their message which involved a “moving press,” and similar to Tiburcio Vasquez, the Magonistas utilized the major mass media communication technology of the period – the newspaper – to circulate their ideas, plans and appeals to Mexicans on both sides of the border in a campaign calling for a mass uprising.

The PLM’s versatile operation of print media as a rhetorical technology marked a novel approach to communication in at least four ways. First, they opened a rhetorical door to illiterate and marginalized groups; activating a unique use of vernacular Spanish and encouraging collective reading customs they brought in to the fold illiterate communities (where the newspaper content was commonly read among groups, predating huddling around the radio). Secondly, their newspaper contained a dialectical participatory nature, where *Regeneración* frequently served as a technological platform for public forums where readers were able to participate by reading collectively, re-printing messages or plans, responding to calls for input (notably in the Plan de 1906), and sending notes, reports and monetary contributions towards the militant revolutionary effort. Thirdly, the group’s polemical battle with the capitalist class was also represented in their face-off with LA Times owners the Otis’s and Chandlers (who owned large tracts of Northern Mexico mining lands), a rhetorical war that was visible on the front pages of the LA Times; and *Regeneración* front page illustrations and photography also visually persuaded readers of dangers and sacrifices entailed in the military conflict. Fourthly, *Regeneración* helped build a wider internationalist counter-hegemonic print culture and counter-public audience where class struggle, anarchist concepts, women’s rights and

democratic participation occupied a more central position than traditional journalism. The PLM were innovative in their use of bilingual editions – Spanish, English, and also Italian - to reach and build connections between diverse audiences on both sides of the border and abroad.

Studying the archive and rhetorical activism of the PLM, the Magon brothers and *Regeneración* newspaper provides a window into the technological aspects and operations of the PLM and on this group's unique ideological development inside the U.S. borders – and Los Angeles to be specific - as they transitioned from patriotic reformers into full-fledged radical anarchists aiming to sway Mexico into an era of peon and worker-led internationalist rebellion. The technology of the newspaper at the time was the equivalent – albeit in rudimentary form - of today's internet; it was a novel technologic form and the major source of information, transmitted via an ephemeral screen (paper), and was the swiftest form of communication and social interaction among mass audiences. The persuasive power of the newspaper was rooted in the media as message as much as the message itself.<sup>165</sup> Readers often read to a group of illiterate comrades, creating a social activity that pre-dates the social gathering around a radio (and later the television set). *Regeneracion's* expansive reach into Mexican communities, literate and illiterate, rural and cosmopolitan, within the U.S. and in Mexico (as well as Latin America and Europe), signaled a unique way of sending prophetic messages to a massive and diverse Mexican audience. As Anderson's quote above delineates, the “mass

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<sup>165</sup> McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964. Pp. 7-9, 15, 18, 170-178. His concept of the “medium is the message” influences my thinking of the effects of technology on audiences, which he calls the “spell of the medium.”

ceremony of reading” may have captivated individual readers as well as listening groups, and reassured them that the imagined community was rooted in everyday life and a collective destiny. A look at the history of the connection between print technology and nationalism benefits a more complicated understanding of the PLM’s interaction with nationalism and *Regeneracion*’s rhetorical effects on audiences.

In *Imagined Communities*, Anderson explains how the mass production of newspapers beginning in the 16<sup>th</sup> century – what he calls “print capitalism” - vernacularized Europe, that is, it made local languages more “official” as it decentralized the empirical power of Latin. As European countries, following Rome’s tradition of empire, spread and colonized large sections of the earth, scholarly Latin came under the secularizing influence of Cicero and the unearthing of the ancients (Greece and Rome), and became less and less ecclesiastical. The Reformation and its use of technology further isolated Latin and popularized vernacular languages. Anderson illustrates this point well, writing, “when in 1517 Martin Luther nailed his theses to the chapel-door in Wittenberg, they were printed up in German translation, and ‘within 15 days (had been) seen in every part of the country.’”<sup>166</sup> Several years later, Luther’s 430 editions of his Biblical translations produced the first known “mass readership” in a vernacular language, making him the “first best-selling author so known.” Anderson in the same chapter explains that print capitalism laid the basis for national consciousness by creating unified fields of communication, giving vernacular languages (such as Mexican Spanish)

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<sup>166</sup> Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 2006. P. 39.

a new “fixity” or formality, and thereby creating “languages of power” which were elevated through print to official administrative languages.<sup>167</sup>

It must be clarified here that *Regeneracion* was unique and distinct from newspapers which had friendly relationships with capital and their respective governments. The PLM re-purposed the technology Anderson and McLuhan describe for their own counter-public audiences and counter-hegemonic purposes. The *Regeneracion* writers, producers and main audience were leaders, associates and potential members of the PLM. The political work of the party and the communication work of the newspaper walked hand in hand. Unlike the print capitalism which Anderson describes as having the effect of bringing strangers to identify as compatriots, *Regeneracion* and other revolutionary newspapers sought to unify groups for rebellion *against* government and capitalism. Marshall McLuhan precedes Anderson in explaining:

“Political unification of populations by means of vernacular and language groupings was unthinkable before printing turned each vernacular into an extensive mass medium. The tribe... is exploded by print, and is replaced by an association of men homogeneously trained to be individuals. Nationalism itself came as an intense new visual image of group destiny and status, and depended on a speed of information movement unknown before print.”<sup>168</sup>

Again, the insights of Anderson and McLuhan are integral but incomplete for understanding the purposes and effects of *Regeneracion*. While the radical paper certainly provided a fast-paced and “intense new visual image of group destiny” it was not based on the designs of capital or the nation. In his excellent history *Revoltosos*, W.

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid. Pp. 44-45.

<sup>168</sup> McLuhan. P. 177. Ironically, Anderson references McLuhan only once in his text, possibly due to McLuhan’s non-academic style or McLuhan’s own lack of citation in his 1964 text.

Dirk Raat explains that in 1900 an early liberal plan issued from San Luis Potosi and *Regeneracion*'s re-issuing the paper as an "independent periodical of combat" spurred the proliferation of "liberal clubs." Many of these clubs started their own papers modeled after *Regeneracion*. The PLM and *Regeneracion*'s influence in the Southwest was deliberate and widespread. Raat writes:

"From the late Porfiriato up to the early 1930's, over four hundred and fifty Spanish-language newspapers were published in the United States. At the very least, thirty of them (and possibly as many as a hundred or more) were magonista publications."<sup>169</sup>

Mexican newspaper publishing was a vibrant activity and their number flourished before and during the revolutionary period. Their ubiquity was tied to pleito rhetoric's appeal and its answer to political repression, and led to the popular phrase "papeles volantes" (flying papers). As Cristina Devereaux Ramirez explains, "pleito rhetoric... takes the fight to the accused, engaging in verbal warfare," and often led to imprisonment and confiscation of presses: "as quickly as one newspaper was shut down and the journalists jailed, another, more radical publication would appear."<sup>170</sup> *Regeneracion* however holds the reputation of being one of the first and longest-lasting of the revolutionary newspapers and, due to their constant repression, policing, exile and geographic relocation, also speaks to the paper's tenacity. Many of these newspapers involved or were led by women and espoused feminist ideals. Chicana scholars like Shirlene Soto, Elizabeth Betita Martinez, Emma Perez and Devereaux Ramirez recognize the PLM as

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<sup>169</sup> Raat, W. Dirk. *Revoltosos: Mexico's Rebels in the United States, 1903-1923*. College Station, TX: Texas A&M Press, 1981. Pp. 27, 37-38

<sup>170</sup> Devereaux Ramirez, Cristina. *Ocupando Nuestro Puesto: Mexican Women Journalists of the Mexican Revolution, 1890-1920*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2015. Pp. 138-139.

being an organization and a space where Mexican and Chicana women could raise women's issues and take a stand.

While the technology of print could be liberating, in the hands of authorities it was also a damaging and repressive tool against the anarchists. The PLM was constantly hounded and policed by Mexican and U.S. authorities, and the private detectives of the Pinkerton and Furlong agencies.<sup>171</sup> A document in the Bancroft library, found in files connected to Chihuahua governor Creel (who was a collaborator of Diaz and U.S. capital) contains a damning espionage report on the entire junta leadership in St. Louis, containing detailed description of each member and their assumed role in the group, along with rosters of members throughout the Southwest and other major cities.<sup>172</sup> After arrests, imprisonment and confiscation of their press in St. Louis, the Junta dispersed to Canada and the Southwest. In 1906, PLM leaders and members were involved in the Cananea Miner's strike, a major rebellion just south of Yuma, Arizona. This uprising was brutally put down by Mexican forces with the help of Arizona Rangers, and was a major precursor to the nationwide rebellion that finally erupted in 1911. The junta eventually resurfaced in Los Angeles in 1907, where they were temporarily jailed and, immediately after release, resumed publication of *Regeneración*. In Los Angeles the paper continued

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<sup>171</sup> Lomnitz. Claudio. *The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magon*. New York: Zone Books, 2014. Pp. 208. Lomnitz explains that U.S. officials preferred to more easily prosecute and jail Mexican PLM revolutionaries in the U.S. courts for Neutrality violations instead of allowing them to be abused or executed in the Mexican justice system out of fear of bad press against themselves and the Diaz regime.

<sup>172</sup> "Informacion Secreta Que El Agente W. N. De San Luis (sic), Missouri, Le Dio Al Suscrito, Contestando Al Siguiete Interrogatorio" (Document title: "Secret Information which Agent W.N. of Saint Louis, Missouri, Gave to the Scribe, In Response to the Interrogation"). U. C. Berkeley, Bancroft Library, Silvestre Terrazas papers, circa 1883-1944. Accessed April 10, 2012.

publishing intermittently until its final issue in 1918. Pioneering Chicano historian Juan Gomez-Quiñonez analyzing PLM activity, emphasizes the group’s mobility, its tenacious determination to publish in the face of persecution, to propagate their ideology, and to persistently disseminate advanced and sophisticated progressive visions.<sup>173</sup> To Gomez-Quiñonez, the rhetorical vision of the group stands out like no other.



Figure 9.1: Ricardo Flores Magon, prisoner. Figures 9.2 & 9.3: Lucille Norman and Mercedes Figueroa, PLM women on cover of *Los Angeles Times*, circa 1912.

### The Ethos and Image of Women’s *Pleito*: Feminist Writers & Activists

“Once again Vesper returns to occupy its post in the field of combat.”

- Juana Belen Gutierrez de Mendoza, May 1910

Mexican revolutionary newspapers also served as important rhetorical platforms for women, where, in the words of Cristina Devereaux Ramirez, they could “occupy their space,” deploy a confrontational pleito rhetoric uniquely Mexican and feminist, and define their reality and agenda. Emma Perez also writes about the activity of women in

<sup>173</sup> Gomez Quiñonez, Juan. *Sembradores: Ricardo Flores Magon y el Partido Liberal Mexicano: a Eulogy and Critique*. Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, 1973.

the PLM as an interstitial space, often overlooked in histories of Mexico and Chicana/os, where women actively developed a feminist agenda. Perez describes their rhetorical activity as the “dialectics of doubling,” a feminist positionality equivalent to a discursive counter-hegemony within a counter-hegemony.

The PLM’s activity and the revolutionary journalism of the period is understood to have been a critical staging ground for early Mexican feminism, and although imperfect, the movement welcomed and encouraged feminist voices. Historian Shirlene Soto details the wide activity and participation of women journalists involved with the PLM. Numerous liberal anti-Diaz newspapers headed by women spread throughout Mexico and Texas during the years before the revolution, including *La Corregidora* founded by 20 year-old Sara Estela Ramirez, and *Vesper: Justicia y Libertad* founded by 26 year-old Juana Gutierrez de Mendoza (both in 1901).<sup>174</sup> Emma Perez explains, “the revolution... created a kind of renaissance during which women wrote essays and edited their own magazines, newspapers and journals... (they) wrote prolifically, criticizing the dictator Porfirio Diaz and championing the revolution as a revolution for women.”<sup>175</sup> Rhetoric scholar Cristina Devereaux Ramirez’s text *Occupying Our Space*, highlights Mexican revolution-era women journalists (most of them directly linked with the PLM), and utilizes Gutierrez de Mendoza’s metaphor to describe the rhetorical stance of women: occupying their place or “post” (“puesto”) in the revolution signified women’s willingness to fight (literally) for the revolution, as well as to shape the ideology of the

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<sup>174</sup> Soto, Shirlene. *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman: Her Participation in Revolution and Struggle for Equality 1910-1940*. Denver, CO: Arden Press, 1990. Pp. 19-29.

<sup>175</sup> Perez. P. 56.



revolution by “claim(ing) a discursive space.”<sup>176</sup> Devereaux Ramirez’ concept of occupying one’s space/post/puesto captures not simply women’s parrhesia and militancy, but also these women writers’ ethos; their words were accompanied by actions and a willingness to sacrifice, and their consequent persecution gave their message a unique and powerful credibility.

Devereaux Ramirez dedicates a chapter in particular to Juana Belen Gutierrez de Mendoza, a fiery journalist and activist who best personifies the militant journalism of Mexican women during this time. Like the Magon brothers and the PLM, she started a newspaper (in Guanajuato) in the early period, suffered imprisonment numerous times for her writing, and went into exile in Texas, joining the PLM in San Antonio in 1904. Unlike many other Mexican women writers who came from the educated upper classes, she was of humble background. Of Caxcan indigenous and working class origin, Gutierrez de Mendoza captures the spirit of pleito rhetoric uniquely. In 1897 at age 22, she was jailed for the first of many times for writing anti-government articles criticizing the conditions of miners in northern Mexico. She was one of the first women to join the PLM cause, was jailed numerous times and went into exile but returned to Mexico soon after. Devereaux Ramirez explains the connection of pleito to ethos:

(jail time) afforded Gutierrez de Mendoza a powerful ethos among the male intellectual revolutionaries in Mexico City. Wearing jail time like a badge of honor, she held a level of credibility proving that she was speaking, not from privilege, but from a puesto of risk taking and willingness to suffer the consequences of speaking truth to power<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Devereaux Ramirez. Introduction, pp. 3-32.

<sup>177</sup> Devereaux Ramirez. P. 138.

Gutierrez de Mendoza's career, words and actions, illustrate that pleito rhetoric does not stand alone, requiring the praxis of action to complete its effects. Her ethos and popularity is reflected in her communications and close association with numerous revolutionary leaders like Magon, president Francisco Madero, and southern general Emiliano Zapata.

Her May 15, 1903 article, "Al General Diaz" is a biting and ironic attack against the dictator. Issued during a period of persecution and incarceration of journalists, Gutierrez de Mendoza's irreverent wit and confrontational tone is bold. Structured as an "open letter" to the president, the article's direct address signaled a radical dissonance in a time when women did not yet have the right to vote. The opening paragraph, in fact, explains that the only reason for the communiqué is that the general has gotten in the way of "the march" towards liberty. This explanation is paired with insults that he is difficult to address because from his body has disappeared "the man, the governor, the gentleman, the human being, everything." The severity of her wit can be measured by her allusions to death, as when she states that they (herself and her compatriots) will address his instinct because "the dead cannot hear, and in you all feelings have died." This is the first of several references to dead bodies or jailed journalists and critics. She boldly warns Diaz that they are on a crash course, and the people will be obliged to translate their ideals into "brute force." The letter is also characterized by a revolutionary certainty or confidence that the people will prevail, as when she states: "We want Mexico to be free and it will be." The letter ends by returning to the march, instructing the general to step aside and excuse himself from the post, ending with an emphatic "Mr. General, STEP

DOWN.” Gutierrez de Mendoza’s letter had two key audiences: the people and the dictator. Her fierce tone, coming from a working class indigenous woman, must have startled male readers into a serious reflection. That the people eventually did exercise “brute force” (beginning in Cananea in 1906, then again in 1910), and that by May 1911 Diaz actually stepped down are evidence that this rhetoric had powerful effects. The effect on Diaz as a reader are even more dramatic, explained by Devereaux Ramirez: “Verbal pleitos such as these prompted the regime to confiscate her printing press and once again sentence her to jail,” this time to the notorious *men’s* jail, Belem prison, in the winter of 1903 (joining Magon and several liberal party leaders).<sup>178</sup> Believing to have silenced her and the PLM, Diaz at the moment could not have measured the power with which her rhetoric still was circulating.

Pleito rhetoric, like any other weapon, had the capacity to hurt not only enemies but comrades as well. First in 1906 and then during the outset of the Mexican revolution, late in 1910, numerous political and ideological splits occurred which thinned out the PLM leadership and divided the membership. In 1906, as the PLM swayed ideologically left (towards anarchism) and argued for armed insurrection, numerous individuals left the group and associated with Francisco Madero’s more moderate and “pragmatic” electoral reforms. Among them was Gutierrez de Mendoza. Ricardo Flores Magon’s response was doctrinaire and vicious. Gutierrez de Mendoza – along with Elisa Acuña, Juan Sarabia and Antonio Villareal – were accused of being traitors and homosexuals. The trope of homosexuality or “natural order” was hurled against these individuals, attacking their

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<sup>178</sup> Devereaux Ramirez, p. 142. Alicia Villaneda. *Justicia y Libertad: Juana Belen Gutierrez de Mendoza 1875-1942*. Mexico City: DEMAC, 1994. P. 34.

femininity and manliness respectively. Vicious accusations of sexual “degeneracy” and selfishness served to build PLM moral supremacy on the “fallen” bodies of ex-members.<sup>179</sup> Lomnitz explains that during these purges, Magon and the PLM were responding to ongoing surveillance, persecution, and paranoia, that these acts served to ideologically consolidate and strengthen the core of the leadership, but these rhetorical battles also divided and weakened the wider following.

In her chapter “The Poetics of an (Inter-)Nationalist Revolution: El Partido Liberal Mexicano Third Space Feminism in the United States,” Emma Perez finds radical potential in this rhetorical conflict between the PLM women and men. She centers her argument on two aspects of PLM rhetoric: first, that *Regeneracion* politicized women even as it romanticized their role in a Mexican revolution that was part of the internationalist struggle of workers; secondly, women journalists’ rhetoric performed a “dialectics of doubling,” a kind of counter-hegemony within a counter-hegemony, where they challenged the group’s assigned role for them.<sup>180</sup> Perez groups together the “interstitial feminist activities” of Mexican/Chicana women who left the PLM and those who remained, to “express a dialectics of doubling in which on the one hand they agreed with the male revolutionaries and their (inter)nationalist cause, but as feminists, on the other hand, they intervened with their particular agenda about what that revolution meant.”<sup>181</sup> Perez pays special attention to the role of rhetoric, pointing out in particular how tropes are central to human consciousness and understanding history

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<sup>179</sup> Lomnitz. Pp. 201-204.

<sup>180</sup> Perez. P. 59.

<sup>181</sup> Perez. P. 65.

(historiography). Alluding to Hayden White and Kenneth Burke, she emphasizes how tropes, like hierarchal terministic screens, constitute “dominant modes of historical thinking,” and warns against becoming captive to male-centered historiographic traditions or “tropological interpretation”<sup>182</sup> in which Chicana histories fall into the interstitial shadows.

Against romanticized and prescribed images of women’s “sweet mission” or of “rebel girls,” images forwarded by PLM and IWW men respectively, Perez describes the active role and rhetoric of women as journalists, editors, risk-taking companions, and fierce activists. In one section she details the work of Maria Talavera (aka Maria Brousse), companion of Ricardo Flores Magon, through her love letters expressing commitment to Ricardo, the party, and the revolution, and through the demonization she underwent at the hands of the *Los Angeles Times*. *The Times* vilified her on front pages as a housewife and an assassin in a 1907 story. During subsequent trials to jail PLM leaders, Talavera’s daughter, Lucille Norman would also experience a rhetorical attack on her and the PLM’s character. The activity of Talavera, her daughter Lucille, and Mercedes Figueroa would find itself on the front pages of the Times, and although they were not journalists, the face-offs were no less rhetorical nor without consequences.

Lucille Norman, technically a stepdaughter of Ricardo, was referred often as the daughter or “adopted daughter” of Magon, and was affectionately close with the anarchist. Although not much of a writer, like her mother she played an influential role as an organizer, actress and inadvertently as a figure on the front pages of the *Los Angeles*

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<sup>182</sup> Perez. P. 8.

*Times*.<sup>183</sup> Since the 1906 arrival of PLM leaders in Los Angeles, Maria and her daughter began a close association with the junta and Ricardo in particular. Their primary role was supportive and clandestine, often smuggling communications from the jailed members. Shortly after the failed take-over of Baja California in 1911, as persecution mounted, the women took central roles in public protest to free the prisoners. On June 5, 1912, after turbulent days in court featuring the damaging testimony of a Mexican spy, Lucille Norman and Mercedes Figueroa stood up and disrupted the court, assailing him “as a traitor and said they would shoot him if he did not stop giving testimony” (against their fathers). Both were taken into custody, the *Times* calling “the alleged contempt ... the most serious which ever occurred in a local Federal court.”<sup>184</sup> The *Times* front page article featured a large image, a photographic portrait of Lucille and Mercedes juxtaposed with a hand drawing of Lucille being held back and pointing threateningly towards the stunned witness (see image above).

Days later, during a particularly rowdy demonstration to free the PLM junta, the *LA Times* featured another front page spread that included a photograph of the women “leaders of the riot,” Lucille Norman speaking at Plaza Olvera, and a violent arrest of a contorted Mercedes Figueroa on her knees.<sup>185</sup> Among the estimated 2,000 demonstrators, thirteen men and five women were arrested, eight were reported badly hurt, six officers

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<sup>183</sup> Kahn Ellstrand, Nathan. *Las Anarquistas: The History of Two Women of the Partido Liberal Mexicano in Early 20th Century Los Angeles*. Master's Thesis, Latin American Studies, U.C. San Diego, 2011. Ellstrand also describes the court protests, emphasizing changing gender roles, and LA Times coverage on pages 35-37.

<sup>184</sup> *Los Angeles Times*. June 6, 1912. Page 1.

<sup>185</sup> *Los Angeles Times*. June 26, 1912. Page 1

injured and one citizen who assisted officers stabbed. These numbers could attest to the young women's effective oration and organization. While the *Times* animalized and demonized the female characters throughout the stories – “running like antelopes” or disrespectfully “laughing” at judges – the young women seem to deliberately efface a counter-image. Like Vasquez's interaction with photography, Lucille Norman visibly strikes a cosmopolitan pose of refinement in response to the *Times*' vilification. In the June 6 front page a drawing of the woman pointing threateningly at the spy is juxtaposed below a larger photograph of a more dignified Lucille and Mercedes posing in formal manner, both wearing Victorian style dresses with lace, and the former donning a wide elegant hat. In the June 26 front page, Lucille again dons a large elegant hat and appears to wear a formal white dress or coat. While they engaged rhetorically and physically in militant protest activity, it is evident that these young women were attentive to public appearance and how their image could circulate. They understood public protest as an opportunity to “jack access” to media technology for their own purposes, and how meaning could be interpreted differently by the mass audience of the *Times*.

The rhetorical legacy of PLM women is also highlighted in Elizabeth “Betita” Martinez' illustrated *500 Years of Chicana Women's History* (2008), a prosthetic history of Chicanas which captures what Emma Perez calls the decolonial imaginary.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> While a Chicana prosthetic history emphasizes the “patchwork” of constructing history for a group or people, a decolonial imaginary emphasizes the operation of looking at the silences in colonial eras and histories. Both concepts aim to decolonize history for purposes in the present. Maylei Blackwell describes a similar concept, “retrofitted memory,” alluding to the customizing of lowrider cars.

Referencing Foucault's concept of archeology and unheard interstitial gaps of history<sup>187</sup>, Perez proposes that Chicana historiography can challenge the terministic screens created by traditional historians, whose "hierarchy of significance" chooses certain events as important while omitting others.<sup>188</sup> Perez proposes that "sexing the colonial" in Chicana historiography can help readers "rethink history in a way that makes Chicana/o agency transformative."<sup>189</sup> Several pages in Martinez' *500 Years* chronicle PLM women's participation in the Mexican Revolution through paragraphs and illustrations. One page reprints an accusatory *LA Times* cover image of Maria Brousse, but for the purposes of a *Chicana* history. Stylized for high school and younger readers, the book features Martinez' unique and effective rhetorical form: a thematic title, a picture, a polemical paragraph that summarizes a topic, providing a quote or details from the figure or event. Martinez' paragraphs also usually contain Spanish phrases or code-switching, and a final sentence that punctuates a major point distinct from the topic sentence. In Martinez' Xicana rhetorical style, I find also Perez' decolonial imaginary at work.<sup>190</sup> Like her PLM predecessors she writes about, her textbook brings women's voices and actions out of the shadows of history's interstitial spaces and makes them relevant and inspirational, especially to young Chican@s and Latin@s in today's schools.

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<sup>187</sup> Perez. P. 5.

<sup>188</sup> Perez. P. 27. Perez recognizes the power of tropes, again referencing Hayden White who is clearly influenced here by rhetoric scholar Kenneth Burke's concept of terministic screens.

<sup>189</sup> Perez. P. 5

<sup>190</sup> This analysis is from a paper/power point presentation I presented titled "Radical Mexican Technologies: Rhetorical Operations of the PLM and *Regeneracion* Newspaper in Los Angeles 1907-1918." Delivered at the National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies Conference, Denver, CO. April 9, 2016.



## **Tropes, Plans & Manifestos: Mexican Technologies of Revolt**

Comrades,

It is little more than four months since the red flag of the proletariat erupted onto the battlefields of Mexico, carried by emancipated workers whose aspirations can be understood from this sublime war cry: Tierra y Libertad! (Land and Liberty!)

- *Manifesto to the Workers of the World*, April 3, 1911

The study of revolutionary plans as a “specifically Mexican discourse” and their appropriation by the Chicano Movement is carefully analyzed by John C. Hammerback and Richard J. Jensen in “Ethnic Heritage as Rhetorical Legacy: The Plan of Delano.” By studying the PLM’s use of revolutionary plans as a Mexican rhetorical tradition, and the circulation of these manifestos in the Southwest and beyond, I hope to bridge this rhetorical genre to the rhetoric of the Chicano Movement approximately 50 years after the revolution’s decline (Magon was jailed in Los Angeles in 1918 and began his last prison sentence, dying in Leavenworth in 1922). The various PLM manifestoes issued from the U.S. territories are also a clear example of the unique repurposing of print technology by the group, illustrating how these solemn documents encapsulated ideological concepts, tropes, and political agendas that could be widely and effectively circulated.

Hammerback and Jensen begin their essay by explaining the powerful impact of “plans” during the Chicano Movement of the 1960’s, particularly the UFW and Cesar Chavez’ “El Plan de Delano.” They then describe the origins, functions and characteristics of plans in Mexican history beginning during independence movements in

the early 1800's.<sup>191</sup> Their study of the rhetorical structure of Mexican plans invites reflection on how these manifestos may have circulated among audiences. Many were one-page declarations, often named after a village, friendly to posting in public squares or other open spaces. A first paragraph contained a rationale, often followed by a list of articles. They were written in a formal style with solemn tone, and at some point promised justice and emphasized the severity of the message - the ties between rhetoric and life - by connecting the message to "life or death." To conclude the document, visions of a peaceful tomorrow were coupled with propositions (ie. to rise up or take up arms), often with a slogan in capital letters, and the author/authors' signature(s). Plans during the Mexican Revolutionary period flourished, and the most recognized are Francisco Madero's *Plan de San Luis Potosi* (1910), and Emiliano Zapata's *Plan de Ayala* (1911, and amended 1914). The plans "form the mother-lode of Mexico's political resources, the quarries which activists mined in search of ideas which they could call their own," preserving a "rich vein of rhetorical resources... a genre of specifically Mexican discourse."<sup>192</sup> The PLM manifestos were precursors to the more memorable plans, and in the words of Richard Wright, their "words did the work" (*nommos*), preparing the soil for later documents to gain traction and prominence. The PLM's *1906 Manifesto to the Nation* notably demonstrates the group's repurposing of the technology

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<sup>191</sup> Hammerback, John C., and Richard J. Jensen. "Ethnic Heritage as Rhetorical Legacy: The Plan of Delano." *Readings on the Rhetoric of Social Protest*. Charles E. Morris III and Stephen H. Browne, Eds.. State College, PA: Strata Publishing Inc., 2006. Pp 304-319. Another indigenous source of "planes" could be speeches and documents from the Mesoamerican groups, such as Cuauhtemoc's Last Decree.

<sup>192</sup> Jansen and Hammerbeck. P. 315. The first part of the quote is taken from Thomas B. Davis and Amado Ricon Virulegio's broad study *The Political Plans of Mexico* (1987).

of newsprint for a revolutionary project, fusing their democratic ideals to technological innovations of the day.

When the PLM first went into exile they published *Regeneracion* from San Antonio, Texas during 1904, and St. Louis, Missouri during 1905. During this time they grouped into the more formal PLM “junta,” a radical committee or council. After a failed uprising in Juarez (working from bases in El Paso, TX) the group fled to St. Louis, Missouri. From here they issued their historic *Manifesto to the Nation* on July 1, 1906. As Chaz Bufe and Mitchell Cowen Verter recognize in their collection *Dreams of Freedom: A Ricardo Flores Magon Reader*, this plan heavily influenced reformer Francisco Madero subsequent *Plan de San Luis Potosi* (first revolutionary president, later assassinated), Emiliano Zapata’s *Plan de Ayala*, and the current Mexican Constitution (drafted in 1917), which copied sections from the manifesto. The 1906 Manifesto was an impressive popular effort which called for an 8-hour day, labor rights, banning of child labor, women’s rights and vote, free universal secular education, return of confiscated lands to indigenous groups, a four-year presidential term, and numerous other social reforms. The plan was uniquely constructed from letters sent in to the *Regeneracion* office following a public query. Bufe and Verter describe the process:

The avid writers of the Junta engaged in a phenomenal amount of correspondence to solicit the ideas of liberal club members... through letters, as well as in the pages of *Regeneración*... people were asked to send their complaints and ideas for reform to Saint Louis.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Bufe, Chaz and Mitchell C. Verter, *Dreams of Freedom: A Ricardo Flores Magon Reader*. Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2005. Pp. 43-46. The majority of the Manifesto of 1906 is found in this collection; pp. 124-134.

The ideas were compiled by Rivera and others, and bookended with remarks by Ricardo, composing the entire 1906 Manifesto. This was an innovative and powerful collective process that sought to dynamically capture the voice of the Mexican people. Unlike any earlier Mexican plan, here the persuasive aspect of the plan was the use of the newspaper as a participatory technology, used to include the audience in the invention and arrangement of the revolutionary message. In the long tradition of Mexican “plans” this democratic innovation, alongside the message, had to have contributed to the messengers’ credibility as well as the message’s power.

The PLM propaganda for years agitated lower classes and particularly workers around issues of electoral politics, democracy, and increasingly labor conflict and foreign expropriation of national resources. A major trope of *Regeneracion* writers was “slavery.” Diaz in fact used Yucatan’s exploitive Henequen plantations as the often final destination of prisoners, opponents and (particularly Yaqui) Indian rebels. Lomnitz explains the effect of the slavery trope on U.S. audiences, describing the work of PLM member, author Kenneth Turner, who secretly visited the plantations in order to write his widely read book *Barbarous Mexico* in 1910.

Mexican slavery, so cunningly hidden from view and yet so crucially supported by the American establishment, was like the return of the repressed for the progressive American reading public.<sup>194</sup>

Alongside the image of the “Trail of Tears” evoked by the persecution of the Yaqui, Turner and *Regeneracion* applied the trope of slavery to condemn the dictator and evoke wide support from audiences in the U.S..

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<sup>194</sup> Lomnitz. P. 153.

As labor agitation (influenced by PLM organizers) spread and the dictator Diaz' repression increased, the stage for a mass uprising was set. In October 1910 from San Antonio, Texas, the exiled Madero issued *El Plan de San Luis*, calling for a national uprising on November 20, 1910. The initial uprising failed but fighting broke out throughout the nation and the Los Angeles-based PLM continued the call for national uprising. In January of 1911, the PLM invaded and took over the towns of Mexicali, Algodones, Tecate and later Tijuana, in Baja California. On a weekly basis *Regeneracion* agitated for rebellion, recruited soldiers, and solicited contributions to fund the newspaper and the fighting. It printed weekly updates of battles throughout the nation, helping to cohere the uprising's meaning and direction. In February, Madero won key victories in Chihuahua and northern Mexico. As fighting spread throughout the nation, Diaz resigned and fled in May. Madero took power and declared an end to the revolution, sending troops to put down the PLM in Baja California in June.

Many PLM Junta leaders had gone over to Madero's team (including Magon's older brother Jesus) and many PLM fighters were glad to hear of the ceasefire. Days after the Baja defeat, Jesus and other Madero representatives visited the PLM Junta in LA and reputedly offered Magon a vice-presidency. They were kicked out of the offices. The next day local officials arrested the four key leaders of the PLM including then-editor of *Regeneracion*, Anselmo Figueroa. The June 16 issue loudly announced: "The Junta of the Liberal Party in Prison." A less dynamic *Regeneracion* continued under new editors. Figueroa, his health debilitated, would die soon after release. The men would remain in prison for three years, and caught up in courts and jails throughout much of the rest of the

decade. Under temporary release in September of 1911, however, the PLM delivered an impressive document, the *Manifiesto of September 1911*.

Throughout the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the PLM had matured and been influenced by radical thought north of the border, in particular by their interaction and shared membership with the anarcho-syndicalist International Workers of the World (IWW). Diaz's reign and a more thorough understanding of Mexico's political economy and the role of U.S. capital brought a deep disillusionment with capital and traditional government. By 1910 the consolidated junta was fiercely anarchist in ideology, but publicly they identified as "liberal." With the outbreak of revolution and the social disruption, Magon and the junta more boldly announced their anarchist principals which were evident in a powerful emerging trope: the three-headed hydra.

The *Manifiesto of September 1911* identified early in the document the chief enemy of Mexicans: "the dark trinity" of Capital, Authority (government) and Clergy, which "makes of this beautiful earth... a hell for those with whose arms and minds work the earth." The junta, declaring "solemn war" upon the dark trinity, condemned private property and instead proposed "expropriation" as a form of worker self determination. They explained that, "it's necessary that the workers themselves determinedly take possession of all the industries," ensuring that all the nation's resources "remain in the power of (Mexicans), without sexual discrimination."<sup>195</sup> The plan proposed "snatching everything from the hands of the bourgeoisie," establishing "community warehouses," "lands held in common" (the ancient *milpa* system), and warned against "waiting for

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<sup>195</sup> Bufe and Verter. P. 140.

some law” to decree these things. The manifesto avoided the term anarchy, but openly expressed anarchist principals in their visions of a “fraternal jubilation” in a forthcoming system “arranged by mutual consent between free individuals.” Exhorting readers to “adopt the lofty ideals” of the PLM months after their failed uprising in Baja, the junta must have been compensating rhetorically for its shortcomings militarily. As if prophesizing the “war of bandits” that would ensue through the rest of the decade, the plan warned and instructed readers that “the cost is the same in effort and sacrifice to elevate a ruler, that is, a tyrant, as it is to expropriate the wealth held by the rich.” The manifesto ends in traditional “plan” style with the PLM’s classic refrain in capital letters – later adopted by the Zapatistas later in the decade – “TIERRA Y LIBERTAD!” (LAND AND LIBERTY!), the city (Los Angeles), the date, and the signatures of the four soon to be jailed junta leaders.

As courts and prisons demanded Magon and the PLM’s attention, the PLM role diminished in Mexican politics. The writings of Ricardo Flores Magon turned more philosophical and aesthetic. As the junta regrouped and established a commune in present day Echo Park, they continued publishing *Regeneracion*, though less frequently, along with short stories, songs, and plays. The play “Tierra y Libertad,” written by Ricardo, was staged a few times in Los Angeles, later in Mexico, to raise funds for the newspaper and defense of the author at the time (1916-17). It featured characters played by central PLM members including Maria Brousse, Lucille Norman, Enrique Flores Magon, and Blas Lara. Oppression and capitalism was sexualized and corrupted, the play an allegorical representation of political forces dividing city workers from rebelling

peasants. Women characters and roles mirrored women's increasing role, contributions, and activism in PLM activity, especially the contributions of Maria and Lucille, which didn't necessarily neatly fit into common roles as "soldadera," "adelita" or journalist.<sup>196</sup>

The four act play, "Tierra y Libertad," opens with the conflict front and center, the hacienda owner Don Julian desiring and attempting to blackmail the peasant Marta, who is married to Juan, into sleeping with him. Marta and Juan seek the help of the priest, Don Benito, who attempts to quell their apprehension, while giving asides that reveal his complicity with Don Julian, his disdain for the poor and the church's role in repressing rebellion. The priest's asides and their content symbolically paint the church as especially deceitful. Another set of peasant couples, Rosa and the literate Marcos, and Ramon and Teresa, lead the peasants in a growing rebellion which frees the prisoners and captures Don Julian and Don Benito at the end of Act III. Having taken control of the prison, Marcos proclaims to the two men:

You are going to die and with you will die Authority,  
Capitalism and the church, the three oppressors of the human  
species... Comrades: we must complete social justice: Let us  
cut off the head of the hydra and take possession of all that  
exists for the well-being of all. Long live Land and Liberty!<sup>197</sup>

In order to challenge Christian allegory, the PLM seemed to reach further back into older Greek allegory to reveal how the three-headed monster of capital, government and church collaborated to control society, and how it could be defeated by Herculean efforts. In Act

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<sup>196</sup> Kahn Ellstrand, Nathan. *Las Anarquistas: The History of Two Women of the Partido Liberal Mexicano in Early 20th Century Los Angeles*. Latin American Studies Master's Thesis. UC San Diego, 2011. P. 46.

<sup>197</sup> Flores Magon, Ricardo. Mitchell Verter (trans.). *Land and Liberty*. San Francisco, CA: Libro Libre (self-published). ND. P. 40.



IV a government minister and his assistant quell a labor dispute by recruiting the city workers into an army to attack the peasant uprising. In the final scene, one by one the rebels are shot down as they denounce the “unholy trinity” and the misled city workers who have betrayed their class brothers and sisters. The play’s tragic conclusion involving the defeat of the rebellion by the survival of the three-headed hydra may have been both an allegorical reflection of the existing political conditions as well as prophecy.

The study of allegory is rich in historical, spiritual and critical substance and provides a sense of its powerful interpretive functions over time and the PLM’s limited control over it. John MacQueen compares the use of allegory in Greek, Roman, Biblical Medieval and modern societies in his study of allegory, pointing out its ancient spiritual dimension. As the power of story likely crystalized from shamanistic beliefs and practices in Europe (as well as many other parts of the globe) the practice of allegory found its spiritual strength in the power to reveal deeper meaning, showing the material world to be “a great myth, a thing whose value lies not in itself but in the spiritual meaning which it hides and reveals.”<sup>198</sup> Called by Dante “a truth hidden under a beautiful fiction,” allegory was also defined by the Roman rhetorician Quintillian as “one thing in words and another in meaning.”<sup>199</sup> Later evolutions in biblical allegories, especially the parables of the New Testament, captured audiences’ attention, as a new priesthood was trained in reading a story and then interpreting its deeper messages for recruitment purposes and spiritual elevation.<sup>200</sup> Although the allegorical writings of the PLM may

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<sup>198</sup> MacQueen, John. *Allegory*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1970. Pp. 4, 13.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.* P. 49.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.* P. 26.

have been revelatory to audiences, Mexican masses had been swayed by Christianity's allegorical mission for centuries and the hybrid indigenous Mexican Catholic church culture was part of the fabric of Mexican spirituality. The PLM rejection of the church was devastating, but it was also, likely, an impossible quantum leap for the masses to take. The critique nevertheless had certain effects seen in the post-revolution governments' anti-clerical laws that imposed limits on the power of the Catholic church, and came to a head in the controversial "Cristero Wars" of the 1920's.

In one of its many short stories, "Justice!" authored by Ricardo and published on June 13, 1914, *Regeneracion* evoked the powerful collaboration of capital, government and clergy and the need to stamp these out simultaneously. The story begins with "the ruler, the capitalist, and the priest" dejected and contemplating their fate while exiled in a mountain canyon under an ash tree. They curse their fall from power and desecrate a "red booklet," the PLM *Manifiesto of September 1911*. The priest, however, re-invigorates the other two, explaining:

At first glance, it appears that the ideas contained in this damned booklet have triumphed in the village.... But others repudiate them, above all they repudiate those that attack religion, and it is among these that we can foment a reactionary movement.<sup>201</sup>

While not explicitly, the allegory explained an imposed social order that had operated since the arrival of the colonial settlers, and revealed how the forces of capitalism and government and had worked ideologically in tandem with the Catholic church to seize lands and colonize the masses throughout the Americas. "Justice!" forecasted ideological

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<sup>201</sup> Bufe and Verter. Pp. 328-330.

divisions and the Cristero Wars, but it also revealed the stubborn control and contours of the ruling elite in Mexico, as well as the regenerating powers of its ideology through rhetoric. The three-headed hydra was indeed a monster not to be underestimated.

Through these tropes and technologies, the PLM activists agitated a radical critique of systems of authority and spread a radical message. While the revolutionary message can be seen for immediate dispersal and effect, it also seems always aimed beyond the horizon. Similar to Native American rhetoric's understanding of audience in its concept of the seven generations, the PLM seems to have had a different understanding of "the public."<sup>202</sup> It was one that had not yet come into existence.



Figure 10: *Regeneración* front page, PLM *junta* in prison, 1911.

### Red Sunsets, Radical Traditions, Echoes of Revolt

“...It is better to know *WHERE* to go and not know how, than to know *how* to go, and NOT know *where*.”  
 – Martino (the rebel) in the film *Burn!* by Gio Pontecorvo

The PLM's main communication activity was the newspaper but it was accompanied by a variety of other genres: manifesto/plans, short story, re-prints of

<sup>202</sup> Lois J. Einhorn. *The Native American Oral Tradition: Voices of the Spirit and Soul*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2000.

anarchist texts, political pamphlets, fold-out songbooks, plays, and later memoirs as novel (Duffy Turner, Blas Lara). Their activity also went beyond traditional forms of journalism and included smuggling and translating and re-publishing other authors' work.

Similar to Tomas Ybarra Frausto's analysis of the rhetorical activity of the Chicano Movement in his essay "The Chicana/o Movement and the Emergence of a Chicano Poetic Consciousness," Chicano rhetorical genres and forms are variegated and come in part from a long Mexican and Southwest tradition of experimentation, and re-purposing technologies for popular expression.<sup>203</sup> The rhetorical activity of Mexicans in Los Angeles during the Mexican revolution came in multiple medias, genres and activities. It was also systematically repressed in two nations, and when the editors were finally jailed in 1918, the newspaper permanently stopped publication. When Ricardo Flores Magon died (or was murdered) in Leavenworth Prison in 1922, the PLM ceased to exist.

There is ample proof that the PLM repurposing of technology sent multimodal signals over the horizon and these were received by future audiences. Devra Weber explains that "radical thought" among Los Angeles Mexicans "originated in Mexico from the Mexican labor movement and the Mexican revolution, with which it was closely associated." She cites *Regeneracion's* circulation of 10,500 in Los Angeles, that it was the "most widely read newspaper in the Mexican community," and that huge anarchist-communist gatherings in the city, featuring cultural-political programs, commonly

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<sup>203</sup> Ybarra Frausto, Tomas. "The Chicano Movement and the Emergence of a Chicano Poetic Consciousness." He writes, "Established primarily as a tool for organizing, the periodical soon came to function as a vehicle that promoted unity by stressing a sense of class consciousness while building cultural and political awareness." P. 84.

attacked “Capital, Authority and the Clergy.”<sup>204</sup> A decade after Magon’s death, older lower class men, “communists and atheists,” could be found in the *placita* (Olvera) making “fiery and vile” speeches against the church. Weber insists the Magonista principals and impulse inspired the large labor strikes in the Imperial Valley in the late 20’s and 30’s, and that the 1933 El Monte Berry Strike that involved agriculture workers throughout the L.A. basin was Magonista inspired.

Bufe and Verter's *Dreams of Freedom* and Raymond Saborio's USC Master's thesis explain that Augusto Sandino, the Central American revolutionary, was politicized by Magon’s writing in 1923 while working in Tampico on the Mexican East Coast, "an inferno of competing revolutionary ideas," where the ideas of Ricardo Flores Magon were popular. It is likely, according to Saborio, that Sandino read pamphlets such as *Semilla Libertaria* (“seed of liberation”), a collection of Magon writings, widely distributed in Tampico at the time. Sandino was also influenced by Mexican indigenous Spiritualism and a liberal form of Free Masonry, which led him to believe in “extra sensory communication” with spirits. Sandino led an anti-imperialist war against U.S. military occupation of Nicaragua, and was himself later resurrected as the namesake of the socialist Sandinista revolution that toppled the Somoza dictatorship in 1979. Nicaragua’s history and legacy are evidence that ideas travel and regenerate in other times and places, that radical rhetoric contains a vision that has the capacity to travel and re-pollenate, that revolutionary ideas regenerate.

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<sup>204</sup> Weber, Devra. “The Organization of Mexicano Agricultural Workers, The Imperial Valley and Los Angeles, 1928-1934, an Oral History Approach.” *Aztlán: Chicano Journal of the Social Sciences and the Arts*. Los Angeles: the Regents of the University of California, 1973. Pp 307-347.

Jack London's short story "The Mexican," provides another powerful example of the PLM's lasting effects, and how future audiences appropriate rhetoric, and repurpose messages. Although Jack London was an early supporter of the PLM – once giving a speech where he claimed "we socialists, anarchists, hobos, chicken thieves, outlaws and undesirable citizens... are with you heart and soul" – he succumbed to a white supremacist nationalism, sold out to William Randolph Hearst and endorsed U.S. intervention in Veracruz. His short story, written during the early years of the revolution and based on a real life figure of "Joe Rivers," portrays a young boxer fighting to raise money for the "revolutionary junta," clearly modeled after the PLM Junta in Los Angeles, as it prepares to launch its 1911 campaign in Baja California. The journalist leader Paulino Vera is modeled after Ricardo Flores Magon and editor Mrs. May Sethby resembles Ethel Duffy Turner. Portraying the underdog status of PLM exiles taking on Diaz, "The Mexican" allegorically captures the tenacity and determination of the revolutionaries. On the eve of revolution, the desperate Junta falls short five thousand dollars for guns, and young Rivera promises to deliver the money in three weeks. The boxer takes on champ Ward, the fight goes back and forth and after seventeen rounds in front of a one-sided crowd - the officials favoring the champ, and a last minute demand that he throw the fight - he floors Ward. Looking out to the hated gringo crowd of ten thousand he imagines them guns for the revolution.

In the 1921, Sergei Eisenstein directed "The Mexican" as a stage production with the First Worker's Theater of Proletcult in Russia. In 1952 United Artists produced "The Fighter," a film based on the London short story, in a sense bringing the junta and the

Mexican Revolution back to life on the big screen. While the staging of an actual radical revolution across its southern border may have been too hot to handle - threatening U.S. economic and political interests - the romantic “re-staging” of the exploits of a revolutionary newspaper decades after its suppression was a more palatable affair to a fledgling film industry. In 2013, I watched a staged reading of “The Mexican as Told by Us Mexicans,” “co-adapted” by playwrights Virginia Grise and Ricardo Bracho, in a “queer theatrical retelling” of Jack London’s story.<sup>205</sup> Ricardo Flores Magon and the PLM, in fact, continue to resurface as central characters in recent historical novels set in the U.S. Southwest: Luis Alberto Urrea’s *The Hummingbird’s Daughter* (2005), Thomas Pynchon’s tome (1085 pages) *Against the Day* (2006), and Daniel Cano’s *Death and the American Dream* (2009). All of these works convey the message that although the revolutionists are contained or repressed, that the revolutionary spirit lives on.

A review of the play “Tierra y Libertad” in a January, 1917 edition of *Regeneracion* mentions that “the cries of the subversive character Marcos, the peasant agitator and rebel, rang throughout the better part of the crowd.”<sup>206</sup> By listening and reflecting on these echoes of revolt we can see how meanings deepen and the longer-range purposes of the *Partido Liberal Mexicano* expand in front of us. The “Tierra y Libertad” flag, taken down in Baja California in the summer of 1911, was risen five years later by Zapata in Morelos, and then again in 1994 when Chiapas-based Zapatista rebels in Southern Mexico challenged the nation-corporate-friendly NAFTA agreements. The

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<sup>205</sup> See Virginia Grise webpage. <http://www.viriniagrise.com/the-mexican-as-told-by-us-mexicans>

<sup>206</sup> *Regeneracion*. 13 January, 1917. “Los gritos subsersivos de Marcos, el peon agitador y rebelde ... eran coreados por buena parte del publico.”

technology of manifestos and plans that flourished in revolutionary Mexico resurfaced fifty years later in the U.S. when *El Plan de Delano*, *El Plan de Aztlan*, and *El Plan de Santa Barbara* moved and mobilized masses of farmworkers and youths throughout the Southwest, even as a journal aptly titled *Regeneración* also resurfaced in East L.A. the late 1960's. In the 1990's a community and arts center in Highland Park sponsored by Zack de la Rocha (*Rage Against the Machine*) also named itself "Regeneración" and hosted many dynamic bands, cultural/political events, and raised awareness about the EZLN rebellion in Mexico. Two educator groups have recently circulated journals titled "Regeneracion" in Los Angeles.<sup>207</sup>

The repurposing of ideas and technologies should evoke in us a critical reflection on how certain ideas, genres and messages continue to ring into the present. A need for reflection exists when engaging with technology; as technology speeds by dispersing its reach, there is a tendency to participate, to not be left out, even at the expense of relinquishing one's private information or putting other life-sustaining priorities secondary. We move with technology, in the direction technology takes us. What a radical Chican@ rhetoric tradition can teach us is that what matters is not simply the HOW but importantly the WHERE. This is done by looking to the re-purposing of technology by communities for the purpose or project at hand. Technology today is not simply the machines, their operations and its blinding speed- although it *is* that – but the *reason* we go in a certain direction with technology, the *purpose* we attach to technological work.

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<sup>207</sup> The Association of Raza Educators (ARE) and UCLA's Raza Graduate Student Association.



Communist Italian filmmaker Gillo Pontecorvo echoes Magon and Sandino's call for revolt, and provides a useful epitaph for this chapter's mediation on rhetoric, revolution and technology. He followed his radical "Battle for Algiers" (1966) with "Burn!" (1969), a Fanonian script written during the Vietnam war. Set in a fictional Caribbean island, the film is loosely based on the 19<sup>th</sup> century plantation exploits of American filibusterer William Walker (who briefly ruled Nicaragua in 1856) played by Marlon Brando. The film narrates the rise of a rebellion against European colonial manipulation, how it captures the people's imagination, threatens the colonial order, but is ultimately crushed. When the rebel Martino is captured and interrogated, he defiantly reports to Walker that "...it is better to know WHERE to go and not know how, than to know HOW to go, and NOT know where." While some historians may dismiss Magon and his group's idealistic work as a political destination that did not know *how* to get there, the PLM's rigorous rhetoric and its archive leave many clues as to *where* it is. This kind of revolutionary fervor and historical consciousness came to resurface fifty years after Magon's death – again rhetorically, through print, via a repurposed technology - in calls for Chican@ Studies and Ethnic Studies and was at the center of an educational project which aimed, once again, to de-colonize the mind.

## Chapter 4

### Nascent Epistemologies: Student Activism, Conferences, Plans & the Rhetorical Construction of Chican@ Studies<sup>208</sup>

*Student Movements have been considered barometers of change and have provided insight to the direction of the larger social movement of which they are a part. A student movement is often the training and experimental ground for leadership, membership, concepts, tactics and goals.*

-Juan Gomez-Quinonez, *Mexican Students Por La Raza* (1978)<sup>209</sup>

*The Chicanos on campus are an organic, integral part of the Chicano community... the Chicano community on campus is an extension of the larger community.*

- *El Plan de Santa Barbara* (1969)<sup>210</sup>

*By "rhetoric," I mean simply the management and negotiation of the world through language... (rhetorical) vision operates historically as a method of critique... (and) through the concept of possibility, of seeing things differently in a manner that is directed toward the future; seeing is possibility.*

- Douglas Thomas, *Reading Nietzsche Rhetorically*<sup>211</sup>

As I explained in chapter two, pleito rhetoric was perhaps most clearly utilized and articulated during the student movements that led to the creation of Chicana/o and Ethnic Studies programs beginning in the late 1960's. Chican@ student protest enacted a particular style of combative, embodied and bicultural rhetoric that produced an epistemic argument for Chicana/o Studies and Ethnic Studies at the university. The

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<sup>208</sup> Taking cues from Damian Baca's *Mestiz@ Scripts*, I use the term "Chican@" to signify awareness of gender exclusion in language and the pervasiveness of the digital in language, knowledge production and everyday life. Throughout most of this chapter I use Chicano Studies when referring to early history, and the more common term Chicana/o Studies when referring to more contemporary moments.

<sup>209</sup> Gomez-Quinonez, Juan. *Mexican American Students Por La Raza*. Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, 1979. P 2. Rhetoric scholar Susan Jarratt, speaking on the required awareness of "space and place" of Southern California, alluded to this text as a key source of local Chicano Studies history of the region, during her keynote address at the 1<sup>st</sup> annual Rhetoric and Composition Symposium at UC Irvine in 2012.

[http://sites.uci.edu/rhetoric/files/2012/04/Jarratt\\_SoCal\\_symposium\\_talk\\_May\\_2012.pdf](http://sites.uci.edu/rhetoric/files/2012/04/Jarratt_SoCal_symposium_talk_May_2012.pdf)

<sup>210</sup> Chicano Coordinating Council on Higher Education. *El Plan de Santa Barbara*. Oakland: La Causa Publications, 1969. Pp. 14.

<sup>211</sup> Thomas, Douglas. *Reading Nietzsche Rhetorically*. New York: The Guilford Press, 1999. Pp. 1, 13.

rhetorical, dialectical and epistemic work of young activists - articulated during protests, poetry and in *El Plan de Santa Barbara* - are undeniable yet understudied. Pleito's dialectic of confrontation - the coupling of epistemological arguments alongside the forcefulness of student protest - operated regularly during this nascent period when students of color rigorously attempted to decolonize the university and construct their own way of knowing.

This chapter elaborates on chapter two's theorization of pleito rhetoric by taking a closer look at how Chicana/o Studies was initially argued into existence, particularly how Chicano writers, artists and students rhetorically constructed a historical vision - a "prosthetic history" - which marched alongside student militancy. I end the chapter by taking a closer look at the *Plan de Santa Barbara* and identifying six seminal epistemic tenets which continue to generally guide the discipline into the present. Steven Mailloux's work on rhetoric, interpretation and disciplines, particularly what he calls "paths of thought," help me explain how pleito rhetoric did not simply argue the field into existence but engaged in acts of "troping and arguing" that led to the formalization of a Chicana/o knowledge tradition.<sup>212</sup> Mailloux' work on rhetorical disciplinary history - or rhetorical hermeneutics - helps me explain how Chicana/o Studies joined other disciplines by articulating a set of "practices, theories and traditions." I utilize Douglas Thomas' conceptualization of rhetorical vision in the epigraph above to understand how Chican@ rhetoric articulated a vision of Chican@ knowledge and presence at the university, one which looked critically at the past and constructively towards dangers and

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<sup>212</sup> Mailloux, Steven. *Disciplinary Identities: Rhetorical Paths of English, Speech and Composition*. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2006.

possibilities in the future. As pleito rhetoric sought to carve out a space for Chicanas/os on campus, its spatial dissonance marched alongside a student militancy influenced by third world revolutionary ideologies which contextualized the discipline along a radical, at times militant, tradition. I end this chapter by delineating six central epistemic tenets (most of them articulated in the *Plan*) which define a unique disciplinary paradigm: a Chicano worldview; Chicano history's dialectical challenge to U.S. history; self determination; the central role of the student; Chicana feminist dialectics; and connecting the university to Chican@/Latin@ communities.

As pioneering historian Juan Gomez-Quiñonez' epigraph points out, Chicana/o students and young scholars, along with their rhetorical production, were central figures in the Chicano Movement and in the construction of Chicana/o Studies. Much of the movement's leadership and the majority of its membership during the late 60's and early 70's were students and of college age. As Berkeley MASC (later MEChA)<sup>213</sup> president and *Third World Liberation Front* leader Ysidro Macias observed, students came to view themselves as a "vanguard group," and the unification of Chicano student groups in the Southwest under the name *MEChA*, accomplished at the April 1969 conference in Santa Barbara, signaled their political maturity, militant style and organizational potential. The collectively authored *El Plan de Santa Barbara*, published soon after the conference, became a blueprint for starting programs, and has been called "an album- more than a snapshot - of prioritizations, a condensation of consensus," and the nascent ideologies

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<sup>213</sup> MASC, popular in Northern California campuses is an acronym for Mexican American Student Confederation. Many similar groups changed their name to MEChA - Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan - after the 1969 Santa Barbara conference, in a gesture of unity.

among Chicano/a students and educators at the time<sup>214</sup>. While clearly influenced by the gendered nationalism of the period, the movement was also influenced by Marxist historians, the Vietnam war, Black nationalism, Chicana feminism, and internationalism.<sup>215</sup> While often dismissed for being male-centered and chauvinistic, the early Chicano Student Movement, I argue, made critical ideological breakthroughs and possessed a “rhetorical vision” located in the aspirational and organizational aspects of the rhetoric of Chicano/a students.

A rhetorical analysis also highlights how rhetoric functions a priori to epistemology: rhetoric recognizes discourse communities, and how groups are seen to espouse a “rhetorical vision” which identifies problems, frames these ideologically, organizes mass bodies, foreshadows threats, and envisages as it articulates systems of what social justice looks like. Chican@ and Ethnic Studies, like other disciplines at the University, were rhetorically argued into existence. Unlike other disciplines, however, Chican@ and Ethnic Studies emerged from a civil/human rights movement where young people were the engine of change. While Tomas Ybarra-Frausto highlighted the “poetic

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<sup>214</sup> Serna, Elias. “Chicano studies Now: As Discipline Faces Growing Pains, Students Take Positions on Key Issues”; *La Gente de Aztlan* (UCLA), May 1998. Juan Gomez Quinonez, “To Leave to Hope or Chance: Propositions on Chicano Studies, 1974,” in *Parameters of Institutional Change: Chicano Experiences in Education*; Hayward, CA: Southwest Network, 1974. *Chicana/o Studies Paradigms: A Journal of Alternative Voices* (special issue: Chicana/o Studies: An Academic Odyssey), edited by Randall Jimenez and Marie Chin provides several cases of campus Chicanas/os utilizing the Plan de Santa Barbara at places like San Francisco State University, San Diego State University, CSU San Jose and UC Davis. Santa Clara, CA: Historical Science Publishing, 2000.

<sup>215</sup> Gomez-Quinonez, Juan. *Mexican Students Por La Raza*; Santa Barbara, CA: Editorial La Causa, 1978.

consciousness” of the Chicano Movement<sup>216</sup> – that literary arts and rasquache technologies were key to educating and mobilizing the brown masses – I purposely emphasize the critical *rhetorical* role of students and others in creating culture, producing knowledge, establishing long-lasting principles, and specifically, building Chicano Studies, perhaps the most lasting and productive institution of this period. Recent writings on Chican@ Studies emphasize a historical testimonial historiography of the development of the discipline<sup>217</sup>, the ideological and institutional underpinnings and challenges<sup>218</sup>, the struggle and erasure of early Chicana feminist contributions<sup>219</sup>, the discipline’s emergence from a youth movement and the institutional challenge of paradigm shifts<sup>220</sup>, as well as numerous studies of individual regional programs and departments.<sup>221</sup> What a rhetorical analysis brings to the table is a foregrounding of discourse community formation, and how language not only moves and persuades

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<sup>216</sup> Ybarra Frausto, Tomas. “The Chicano Movement and the Emergence of a Chicano Poetic Consciousness.” In *New Directions in Chicano Scholarship*. Ricardo Romo and Raymund Paredes (eds.). Santa Barbara: UCSB Center for Chicano Studies, 1984.

<sup>217</sup> Acuña, Rodolfo F.. *The Making of Chicana/o Studies: In the Trenches of Academe*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2011.

<sup>218</sup> Soldatenko, Michael. *Chicano Studies: The Genesis of a Discipline*. Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 2009.

<sup>219</sup> Blackwell, Maylei. *Chicana Power: Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement*. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2011.

<sup>220</sup> Munoz, Carlos. *Youth, Identity, Power: The Chicano Movement*. London: Verso, 1989.

<sup>221</sup> Ferreira, Jason. “From College Readiness to Ready for Revolution!: Third World Student Activism at a Northern California Community College, 1965-1969,” *Kalfou*, Vol. 1, Issue 1 (Spring 2014), Pp. 117-144. This article contains rich material on radical student rhetoric and activism for Ethnic Studies at the community college level. Miguel Chavez’ PhD dissertation “The Four Corners of the West Side” contains a chapter of MEChA activism for Chicano Studies programs in West Los Angeles. Raymund V. Padilla “Chicano Studies at UC Berkeley: En Busca del Campus y la Comunidad” (PhD Dissertation) 1975. Barrera, B. James “The 1968 Edcouch-Elsa High School Walkout: Chicano Student Activism in a South Texas Community” *Aztlan: A Journal of Chicano Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 2, Fall 2004. Rene Orozco. Quinonez’ “To Leave to Hope or Chance” other articles in *Parameters of Social Change*.

people, but how it helps formalize and organize a community's knowledge tradition along theories, practices, traditions, and epistemic tenets. A rhetorical analysis helps define and distinguish the discipline, providing a clearer view of its beginnings, while tracking this progression towards a more critical, complex and wide-reaching conceptualization – a tracking of “paths of thought” - of Chicano and Ethnic Studies in the present.

In his text *Disciplinary Identities*, rhetoric scholar Steven Mailloux examines the rhetorical activity of scholars engaged in forming and shaping academic disciplines. Mailloux looks in particular at rhetoric's migration from its ancient home (Greece, Rome and as part of the “trivium” of education – grammar, logic, rhetoric - during the Middle ages) to its often troubled housing during the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the fields of English, Speech communication and composition. Employing what he calls a rhetorical hermeneutics, he points out that academic fields have made their way into universities through “rhetorical paths of thought,” persuasive ideas, theories, practices and practical wisdom that has been interpreted and transformed into accredited techniques (in disciplines). Rhetorical paths of thought also include how scholars participate in “troping and arguing” through shared interpretations within “this or that discipline.”<sup>222</sup> While most academic disciplines were argued into their place through rigorous academic exchanges (among wealthy white men of the educated class) on campuses and at conferences, Chicano and Ethnic Studies more often involved student protests and a different kind of heated dialectical exchange.

Nonetheless, powerful and persuasive tropes and arguments – such as the trope of Aztlan,

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<sup>222</sup> Mailloux, Steven. *Disciplinary Identities: Rhetorical Paths of English, Speech and Composition*. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2006. Page 18.

or the argument of a newly constructed Chicano history - went into play in the construction of these fields. Similar to scholars of rhetoric, Ethnic studies activists ultimately made it understood that “the question is not *whether* we ... should have a tradition but *how* we will have it.”<sup>223</sup>

While Mailloux explains how disciplines are rhetorically constructed he also elaborates on an understanding of tradition, by defining academic disciplines as “sets of practices, theories and traditions for knowledge production and dissemination.”<sup>224</sup> Traditions in turn involve interpreted canons and interpretive contexts for disciplinary practices and theories. This analysis explains what early activists were up against, but it also reveals the powerful arguments and actions that constructed a field with no evident precedent as far as an academic tradition. While early Chicano Studies struggled “constructing” its tradition by producing research, literature and a body of theory, we can fortunately look in hindsight and understand that this movement for Chicano Studies materialized in the opportune “interpretive context” of various youth and civil rights movements locally and third world uprisings globally. It also happened in the context of a nascent “Chicano” history. In other words, Mailloux’s work on rhetorical “paths of thought” and tradition help us see Chicano Studies as a historical moment along a tradition of Mexicans and Mexican Americans developing a “historical consciousness,” taking an inventory of their history, and “troping and arguing” their presence (on to university campuses) and experiences in world.

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid. P. 81. My italics.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid. P. 67.



### **Rhetorical Vision In Aztlan**

*The journey of this writing is as much a journey into the past as it is into the future, a resurrection of the ancient in order to construct the modern. It is a place where prophecy and past meet and speak to each other.*

- Cherrie Moraga, *The Next Generation*<sup>225</sup>

The “rhetorical vision” of Chicano activists understood an opportune moment in the present and looked back critically at history in order to construct an institution that could educationally serve their community into the future. By looking to indigenous civilizations and regional histories, they disrupted the canonical “truths” of history departments and the obligatory procedures of the university. Douglas Thomas, in his rhetorical analysis of Friedrich Nietzsche, explains how rhetorical vision operates within multiple temporal perspectives. Thomas writes that unlike Plato, who believed that Truth existed (and language stood by at its service to Truth), Nietzsche believed that truth was the result of language and interpretation. Interpretation, in other words, was the father of truth. Edward Said, explaining the colonial use of language in constructing a hegemony and epistemology in the Orient – the “truths” about the Orient delivered by European language to the world - similarly cites Nietzsche’s observation that language is a priori to knowledge:

What is the truth of language but a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms – in short, a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people: truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that this is what they are.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Moraga, Cherrie. *The Next Generation: Prose and Poetry*. Boston: South End Press, 1993. P. 3.

<sup>226</sup> Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon, 1978. P. 203.

In other words, when Chicano and students of color questioned established histories and disrupted the regional vision of history, subsequent student protests and arguments were as much *rhetorical* battles than anything else. To this effect, Thomas points out the significance of having “rhetorical vision,” and explains that theory (and ideology) becomes a way of seeing in two ways:

First, vision as seeing and perspective enables a sense of critique. One can see things differently in a way that is directed towards the past... as a method of critique. Secondly, vision operates through the concept of possibility, of seeing things differently in a manner that is directed toward the future.<sup>227</sup>

Here, the student and early faculty articulation of Chican@ Studies demonstrated influence from Marxist scholars and rhetorical traditions: the dialectical contestation of dominant (historical) narratives. Like the emergence of African American Studies, Ethnic Studies, and Women’s Studies, the new disciplines were part of mass social movements that would, in the words of Fredric Jameson, “startle us into a distinction between at least two kinds of thinking.”<sup>228</sup> When looking for the contribution and representation of Chicanas/os in the U.S. narrative, what the first scholars of color found was absence, distortion and marginalization. For this reason the rhetorical vision of Chicano students looked back self-consciously (with new eyes at a revised Chicano history) and forward (towards the possibility of liberation and the construction of a discipline), and essentially provided the vision and methods for constructing new social relations. Armed with a fledgling unity, moral authority and an early and developing radical political philosophy,

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<sup>227</sup> Thomas, Douglas. *Reading Nietzsche Rhetorically*. New York: The Guilford Press, 1998. P. 13.

<sup>228</sup> Jameson, Fredric. *Valences of the Dialectic*. London: Verso, 2009. P. 5.

Chicano student rhetoric also identified and made possible – especially through protests, plans and individual proposals - what they saw as a capable vehicle towards the liberation of their people: Chicano Studies.

Utilizing rhetorical analysis and fundamental concepts of rhetoric allows for a “laying out” of methodological and analytical materials on the scholarly table in order to more clearly recognize the role of language in epistemology, technology and social change. A rhetorical approach to the Chicano student movement places language and its particulars – speakers, writers, poetry, plans (documents), audiences, the powerful role of identification in persuading audiences, conditions and contexts (recognizing kairotic/opportune moments), the emotional appeals, the factor of credibility, the role of logic and dialectical contestation, especially its role in the production of knowledge, and other discursive materials and their effects - front and center.

Within key Chicana/o Studies writings, several scholars have utilized rhetorical theory to foreground decolonizing methodology and emancipatory theorizing, and they influence my understanding of rhetorical vision. While Carl Gutierrez-Jones enacts a critical reading of Chicano literature’s discordant conversation with legal discourse (especially around “criminality” and criminalization)<sup>229</sup>, Chela Sandoval more directly engages rhetorical theory in her description of differential consciousness, which she describes as a kind of “clutch” used by oppressed people to shift between ideological and

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<sup>229</sup> Gutierrez-Jones, Carl. *Rethinking the Borderlands: Between Chicano Culture and Legal Discourse*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

rhetorical strategies.<sup>230</sup> Emma Perez, also uses rhetorical analysis, and does a more rebellious postmodernist excavation of Chicana/Mexicana political discourse, composing a Chicana rhetorical tradition from within the “interstitial spaces” between a Chicano male-hero dominated *his*-story, and the historiographic tradition of repeating “things said” within the borders/paradigms of the White male-dominated discipline of history. In particular, she utilizes (via Hayden White) rhetorician Kenneth Burke’s insights on tropes to explicate how historians, consciously or not, construct and edify dominant modes of interpretation and thinking through dissemination of dominant historical tropes.<sup>231</sup> This critical departure allows for Perez’ own intervention in historiography, the operation of a “decolonial imaginary,” that, for instance, envisions women’s writing and women’s groups enacting a “dialectics of doubling” (where Mexicana women writers involved in the nationalist/anarchist PLM group inserted a feminist agenda within Mexican revolutionary writing and activity). Here again is the productivity of rhetorical analysis, particularly the tethering of rhetoric to dialectic activity and epistemology, rhetoric’s role in political activity, and its rigorous dialectical aspect in challenging oppressive viewpoints and structures.

Chicano student movement rhetoric understood, like LuMing Mao and Morris Young’s examination of Asian American rhetoric, that “words have histories.” The

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<sup>230</sup> Sandoval, Chela. *Methodology of the Oppressed*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000. P. 58. Her analysis of how oppressed groups encounter Western ideologies in chapter 5, “The Rhetoric of Supremacism as Revealed by the Ethical Technology: Democratic,” uses Barthe’s seven rhetorical figures that regulate political consciousness and social space.

<sup>231</sup> Perez, Emma. *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas Into History*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999. Pp 7-8, 59, 132.

authors foreground historical and spatial aspects and strategies of how Asian Americans use rhetoric. Like Chicano students and “Corky” Gonzales’ poem “I am Joaquin”, Asian American rhetoric “gathers and disseminates the illocutionary force of past practices.”<sup>232</sup> Borrowing from James Paul Gee the notion that “words have histories,” they emphasize how ethnic specific use of words have been part of (historical) events with “potential situated meanings,” and that these meanings have traveled, emphasizing Asian American’s unique apprehension of rhetorical space as transnational. Although Chicanos are often associated with immigrants or identified as children of immigrants, movement rhetoric recognized them as having indigenous ties to the region. Thus, *mestizo@* rhetoric, like Asian American rhetoric, challenges and undermines the “spatial logic” of the state as well as terms such as “immigrant,” “alien,” “naturalized,” “native” (Lowe 8). As I explained in chapter two, Chicanos deployed the trope of Aztlan to strategically resist the spatial logic of the United States and restore an allegiance to the newly imagined Chicano nation. While influenced by Black Power nationally and third world revolutions internationally, Chicanos also emphasized their own legacy of rebellion in the Southwest by resurrecting leaders and movements such as Joaquin Murrieta, Tiburcio Vasquez, Pancho Villa, Ricardo Flores Magon, the Partido Liberal Mexicano, labor strikes, the Zoot Suit Riots, and Emma Tenayuca to name a few figures and moments from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Historians like Rudolfo Acuna emphasized this legacy, even while he quoted the Algerian Franz Fanon at length, in the first edition of his seminal history text, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*.

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<sup>232</sup> Mao, LuMing, and Morris Young. *Representations: Doing Asian American Rhetoric*. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2008. P. 5.

Even before Chicano studies courses were drawn up, the Chicano Movement was already producing polemics that were challenging hegemonic narratives about the past , present and future of Mexican Americans. An analysis of dominant themes, forms and operations of the early poetry of the movement provides a forecast of elements and features of an emerging Chicano history as well as the political agenda of Chicano@ Studies.

### **Prosthetic Chicano Histories: Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales’ “I am Joaquin”**

*Our historical consciousness is always filled with a variety of voices in which the echo of the past is heard.*

- Hans-Georg Gadamer<sup>233</sup>

Even before Chicano Studies historians constructed a counterhegemonic history that challenged the academy with effective arguments that carved out the initial spaces for Chicano Studies programs, polemical poets of the movement were already articulating a rhetorical vision that re-created a Chicano historical past for the immediate purposes of the movement’s present. I call this invention, arrangement and composition of Chicano history a “prosthetic history,” and it is clearly present in early works like “I am Joaquin” and the “Plan de Aztlan.” Prosthetic histories are various and variegated historical moments, stitched together and poetically fashioned for the purposes of uniting diverse communities, educating masses, recruiting activists, and, here, anchoring Chicano politics in a regional history of decolonial struggle.<sup>234</sup> By prosthetic I aim to point to the aspect of

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<sup>233</sup> Mailloux, Steven. *Disciplinary Identities*. P. 75.

<sup>234</sup> Gonzales, Rudolfo “Corky”. “I am Joaquin.” Denver: Crusade for Justice, 1967 (first edition).

a cultural production of history by poets, students, artists and writers for purposes in the present, and to consider the role of arts as technologies aimed at imagined futures. My use of the term is not meant to suggest a handicapping “falseness” of Chicano history, but to a more science fiction sense of the term. Like Moraga’s earlier quote in the earlier section, past met the present in a prophetic way- or with futuristic purposes. The rhetorical style of this early literature would continue to inform Chicano Studies builders and later generations of writers. In contemporary Chican@ literature - such as Ana Castillo’s “In My Country,” Seshu Foster’s *Atomik Aztex*, Guillermo Gomez-Pena’s *Friendly Cannibals*, Cherrie Moraga’s *Hungry Women*, and Chicano Secret Service's play "Fear of a Brown Planet" - authors disrupt dominant temporal geographies by removing hegemonic historical narratives and stitching together histories and political landscapes that are constructed, unearthed, and/or invented.

In Chicano science fiction narratives, for instance, this rhetorical strategy initiates a dystopian critique that helps readers imagine the possibility of another reality/world existing just under the surface of the real, a what-might-have-been. In works like *Friendly Cannibals* and *Atomik Aztex* the invention of a virtual - or “prosthetic”- history works on a deeper level to disrupt privileged Eurocentric understandings and promote political concepts that have roots in earlier Chicano Movement poetry and literature. These texts employ science fiction techniques of the utopic and dystopic to subvert and disrupt privileged viewpoints and submit for our consideration alternate visions of more idealistic operations. More subliminally, these texts also participate in the discourse of

their actual political historical settings, reflecting group agendas, future warnings, solidarities, and utopic desires. As science fiction critic Thomas Moylan writes,

Dystopia's foremost truth lies in its ability to reflect upon the causes of social and ecological evil as systemic. It's very textual machinery invites the creation of alternative worlds in which the historical spacetime of the author can be re-presented in a way that foregrounds the articulation of its economic, political, and cultural dimensions... dystopian critique can enable its writers and readers to find their way within – and sometimes against and beyond – the conditions that mask the very causes of the harsh realities in which they now live.<sup>235</sup>

These virtual, invented, or prosthetic histories in Chicano literature have origins in movement poetry and strategies using prosthetic histories. Like the Zapatista rebels in Southern Mexico, they are “trying to create a world where many worlds fit.” The prosthetic Chicano histories of the movement disrupted but also revised a historical Nation state narrative that had traditionally excluded or marginalized Chicanos and other ethnic groups.

In chapter 2, I explained how Corky Gonzales' poem “I am Joaquin” disrupted the spatial logic of the United States while reconstructing Aztlan as a central ideograph of the Chicano Movement. Here, I aim to explore how the poem, published in 1967 during the dawn of Chicano urban protest movements in the US Southwest, was a seminal Chicano prosthetic history, and how it instantly became an anthem for a generation of militant brown youth that were fed up with second class citizenship. Participating in the worldwide radicalization of youth, and polemical to the bone, the poem sprang from a deep regional cynicism:

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<sup>235</sup> Moylan, Thomas. *Scrapes of the Untainted Sky: Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000.



I am Joaquin/ Lost in a world of confusion  
Caught up in a whirl of a gringo society  
Confused by the rules/ Scorned by attitudes  
Suppressed by manipulation/ And destroyed by modern society.

Gonzales' poem and Chicano movement poetry in general represent an important union of history, art and politics that continues to influence contemporary Chicano literature. Effecting a strong literacy in standard English, the poem does not hesitate to code-switch with Spanish and street-level Chicano English or slang. The use of "gringo" in the opening salvo captures a *pleito* rhetoric that combines an "official" English with a street-level bilingual vernacular and "fighting words." The assertive and unapologetic stance was evidence of a growing resistance and insistence on self-determination. Another part of its appeal was the revisionist history that re-situated the place of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans from the shadows to the forefront in the history of the Americas:

I am Cuahatemoc / Proud and Noble Leader of men  
King of an empire, civilized beyond the dreams/  
Of the Gachupin Cortez/ Who is also the blood/ the image of myself...  
I am the Eagle and Serpent of the Aztec civilization.

Gonzalez removed a Euro-centric national history that began with Columbus, Pilgrims and the Founding Fathers, and replaced it with a narrative arrangement of resistance and self-determination featuring Mesoamerican civilizations, the poet-king Nezahualcoyotl, Aztec warrior Cuauhtemoc, Independence leaders like Padre Hidalgo, Indian president Benito Juarez, revolutionist Francisco "Pancho" Villa and of course the 19<sup>th</sup> century California social rebel Joaquin Murrieta. Also prominent were "the Indian," the Virgen de Guadalupe, Aztec goddess Tonantzin, and *soldaderas* of the Mexican revolution. In the act of reattaching these historical figures he also restored a pride and dignity to a

people who had little knowledge of such a past. Never before had a poet or poem called on an audience to participate in a historical act of identification with an epic and revolutionary past. Although masculinist in some areas, the move jarred Chicano consciousness and aroused activist tendencies. Gonzalez had successfully performed the first amputation of Eurocentric ideology, and attached a radical prosthetic history to Chicano consciousness.

Film scholar Chon Noriega cites literary critic Tomas Ybarra-Frausto's seminal essay on Chicano literature to explain the central role of poetry in politicizing the masses, through a "Chicano poetic consciousness." Poems like Gonzales' "I am Joaquin" were "the medium through which Chicanos became politically aware and active."<sup>236</sup> Poet Juan Felipe Herrera explains,

... here, finally, was our collective song, and it arrived like thunder crashing down from the heavens. Every little barrio newspaper from Albuquerque to Berkeley published it. People slapped mimeographed copies up on walls and telephone poles.<sup>237</sup>

The poem not only neatly arranged the "variety of (Mexican/Chicano) voices in which the echo of the past is heard," but it gave cues to historians who were writing a Chicano history that would soon change the face of higher education. "I am Joaquin's" central operation was the amputation of patriotic notions socially conditioned through

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<sup>236</sup> Chon A. Noriega *Shot In America: Television, the State and the Rise of Chicano Cinema*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000. Tomas Ybarra-Frausto, "The Chicano Movement and the Emergence of a Chicano Poetic Consciousness," *New Directions In Chicano Scholarship*. Eds. Ricardo Romo, Raymund Paredes. Chicano Studies Monograph Series (UC San Diego, La Jolla), 1978.

<sup>237</sup> Sahagun, Louis. "Rodolfo Gonzales, 76; Prizefighter, Poet and Fervent Chicano Activist." (obituary) *Los Angeles Times*, April 13, 2005.

generations of schooling practices, and then replacing these with a fledgling Chicano nationalism that was heavily influenced by a Mexican history of rebellion and kairotically coincided with the third world liberation struggles taking place globally.<sup>238</sup>

Gonzales' prosthetic history tactfully conjoined ancient myth, colonial past, the Mexican American war and the present conditions of Chicanos.

Here I stand / before the Court of Justice / Guilty /  
For all the glory of my Raza / to be sentenced to despair...  
I have made the Anglo rich/ yet Equality is but a word/  
The Treaty of Hidalgo has been broken  
and is but another treacherous promise...  
These then are the rewards/ this society has/  
For sons of Chiefs and Kings and bloody Revolutionists.

Here Gonzales challenged the logos of a long-standing patriotic historical narrative of the Mexican American War, that Mexicans invaded the Nueces territory, fired on Americans, and were repelled to the point of losing the Northern half of their country. The poem articulated a Chicano logos that dialectically opposed a mythical U.S. history, revealed “manifest destiny” expansionist motivations, and explained its connection to the current second-class status of Chicanos. It provided not only its own version of events but a whole different concept of citizenship and loyalty. Lorena Oropeza emphasizes how the notions of patriotism, service in Vietnam and allegiance to the United States of America were effectively supplanted during the Chicano Movement by Chicano nationalism, activist militancy and allegiance to Aztlan.<sup>239</sup> Although Aztlan is not mentioned in the

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<sup>238</sup> Oropeza, Lorena. *Raza Si, Guerra No: Chicano Protest and Patriotism During the Vietnam War Era*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005; George Mariscal. *Brown-Eyed Children of the Sun: Lessons from the Chicano Movement, 1965-1975*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005.

<sup>239</sup> Oropeza, Lorena. Pp. 47 – 112.

poem because it had not been introduced yet, Corky and the Crusade for Justice eventually utilized it in their 1969 “Plan de Aztlan,” a proposal for Chicano political unity drawn up at the 1969 Chicano Youth Liberation conference in Denver. The plan was prefaced with a poem authored by Alurista, a poet from San Diego, California. As the 11<sup>th</sup> century semi-mythical home of the Aztecs (a group of late Chichimeca migrants from the north), Aztlan was transformed by Chicano artists into a reminder of the lost territories stolen during the Mexican American War of 1847. Chicanos were likely influenced by the Franz Fanon’s works on decolonization. Fanon wrote:

The fight for national culture means in the first place to fight for the liberation of the nation, the material keystone which makes the building of a culture possible... The nation is not only the condition of culture, its fruitfulness, its continuous renewal and its deepening. It is also a necessity.<sup>240</sup>

Aztlan gained currency because it was positioned in the imagination as a true, ancient and actual homeland for a people that were treated as conquered subjects, the latest immigrants, or “strangers in their own land.”<sup>241</sup> This myth replaced feelings of dispossession, guilt and alienation with concepts of ownership, self-determination and cultural pride.

Along with this prosthetic history found in “I am Joaquin,” much of Chicano literature - especially poetry – also effectuated a rhetorical irony, using Chicano English (code-switching, Spanglish, and caló, an early 20<sup>th</sup> century pachuco argot) to communicate agency, aesthetics and messages specific to the Chicano community. The

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<sup>240</sup> Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 1968, p. 233.

<sup>241</sup> Weber, David J.. *Foreigners In Their Native Land*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1973.

contortion of “proper” English and Chicano “verbo”<sup>242</sup> by Chicano writers became an example of agency in the form of spite against the decades of schooling practices that tried to wipe out Chicano language and culture. Chicano poetry emerged as a critical genre and political tool not to be underestimated. Out of this attention to poetic language emerged a Chicano literary and political aesthetic that appropriated the Aztec concept for poetry/literature, the “*flor y canto*,” flower and song, with an emphasis on the aesthetic and spiritual aspects of language and harmonious composition. “*Floricultos*” became a metonym for Chicano poetry and literature as well as the title to numerous poetry gatherings throughout the 1970’s and up to the present.

### **Pleito Rhetoric: The Dialectics of Militancy**

*We’re going to take the University back to the varrio, brick by brick.*  
-Jaime Solis (MASC-TWLF) Berkeley, 1969<sup>243</sup>

*What is the truth of language but “a mobile army of metaphors”*  
-Edward Said, *Orientalism*

Movement writings were clearly aimed at the youth, students in particular, and at revealing a discriminatory history of Chicanos in schools. By employing a unique combination of what is termed “high” and “low” culture, pleito rhetoric sought to connect with young minds and to agitate them into an agonistic face-off with educational institutions. Specifically, this literature combined the language of the street and varrio with the language of the academy, a “proper” English. Pleito rhetoric also reflected the militancy of revolutionary Third World movements and their emphasis of self-

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<sup>242</sup> Street slang for effective Chicano rhetorical skill. Also called *calo*, Chicano English, code-switching and bilingualism.

<sup>243</sup> 1988 interview by the author with Jose Montoya. Unpublished paper.

determination. The counterpart of pleito rhetoric was militant action, and poems like “Stupid America” likely resonated intensely during student walkouts throughout the Southwest in the late 1960’s.

In 1969, Denver poet Abelardo (aka Lalo Delgado) penned one of the most poignant anthems of Chicano Power, the poem “Stupid America,” a dialectical challenge to Chicano schooling.<sup>244</sup> As I mentioned in the introduction, Abelardo’s poem encapsulated a critique of academic spaces as it evoked the history of Chicano educational experiences in U.S. schools. The title itself launched a rhetorical salvo which directly confronted decades of discriminatory education practices and ideologies – including segregated schools, tracking, language erasure, curricular exclusion, corporal punishment and the overall humiliation of what has come to be called “deficit thinking” (that bilingualism, biculturalism, and Chicano knowledge are deficits to learning). The title critically turned a racist epithet against Mexican intelligence – “stupid Mexican” – on its head and aimed an institutional critique against the U.S. schools’ treatment of Chicanos. While decades of American schooling consistently misunderstood and failed Chicano students, Abelardo’s poem, deploying an organic bilingualism along with an acquired critical knowledge of historical racism, conversely and categorically “flunked” American schools. Abelardo’s poem waxes poetically and politically:

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<sup>244</sup> Abelardo Delgado. *Here Lies Lalo: The Collected Poems of Abelardo Delgado*. Houston, TX: Arte Publico Press, 2011. Simon Romero. “Lalo Delgado, 73, Vivid Poet Of Chicano Literary Revival.” *New York Times*, July 30, 2004. [http://www.nytimes.com/2004/07/30/arts/lalo-delgado-73-vivid-poet-of-chicano-literary-revival.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2004/07/30/arts/lalo-delgado-73-vivid-poet-of-chicano-literary-revival.html?_r=0)

Stupid America, see that chicano  
With a big knife  
On his steady hand  
He doesn't want to knife you  
He wants to sit on a bench and carve Christfigures  
But you won't let him.  
Stupid America, hear that chicano  
Shouting curses on the street  
He is a poet  
Without paper and pencil  
And since he cannot write  
He will explode.

While these stanzas worked on an audience of Chicanos that identified directly and thoroughly understood this kind of discriminatory educational experience, it functioned within a kairotic moment of the Chicano Movement, fueling Chicano resentment towards the low expectations schools had of brown students. The metaphors of educational outcomes for Chicanos (“won’t let him,” “he will explode”) signaled a rhetorical forcefulness and, if indirectly, the militancy that Chicano students were willing to resort to. The poem’s concluding stanza shifts from the violent possibilities to intellectual capacities and potential. By foregrounding these contradictions and cynical outcomes, the poet implied that a Chicano takeover of their educational destiny was in order. His artful turn captured the moral authority, innovation and political confidence of the Chicano student movement, which was attempting radical social change:

Stupid America, remember that chicanito  
Flunking math and English  
He is the Picasso  
Of your western states  
But he will die  
With one thousand masterpieces  
Hanging only from his mind.

The complexity and structure of Abelardo's poem paralleled the militant attitude and the rhetorical organization of the Chicano student movement. It also keenly suggested that one of the major goals of this movement would be the transformation and takeover of educational institutions. "Stupid America" in particular captured the militancy, goals and rhetorical astuteness of the nascent Chicano student movement that seemed to explode in the Spring of 1968.

More than any other event, the East LA walkouts that occurred in the first week of March 1968 propelled the nascent Chicano student movement and led to multiple walkouts throughout the Southwest in the subsequent years. Earlier Chicano uprisings across the Southwest influenced a new political attitude among urban youth and often encouraged militant tactics. In 1965 Cesar Chavez and the UFW made national news by striking, marching, taking on wealthy agribusiness and gaining significant concessions and allies. In 1967 in New Mexico, Reies Lopez Tijerina and the Alianza de Pueblos Libres took up arms in a campaign to reclaim land lost after the Mexican American War of 1848. They demanded the enforcement of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and caused state leaders to call in the National Guard. In Crystal City, Texas, graduate student Jose Angel Gutierrez and his allies mobilized voters to take over the local school board. Up to the Spring of 1968, however, no mass movement of Chicano youth had occurred, particularly involving students in large urban centers. After ten thousand youths walked out city-wide at the end of the "East Los Angeles blowouts," Chicano student activism



began to spread throughout Southern California, and similar student strikes and Chicano walkouts occurred throughout the Southwest in the ensuing years.<sup>245</sup>

The character of this movement was significant if rudimentary and fledgling. Significantly it was student organized, though highly influenced by a charismatic teacher Sal Castro. Chicano college students and the militant Brown Berets were also involved, primarily in secondary but advisory roles. Brown Berets were instrumental, supportive and symbolic. The tough street politics of the Berets were notably accompanied by the vernacular of the *varrio* and *pleito* similar to the Black Panthers. LA Times journalist Ruben Salazar recognized in particular the insightful and charismatic rhetoric and personality of the Minister of Information, Carlos Montes.<sup>246</sup> The mass participation also served to politicize new participants and bring them in to what was becoming a broader and national Chicano movement. Most significantly for this study, the walkouts foregrounded an agenda of education reform and foreshadowed the more radical and sophisticated agenda of Chicano Studies that was yet to come. Writing in the *Aztlán* journal six years later, Carlos Munoz explained,

During this time various “militant” community and college Chicano student groups which had been organized the year before (1967), namely the Brown Berets and the United Mexican American Students, were asked for support... student demands were narrowly defined... included better (cafeteria) food, Mexican menus,... free speech and curriculum modifications which would make possible the teaching of Chicano history and culture... three had

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<sup>245</sup> Munoz Jr., Carlos. *Youth, Identity, Power: the Chicano Movement (1989)*. Pp. 64.

<sup>246</sup> Garcia, Mario T.. *Border Correspondent: The Writings of Ruben Salazar*. Also see interviews of Montes and other Brown Berets and Chicano leaders in “Chicano!: The History of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement.” Consider the popularity and urge to control walkouts in the cartoon on Chicano Educational discrimination in *Chismearte*, 1974.

relevance to the political issue of community control of the schools.<sup>247</sup>

This included a citizen's review board, "administrative takeover by Chicano personnel" of schools with Chicano student majorities, and placement of schools under the "jurisdiction of Chicano Parents' Council for the purposes of introducing school-community programs of a bilingual and bicultural nature."<sup>248</sup> Later in 1968 and up to the early 70's, walkouts occurred throughout the Southwest with similar demands to reform curriculum and the school experience. As far away as Edcouch-Elsa, deep in south Texas, about 200 high school students staged a walkout in October of 1968. B. James Barrera writes that their movement was severely repressed but gained victories including "implementing a curriculum that included the contributions and history of Mexican-origin people in the United States."<sup>249</sup> In West Los Angeles, an UMAS chapter organized hundreds of Chicano boys and girls at Venice High School several days after the East L.A. walkouts, and clashed with LAPD officers.<sup>250</sup> These protest were followed by the creation of Chicano classes in Venice, Santa Monica High School and other West Side schools.

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<sup>247</sup> Munoz Jr., Carlos. "The Politics of Protest and Chicano Liberation: A Case Study of Repression and Cooptation." *Aztlan: Chicano Journal of the Social Sciences and the Arts*. Vol. 5, No. 1 and 2, Spring and Fall 1974. Pp. 127-128.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Barrera, James B.. "The 1968 Edcouch-Elsa High School Walkout: Chicano Student Activism in a South Texas Community." *Aztlan: A Journal of Chicano Studies*. Vol. 29, No. 2, Fall 2004. Pp. 93-122.

<sup>250</sup> Chavez, Marcelo. *Las Cuatro Esquinas: The Chicano Movement on the West Side*. PhD Dissertation, History, UCLA 2012. "Venice High Youths, Police Clash." *Los Angeles Times*. March 13, 1968. This article reported a clash involving almost 1,000 youth.

Chicano student organizing matured politically during this period, and this is manifested in the growing frequency and impact of conferences and the drafting of resolutions and revolutionary-style “plans”. Gomez-Quinonez recognizes two student conferences in Southern California during June and December of 1968 which

“clarified its ideology and organizational goals... organizing into four major workshops: organizational structure, educational programs, community relations and ideology. The issues demonstrated the change: Chicano Studies programs, legal defense, colonialism, international solidarity, a state-wide coordinating council.”<sup>251</sup>

These meetings were precursors to the watershed meeting that was to take place in the spring of 1969 in Santa Barbara. The rhetoric of Chicano students began to manifest when, in the fall of 1968, the first Chicano Studies programs began operating in Southern California, at Cal State Los Angeles and San Fernando Valley State College (now CSU Northridge). In January of 1969, the Crusade for Justice in Denver announced plans to convene the Chicano Youth Liberation Conference in March of the same year. Notably, in early March Denver experienced their first huge and violent student walkouts, sparked by racist comments against Chicanos and the Crusade by an Anglo teacher. The stage was set for one of the first major mass meetings of Chicano students. These meetings and their subsequent “plans” would have a lasting impact on the education and ideology of Chicanos/Latinos in the United States.

Although Ernesto B. Vigil, in his history of the Crusade for Justice, does not assess student organizing as prominent in Colorado, he underscores the rhetorical impact of the Chicano Youth Liberation Conference and the *Plan de Aztlán* that came out of it.

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<sup>251</sup> Gomez-Quinonez, Juan. *Mexican Students Por la Causa*. Pp. 27.

Like Mexican revolutionary plans roughly 50-60 years before (see chapter 4), the drafting and presentation of plans carried with it a critical ethos, a sense of tradition, that operated among increasingly large audiences of young Chican@s. The fact that these documents were to a degree collectively authored - drafted around organizational gatherings and open to input - carried a credibility that operated ideologically on a generation of activists. Vigil notes that the conference was conservative in its presentation of culture (especially with regards to Chicana feminism, which “puzzled” Crusade men) yet provocative in its encouragement of “revolutionary acts.” Of various resolutions passed, Vigil recognizes two which the Denver Chicano publication *El Gallo* published:

“(That) ‘Arte de Aztlan’ is a social, revolutionary art, . . . (and) to establish a Chicano institute where students and youth would collaborate with workers in educational and organizational projects.”<sup>252</sup>

The *Plan de Aztlan* rhetorically convened a generation of Chican@s and articulated a general calling for Chican@s to be activists. The plan, like Corky’ Gonzales’ previous “I am Joaquin,” would live on in Chicano movement culture, recited at meetings, classrooms and protests, like a newly constructed national anthem. Whereas the poem provided a “prosthetic history” for Chicanos to know, the plan spelled out a geographical homeland for Chicanos to reclaim. It answered the epithet, “go back where you came from,” with a monumental reclamation that “we have returned to Aztlan.”<sup>253</sup> Vigil also discusses the oft-cited controversial declaration by the women’s caucus that “they

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<sup>252</sup> Vigil, Ernesto B.. *The Crusade for Justice: Chicano Militancy and the Government’s War on Dissent* (1999). Pp. 97.

<sup>253</sup> *El Plan de Aztlan* (1969). <http://classes.sscnet.ucla.edu/00W/chicano101-1/aztlan.htm>

preferred not to be liberated.” Chicana feminism would have to wait for its fuller articulation at a later date when men would not be as “puzzled” and Chicana feminist concepts reached a critical mass.

In the *Plan de Aztlan*, poetry and polemics merged for maximum impact. According to poet Alurista’s account, he drafted a poem to be presented the next day, which Gonzalez and organizers decided to feature as the preamble to the conference’s pre-drafted Plan. Educated in Mexican schools, and knowledgeable of ancient Mexican history, Alurista notably located the ancient homeland of the Mexica in the U.S. Southwest, thereby providing the Chicano Movement with an ancient homeland and a millennial sense of belonging and indigeneity.<sup>254</sup> Vigil notes that this had a profound and problematic effect on the student movement. The concept captured a strong sense of nationalism and was rhetorically deployed almost immediately; notably, a month later in Santa Barbara, almost all Chicano university student organizations adopted the name “Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan” (MEChA). While the concept overlooked multiple existing indigenous homelands living in the Southwest, it captured the overwhelming sense of Chicano Pride. Vigil also notes that the Alurista’s poem was only its preamble (it is almost always mistaken as the entire *Plan de Aztlan*), and was followed by tenets centering Chicano nationalism as a key organizational and political concept. This seminal document foregrounded nationalism and reflected activists’ understanding of how Mexican “Plans” – El Plan de Ayala, El Plan de San Luis Potosi, PLM

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<sup>254</sup> “Chicano!: History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement” (“Taking Back the Schools”) (1996). Video produced by Galan Productions and the National Latino Communication Center.

manifestos, El Plan de Guadalupe - were central to the Mexican Revolution. Some (Marxist-influenced) leftists challenged nationalism's failure to address class exploitation. This was to foreshadow one of several key debates – or dialectics - within the Chicano student movement.<sup>255</sup> All in all, what most of these events and youth mobilizations rhetorically composed were documents articulating an official collective concern with educational structures and the call to struggle for the establishment of alternative, more radical and self-determined institutions of learning.

### ***Pleito* Rhetorics: Characteristics, Products and Problems**

*“The library didn’t subscribe to any Chicano periodicals while the head librarian would spend every summer in Europe acquiring books. So students, after petitioning, one day just marched into the library and overturned some shelves and said, ‘We will be doing that once a week until you buy some Chicano stuff.’ So the librarian decided to buy some Chicano stuff.”*

*-Eliezer Risco, “Before Universidad de Aztlán: Ethnic Studies at Fresno State College” (1974)*

One of the characteristic features of Chicano student rhetoric during this period was its militant style. It also deployed a type of “fighting words” in tandem to the academic vernacular of the early movement. This rhetorical style was organic to Chicano experiences, proved politically effective many times, and also raised problems of sexism in an embodied rhetoric that foregrounded men.

Rudolfo “Corky” Gonzales, president of the Crusade for Justice, for example, was a former farm worker and urban youth who became an amateur golden gloves boxing champion. After leading the state’s Democratic party Viva Kennedy campaigns, he

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<sup>255</sup> Vigil. Pp. 98-100.

focused on grass roots organizing, adopting a more militant outlook that emphasized Chicano nationalism and self-determination. Gonzales also spoke frequently at colleges throughout the Southwest and became the most influential ideologue among students. The Crusade for Justice eventually opened an alternative Chicano school, Escuela Tlatelolco, which still exists today. Denver Chicanos also gained a reputation - through walkouts, confrontations with police and solidarity with the American Indian Movement - of being willing to put their bodies on the line and exercising militant action.

In California, the Mexican American Student Confederation at UC Berkeley for instance demonstrated its militancy by conducting successful sit-ins for the UFW boycotts and Chicano programs, and then joining the Third World Strike for a Third World College (discussed in chapter 2). Chicanos became key leaders of the strike that drew the National Guard (for the first time at a California university) and created the Ethnic Studies Department with a Chicano Studies program. The web page of Manuel Delgado<sup>256</sup> and the writings of Ysidro Macias<sup>257</sup>, both leaders of MASC and the TWLF, are excellent archival records of memories, letters, pictures, newspaper clippings and other artifacts of MASC, the Third World Strike and the early split of MEChA and the FRENTE at Berkeley. Lucha Corpi's novel *Delia's Song* also illustrates the social tumult of the student movement at Berkeley. Delgado, a Vietnam War veteran (at a time when Chicanos were disproportionately about 22% of Southwest casualties), details how student demonstrators often clashed with police to maintain their line, recruit

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<sup>256</sup> Manuel Delgado website. [https://localwiki.org/oakland/Manuel\\_Ruben\\_Delgado](https://localwiki.org/oakland/Manuel_Ruben_Delgado). Also U.C. Berkeley Ethnic Studies Library; <http://eslibrary.berkeley.edu>.

<sup>257</sup> Ramon Macias, Ysidro. *The Compassion of the Feathered Serpent: A Chicano Worldview*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing, 2013.

sympathizers and shame the university. Both leaders were on separate occasions beaten unconscious by police. After the strike, a split occurred between Delgado and his allies who believed the struggle should continue in the communities of West Berkeley and Oakland, and Macias and others who focused on campus politics and the building of the Chicano Studies department. After months of violent protest at the beginning of 1969, the chancellor and the UC President on April 7th agreed with the Academic Senate to establish an Ethnic Studies Department in the Fall of 1969.

Significantly, these “pleitos” and their accompanying rhetorics played out on campuses around California and the Southwest. The tactics and violence almost mirrored violence playing out in Third World countries throughout the globe in decolonial movements such as those in Cuba, Chile, Angola, Algeria, and Vietnam. One person died and police pointed guns at students at San Francisco State’s Third World Strike.<sup>258</sup> In Fresno, a student cut his finger off and Chicanos marched, rioted and destroyed the college’s central computer in their effort to establish Chicano Studies.<sup>259</sup> Students rioted with police on Cinco de Mayo 1970 at UCLA after the school fired Angela Davis and while Chicanos negotiated a Chicano program and a research center. At UC San Diego students carried guns to protect radical theorist Herbert Marcuse from right-wing death threats while they struggled to establish a similar Patrice Lumumba-Emiliano Zapata College on campus.<sup>260</sup> San Diego artist Jose Gonsalvez went into hiding after publishing

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<sup>258</sup> “Third World Strike” (SF State 1968), Third World Newsreel.

<sup>259</sup> Eliezer Risco. “Before Universidad de Aztlan: Ethnic Studies at Fresno State College.” In *Parameters of Institutional Change: Chicano Experiences in Education*. Hayward, CA: Southwest Network, 1974. Pp. 41-47.

<sup>260</sup> “Herbert’s Hippopotamus,” film by Paul Alexander Juutilainen (1996).



an article on how to make Molotov cocktails to “fight the pigs” in a Marcuse-sponsored Brown Beret periodical. The point of these illustrations is that violent student militancy was deployed during the nascent period of Chicano and Ethnic Studies Programs: the militant rhetoric of “pleito” moved alongside its action counterpart. What is important to acknowledge here is that the global historical context was one of “pleito” – third world liberation struggles and violent civil rights movements inside the U.S. – and the rhetoric of “pleito,” at least for Chicanos and other oppressed racial groups, was the order of the day. Chicano language, it could be argued persuasively, was historically and organically violent, and this violence found a poetic outlet and political effectiveness in the turbulent campus struggles of the late 1960’s and early 70’s. While it was highly productive to movement activists in their moment in history, these politics and rhetorics would later clash with feminist developments in Chicano Studies.

Andrea Smith explains how militancy in the American Indian Movement foregrounded male bodies and pushed women’s voices to the background.<sup>261</sup> The Chicano Movement had similar experiences and a few Chicanas frequently brought feminism, if cautiously, into debates on the direction of Chicano Studies. Early Chicana feminist Adaljiza Sosa Riddell pointed out how the Women’s caucus at the Denver conference emphasized that the role of the Chicana was “to stand behind her man.” She warned of potential abuse of machismo by the system as well as within the movement, and that the Chicano Movement should

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<sup>261</sup> Smith, Andrea. *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015.

articulate specific proposals and goals which relate to the Chicana... (and that) the concerns expressed by Chicanas for their own needs within the Movimiento cannot be considered a threat to the unity of the Movimiento itself.<sup>262</sup>

Chicana feminist voices in the early 70's were dwarfed by male academic writing. Poet Lorna Dee Cervantes recalls that an impetus to her creative work resulted from her response in the first Chicano Studies courses at San Jose State to romantic portrayals of patriarchy in Chicano culture.<sup>263</sup> Chicana creative writing, feminist discourse and notably Chicana lesbian writing were outlets to Chicana feminist expressions, which were to emerge more forcefully during the 1980's. Sosa Riddell notably helped establish a Chicano Studies department at UC Davis that featured a majority female faculty. Later it may be argued that Chicana discourse appropriated its own form of pleito rhetorics. Pleito and its rhetorics, when foregrounded in political debates, were often counterproductive. Gomez-Quinonez stated in 1978:

Witness the coinciding tendencies of extreme indegenismo, the bato loco syndrome (lumpenism) and drugs as the cultural norms. Each at best ridiculous and apolitical, at worst destructive. These lumpen and petty bourgeois tendencies tended to obscure, even hamper the struggle of the progressives versus the accommodationists. At each stage of ideological advancement there was much internal struggle.

Pleito rhetoric was a language of force, a force in itself, but it could also be divisive, misguided, sexist and problematic. Activists and leaders often worked with this paradox: deploying pleito rhetoric and simultaneously containing it. At the largest Chicano

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<sup>262</sup> Sosa Riddell, Adaljiza. "Chicanas and El Movimiento." *Aztlan*. Vol. 5, No. 1-2, Spring/Fall 1974. Pp. 155-163.

<sup>263</sup> Schmidt Camacho, Alicia. *Migrant Imaginaries: Latino Cultural Politics in the U.S. - Mexico Borderlands* (2008). Pp. 178.

department in the San Fernando Valley, leading intellectuals went into rooms with Anglo administrators, playing “good Chicano, bad Chicano,” as well as actually getting into physical confrontations with one another.<sup>264</sup> Suffice it to say, pleito rhetorics could produce hands full of resources but a fistful of problems as well.

### ***El Plan de Santa Barbara: Rhetoric as Epistemic, and Six Tenets***

*The role of knowledge in producing powerful social change, indeed revolution, cannot be underestimated. But it is equally important to recognize that research will not only provide Chicanos with action-oriented analysis of conditions, it will also aid significantly in politically educating the Chicano community. That is, it will help measurably in creating and giving impetus to that historical consciousness which Chicanos must possess in order successfully to struggle as a people toward a new vision of Aztlan... above all (we must) perceive the university as being our university.*

*- El Plan de Santa Barbara , 1969 (78)*

In a cornerstone essay on rhetoric’s central role in epistemology (knowledge production), “On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic” Robert L. Scott made a powerful argument that rhetoric was a priori to truth claims, and revived the Sophists’ use of “dissoi logoi” (counter arguments and contradiction) in reaching probabilities, “truth,” and/or the possible. His dissoi logoi is equivalent to the dialectic, or dialectical activity, and helps us understand Chican@ Studies as an important dialectic to the standard patriarchal Eurocentric history and language operating in U.S. universities up to the 1960’s. Scott ended his essay outlining three precepts, or tenets, for rhetoric: emphasizing tolerance for uncertainty, cultivating a will to act (“inaction is unethical”), and that

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<sup>264</sup> Chisme. Also see “Unrest: Founding of the Cal State Northridge Chicana/o Studies Department” (produced by Gerard Meraz, Maria Elena Fernandez and Miguel Angel Duran) 2013. “Storm at Valley State” (student film) at CSU Northridge library. Rudolfo Acuña, *The Making of Chicana/o Studies: In the Trenches of Academe* (2011).

(taking) responsibility for consequences should guide rhetorical acts. Scott's essay helps me understand similarities between rhetoric and Chican@ Studies, while it helps set up my argument that Chican@ students and their rhetorical activity constructed knowledge uniquely on university campuses. Similar to Scott's work, this section delineates epistemic tenets that explain how Chican@ Studies produces knowledge. These tenets help explain the field of Chican@ Studies as well as guide future work.

The productive work of *El Plan de Santa Barbara* (PSB) is reflected in the planning, coordination, execution and follow-through of a conference convened in the Spring of 1969 in Santa Barbara which brought together key students and education leaders, and united them under a banner of a Chicano Studies discipline. Paul Sanchez' "Memoirs of a Chicano Administrator" in *Parameters of Institutional Change* (1975) is the most detailed survey of the planning and processes of the conference in light of the resistance the UC system demonstrated to Chicano ideas. Within weeks of the conference, the proceedings, including breakout group discussions, were drawn up, edited and published into *El Plan de Santa Barbara* (PSB). Although the publication captured early rhetorics and agendas that have been analyzed by various scholars such as Orozco, Nunez, Contreras, Acuna, Soldatenko, and Bebout, I want to focus on important rhetorical operations of the PSB, particularly the key early tenets of the discipline articulated in this document. The PSB was a rhetorical technology that was invented, produced, circulated and which operated with widespread effects. Although no two Chican@ Studies programs are alike, and many more principals and methods of the way Chican@ Studies is practiced are certain to operate, I wish to foreground six tenets which

I believe capture essential and long-standing values and methods of Chicana/o Studies that identify a unique way of producing knowledge. I derive these tenets from the PSB document itself, from Chicana/o Studies literature (particularly evaluations and histories of the field), conversations over the years with teachers of Chicana/o Studies, from being a student in these classes, and from my experience teaching Chicana/o Studies classes. The six tenets include: defining Chican@ cultural identity and worldview, Chicano history's dialectical disruption of hegemonic nation-state narratives, self determination, the central role of the student, a Chicana feminist dialectic, and relevant connections of the university to Chican@/Latin@ communities. Many of these tenets are found in the rhetoric of the PSB, while others - especially Chicana feminist contributions - are to be located in the interstitial spaces and hidden histories of early Chicano Studies movements and later developments.

An essential beginning of Chican@ Studies is the philosophical development of a Chicana/o view of the self, more internally projected than simply a "world view." In other words, Chican@s needed to have an understanding of themselves as a people based on common experiences, histories and culture. This is what the PSB referred to as the required "historical consciousness," although the concept is not elaborated on in the PSB. Many scholars such as Rene Nunez, Raoul Contreras and Michael Soldatenko ascribe this concept to Berkeley anthropologist and *El Grito* (an early Chicano academic journal) editor Octavio V. Romano. What Romano called a "new Chicano perspective" was motivated by his distrust of the social science on Mexican Americans at the time, particularly the role of language as a colonizing technology. As he penned seminal essays

on Mexican American studies and edited early volumes of Chicano poetry, he called for a “new rhetoric” that took into account mutual and individualistic political struggle on Mexican culture’s own terms. He felt “Mexican-Americans should express in their own Mexican ‘voices’ a different historical, psychological and intellectual orientation.”<sup>265</sup> While Soldatenko takes an elaborate view of Romano and other’s contributions to the awareness-raising of a “perspectivist Chicano Studies,” Raoul Contreras recognizes the field’s duty “for promoting and organizing Chicano student self-consciousness, a Chicanismo among students.”<sup>266</sup>

Connected to this internally directed role of Chicano@ Studies was the external critique the discipline aimed at the field of history itself. Before Damian Baca’s call for a recognition of hemispheric “rhetoric(al tradition) of the Americas,” historian Carlos Cortez critiqued the Western “civilizational” myth of knowledge and culture moving from East to West, emphasizing instead the exchange of ideas and culture moving North and South along the Western hemisphere – or Abya Yala, “Turtle Island.” As Gomez-Quinonez explains, the historians and history graduate students made critical arguments – such as revising the origins, motives and violence of the Mexican American War – directly challenging U.S. history narratives that foregrounded heroic figures, “American exceptionalism,” and justified the expansion of a white supremacist nation-state based on “Mexican aggression.” Chicano history as a field was a key argument – or collection of

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<sup>265</sup> Garcia, Richard. “Creating a consciousness, memories, and expectations: The Burden of Octavio Romano.” In *Chicano Discourse: Selected Conference Proceedings of NACS*, Tacho Midiola, Emilio Zamora, Eds. Houston, TX: Mexican American Studies Program, 1992. P 15.

<sup>266</sup> Soldatenko 26. Raoul Contreras “Chicano Studies: A Political Strategy of the Chicano Movement.” *Mapping Strategies: NACCS and the Challenge of Multiple (Re)Oppressions*. Hermosillo, Sonora (Mexico): Editorial Orbis Press, 1999. P 103.

historical arguments - that effectively justified the discipline of Chican@ Studies and carved out space on universities across the Southwest. Rodolfo Acuna's historical tome *Occupied America* (now in its 8<sup>th</sup> edition) – often referred to by activists as the “Chicano bible” - was a key early text that signaled the arrival of an alternative and meritorious Chicana/o scholarship. Chicano history was a key epistemic argument as much as it was a political project: without a history, Chican@s could not proclaim their existence (peoplehood) much less develop a historical consciousness.

While the PSB stressed the “role of knowledge in producing social change” it emphasized the principle of self-determination, that the field must be constructed by Chicanos and on Chicano terms. The idea that a people or nation should determine their own destiny was central in decolonial independence movements in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (ie. Vietnam, Cuba, Algeria), and can be traced back to hemispheric Latin American independence movements in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Jorge Mariscal writes about how the language of Cuba and Franz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* heavily influenced the movement.<sup>267</sup> “The self-determination of our community is now the only acceptable mandate for social and political action,” the PSB stated emphatically in the opening “Manifesto,” tying this tenet to the term Chicano and its organic nature.<sup>268</sup> The principal of self determination, the plan stated, would be “defined and practiced in the areas of control, autonomy, flexibility, and participation.” Warning against tokenism, the plan

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<sup>267</sup> Mariscal, George. *Brown-Eyed Children of the Sun: Lessons from the Chicano Movement, 1965-1975*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2005. Pp. 53-139.

<sup>268</sup> *El Plan de Santa Barbara*. P 9.

declared that hiring and direction of programs had to be in the hands of Chicano@s, including the students.

Students during this early period played a key role in a variety of ways, and the plan ensured that they remain at the center of the discourse. Due to their numbers, militancy, and organization students were a force to be reckoned with. Student events like the 1968 walkouts in LA and other cities, and the 1969 Chicano Youth Liberation Conference in Denver generated national attention and broad enthusiasm. Existing programs at the time (Spring 1969) were largely due to militant student activism, like the confrontational politics of the Third World Strikes at San Francisco State and UC Berkeley.<sup>269</sup> The plan recognized this stating, “this resulted because of the self-sacrifice, militancy, dedication and political maturity of student organization,” and assigned students a seat at the table of governance. Student takeovers of programs – such as UCLA and UC Berkeley - demonstrate that students operated around this principle and often “seized power” from faculty they saw as aligned with administrators. The PSB also elaborates on the centrality of students being the main tie to barrios and Chicano communities: "The Chicanos on campus are an organic, integral part of the Chicano community... the Chicano community on campus is an extension of the larger community" (PSB 14). Recognizing student effectiveness in fueling activism, it stated "political mobilization is directly dependent on political consciousness... The Chicano student organization in institutions of higher learning is central to all effective political

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<sup>269</sup> The wide ranging effect has been noted often, including Carlos Cortez observation that the UC Riverside chancellor was affected by “psychic contagion” when he called for a meeting with Black and Brown students to organize programs because he “didn’t want what happened in Berkeley to happen on his campus.” Interview 2012.



mobilization" (PSB 51). The plan devoted an entire chapter to the student group MEChA and campus organizing, outlining principles for the organization. The instant adoption of the name by student groups throughout California and much of the Southwest signaled the ideological impact of the plan. Later evaluations also recognized the problematic role of students in administrative roles. Raymond V. Padilla's two papers, a 1974 PhD Education dissertation and a 1987 paper, are very elaborate records and evaluations of the administrative problems and methodological challenges at UC Berkeley.<sup>270</sup> While he recognizes and applauds the students' heart and dedication, he recognizes shortcomings such as inexperience and resistance from the university administration. "The review process was used by academics to eliminate the more radical elements of the Chicano Studies perspective and make it more palatable to the university." When students lost control of the Executive Committee in 1973, the University administration forced a faculty takeover. He concluded, "In many ways, both the strengths and the weaknesses (not to say *las inquietudes, las angustias y los exitos*)<sup>271</sup> of the field are directly linked to the early and predominant involvement of students."

The most drastic and visible shortcoming of the *Plan de Santa Barbara* is the exclusion of women. From the all male editorial board to the exclusive use of the masculine forms for group identity – such as Chicano, hermandad (brotherhood), Chicanismo - to the exclusion of female topics in the appendix's course proposals, the

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<sup>270</sup> Padilla, Raymond V.. "Chicano Studies at UC Berkeley: En Busca del Campus y La Universidad" (PhD Dissertation, Education, UC Berkeley). 1975. Also see Padilla, Raymond V., "Chicano Studies Revisited: Still in Search of the Campus and the Community." Occasional Paper Series, No. 6. Chicano Studies Center, University of Texas, El Paso. June 1987.

<sup>271</sup> "... anxieties, anguish and successes." Padilla, "Chicano Studies Revisited."

masculinist voice permeates the document. Women were visible in photographs throughout the document, and important Chicana voices like Ana Nieto-Gomez and Gracia Molina de Pick were present in Santa Barbara and are listed as workshop contributors. Nevertheless, a clear collective Chicana critique of the PSB doesn't surface until the 1986 publication of the 1984 NACS conference proceedings, dedicated to "Voces de la Mujer." In it Cynthia Orozco called out the "lack of consciousness about sexism and gender" in the PSB and symbolically "revised" the plan with a feminist voice, naming her final statement "El Plan de Santa y Barbara" (as in the name of two Chicana women).<sup>272</sup> Sociologist Mary Pardo also criticized the masculinist language of the plan, pointing out how its rhetoric was tied to action, that sexist and oppressive behaviors and policies were tied to the exclusionary language that was customary at the time of the document's drafting.<sup>273</sup> She suggested hiring more women and taking their voices and ideas seriously. Alma Garcia notably surveyed the field to date, pointing out dominant tropes in methods, calling for a synthesis of former approaches that viewed Chicanas as "Great Women," as "Workers," and as "Women." She asks, "what is the intersection of race, class, and gender in analyzing Chicanas in American society?"<sup>274</sup> As Maylei Blackwell asserts, Chicana feminist voices were present since the outset of the Chicano Movement (and strong Chicana leaders existed through previous centuries) but were most

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<sup>272</sup> Orozco. P 13.

<sup>273</sup> Pardo, Mary. "A Selective Evaluation of the Plan de Santa Barbara." *La Gente Newspaper*, March/April 1985.

<sup>274</sup> Garcia, Alma M.. "Studying Chicanas: Bringing Women into the Frame of Chicano Studies." *Chicana Voices*. P 19-29. Michael Soldatenko also provides an impressive historiography of divergent Chicana methodologies and ideologies in *Chicano Studies*. See also Alma Garcia (ed.), *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writings*. New York: Routledge, 2014.

often met with exclusion and hostility during a time when it was common to treat Chicana feminist issues as divisive, bourgeois, or a “white thing.” Chicanas in UC Berkeley’s teatro, and CSU San Diego’s female teatro – in *Teatro Chicana* – also provide valuable insight into the unique experiences of Chicanas at the university.<sup>275</sup> Later theoretical contributions from scholars and critics like Norma Alarcon (re-writing Malinche), Gloria Anzaldúa (mestizo@ consciousness, conocimientos), Emma Perez (the decolonial imaginary), Chela Sandoval (differential consciousness), Cherrie Moraga (theory of the flesh, Queer Aztlan) and Angie Chabram Dernerseian (Chican@ Cultural Studies) – not to mention the creative literary output of Chicanas like Ana Castillo and Sandra Cisneros, and Chicana organizers inside and outside the academy – bolstered the presence of women in the field through their dialectical work within Chican@ Studies.

Finally, the rhetoric in *el Plan* tied Chican@ Studies epistemic activity to praxis in the community. Like the epigraph above by MASC/MEChA member Jaime Solis during the Third World Strike, the first Chican@s on campus were determined to “take the university back to the barrio, brick by brick!” The concept of collective concern over individual uplift was a radical turn away from the individualism and materialism espoused to this day by the university. Preceding ethnography, field work and service-learning, Chican@ Studies commitment to being of direct service to Chican@ working class communities was ahead of its time. The connections of the university to the community are ubiquitous throughout the language of *El Plan de Santa Barbara*, and are

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<sup>275</sup> See “Chicana Goes to College” in *Teatro Chicana: A Collective Memoir and Selected Plays*. Laura E. Garcia, Sandra M. Gutierrez, and Felicitas Nunez, Eds.. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008. Pp 175-189.

most directly manifested in the call for “barrio centers.” The PSB stated, “community members should serve on all programs... in addition to this all attempts must be made to take the college and university to the Barrio whether it be in form of classes... or community centers financed by the school...”<sup>276</sup> The last pages of the PSB include a proposal titled, “Outline of the Barrio Center Program,” whose goals included to recruit students to the campus and “to facilitate on-going and proposed research conducted by SDC (the university) in the Chicano Community.” Early Chicano Studies builders envisioned an academic tradition that would be formally tied to Chicano communities off campuses.

### **Productive Tensions: Dialectical Activity, Ollin (Movement) and Space**

Political repression, cooptation, a decline in political activism generally, and various internal conflicts splintered the Chicano Student Movement’s early united force. While education leaders carved out academic space in universities, ideological (and personal) conflict continued. Several movement groups advocated for a split or a recognition within the family of “la Causa,” and later within Chicano Studies this work continued (with the participation of activists, artists, the Pocho Cultures Research and Development, Chicana feminists, Marxists, creative writers, literary critics, teatristas, ballet folclorico dancers, queers, and Central Americans for instance) although not always recognized or institutionalized. Especially in the early years, difference could lead to exclusion or a destructive and divisive form of pleito rhetoric.

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<sup>276</sup> *El Plan de Santa Barbara*. P 60.

Ysidro Macias went on to teach in Chicano Studies briefly, founded a literary political arts magazine called “El Pocho Che,” returned to school for a law degree, and ultimately went into business and raising a family. An early writing of his, however, highlighted a unique ideological perspective which – like the works of his mentor and predecessor, Octavio V. Romano – may have been dismissed prematurely. Utilizing an indigenous Xicano world view, and predating Carlos Castaneda’s mystic anthropological writings and Gloria Anzaldua’s concept of mestiza consciousness, Macias called for the search for equilibrium between Chicanos’ material and spiritual needs. His unorthodox style may have led to his ideas being too easily dismissed. The concept of accepting dualities and searching for a balanced harmony between seemingly opposing positions (such as between Spanish language and indigenous spirituality, Marxism and nationalism, nationalism and feminism, the community and the campus, militant protest or electoral politics, Chicano manhood and lesbian feminism) resembled Gloria Anzaldua’s call for a “mestizo consciousness that embraces... different ways of knowing.” Like Anzaldua, Macias saw difference as “precisely that – different, not separate.” He proposed the Mexica vision at the founding of Tenochtitlan as a useful metaphor:

The Scene before them spoke of the permanent struggle, el equilibrio, between earthly man – the snake – and spiritual man – the eagle – from whom el Quinto Sol, the age in which we live, derives its energy, its force.

The image of the eagle and serpent – found at the center of the Mexican flag – speaks as well to the Mesoamerican concept of Quetzalcoatl, a king/deity/concept illustrated as a dragon-like feathered serpent, and often associated with learning, wisdom and civilization. More generally, Macias was speaking of ollin, the Mesoamerican

concept for movement, represented by two intertwining strands in harmonious counter movement (see image below). The ollin glyph can be compared to the Asian ying-yang and has varying designs over centuries throughout the western hemisphere. With regard to rhetoric, discourse and politics it serves as a fitting counterpart to the dialectic of the West. Like dialectical activity, ollin recognizes the “awakening to at least two ways of seeing things” and foregrounds the interaction between interlocutors, groups or opposing ideas. The ollin concept, in its manifestation as “movement,” also privileges the idea that difference does not need to strictly mean opposition or conflict, but can also mean (productive) tension and harmony.<sup>277</sup>

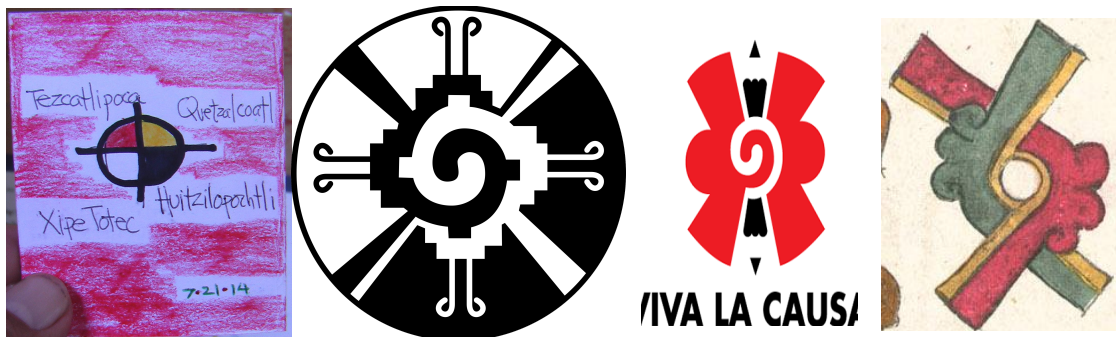


Figure 11.1-11.4. Ollin glyphs, ancient and modern.

Rhetoric scholars such as Vorriss Nunley and Damian Baca recognize the interaction of rhetoric and space in knowledge production: European rhetorics ultimately sought to control space, and decolonial spaces produce knowledge uniquely. While I have argued that the rhetoric of the Chican@ movement created a unique body of knowledge (Chican@ Studies epistemology), it did so in a particular space – the university- and from

<sup>277</sup> In conversation with Adela Licon at Rhetoric Society of America Conference, San Antonio, TX, May 25, 2014. Also see Karma Chavez and Adela Licon, “Fragments from ‘Coalitional Gestures, Third Spaces, and Rhetorical Imaginaries: A Dialogue in Queer Chican@ Feminism.’” *Rhetoric Across Borders*. Anderson SC: Parlor Press, 2015. Pp. 269-273.

the perspective and in the interest of a wholly different space – the barrio (or particular Chicano communities). Here I want to emphasize that Chican@ Studies rhetoric and epistemology have elicited a unique and particular spatial dimension that is undeniable and irrevocable. Over the last five decades, Chica@ students and scholars created *literal* spaces for the study of Chican@ experience and communities: classrooms, research centers, Chicano Studies libraries, offices, MEChA student group spaces, cultural or student centers, buildings occupied during conferences or meetings, and hallways or outdoor spaces dominated by murals where students congregate. Sometimes – notably during the 1993 UCLA Hunger Strike and the 1999 UC Berkeley Third World Strike protest for Ethnic Studies - students fought aggressively to defend or expand these spaces. As has been studied throughout this chapter, rhetoric played a central role in this construction. But the role of rhetoric in the production of space can take on a deeper and more critical understanding if we listen to the interaction between rhetoric, audiences, time and space. Artist Sandra de la Loza, a Chican@ Studies major at UC Berkeley in the late 80's and early 90's, explains the production of Chican@ Studies knowledge in terms that are rhetorical, temporal and spatial:

I think social change happens through small advances; the impact of an act, a poem, a discourse isn't known until maybe, one, two, three generations afterwards. If I look at some of my teachers and some of the people who have influenced me most and what they did-- they created their own space. They articulated an experience that hadn't yet been articulated, and in doing so, in just naming it they created a space that didn't exist before. That is especially true when I look at what most immediately impacted me: the woman of color feminists, especially the Chicana feminists. They were the first generation to be very critical of Chicano nationalism, critical of white feminism, critical of homophobia and they found a voice and articulated who they were, created something that has

allowed the next generation to have a space that already exists for them.<sup>278</sup>

The significance of de la Loza's spatial insight is that it acknowledges the temporal interaction between rhetoric, space and audiences (or generations). Persuasion cannot be simply understood as happening instantaneously: it cannot be understood as a mechanical formula where the outcome is immediately recognized. De la Loza's comment reveals that, similar to tenets of Native American rhetoric, Chican@s rhetoric's work on persuasion or identification takes place in future moments and spaces.

Particularly divisive conflicts have occurred over issues of community, gender, and queer identity. The Chican@s rhetorical concepts of mestizo@s consciousness, ollin and equilibrium can be useful in future endeavors, particularly in the dialectical aspects and activities of such concepts. We can take cues from Fredric Jameson's attention to the dialectic, specifically the work of synthesis in reaching a negotiated outcome. And as Chicana rhetoric scholar Licon instructs, conflicts can also be seen as "productive tension," moments where argument leads to naming, understanding, building and moving forward together.

While Chican@s Studies and Ethnic Studies programs provide a critical dialectical operation to knowledge and national identity in the U.S., major conflicts within the discipline of Chican@s Studies continue to take on a dialectical nature. Chican@s continue to search for a balance, an equilibrium, between the university and the community, between nationalism and feminism, and various other tensions. The

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<sup>278</sup> Jennifer Flores Sternad interview with Sandra de la Loza. *Latinart.com: Online Journal of Art and Culture*. December 1, 2004. <http://www.latinart.com/transcript.cfm?id=65>



rhetorical analysis above I hope contributes to a continued and more focused reflection on the discipline.

In my introduction, I explained why a rhetorical analysis of Chicano history is important primarily for three reasons which are epistemological, historical and practical: that “words do work” in knowledge production, that a “Chicano poetic consciousness” was critical to Chicano movement activism, and that understanding a Chican@ rhetorical tradition is tied to educational outcomes of Chican@/Latin@ students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In this chapter, I elaborated on the constructive and epistemic rhetoric of students, poets and activists in carving out the discipline of Chican@ Studies. While the movement rhetoric of the *Plan de Santa Barbara* may seem dated, the education crisis of Chican@ and Latin@ students continues. The argument for Chicano education programs stands at the intersections of Chicano Studies and composition and speaks to future educational strategies facing the burgeoning Latino student population nationally.<sup>279</sup> While conservative voices continue to promote the benefits of assimilation of Latino students (which Baca incisively conflates with genocidal colonial conversion), the mestizo@ rhetoric of Chican@ Studies recognizes the multiple identities of a mestizo@ consciousness and foregrounds the possibilities of “invention between different ways of knowing.”<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> In the most current demographic statistics for LAUSD schools (2009-10), the Latino student population was 73.4% (LAUSD webpage). <http://search.lausd.k12.ca.us/cgi-bin/fccgi.exe>

<sup>280</sup> Baca, Damian. *Mestiz@ Scripts, Digital Migrations and Territories of Writing*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. Pg. 4.

Furthermore, a historic advent - and kairotic moment - is approaching in the year 2019: the 50 year anniversary of the Plan de Santa Barbara's consolidation of Chicana/o Studies in the Spring of 1969, converging with 500 years of Spain's arrival in Tenochtitlan in November of 1519. This historical convergence offers an opportunity to reflect on, assess, and to articulate the important decolonizing work of Chicana/o and Ethnic Studies and their place in the university. This critical attitude will also be coupled with recent regional and national turmoil and activity around Chican@ and Ethnic Studies: namely, the destruction of the high school Raza Studies department in Tucson, and the subsequent movement to spread Ethnic Studies particularly in high schools in California, Texas and the Southwest. Contemporary students and scholars will need to assert ownership and to elaborate on the unique methods, operations and epistemological contributions made by Chican@ Studies. Scholars with investments in the discipline will necessarily be revisiting origins and formative tenets in order to discuss the future of existing programs. I also hope that this analysis of incipient student organizing and its various articulations (through poems, plans and activism) can also inspire and inform the rhetorical work of current and future student movements.

## CONCLUSION<sup>281</sup>

In the 60s, from the Third World Strike to the school walkouts in East Los Angeles in 1968, education remained the fundamental concern of young Raza. Because education was about the future of a people. And we saw ourselves as such, as a people distinct from mainstream America, requiring culturally specific methods of intellectual inquiry.

—Cherrie Moraga, *Loving in the War Years* (2000, 187)

In this final chapter I aim to bring the Chican@ rhetorical tradition into the present, the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, by evaluating some evolutions in and the status of Chican@ Studies in the context of the political tempest in Arizona that destroyed the very successful K-12 Raza Studies department in the Tucson Unified School District. By looking at this Chican@ Studies struggle and understanding the spread of these programs to California, Texas and nationally, I make connections with the central themes of my dissertation on a Chican@ rhetorical tradition: that rhetoric is epistemic, that a rhetorical history contributes to a historical consciousness, that Chican@s re-purpose technology, and that indigenous tropes/ancestral knowledge operate deeply in rhetorical and epistemic ways. In the Raza Studies struggle we find a rich well of rhetorical activity doing work in the world (*nommo*), where persuasion happens immediately as well as in later times and spaces, where a deep rhetoric reaches wider social and moral dimensions, and is sure to have lasting effects into the future on social life, cultural identity, ideology and institutions.

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<sup>281</sup> Sections of this chapter appeared previously in print and appear here with permission of the publishers. "The Eagle Meets the Seagull: the Critical, Kairotic & Public Rhetoric of Raza Studies Now in Los Angeles." In *Reflections: Public Rhetoric, Civic Writing and Service Learning*. Cristina Kirklighter, Ed.. Vol. 13, no. 1, Fall 2013. Pp. 80-93. "You Can Ban Chicano Books, But They Still Pop Up!": Activism, Public Discourse, and Decolonial Curriculum in Los Angeles." In *"White" Washing American Education: The New Culture Wars in Ethnic Studies*. Denise Sandoval, Anthony Ratcliff, Tracy Lachica Buenavista, and James R. Marin, Eds. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2016. Pp. 133-156.

Cherrie Moraga's insights communicate the deep philosophical and cultural effects of movement rhetoric for a Chican@ Studies education. Chican@ education nurtures and defines a people. The passage also evokes my methodology: this conclusion operates with tenets and methodologies primarily grounded in Chicana/o Studies and rhetoric (Moraga 2000).<sup>282</sup> The methodology of this chapter uses storytelling, rhetorical analysis, ethnographic observation, and Chicano Studies tenets and practices. While I chronicle and theorize on Arizona and the current Ethnic Studies movements - groups like Raza Studies Now, Ethnic Studies Now, the Xican@ Institute for Teaching and Organizing (XITO), the Xican@ Pop-Up Book Movement – I highlight rhetorical acts and strategies of Chican@ and Ethnic Studies activists who produce a rhetorical dialectic - a challenge or “antithesis” to Eurocentric or colonizing narratives - that continues to produce knowledge uniquely.

Rhetoric's ties to epistemology help remind us of what should be evident: that knowledge is constructed discursively through the composition of arguments, the coming together of minds in discourse communities and rigorous dialectical activity. James Berlin's influential history of rhetoric and writing instruction in 20<sup>th</sup> century universities, *Rhetoric and Reality* (1987), emphasizes the “rhetorical triangle,” where what we know about reality is arrived at through the interaction of interlocutor, audience and language. He states:

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<sup>282</sup> In the essay “Out of Our Revolutionary Minds: Toward a Pedagogy of Revolt,” Moraga reflects on the purpose of Chican@ Studies, culturally relevant curriculum, and the necessity for educational spaces that allow for rebellion against social injustice. *Loving in the War Years, 2nd Ed.*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2000. Pp. 170-190.

every rhetorical system is based on epistemological assumptions about the nature of reality, the nature of the knower, and the rules governing the discovery and communication of the known. These matters, of course, converge with the elements of the rhetorical triangle: reality, interlocutor, audience, and language (Berlin 4).

He goes on to explain that truths accomplished through rhetoric are by nature uncertain, open to debate, contingent and probable, stating, “ultimately, choices are made on the basis of public discourse – individuals working together within a community of discourse” (Berlin 15). Citing Michael Leff, Berlin clarifies that “knowledge is not discovered by reason alone... intersubjectivity is a condition of all knowledge, and that the contact of minds affects knowledge” (Berlin 165). Here I tether Berlin’s insights to Dolores Delgado Bernal’s (1998) writing on Chicana feminist epistemology which challenges historical and ideological representations of Chicanas, relocates them to central positions, and asks distinctively decolonizing questions (from a Chicana “intersubjectivity”). Like her methodology, this chapter aims at a “theoretical sensitivity” that does not shy away from the “cultural intuition” of being a Chican@ or person of color in Eurocentric education spaces. I also draw from Delgado Bernal’s deliberate and “explicit use of group interaction to produce data and insights.” While Delgado Bernal’s work is grounded in Education Studies, I understand her Chicana feminist scholarship – as well as the discourse communities formed during Tucson’s struggle - as an evolution of Chican@ Studies epistemology, particularly the always-present feminist dialectic within Chican@ Studies, and the tenet of connecting scholarship to communities, what was sometimes articulated as “taking the university back to the varrio.” The struggle in Tucson, involving activist students, teachers, professors, community members, and

ultimately reaching beyond through social media and mass media outlets, consequently brought a genealogy of Chicano spatialities and rhetorics into a broader public discourse around race and Ethnic Studies. While the vitality and material effects of this rhetorical tradition continue to unfold in the present, the tradition will continue to be integral to the cultural and intellectual vitality of Chican@/Latin@ communities in the Southwest and beyond.

### **Tempest, Arizona: The Rise and Fall of the Raza Studies Department**

When Your Education Is Under Attack, What Do You Do? . . . Fight Back!  
—U.N.I.D.O.S. student group take over of Tucson School Board (April 26, 2011)

In these activist chants around the ongoing struggle to defend Chicana/o Studies in Arizona and spread Ethnic Studies K-12 programs beyond Arizona, one clearly hears the insistence that indigenous Chicano culture, epistemology, and institutions will not be stamped out and that Chicano culture is a historical one of decolonial struggle. This “cultural war,” and its spread to California, the Southwest and nationally, may not simply be a phase but the ground on which the discipline of Chican/o and Ethnic Studies may determine its epistemological future.

The Raza Studies department was over 13 years in the making. In 1998 Sean Arce began teaching a weekend class on Chicana/o history through TUSD. More teachers joined, classes increased, and the program was institutionalized shortly after the district passed a de-segregation order based on chronic low Latin@ academic performance and a dismal achievement gap in Tucson schools. The foundation of the program was an

indigenous-based re-evaluation of Chicana@ Studies undertaken by MEChA chapters in the 1990's.<sup>283</sup> Curriculum and pedagogy were informed by Chicana@ and Ethnic Studies experiences, Native American and Mesoamerican ceremonial traditions and knowledge systems, as well as by Paolo Freire, critical race theory, and education theory (several teachers were in the University of Arizona Education Ph.D. program). Teachers and community elders developed the Xicana@ Paradigm, a four-part methodology of education rooted in indigenous concepts emphasizing self-reflection, precious knowledge (curriculum and students as funds of knowledge), the will to act (praxis), and transformation.<sup>284</sup> Officially known as the Mexican- American Studies Department (MAS), the program typically graduated 98 % of its students and 70 % went on to college (the national graduation rate for Latinos generally hovers at around 50 %).<sup>285</sup>

One undeniable quality of Tucson activists was their determination to fight for Chicana@ Studies. Many activists, myself included, did not hear of this struggle until 2009 when a group of students and teachers ran through the desert – 110 miles in 115 degree weather – to fight a bill that would destroy the very effective Raza Studies K-12 program. The ceremonial run was organized as a protest, but it was also conceptualized

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<sup>283</sup> "The Xicana@ Paradigm." Phoenix, AZ: Tonatierra, 1994. Pamphlet. The following quote captures the transformed decolonial perspective on educational purpose: "Perhaps... it would be better if we determined our own paradigm instead of blindly following one which has been imposed on us, one which is only working for a few of us."

<sup>284</sup> Arce, Sean. "Xicana/o Indigenous Epistemologies: Toward a Decolonizing and Liberatory Education for Xicana/o Youth." In *White Washing American Education: The New Culture Wars in Ethnic Studies*. Eds. Denise M. Sandoval, Anthony Ratcliff, Tracy Lachica Buenavista, and James R. Marin. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2016. Pp. 11-41.

<sup>285</sup> Cabrera, Nolan L., Jeffrey F. Milem, Ozan Jaquette and Ronald W. Marx. "Missing the (Student Achievement) Forest for All the (Political) Trees: Empiricism and the Mexican American Studies Controversy in Tucson." *American Education Research Journal*, Dec. 2014, Vol. 51 (6). Pp. 1084-1118.

as an indigenous ceremony, in the tradition of the Peace and Dignity runs initiated in 1992. Along the way, regional native groups such as the O’Odam, Yaqui and Yoeme honored them, and in Phoenix, hundreds joined the protest on its approach to the capitol. Upon their arrival, legislators were moved, and honored the sacrifice and the angry crowds by striking down the bill.

Republicans vowed to destroy the program the next year. In 2010 conservative law makers led by Tom Horne passed HB2281 and Governor Jan Brewer signed the bill into law. Without observing classes they accused Raza Studies of promoting the overthrow of the United States government, promoting resentment toward a race of people, and advocating ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals.<sup>286</sup> These manipulative terministic screens employed by state Republicans operated effectively in demonizing Chican@ Studies to conservative audiences; social media comments regurgitated politicians claims that Ethnic Studies classes were “a waste of taxpayer money.”<sup>287</sup> Horne was later elected Attorney General and pressured the Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) to dismantle the program. At first, the once progressive school board refused. On April 26, 2011, a conservative leaning school board prepared to vote to change MAS courses into electives, effectively disabling the program. Student activists in the newly formed group UNIDOS (United Non-Discriminatory Individuals Demanding Our Studies) chained themselves to the school board seats, leading the chamber in a chant that was heard across the Southwest: “When your education is under attack, what do you do? Fight back!!”

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<sup>286</sup> Arizona House Bill 2281. 2010. <https://www.azleg.gov/legtext/49leg/2r/bills/hb2281s.pdf>

<sup>287</sup> See Russell Pearce’s comment during preliminary hearings in the film *Precious Knowledge*.



As in the case of the desert run, blogs, youtube videos and articles on social media spread the news of these actions beyond Tucson. The activists' re-purposing of technologies kept the department alive for a year. Youtube videos of this protest went viral, and news of the Tucson struggle began to circulate widely outside of Arizona via Facebook and through the journalism of Roberto "Dr. Cintli" Rodriguez, Abie Morales' local blog "The Three Sonorans," and articles by historian Rudy Acuña. While many waited patiently for the documentary *Precious Knowledge* to rally a national audience, Jon Stewart's Daily Show preempted the film's expected impact with an effective satirical portrait of an incompetent Tucson school board outlawing Mexican- American Studies, basing its policy on "hearsay."<sup>288</sup> The comic relief served as a balancing pathos to the hostile rhetoric and specious logic of Arizona Republicans in the mass media. Interviews with teachers on CNN, MSNBC and Huffington Post articles by Jeff Biggers followed, effectively "jacking access" of mass media. The struggle also inspired posters and artwork by Favianna Rodriguez and nationally syndicated cartoonist Lalo Alcaraz in California. A public discourse on social media, in short, grew and shed light on the growing movement.

While the Republican state government threatened TUSD with a 15 million dollar economic embargo if they allowed the program to continue, students organized protests, barrio ceremonial runs, and took over several school board meetings. In January of 2012, the school board, under heavy police presence, cut short public comment, and finally

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<sup>288</sup> *The John Stewart Daily Show*. Season 17, Ep. 80 - April 2, 2012.  
<http://www.cc.com/video-clips/ovmyo9/the-daily-show-with-jon-stewart-tucson-s-mexican-american-studies-ban>

voted to terminate MAS. The next day, teachers were ordered to erase course names, change syllabuses, cancel Ethnic Studies units, “mainstream” their instruction, and literally box books up in front of their students.<sup>289</sup> These boxes were labeled “Banned Books” and locked in storage rooms. Teachers filed a federal lawsuit against the state that went to the 9<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeals in January of 2015, yet continues unresolved. Walkouts, Freedom Schools and increased student activism ensued, but so did division. Counter lawsuits tied up teachers in the courts while some were blacklisted and a small few crossed the picket line to take new jobs in a watered down program. PBS was late in releasing an excellent film on the struggle, *Precious Knowledge*, but soon after release the filmmaker was accused of date rape by a former MAS student. Many insiders soberly recognized that the devastation to careers and relationships during these three stressful years of struggle had been irreparable. Accused of playing politics with the education of Chican@ youth, Arizona Republicans vowed to “stop la Raza” and claimed a colonialist, “military-style” victory in destroying the MAS department.

They thought they had buried Ethnic Studies, but they had buried seeds.

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<sup>289</sup> *Three Sonorans*. “TUSD Makes MAS Teachers Box Banned Books in Front of Students.” Jan. 12, 2012. <http://threesonorans.com/2012/01/16/video-tusd-makes-mas-teachers-box-banned-books-in-front-of-students/>

## Chican@ Studies and the Dialectics of Decolonization

I was looking for the Revolutionary *Escuelita* of the 70s, where my age-peers had sent their children, kids who managed to get into Cal, Stanford, Harvard, UCLA with their culture and sanity intact. . . . I fantasize a *calmecac*, a 21<sup>st</sup>-century Xicano cultural school based on indigenist and xicanafeminista *filosofia*.

- Cherrie Moraga, *Loving in the War Years* (2000)

We not only closed the achievement gap . . . we inverted it.

- Sean Arce, XITO Institute, New Haven Unified School District (2015)

The Chicano Movement dreams of alternative schools that Moraga contemplates, similar to the Black Panther School and the Malcolm X-Emiliano Zapata Street Academy in Oakland in the early 1970s, were made real during movement years. Only a few of these schools, however, survived, for example the Escuela Tlatelolco created by the Crusade for Justice in Denver. The purpose and effects of such institutions—captured in Teatro Campesino’s “acto” “No Saco Nada de la Escuela” (Valdez 1990)<sup>290</sup>—was clearly understood by many in my post-movement generation: knowledge of our past and the placing of students and our communities at the center of learning could produce dramatic results that countered the Chicano educational pipeline that has historically failed over half of Latino students (Yosso & Solorzano 2006).<sup>291</sup> As founder and former

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<sup>290</sup> The early work of El Teatro Campesino, also written about by Jorge Huerta and Yolanda Broyles-Gonzalez, was earmarked by “actos,” short sketches with political messages aimed at educating and winning audience into the “movimiento.” As a radical performance art, the teatro galvanized audiences, causing hundreds of teatro groups to spring up throughout the Southwest; television and film projects soon followed. “No Saco Nada de la Escuela” (I don’t get anything from school) was the first acto to address the Chicano education experience directly, exposing discrimination at every level, ending with the college students deciding to start their own school, asking the audience, “who will teach us?” The revolutionary answer was an emphatic “Ourselves!”

<sup>291</sup> According to education statistics, the authors report, out of 100 Chicano elementary school students, only 46 will graduate from high school, 10 will enroll in a four-year college, 8 will graduate, and .2 will earn a doctoral degree.

MAS director Sean Arce states, Chicana/o Studies was capable of reversing oppressive conditions, changing lives, inverting the achievement gap and decolonizing minds.

My own experience with Chicano Studies began in high school when my older brother while attending Santa Monica community college brought home the first Chicano books I had ever seen. We lived in the low income Pico neighborhood adjacent to the college. Elizabeth Martinez's *460 Years of Chicano History*, Roberto "Dr. Cintli" Rodriguez's *Assault with a Deadly Weapon*, and Gus Frias's *Barrio Warriors* were books that I devoured and that lit a fire inside of me. Later my sisters attended UCLA and brought me into spaces of protest, Chicano Studies classes, and the *La Gente de Aztlan* newspaper office. By the time I stepped into my first Chicano Studies class at UC Berkeley, I had attended numerous MEChA events and the Chicano/Latino Youth Leadership conference in Sacramento. MEChA, the "Chicano Student Movement of Aztlan," was active at colleges nationwide and in high schools throughout the Southwest. Although Chicano militancy had waned in the 1980s, Chicano Studies and student activism during this time inspired me to become academically disciplined and civically engaged. In my college years I was active in MEChA, the publication *Chispas*, and cofounded the teatro group *Chicano Secret Service*, which would soon tour nationally and appear on FOX TV pilots and "Pochonovela" (co-written with Coco Fusco) on PBS. MEChA was a central force in the protests of the late 80s and 90s to push for more Ethnic Studies courses at UC Berkeley, Stanford, UC Santa Barbara, UCLA, and many other campuses. Many of us understood how Chicano Studies raised our consciousness and inspired us academically, and we intended to take it back to our communities. Upon

graduation my goals were similar to Sean Arce's: to teach high school and infuse my curriculum with Ethnic Studies knowledge. In 1999 I revived and taught the Chicano/Latino Literature class at Santa Monica High School. Teaching English and Chicana/o Studies simultaneously was something I perceived as a natural fit and a powerful combination.

Rhetoric brings to the Chicano Studies table a deeper reading of language; rhetoric pays attention not simply to how language persuades, but to how language circulates, how it is used to communicate, organize, build community, and construct knowledge (epistemology). Often referencing Aristotle's dictum that rhetoric is the counterpart of the dialectic, rhetoricians traditionally look at how language and arguments construct knowledge, how argumentative rigor contributes to knowing, especially through Hegelian dialectics and other rigorous forms of investigation, such as Marxist dialectical critique. One essential aspect of the dialectic is "to oppose or to challenge." Fredrick Jameson explanation of the three forms of the dialectic – Hegel's formula for knowledge moving from hypothesis to synthesis, the multiplicity of dialectics ushered by Marx's historical dialectical materialism, and his recognition of the dialectic as an *activity* in everyday life – reminds us how rhetorical activity is central to everyday knowledge construction, politics, and public discourse. Chicano Studies and other Ethnic Studies fields can be understood as a critical dialectic within the university.

Whereas the U.S. university is constructed around rigid and predominantly Western standards of knowledge construction, rhetoric helps us understand the politics of knowledge as well as how Chican@ scholars and students can construct and transform

spaces around tenets and arguments that will help anchor the field in U.S. universities, and also keep it relevant and useful to local communities. As the previous chapter examined, guided in part by Steven Mailloux's rhetorical history of academic traditions, Chicano Studies materialized in the opportune "interpretive context" of various youth and civil rights movements of the 60s and 70s locally and third world uprisings globally. In addition to the interpretive and kairotic moment, the nascent period also prompts taking a closer look at the role of the student in Chican@ Studies epistemology. One Chican@ Studies tenet that cannot be overlooked is that students are central to the field: they are not only its audience or inheritors but the conductors of knowledge. Tucson teachers continually point out, as part of the Quetzalcoat/Precious Knowledge quadrant in the Xican@ Paradigm, that knowledge is not to be found solely in texts, but in the prior knowledge that students, as representatives of their families and communities, bring to the classroom (what education scholars call "funds of knowledge"). In fact, as previous lessons have clearly demonstrated, the students may very well prove to be the decisive factor in the longevity of the discipline.<sup>292</sup>

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<sup>292</sup> Students have protested to save or grow departments, and also contribute curricular direction, the "what should be studied." Examples include the nascent period (late 1960s, early 1970s); UC Berkeley's 1988–89 American Cultures requirement strikes; Stanford protests and UCSB Congreso Student Hunger Strike of same period; 1990–1993 UCLA activism for a Chican@ Studies Department culminating in the successful 1993 hunger strike and citywide protest; the 1999 UC Berkeley Third World Strike for Ethnic Studies; and the anti-HR 4437 mass high school walkouts of 2006 throughout the Southwest. The student contribution is commonly overlooked by faculty who assume the academic positions the students fought for and created.

## ***Nommo and Nomos: Pleito, Refranes, Dichos and Ancestral Knowledge at Work***

“They tried to bury us, but we were seeds”

– Larry Lopez, MAS teacher <sup>293</sup>

A characteristic of pleito rhetoric is the unwillingness to compromise the collective’s dignity, the refusal to comply with repression, or to teach this compliance to the next generation (the students). Studies by Nolan Cabrera et. al. and the state-authorized Cambium Report, showed that students taking MAS classes not only closed the achievement gap but surpassed it; MAS students attained higher test scores, g.p.a.s, and higher college-going rates than *all* students (including White students). Still, the state shut down the MAS department. This teaches us that logos (logical argument) was not enough. In the face of injustice, pleito rhetoric recognizes that if logic (logos) fails to persuade, there is always a Chican@ tradition of resistance (nomos) one can put into play.

Cruz Medina’s essay, “Nuestros Refranes: Culturally Relevant Writing in Tucson High Schools,” looks to rhetorical strategies of students, and takes an inventory of Chican@ rhetorical customs - nomos - including *dichos*, code-switching, *movidas* (clandestine moves), *rascuache* aesthetics (a Chican@ do-it-yourself) and subversive complicity. Revisiting Arizona’s House Bill 2281 he theorizes on the rhetorical strategies active in culturally relevant education, particularly the use of *dichos* (sayings, folk proverbs) in *Nuestros Refranes*, a Tucson student publication. Medina makes important

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<sup>293</sup> This saying appears in a poem by Nicaraguan revolution poet-priest Ernesto Cardenal in his tribute to a revolutionary “disappeared” by government death squads, in his 1959 poem “Epitaph for the Tomb of Adolfo Baez Bone.” Some also attribute the quote to the ancient Mayan text *The Popol Vuh*. MAS teacher Larry Lopez concluded a talk with this aphorism at the NAME Conference in San Francisco, 2015.

observations about the simultaneity of effects of right wing, anti-Latino discourse - SB 1070 and HB 2281 – that “polices brown bodies and minds.” His use of Emma Perez’ concept of the decolonial imaginary to frame culturally relevant education and student writing explains how colonial narratives restrain Raza students within a deficit model. By challenging dominant deficit narratives about Latin@s and writing, “*Nuestros Refranes* creates a discursive space where Latin@ students reflect their cultural identity while writing in a context apart from discourses and apparatuses that frame them as educationally deficient.”<sup>294</sup> This rhetorical strategy of working within, yet against oppressive systems, is what Medina calls a “subversive complicity.”

Like chants at protest marches, Chican@ rhetorical customs carry historical meaning and affect. His reference of Mary Carmen Cruz and Ogle Burks Duff’s article “New Worlds, Old Wisdom” explains why the use of *dichos* in classrooms works to enrich thinking and writing skills:

... it creates the transition from home culture to school culture. *Dichos are the moral teachings of a community.* They express the values of a culture and say much about the character of a people. When our students make connections between those values and the work of school, their learning is meaningful. (my italics) (Cruz, Duff 117)

In *dichos*, Chican@s find a wealth of wisdom in capsules of ancestral knowledge. In times of crisis, Chican@s often go to these rhetorical strongholds, commonplaces found in the experiential knowledge of elders. In moments when logic is manipulated, fabricated or ignored, activists can draw from the well of customs and traditions in order

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<sup>294</sup> Medina, Cruz. “*Nuestros Refranes: Culturally Relevant Writing in Tucson High Schools.*” In *Reflections: Public Rhetoric, Civic Writing, and Service Learning*. Ed. Cristina Kirklighter. New City Community Press, 2013. Pp. 61-62.



to harness a rhetorical power that looks back critically and looks forward with hope towards possibility. As Susan Jarratt has explained, *nomos* unhinges the privileged rule of *logos* and “determines behavior and activity through convention.” These uses, strategies, and expressions reflect a Chican@ activist rhetorical tradition in the way they “foreground the perception of shared interests necessary for rhetoric to work” (Jarratt 41). Tradition, in other words, may not always be perceptible, but its deep rhetorical effects must never be overlooked.

Cruz Medina also mentions in “Nuestros Refranes” moments of student-led community action: Tucson Freedom Summer, the April 26, 2011 school board take-over by UNIDOS, and the Chican@ Literature class at Prescott College. In these spaces pleito rhetoric could be seen to challenge policy and incite the crowd. Pleito contests what Ralph Cintron calls a “discourse of measurement,” a Western rhetoric that through maps and town histories sought to imagine, colonize and conquer space and peoples, and continues into the present to produce an “instrumental rationality” that justifies the academic scoring, policing and marginalization of low income communities of color.<sup>295</sup> Arizona’s discourse of measurement marked Chican@s as foreigners and threats, Chican@ Studies as indoctrination and a waste of taxpayer money, and even backfired (through the state-directed Cambium report which documented and lauded MAS achievements). While a discourse of measurement belittles other knowledge systems, pleito rhetoric harnesses the revolutionary *nomos* of self-determination, as well as Raza collective memories and legacies of struggle including now the Tucson struggle. The

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<sup>295</sup> Cintron, Ralph. *Angel's Town: Chero Ways, Gang Life, and the Rhetorics of the Everyday*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1997. Pp. 23-29, 35, 210.

*pleito* rhetoric for Chican@ Studies has been heard in speeches and chants, in the allegory of the seed (the revolutionary’s body is buried but the revolution rises again), and in the anthemic chant inside the April 26, 2011 Tucson school board meeting: “When your education is under attack, what do you do?? Fight back!!...”

In times when communities face crisis they can go to rhetorical strongholds, commonplaces found in *dichos*, protest chants, polemics, cuentos/stories and *pleito* rhetoric; expressions capable of bringing people together, reminding them of who they are, the struggles they’ve gone through, and the direction they must continue to follow. In moments when logic is manipulated, fabricated or ignored, we can draw from this well of customs and traditions. Ida B. Wells, fighting against lynching of Black men in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, reminded readers constantly that there often existed something more powerful than law, and that was public sentiment. As future scholars and activists seek to articulate a vision of what social justice looks like — a world where many worlds fit — they will envision this world rhetorically and by way of customs.



Figure 12.1-12.3: XPUB student work, and in *California Educator*, September 2015.  
 Figure 12.4: PLM fold-out songbook.

## **The Xican@ Pop-Up Book: Allegories of Decolonization & Self-Determination**

You Can Ban Chicano Books, But They Still Pop Up!  
—Xican@ Pop-Up Book Movement, Los Angeles (2013)

The Xican@ Pop-Up Book Movement (XPUB) began as an artistic-political response to the destruction of the Mexican American Studies department in Tucson, Arizona, and specifically addressed the banning of Chican@ Studies and its literature. Like the performance activism of Texas's *Libro Traficante* – that aimed to “smuggle” the criminalized Chican@ literature, or “wetbooks,” back into the state of Arizona via caravans that popularized the protest – the XPUB movement is a performative, satirical allegory against the criminalization of Chican@ Studies.

The XPUB is rooted at the intersection of my academic work and activism. A year after the destruction of the department, I won first prize for a book collection contest at UC Riverside, then later in the year was awarded first place in the 2013 National Book Collecting Award sponsored by the Antiquarian Book Society and the Library of Congress.<sup>296</sup> My collection of Chicano Movement books was titled “Chican@ Movement Banned Books” and featured several of the books on the banned list. UC Riverside Mexican & Xican@ Dance instructor John Avalos Rios and I brainstormed ideas for a book display at the Tomas Rivera Library and he came up with the idea of creating pop-up models. We started experimenting with paper engineering, making pop-up books, drafting a “manifesto,” and then began making pop-up books with our students. We

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<sup>296</sup> “UCR Graduate Student Wins National Book Collecting Competition.” *UCR Today*. August 23, 2013. <http://ucrtoday.ucr.edu/17196>.

wanted to disseminate the message that Arizona state officials had banned Chican@ books, but they would still “POP UP!”<sup>297</sup>

The presence of the Xican@ Pop-Up Book Movement at Raza Studies Now, NACCS, Association of Raza Educators and other conferences took the form of an installation of student work and one large book titled *500 Years of Chican@ History in Pop-Up* created by the *Chicano Secret Service* comedy group.<sup>298</sup> The XPUB Movement provided copies of its “manifesto” and curriculum packets featuring prompts and materials designed by Ron Espiritu, Johnavalos Rios, and myself. The XPUB manifesto’s centerfold opens into a “rising” pop-up UFW eagle, the paragraph below it explaining:

The Xican@ Pop-Up Book is an *allegory* about decolonization and against book burning. In the Middle Ages, groups who preserved ancestral knowledge in ancient books—like the Torah, the Koran and the Bible—were called “people of the book.” Xican@s too are people of the book, except that upon encounter, in the process of colonization, Europeans burned our books. Although most of our amoxtlis (ancient codices) were burned, ancestral knowledge survived and was passed down secretly in art and through oral tradition. Today our ancestral knowledge continues to “pop up” through Chican@ Studies, art and literature—even while groups attempt to burn or ban our books. To them we say, “*You can burn/ban our books, but they’ll still POP UP!*”

The XPUB movement started as protest art, and in less than a year was able to conjure

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<sup>297</sup> Elias Serna, interview by Cruz Medina, “Q&A with Reflections Contributor Elias Serna,” *Academia de Cruz Medina*, November 13, 2013.

<http://www.academiadecruz.com/2013/11/q-with-reflections-contributor-elias.html>.

<sup>298</sup> This oversized “book” was designed for a CSS performance at XITO Summer 2014 conference titled “The Marvelous Counter-Hegemonic Life of Baby Chuey,” alluding to Elizabeth “Betita” Martinez’ classic *500 Years of Chicano History in Pictures* (1991), a banned book in Arizona. See pop-up of Chicana walk-out participants article by Dolores Delgado Bernal by students of Dr. Miguel Chavez at University of Minnesota Saint Cloud (on XPUB Facebook page). <https://www.facebook.com/Xicanao-Pop-Up-Book-Movement-565796656834843/>

itself up as a pedagogical movement, replete with curriculum and an array of creative samples of student work. The diverse examples of curriculum built around the XPUB exhibit display the versatility of the concept as well as how the movement continues to unfold.

At California State University Dominguez Hills, I prepared an essay prompt for my Chican@ literature students in which they were asked to identify a scene from the (banned) novels *Bless Me Ultima* or *House on Mango Street* and to elaborate on a metaphor or allegory that stood out to them. They were to write three paragraphs: a long annotative introduction of the novel; a paragraph detailing the scene and interpreting the allegory; and reflections (using keywords) on the banning of the book in Arizona. At UC Riverside, Johnavalos executed innovative XPUB curriculum through dance, props, and performance. Students discussed the ban, constructed oversized pop-up books, and performed a dance choreography in front of various crowds and large student audiences to mass appeal. The dances were filmed and posted on social media. In the cold plains of Minnesota, Dr. Miguel Chavez had his Saint Cloud State University Chicano Studies students design pop-up books on *academic* articles, producing visually stimulating student interpretations of theoretical ideas and scholarly articles.

In 2014, Ron Espiritu, a Chican@/African American Studies teacher at Animo South LA (ASLA), invited Johnavalos and me to his school and together we brought the XPUB curriculum to more than 180 freshmen students. After reading about the Tucson Ethnic Studies struggle and movements in Texas and California, students then picked topics to create pop-up books. Topics ranged from the East LA Walkouts, the 1963

Birmingham Children's March, the 1963 March on Washington, labor leader Emma Tenayuca, colonial book burning, the Tucson struggle, and the Soldaderas of the Mexican Revolution. On our first visit we prepared a PowerPoint introduction, talked about allegory, and discussed how the current ban on Chican@ literature was a kind of allegory of colonial book burnings by the Spaniards of Aztec books/*amoxtlis*.<sup>299</sup> We explained that the XPUB was an allegory for social protest, raising one's voice, as well as the banned books "rising up." Johnavalos insisted that simplicity in pop-up book had the capacity to produce a strong feeling and open an individual's mind and transform their thinking.

Like Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's attention to presence culture, or the "production of presence," we see here moments when "form becomes energized" (Gumbrecht 59) through the paper technology of a politicized genre, suddenly repurposed, foregrounding a "materiality of communication," and aiming at an epiphany produced by the tension/oscillation between meaning effects and presence effects. The technology of the book repurposed! The technology of the pop-up book repurposed! Gumbrecht's three features of epiphany, describe this XPUB objective:

On the impression that the tension between presence and meaning, when it occurs, comes out of nothing; on the emergence of this tension as having a spatial articulation; on the possibility of describing its temporality as and "event."  
(111)

At Espiritu's class we also described—or conjured!—an audience that was "already there, waiting for them," giving the students the impression that their books would have

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<sup>299</sup> Baez, Fernando. *A Universal History of the Destruction of Books*. 2004. Medina, Cruz, Reclaiming Poch@ Pop

an instant audience at this opportune moment (*kairos*) and could possibly reach wide audiences beyond the classroom and the city. This was an opportunity to which they could assert a confidence, a knowing that we could get the message out and transform people's thinking. Students worked in pairs to complete the project and wrote an essay to document the history of their social movement topic and to connect it to the XPUB Movement. The projects were displayed to the school community and, like prophecy, became the subject of a segment on National Public Radio's syndicated program "Latino USA" broadcast to millions nationally.<sup>300</sup> The radio report concluded by highlighting student enthusiasm making pop-up books, associating this activity with positive results of Ethnic Studies, expressed in higher grades, college-going identities, civic engagement, and feelings of possibility for the future.

The XPUB teaches about decolonization through allegory and participates in decolonizing the classroom through the technologies of paper engineering and social media. Similar to the photographic postcards sold by Tiburcio Vasquez, or the fold out songbooks disseminated by Flores Magon and the PLM, the XPUB pop-up books disrupt technological culture broadly through a multimodal approach to literature, and call attention to the bodily rhetoric and presence effects of the tactile. Whereas many expect innovation and wonder to be in the domain of digital technology, social media, and communications devices, the XPUB evokes marvel through paper engineering, producing a spatial articulation of social justice (seemingly) "out of nothing." The allegory of

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<sup>300</sup> Hamilton, Valerie. *Latino USA* (National Public Radio), 89.3 FM, June 20, 2014. "Lack of Ethnic Studies in California Schools." <http://latinousa.org/2014/06/20/ethnic-studies-majority-latino-high-schools/>

“rising up” (social movements) and specifically of the return (“popping back up”) of Chican@ literature and Ethnic Studies with a creative force is a rhetorical vision that the XPUB seeks to make manifest. Like the confidence and determination of Salvadoran revolutionary poetry or Third World Liberation Front art movements, the XPUB movement re-interprets defeat, re-purposes technology, and re-imagines transformation inside the classroom as well as in the imagination of participants and mass audiences.

The XPUB movement was a part of the movement to not simply defend Ethnic Studies in Arizona, but, through its curriculum and presence effects, to spread it widely and nationally. It premeditates and participates in the kairotic national movement to establish an Ethnic Studies graduation requirement and develop Ethnic Studies programs in high schools.<sup>301</sup> Like Socrates’ description of the Seven Sages’ gift for concise words, the XPUB intends to combine quotes and scenes from Chican@ Literature along with paper engineering and social media in such a way that “twisted together, like a bowstring... a slight effort gives great force.”



Figure 13.1: Roger Alvarado, Third World Strike, San Francisco. Figure 13.2: “Past and Present Struggles for Ethnic Studies,” by Alicia Maria Siu, 2015.

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<sup>301</sup> See the very active Ethnic Studies Now group’s page, where statewide groups network and share resources. <http://www.ethnicstudiesnow.com>. Also see Ethnic Studies article and Ron Espiritu’s students’ pop-up work in *Educator Magazine*. Pp 46-51.



## Rhetorical Vision: Invoking Ethnic Studies

“Of course we’re equals” . . . (Yet I still held, although I would never voice it, the belief that I, being a university student a man of the sophisticated Western world, was superior to an Indian.)

“No, we are not equals. I am a hunter and a warrior, and you are a pimp.”

I could not believe that don Juan had actually said that. . . . He enunciated his words clearly. They poured out smoothly and deadly. He said that I was pimping for someone else. That I was not fighting my own battles but the battles of some unknown people. . . . And that his world of precise acts and feelings and decisions was infinitely more effective than the blundering idiocy I called “my life.”

—Carlos Castaneda, *Journey to Ixtlan* (1991, 81)

The Castaneda quote reminds me of the deep effects of Indigenous ceremony and identity (like the Tucson ceremonial runs I participated in) and that education is not a value-free, apolitical profession or project. The lives of our children and young people and their children and their children’s children (for seven generations) are affected by the work we do today. Castaneda’s quote reveals how academic work can continue to “colonize” people of color, especially if the academic work becomes “the battles of some unknown people.” In an era when a discourse of rigor, the “academic success” of children, and the common core are tropes to be followed as much as they are policy priorities, a renewed evaluation of the epistemic tenets of Chican@ Studies is timely. The responsibilities and purposes of Chican@ and Ethnic Studies (as *our* institutions) for this generation of young people is already at the center of debates on Ethnic Studies in high schools. Historian Rudy Acuña has in past writings insisted that Chican@ Studies is a public trust, a charge and responsibility that scholars, students, and community are

responsible for maintaining.<sup>302</sup> When asked, during his court battle with the University of California in the 90s, how students can build Chicano Studies, he responded that students, faculty, and community need to organize, draw a plan, and “fight like hell.” Nothing would come easy: it would require “fast and furious” activity, but organizers couldn’t expect instant success. “It takes a sustained campaign to reach planned objectives.” It will also take a rhetoric with objectives, one sustained by a radical Chican@ rhetorical tradition.

At the third *Raza Studies Now* in 2014, educator-activist Jose Lara announced that El Rancho Unified School District had just passed the first Ethnic Studies graduation requirement in the state, prompting the hiring of teachers, experts and the creation of classes. Lara and cohorts soon after organized *Ethnic Studies Now*, and in 2015, Ethnic Studies became a graduation requirement in LA schools after large rallies outside of the LA Unified School District. The organization *Ethnic Studies Now* persuasively argued that out of 152,507 students, only 691 take an Ethnic Studies class, in a district that is 75% Raza and 90% nonwhite. They used the widely published studies of the Tucson program which proved that Ethnic Studies classes raised grade point averages, attendance, school engagement, and promoted self-esteem, college-going identities, and civic/community responsibility.<sup>303</sup> The irrefutable logoi had wide effect. After LAUSD

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<sup>302</sup> Acuna, Rodolfo F.. “Chicano Studies: A Public Trust.” *Chicano Studies: Critical Connection Between Research and Community*. National Association for Chicano Studies, 1992.

<sup>303</sup> The Alejo Bill signed by Governor Brown in 2016, and the most recent California legislation, House Resolution No. 29, introduced by Assembly Member Weber April 4, 2017, also cite the findings of these studies.

and San Francisco USD created Ethnic Studies requirements, other large districts passed similar programs, putting a strong wind in the sails of the movement (Alvarez 2015).<sup>304</sup>

These victories set off exciting new organizing efforts and the creation of Ethnic Studies programs in high schools in Sacramento, Azusa, San Bernardino, Riverside, Santa Monica, El Monte, Napa Valley, Moorepark, San Diego, Long Beach, Ventura County, Santa Barbara, Compton, Coachella, Anaheim, Sacramento, Oakland, Union City, El Paso, San Antonio, Houston, Nevada, Chicago, and other large school districts. In 2016, California governor Brown signed the Alejo Bill, which began instituting Ethnic Studies instruction statewide.

A rhetorical awareness of the “opportune moment” will also guide those who meditate on the kairotic possibilities of 2019. Taking the historic 1969 conference that drew up *El Plan de Santa Barbara* as a marker, Chicano Studies will soon approach its fiftieth anniversary. Simultaneously, in 2019, Mexicans, Chican@s and Latinos throughout the hemisphere will be reflecting on their particular colonial past with the five-hundred-year quincentennial of the world-changing global encounter when the Spaniards entered and invaded the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan. As they did in 1992, Chican@ Studies scholars, students of color, indeed, a whole generation in the Western Hemisphere, will prepare for the historical reflection on this encounter and its consequences. By 2019 Chican@ Studies classes may be offered in school districts

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<sup>304</sup> This article recognizes Lara’s work, *Ethnic Studies Now* and recognizes the federal court decision on Arizona’s program as a partial victory, recognizing the probability that Arizona’s law was racially motivated. <http://neatoday.org/2015/07/27/how-one-educator-is-taking-ethnic-studies-mainstream/>

throughout the Southwest, claiming successes and achievements close to those the Tucson teachers boasted before the destruction of their program in 2012.

With participation of activist scholars, new epistemic tenets and rhetorical tropes continue emerging within this movement. Cati de los Rios has pointed out that Ethnic Studies programs must be localized; programs must interact and respond to the community the school serves.<sup>305</sup> When the curriculum is relevant to the students, the school will be a bridge to the community. Allyson Tintiango-Cubales has conceived of Ethnic Studies having an ARC:

The explicit intention to increase “Access” to a high-quality and “Relevant” education for students of color, and to bridge institutions of higher education with the “Communities” in which they are located.<sup>306</sup>

At its best, the collective dialectical activity of self-reflection in this movement has regenerated epistemic tenets while it emphasizes a critical and authentic listening to and hearing of participants, outsiders, the voices of students, and an acknowledgement that tension does not have to be necessarily understood strictly as conflict. Gatherings and conferences, like Raza Studies Now, People’s Education Movement, Association of Raza Educators, and XITO Institutes, are examples of Delgado Bernal’s invitation to harness “explicit use of group interaction to produce data and insights” (1998, 573). These gatherings have invigorated the discourse communities around Ethnic Studies, stimulating new possibilities for these disciplines through the *productive* tension of

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<sup>305</sup> *Raza Studies Now conference*, 2012. Santa Monica College.

<sup>306</sup> Lachica Buenavista, Tracy. “Introduction: The Making of a Movement: Ethnic Studies in a K-12 Context.” *White Washing American Education: The New Culture Wars in Ethnic Studies*. Ed. Denise Sandoval et. al. Pg. x. This text is an excellent collection of chapters on recent movements, programs and pedagogies centered on K-12 Ethnic Studies.

dialogue, one that unfolds constructively, that produces a harmony in a revolutionary unity that decolonizes, a harmony that listens, understands differences, creating a world where many worlds fit. While Chicana/o Studies at the high school level was soundly and egregiously wrecked in Arizona by politicians, the seeds of Raza Studies accomplishments were planted in California and other states, where Chican@ literature and the demand for K–12 Ethnic Studies “popped back up.” Like a Xican@ pop-up book, the movement continues to unfold, evolve, and inspire.

This dissertation’s objective has been to map a genealogy of a Chican@ rhetorical tradition with special attention to rhetoric’s interaction with race, space, history and technology. Finding a theoretical ground at the crossroads of rhetoric and Chican@ Studies I have constructed a rhetorical historiography of Chican@ struggles for self-determination which arrives at the epistemic accomplishments of and continued struggles around Chican@ and Ethnic Studies. In each of these historical moments Mexican and Chican@ rhetors worked rigorously and creatively re-purposed technologies in order to disseminate messages and organize Chican@ communities for unity and self-determination. While classical rhetoric saves a special place for invention as the initial faculty of rhetorical work, I find a unique connection between invention, repression and creativity in the work of Ethnic Studies scholar Dylan Rodriguez.

Within the discourse between the intensely racialized prison industrial complex and organizers of two recent prison hunger strikes, Rodriguez understands a deep rhetoric of prisoners and activists who strive for and articulate self-determination within a space of severe repression. Rodriguez invites readers to “inhabit the impasse,” the severely

precarious political position the prisoners and activists face in the act of standing down a genocidal juridical-academic apparatus and their poetics of racial-colonial genocide. His understanding of these “critical and radical creativities” influences and informs my understanding of how self-determination is expressed in moments of crisis and danger. The impasse Rodriguez writes about is a manifestation of Ruthie Gilmore’s spatial definition of racism as a “state-sanctioned and or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerabilities to premature death” (in distinct yet densely interconnected political geographies).<sup>307</sup> The impasse is a reminder of Vorris Nunley’s explanation that “African American ontology, rhetoric, and knowledge practices have always been and continue to be haunted by the terror of precariousness.”<sup>308</sup> Against a reductive interpretation or simplistic reading of the impasse reached during Georgia and Pelican Bay prisoner hunger strikes in 2010-2011, Rodriguez finds in the activists’ “nondemand” for freedom or prison abolition – within “this nowhere and no time to go” positionality of the prisoners – a “politics of possibility,” hinged on the “insurrectionist poetics” and “absolute creativity... with maneuvers towards total dis/reordering” (Rodriguez 33-35). In the struggle for Ethnic Studies, as in the Pelican Bay prisoners’ rhetoric, words do work, and as they prepare the ground for community struggles or radical ideas to take root, they participate in critical and creative rhetorical traditions with real stakes for peoples’ futures. Like the prisoners who inhabit the impasse, participating in the Black Radical tradition, Chican@ Studies activists also generate new concepts and

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<sup>307</sup> Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007. P. 28, 247. Also cited by Nunley, *Keepin it Hushed*. P. 19.

<sup>308</sup> Nunley, Vorris. *Keepin It Hushed*. P. 18.

invigorate old ones as they participate in and contribute to – knowingly or not – a Chicana@ rhetorical tradition.

As Sandra de la Loza pointed out earlier, the effects of rhetoric - “the impact of an act, a poem, a discourse...” - are also felt years or generations later... in spaces, ideas, and results. In the Chicana@ rhetorical tradition, as in these more recent struggles for self-determination and liberation, where rhetoric is the counterpart to self-determination, we find a liberation process that utilizes language, re-purposed and multimodal, with a historical self-consciousness, to its maximum collective effect. The struggle to defend Chicana@ Studies in Arizona and to spread Ethnic Studies broadly, has itself been a struggle to practice critical thinking through historical consciousness. In this way, the Chicana@ rhetorical tradition is an ancestral tradition of decolonization to be moved forward, to participate in, in which to be innovative, one that has much still to teach.

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