

EMBODIED STORYING, A METHODOLOGY FOR CHICAN@  
RHETORICS: (RE)MAKING STORIES, (UN)MAPPING THE LINES,  
AND RE-MEMBERING BODIES

A Dissertation

by

CASIE COLLETTE COBOS

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2012

Major Subject: English

Embodied Storying, A Methodology for Chican@ Rhetorics:  
(Re)making Stories, (Un)mapping the Lines, and Re-membering Bodies

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Chair of Committee,	Qwo-Li Driskill
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## ABSTRACT

Embodied Storying, A Methodology for Chican@ Rhetorics:  
(Re)making Stories, (Un)mapping the Lines, and Re-membering Bodies. (August 2012)

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This dissertation privileges Chican@ rhetorics in order to challenge a single History of Rhetoric, as well as to challenge Chican@s to formulate our rhetorical practices through our own epistemologies. Chapter One works in three ways: (1) it points to how a single History of Rhetoric is implemented, (2) it begins to answer Victor Villanueva's call to "Break precedent!" from a singly History, and (3) it lays groundwork for the three-prong heuristic of "embodied storying," which acts as a lens for Chican@ rhetorics.

Chapter Two uses embodied storying to look at how Chican@s are produced through History and how Chican@s produce histories. By analyzing how Spanish colonizers, contemporary scholars/publishers, and Chican@s often disembody indigenous codices, this chapter calls for rethinking how we practice codices. In order to do so, this chapter retells various stories about Malinche to show how Chican@s already privilege bodies in Chican@ stories in and beyond codices.

Chapter Three looks at cartographic practices in the construction, un-construction, and deconstruction of bodies, places, and spaces in the Americas. Because indigenous peoples practice mapping by privileging bodies who inhabit/practice spaces, this chapter shows how colonial maps rely on place-based conceptions of land in order to create imperial borders *and* rely on space-based conceptions in order to ignore and remove indigenous peoples from their lands.

Chapter Four looks at foodways as a practice of rhetoric, identity, community, and space. Using personal, familial, and community knowledge to discuss Mexican American food practices, this chapter argues that foodways are rhetorical in that they affect and are affected by Chican@ identities. In this way, food practices can challenge the conception of rhetoric as being solely attached to text and privilege the body.

Finally, Chapter Five looks at how Chican@ rhetorics and embodied storying can affect the field(s) of rhetoric and writing. I ask three specific questions: (1) How can we use embodied storying in histories of rhetoric? (2) How can we use embodied storying in Chican@ rhetorics? (3) How can we use embodied storying in our pedagogy?

For my abuela—my Lita—Azalea Villareal Martinez

For my mom, Judy Steadham Wallen

For my family and for my familia-from-scratch

For my love, Andrew James Cobos

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For years now, I have talked about my academic crushes—there are Walter Mignolo (the first I admitted aloud) and Michel de Certeau, Patricia Williams, Cherríe Moraga, and the newly found, Margaret Price. I have gushed about them in papers or in presentations, on Facebook and in random thoughts that jump out of my mouth. And so, being true to my academic-crush genre, my acknowledgements and thank-yous are to the people who have become academic crushes—though I seldom tell you so.

**Thank you to my committee...**

Thank you, Qwo-Li Driskill, my academic crush who first made me love rhetorical studies, who challenged me to think about indigeneity, and who taught me so many writers/theorists/scholars/activists I have grown to love. Thank you, Qwo-Li, for sharing your amazing brilliance that comes in both performance and everyday practice. Thank you, Qwo-Li, for loving like a Mama Bear. Gvgeyu.

Thank you, Shona Jackson, my academic crush to whom I once shouted “I like your pants” across the foyer. You know all the theories. Thank you for standing up in spaces that want to ignore certain bodies—and for challenging me to think harder, situate theories better, and write deeper. You have taught me more than you know.

Thank you, Juan Alonzo, my academic crush who brought the tape of “Gregorio Cortez” into your office and taught me to listen for/to the voices that are so often confined to paper. You asked me once what I thought you could do on my committee, and I answered that you could challenge me to think past my own biases—you did that and more.

Thank you, Jennifer Mercieca, my academic crush who first introduced me to Hayden White—who I didn't like at all but grew to love. Thank you, Jen, for challenging me to define rhetoric for myself, challenging me to think about the ways that the U.S. has already situated “classical rhetoric” (your book helped, too), and challenging me to think about how, in writing, I am practicing rhetoric. You have encouraged me more than you know.

**Thank you to my familia-from-scratch...**

Thank you, Valerie Balester, my academic crush who let me babble and babble, picked out what I said over and over, and helped me to realize what my dissertation was really about—seriously and sincerely, thank you.

Thank you, Angie Cruz, my academic crush who makes so many people fly higher than you will ever know. Your constant optimism reminds me to see the good in people, the good in life. Eres mi amiga para siempre.

Thank you, Angela Haas, my academic crush whose work has been invaluable to me. You made me feel like my work was important from the first time you heard me give a presentation.

Thank you, Gabi (Gabriela) Ríos, my academic crush who is my hermana-from-scratch. Thank you for teaching me the word epistemology—and all the hard work that came from learning that word/practice. Thank you for the fried-pickle-in-the-bottle memory—and for introducing yourself to Daniel Heath Justice when you already knew him.



Thank you, Aydé Enriquez-Loya, my academic crush who is my hermana-from-scratch. Thank you for challenging me to think more critically about the words on a page, to talk them out more thoroughly, to make something from reading closely. Thank you for teaching me that breakfast is paramount at conference hotels—even though I never get up early enough to eat them.

Thank you, Stephanie Wheeler, my academic crush who is my hermana-from-scratch. Thank you for challenging me to think about the kinds of bodies I am ignoring, for silently asking me to think about the words I use, for teaching me to pay attention to how my own body works. Thank you for putting up with Casie-is-exhausted giggles—and for writing me notes with song titles. BB BLTs and cookies forever!

Thank you, Marcos Del Hierro, my academic crush who is my hermano-from-scratch. Thank you for being my first Chican@-conscious friend way back at BU, for having challenging (or random) conversations about food (and music), for always telling all of us that we are brilliant (and believing it), and for continually saying “We have to write.” Thank you for being my driving partner, for sharing Willowbux with me, and for so many out-of-context one-liners I can’t remember them all.

Thank you, Victor Del Hierro, my academic crush who is my hermano-from-scratch. Thank you for coming late to the party—but for challenging us with all the theories you are learning so that we can make our work better.

Thank you, Garrett Nichols, Melissa Elston, Catalina Bartlett, Alma Villanueva, and Regina Ramos, for becoming part of my academic crushes and my familia-from-scratch.

Thank you to my academic crushes who may never know you are: Hero Bob 1 (Bob Darden), Hero Bob 2 (Robert Griffin), Vanita Reddy, Nandini Bhattacharya.

Thank you to Malea Powell and my classmates (among them, Madhu Naryan and Donnie Johnson) in her historiography class who challenged me in more ways than you will ever know.

Thank you to those in the Texas A&M University Department of English Graduate Office who helped me along the way: Sally Robinson, Mary Ann O'Farrell, Claudia Nelson, Britt Mize, and Paulette Leshner (who has been invaluable).

Thank you to my McNeese people who have helped make me who I am: Neil Connelly, Carol Wukovitz Palay, Michelle Reed, Jessica Pitchford, Shonell Bacon, Tabatha Hibbs, CD Mitchell, Jacob Blevins, Delma Porter, Corliss Badeaux.

**Thank you to my family...**

Thank you to my Lita, Azalea Villareal Martinez, who left us too early but who comes to visit often. Te quiero muchisimo. Soy tu doctora.

Thank you to my mom, Judy Steadham Wallen, who always stands next to me, even when we don't agree. You are the wind beneath my wings.

Thank you to my brother, Dustin Beasley, who makes me laugh and will always be cooler than I am. Thank you to my stepfather, Jerry Wallen, who has moved me across the country in style—semi-trucks. Thank you to my tías and tíos, cousins and more. You make me who I am.

Thank you to the rest of my family—the ones who are always part of me and those that will come.

Most of all, thank you to my sninky, Andrew James Cobos, who is my real life, everyday crush. You love me when I need it most, when I deserve it least—and all the times in between. You asked me how the dissertation was going when you knew your head could be bitten off, and you celebrated with me when it was finished. You do silly dances with me and talk in our cats' voices. You dream with me—and make me a dreamer. I love you.

“It’s like making familia from scratch, each time all over again . . .

with strangers, if I must, if I must.” –Cherríe Moraga

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CHAPTER I

VAMOS A HABLAR: MAKING INTRODUCTIONS,  
ANSWERING A CALL, AND MAKING METHODOLOGIES

“I am committed to histories of rhetoric that seek  
the silenced voices, the defeated remnants in  
the battles of language and power.”

James Berlin, “Octalogue I”

“Last but not least, my argument doesn’t claim  
originality (‘originality’ is one of the basic expectations of  
modern control of subjectivity) but aims to make a contribution to  
growing processes of decoloniality around the world.”

Walter D. Mignolo, “Epistemic Disobedience”

“Maybe this is the same refrain in all of my work:  
an insistence on a presence where the  
world perceives absence.”

Cherríe Moraga, *A Xicana Codex*

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This dissertation follows the style of *Modern Language Association (MLA)*.

*Two things happened the morning of the written portion of my preliminary exams in March of 2011. First, I walked out of my house, and both my azalea bushes and my roses were in full bloom. My abuela, Azalea Villareal Martinez, grew roses in the desert of her El Paso yard. She cared for them carefully, giving them room to grow, grooming them regularly, and watering them early in the morning and late in the night. So, when I walked out that morning to see my azaleas and roses in full bloom, I knew it was time to take my exams. I walked back inside, grabbed scissors, and clipped an orangey-pink bloom to take with me into the tiny room I would sit in for my exam.*

*The second thing that happened that morning was that my mom called as I was driving from Tomball to College Station. She called to tell me she had had a dream. It's not unusual for my family to dream; we dream things into existence often—pregnancies before pregnancy tests, illnesses before diagnoses, calmness before storms. My mom's dream in April 2010 was for me though; she said, "I dreamed about your lita this morning. It was so real. She was sitting on my bed. I could feel her. I woke up and saw her. She said 'mi doctora va estar bien.' 'Cual, mamá? Cual doctora?' Mi doctora, Casie. Va estar bien.' She wants you to know you're ready, mija."*

I open my dissertation with that story because it reminds me of where I come from—my knowledge processes, my body, and my story. I share it with you because while my dissertation is about Chican@ rhetorics and the heuristic of embodied storying, it is also about me, my family, my familia-from-scratch, and my community. It is also about weaving stories with theory even though stories and theory are already woven together. And it is about our making and practicing knowledge together.



This sounds like an appeal to emotion—I know. It sounds idealistic—I know. It sounds unscholarly—I know this, too.

It also sounds like community-building and a rhetorical challenge—I hope. And in this hope, I dream, like my abuela and mother dreamed me, that we will continue to challenge the confines of “the” rhetorical tradition. I am not the first to weave stories and research. There are Gloria Anzaldúa and Malea Powell, Patricia Williams and Qwo-Li Driskill. There are Kendall León and bell hooks, Jackie Jones Royster and Cherríe Moraga—and more beyond those. But in walking this path again, I hope that we, together, will reconsider what makes theory and knowledge, story and history, rhetoric and space.

Think for a minute about the works you go to for your own work, and I will tell you some of mine—*The House on Mango Street*, *Sapogonia*, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, *This Bridge Called My Back*, *Loving in the War Years*, *Alchemy of Race and Rights*. There are more—some of them *sound* more theoretical like Walter Mignolo and Michel de Certeau—but when I think about how I came to know who I was in the academy and outside of it, too, I think about these books, the books that remind me of the theories of the flesh. And from a theory of the flesh—the writers I’ve read, the family I have, the familia-from-scratch I’ve made—comes this dissertation.

In this dissertation, I bring Chican@ rhetorics to the forefront of the construction of rhetoric. I do so to challenge a single lineage history of rhetoric, to challenge the sometimes narrow definitions of rhetoric, to challenge the way rhetoric is made, and to challenge Chican@s (and our allies) to formulate our rhetorical practices through some

of our own epistemologies. Formulating Chican@ rhetorics in this way, then, means that we must recognize that there is not a single History of Rhetoric; there are instead histories of rhetorics. Chican@ rhetorics, then, like Plato's rhetoric and Sir Francis Bacon's rhetoric, become an other rhetoric. In *Local Histories/Global Designs*, Walter D. Mignolo formulates "an other" as a way to displace/de-center the "Western canon... as a starting point for the epistemology of the colonial difference" (313). This means there is not "another" dependent on one neutral original but instead all epistemologies are "an other." All rhetorics are an other.

Obviously, I cannot undo the History of Rhetoric in this dissertation. I can, however, offer ways to challenge current models by privileging Chican@ rhetorics based in our indigenous identities by relying on Chican@s and all our relations.<sup>1</sup> And importantly, I can offer "embodied storying" as a way for Chican@s to think through how we already contribute to the histories of rhetoric, how we already have our own, and how we can analyze our practices. Later in this chapter, I work through the specific parts—or what I call prongs—of embodied storying, and throughout my dissertation, I work through how this concept might work with rhetorics of a historical nature, of ritualistic traditions, and everyday practices. From Nahua codices to (re)formulations of Mexican-American popular stories and from cartography to cooking practices, embodied

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<sup>1</sup> "All our relations" comes from the title of Winona La Duke's book *All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life*—and was taken up by Malea Powell as the theme for the 2011 Conference on College Composition and Communication as way to challenge the field(s) of rhetoric and writing to think through the ways we close off our field to marginalized peoples. Furthermore, Qwo-Li Driskill helped me to understand that La Duke and Powell are drawing from the Lakota tradition of "Mitakuye Oyasin," which is used in prayers. I use this phrase here to mean that while I privilege Chican@s, I do not rely solely on them to work through my analyses.

storying can help us work through the Chican@ rhetorics we have been practicing throughout our lives.

## **Defining and Situating Rhetorics**

### *Master Narratives*

“Since the mid-seventies, the idea that knowledge is also colonized and, therefore, it needs to be de-colonized was expressed in several ways and in different disciplinary domains,” writes Walter D. Mignolo about the need to move away from assuming a singular neutral knowledge base (“Delinking” 450). And while Mignolo does not situate himself in the field(s) of rhetoric and writing, rhetoric’s deep commitment to a single lineage certainly assumes a commitment to colonized ideologies that situate themselves deep in a Euro-American understanding of who produces knowledge and how.

I am not the first to point to the way that the field of rhetoric<sup>2</sup> has come to rely on Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg’s edited collection *The Rhetorical Tradition* as a means to trace a clearly defined rhetorical history. In 1990, these two scholars released the first edition of this book, which described itself as “the first comprehensive anthology of primary texts covering the history of rhetoric” (1). The anthology became, as Bizzell describes it, a “cultural phenomenon” (109) and became such with a table of

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<sup>2</sup> Here and throughout my dissertation (unless otherwise expressed), I use rhetoric in a broad sense, encompassing but not exclusive to rhetoric, language, discourse, composition, and writing. I capitalize the term only when referring to the assumed single lineage or single understanding of rhetoric. Furthermore, Powell argues in “Listening to Ghosts” that one way to situate words like *rhetoric*, *theory*, and *history* in a way to privilege multiple knowledges is to “divest them of their initial capitals” (18).

contents that privileged a male lineage of rhetorical studies. By the time the second edition was published in 2001, this collection had become a mainstay in both undergraduate and graduate courses that span from the “classical times to the present” and used in various departments—including English, rhetoric, writing, communication, and philosophy departments—that often have differing emphases in the use, production, and analysis of rhetoric. Working as many anthologies do, this text assumes a central position of all-encompassing cannon from which other texts and practices can support, stem, and stray.

Neither am I the first to state that while this revised second edition attempts to throw a wider net to capture a larger sampling of rhetoricians and rhetorical texts, its inclusions and exclusions continue to foster the notion of a single, linear rhetorical tradition that field argues formally began in the “fifth century B.C.E.” (Bizzell and Herzberg 1). To be fair, the academy often demands anthologies as an easement for course materials—students can carry a single book, can be introduced to a multitude of authors, can find both introductory (secondary) and primary materials in one place, can often (not always) pay less for a single book, and importantly, at least in theory, can gain access to the most important materials of “the” field. Bizzell and Herzberg’s collection, then, provides an answer to this demand through the following definition and examples of types of texts the anthology offers:

Rhetoric has a number of overlapping meanings: the practice of oratory; the study of the strategies of effective oratory; the use of language, written or spoken, to inform or persuade; the study of the persuasive

effects of language; the study of the relation between language and knowledge; the classification and use of tropes and figures; and, of course, the use of empty promises and half-truths as a form of propaganda... It is less helpful to try to define it once and for all than to look at the many definitions it has accumulated over the years and to attempt to understand how each arose and how each still inhabits and shapes the field. (1)

However, by beginning this anthology with a quotation<sup>3</sup> that speaks to the universality of “the” rhetorical situation and ending it with an article<sup>4</sup> that traces a Greco-Roman-Euro-American male-dominated lineage of rhetoric, this book essentially lends to the belief that rhetoric can, in fact, be defined and traced as a universal phenomenon with a single universal understanding. The problem with this is that it makes invisible the reliance on certain privileged epistemologies that deny other epistemologies (and, therefore, peoples and bodies) a prominent place at the rhetorical table—or a place at the table at all.

Bizzell, herself, recognizes the difficulty in trying to create this kind of history and/or anthology in her article “Editing the Rhetorical Tradition,” which she uses to discuss her and Herzberg’s revisions in the second edition. Bizzell discusses the additions to this edition in two ways: the “traditional tradition” (111) and “new

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<sup>3</sup> From Kenneth Burke’s *A Rhetoric of Motives*: “In parturition begins the centrality of the nervous system. The different nervous systems, through language and the ways of production, erect various communities of interests and insights, social communities varying in nature and scope. And out of the division and the community arises the ‘universal’ rhetorical situation” (146).

<sup>4</sup> See Stanely Fish’s “Rhetoric.”

traditions” (112). No reviewer wanted less of the “traditional tradition”; in fact, more was requested—and, therefore, added (112). She then goes on to name Aristotle and Cicero as mainstays and introduces other figures—Longinus, Hume, Spencer—as of the same tradition and, so, added their works. Why we are to assume that these figures are traditional or mainstays does not come into discussion; however special attention is paid to prove why “new traditions” should be and are included.

These “new traditions” are split into two categories: “minor figures” (112), and the second “more radical category who are people of color and white women... figures... exploring what [she] calls ‘rhetorics of heterogeneity’” (113). The first group includes “texts and authors already known to traditional historians of rhetoric” who yet remain “risky figures” —Nietzsche, Bakhtin, Derrida, and Foucault (112). The second group, which includes Frederick Douglas, Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, Virginia Woolf, and Gloria Anzaldúa, are the more radical additions but justified as included because of what is viewed as their direct engagement with language, writing, and delivery.<sup>5</sup> While this group is lauded as introducing different cultural understandings of rhetoric from and by marginalized groups, previous understandings and definitions of rhetoric are imposed in order to identify which “new traditions” can and should be included.

### *Interventions in Master Narratives*

While my intent is not to blame Bizzell and Herzberg—especially since Bizzell has actively positioned herself as an ally to marginalized members in the fields of rhetoric and writing—this anthology acts as a microcosm of the intentional and

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<sup>5</sup> See Bizzell’s article for more information on the specific problems that arose in choosing these people.

unintentional denial of differing cultural and epistemological understandings of rhetoric. Recognizing the difficulties of creating and justifying such a history, Angela Haas takes a different approach to intervene on dominant discussions of rhetorical constructions and histories:

... another strand of inquiry is emerging in rhetoric studies that understands these "new rhetorics" as nothing new—as women and people of color have participated in public forums and theorized race, gender, and language for thousands of years—and thus seeks to study parallel traditions of communicative and inventive knowledge production just as rich and complex as Greek and Roman traditions. (“Rhetoric of Alliance” 6)

Situating “new traditions” as nothing new problematizes a linear time and geographic progression of rhetoric—even when recognizing multiple definitions—and allows for the realization of a wide array of rhetorics that peoples have been practicing simultaneously, side-by-side—both in conjunction with and in contradiction to—since and before the field-recognized formal introduction of rhetorical studies in Greece.

At the third and most recent Octalog,<sup>6</sup> “Octalog III: The Politics of Historiography in 2010,” at the 2010 Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), several panelists called for re-situating not only

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<sup>6</sup> The Octalogs are featured roundtable discussions that take place at the Conference on College Composition and Communication and “have provided a space for exploring varied notions concerning rhetoric’s role in serving a common good and assessing the contentious nature of that undertaking” (“Octalog III” 109). They are often used to discuss perceptions and shifts, as well as to call for changes, in the field(s) of rhetoric and writing.

understandings of rhetoric but also the productions of rhetoric. That is, we must not only interrogate the means by which we have come to understand rhetoric (the historiography) but we must also work to situate the way we understand rhetoric as we practice it (our methodologies) and the rhetorical practices we are analyzing. This Octalog works in conversation with—through affirmations, contradictions, and deviations—the two previous Octalogs at the CCCC, and through difficult discussions, these panels have brought challenges to the dominant understanding of the field that center able-bodied, male, and European histories.

For Malea Powell, de-centering the field(s) means recognizing that not everyone needs to “[connect] every rhetorical practice on the planet to Big Daddy A [Aristotle] and [that] the one true Greco-Roman way does not exactly build a sustainable platform for the continued vibrance of our disciplinary community” (“Octalog III” 121). Susan Jarratt, in the first Octalog, synthesized many of the panelists’ discussion by calling attention to the “stories that are guiding these things [these things being histories]” (brackets not mine, “Octalog I” 26, “Octalog III” 113).<sup>7</sup> Jay Dolmage, in working from a disability-centered approach to rhetoric, contends that “... we would do [rhetorical] history differently, not just in recognizing other bodies throughout our stories in new complexity and eminence but also because our histories might more closely represent our bodies themselves...” (“Octalog III” 114). James Berlin, who directly influences Dolmage’s conceptions of rhetoric, asked the audience of the first Octalog to recognize

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<sup>7</sup> While I agree with Jarratt’s discussion here, I do not agree with her move to make *everything* a text, which she discusses in “Octalog I.” Also, for more discussion on stories, histories, constructions, etc. see Powell, King, White, de Certeau.



that “All histories are partial accounts, are both biased and incomplete... we must then have *histories* of rhetoric, multiple versions of the past...” (emphasis mine, “Octalog 1” 12). And Linda Ferreira-Buckley stated in the second Octalog that she “[believes] in the possibility of writing accurate histories—histories in the plural, histories that are revised and updated through rhetorical negotiation and renegotiation” (“Octalog II” 26).

While not all of these scholars work from the same traditions, define rhetoric in the same way, or even privilege the same communities in their work, the overriding calls from the speakers at the Octalogs are for varied definitions, multiple histories, and diverse practices of rhetoric. Furthermore, these calls mean that not everyone will agree all the time and that some definitions, theories, and practices of rhetoric may look vastly different than others.

Not surprising, disagreements about definitions of rhetoric abound in the History of Rhetoric, even if we only take a few examples from the “classical era.” Some of Socrates’, Plato’s, and Aristotle’s teachings on rhetoric come from their disagreement both with each other and with the Sophists, and before these critiques, the Sophists were already calling for culturally situating arguments that paid attention to speaker and audience bases and thus shifted understandings of how to use different rhetorical strategies. Aspasia’s erasure happened alongside Aristotle’s categorization of which bodies were worthy to participate in society and in rhetoric,<sup>8</sup> which, Jay Dolmage argues, already obscures the way that contemporary scholars define rhetoric (“Metis”).

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<sup>8</sup> See Aristotle’s *Generation of Animals*. Furthermore, in “Metis, Mêtis, Mestiza, Medusa: Rhetorical Bodies Across Rhetorical Traditions,” Dolmage shows how with the erasure of women from rhetorical histories came the privileging of the mind and the

Discussions, like those in the Octalogs then, are not uncommon; however, actual acceptance and widespread practice of expanding rhetorical traditions and histories are much less common. This is not to say that it does not happen—but discussing women’s practices and traditions of people of color as radical and unstable sets up a false paradigm of those pieces which should be required readings in the field and those which are auxiliary. Like Francis Bacon, some scholars see rhetoric as split from the epistemic, which allows for a singular understanding divorced from cultural situation. Therefore, instead of seeing non-western traditions as contributing to discussions of what rhetoric is, how it has been formed, and how it can shift discussions, those termed “radical” are often seen as threatening the dominant field and/or challenged as inauthentic.

*A Working Definition of Rhetoric*

For purposes of this dissertation, the larger definition of rhetoric from which I work follows: rhetoric is meaning-making, largely inclusive of language, practices, and productions that are epistemologically situated. Rather than assuming rhetoric equals persuasion equals argument, I see meaning-making as a more nuanced understanding of rhetoric that includes material productions, embodied practices, and identity formations, often through the handing down of knowledge or the contestation of power through communication.<sup>9</sup> Finally, the practicing of this definition attempts to bring into conversation Mignolo’s de-linking process so that all rhetorics work along side each other and Malea Powell’s call to remember the bodies literally erased and crushed in the

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erasure of the body as necessary participant in productions and discussions of rhetoric.

<sup>9</sup> See James Berlin in “Octalog I,” also Jay Dolmage and Malea Powell in “Octalog III.” See also “Rhetoric” by Angela Haas, et al.

building of the field(s) of rhetoric and writing—and academia at large (“Blood and Scholarship”).<sup>10</sup>

*Using Cultural Rhetoric Methodologies*

Admitting that a myriad of rhetorical traditions exists opens doors for a larger community of rhetorical scholars and practitioners; however, following in footsteps of recent scholarship to situate differing rhetorics—the theories, analyses, and actual practices—in the context(s) of their epistemologies takes a concerted effort and a willingness to messy the History of Rhetoric. In 1999, Victor Villanueva made a call to “Break precedent!”—to look to the Americas for ways to understand “our own people of color” rather than to continue in a “colonial mindset” that looks to Europe—and its claiming of Greece and Rome—to explain all experiences (“On the Rhetoric” 658-659).

The earlier quotation by Haas follows in Villanueva’s lineage in that she points to the complex ways that various peoples offer their own relationships with rhetorical systems through cultural rhetorics. Cultural rhetorics are methodological approaches that offer more than a rhetorical analyses that use a “cultural artifact.” Furthermore, cultural rhetorics, being situated in the field of rhetoric (largely and loosely defined), may also act differently than cultural studies—although they definitely interact. While cultural rhetorics allows for differing understandings of its practices, using a cultural rhetorics approach asks for the awareness and purposeful situating of

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<sup>10</sup> While I give a specific definition of rhetoric above, I do so with the expectation that it can be taken up different ways, by different peoples—and more importantly, with the understanding that different scholars and peoples will situate their own work culturally. My use of this definition presupposes the fact that not everyone will agree with this definition or its practices.

- our orientation(s) to the field
- our methodological approaches
- our methods, and
- the epistemologies and subjecthood of the practices in our analyses.

While this list is not anywhere near exhaustive,<sup>11</sup> it allows for an entrance into understanding why forcing all understandings of rhetoric into the canonical history not only eliminates certain practices as rhetorical but also silences those who would offer different views in our fields.

For instance, tracing American Indian rhetorical practices through the dominant history of rhetoric may neglect the emphasis of performance that slowly erases itself as connected to body and land. Instead of tracing Cherokee rhetorics through an Aristotelean approach, Qwo-Li Driskill takes a cultural rhetorics approach that privileges the performance of Cherokee, two-spirit bodies as necessary factor in thinking about Cherokee rhetorics.

Kendall's León's dissertation, "Building a Chicana Rhetoric for Rhetoric and Composition: Methodology, Practice, and Performance," traces a Chicana approach to rhetoric that works beyond Latin@ language discourse models or second-language composition studies. She uses archival research from the records of the *Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional (CFMN)* as a means to show the various productions of

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<sup>11</sup> My understandings of cultural rhetorics comes from readings by, presentations by, and conversations with Qwo-Li Driskill, Angela Haas, Malea Powell, Victor Villanueva, Stacey Pigg, Kendall León, Gabriela Ríos, Jay Dolmage, Jackie Jones Royster, Donnie Johnson Sackey, Madhu Naryan, Aydé Enriquez-Loya, Stephanie Wheeler, and Marcos del Hierro.

Chicana identity as always rhetorical. From looking at how documents are paper-clipped together to examining organizational decisions, León makes an argument that Chicana rhetorics comes from experiential knowledge bases that some people might take for granted.

### **Call for Chican@ Interventions**

In this dissertation, I want to follow in León's steps toward using the experiential to approach Chican@ rhetorics, and, importantly, I want to provide one possible option in answering Villanueva's call to situate rhetorics of the Americas *in* the Americas. In order to intervene on rhetorical histories, theories, and methodologies, I want to center Chican@ experiences through rhetorics of alliance<sup>12</sup> and decolonial methodologies. Therefore, while I want to show the alliances that exist in mainstream rhetorical traditions, I also want to situate Chican@ rhetorics in the experiences of lives, histories and theories created and privileged by Chican@s.

### *A Note on Identity Practices*

As Kendall León explains,

“Chicana” is a rhetorical and intentional term. Chicano/a people created “Chicano” identity to speak to the experiences of living in the United States, with a connection to a Latino/a background, and for most, recognizing an indigenous connection as well (which terms like Hispanic and Latin American erase). Chicano/a then acknowledges a mixed blood

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<sup>12</sup> See Angela Haas' “A Rhetoric of Alliance.”

and cultural background, a reclamation in the face of a society that privileges mythic “purity.” (12)

León’s loose definition comes from complex and shifting understandings of what being Chicana@ means—or how Chicana@s practice individual and communal identification in a multitude of ways. Uses of the term Chicano, Chicana, Chicana@—as well as their “X” counterparts<sup>13</sup>—are also heavily tied to the Chicana@ Movements of the 1960s.<sup>14</sup>

Important to León’s definition is the emphasis of “Chicana” being an “intentional term.” While many conflate Chicana@s with being Mexican American—or Mexicans who live in or migrate to the United States—many Chicana@s see this term as part of a means to self-identify in a politicized manner that while having roots in Mexico<sup>15</sup> allows for a U.S.-affected cultural experience. Ana Castillo, for one, uses Chicano/a when implementing activism but privileges her Chicanaidad as specifically tied to her mestiza@ heritage. For Gloria Anzaldúa, coming to healing terms with her community and

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<sup>13</sup> Xicana, Xicano, Xicana@

<sup>14</sup> The Chicana@ Movement(s) was/were a part/parts of the Mexican American movements in the 1960s Civil Rights era. Another was the Farmworkers Union. I use the non-specific gender “@” and the plural of movement as a way to honor the complicated work done by various scholar and activists (including Emma Pérez and Maylei Blackwell) to messy the singular history of the Chicano Movement that tends to privilege the straight male participants often glorified and privileged in these movements.

<sup>15</sup> Mexico, here, is complicated in that it refers to Mexico both pre-Mexican-American War era and post-Mexican-American War. Furthermore, many people understand Mexico as working beyond the colonial nation-state in that it crosses boundaries into nation-states below and above Mexico because of indigenous communities that do not stop at man-made borders. Indigenous peoples of Mexico may also those who were colonized through the Spanish language, and therefore, have similarities in mixed-blood cultural practices as peoples in the Southwest U.S. who identify as Mexican, Mexican American, etc.

Chican@ identity meant specifically recognizing her Chicanidad as a specifically mestiza world view—one in which the indigenous is privileged, even while not denying other parts of herself. Castillo's and Anzaldúa's identifications with their mestiz@ heritage point to a key reason that many Mexican Americans self-identify as Chican@—the recognition and privileging of our indigenous heritages and cultural infiltrations in Mexico (and the U.S. Southwest). For political, social, and historical reasons, Chican@s identify heavily with their indigenous ties to the Americas.

Importantly, not all Mexican Americans or Mexicans in the U.S. choose to identify as Chican@s. For instance my abuela only ever identified herself as Mexican—even after living on the U.S. side of the border for almost forty years. And while many Chican@s celebrate César Chavez as part of our Chican@ heritage, he chose not to identify as Chicano because he wanted to privilege his commitment to the Farmworkers Union—a social justice movement happening alongside the Chicano(/a) Movement(s) in the 1960s.<sup>16</sup> And Sandra Cisneros privileges her Mexicanidad but uses the term Chicana situationally: “I usually say Latina, Mexican-American or American Mexican, and in certain contexts, Chicana, depending on whether my audience understands the term or not” (Oliver-Rotger).

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<sup>16</sup> My comments here do not work to distance him from our Chican@ histories—only to point to various reasons why people may or may not identify as Chican@. The Farmworkers Union movement is still alive today and continues to work for farmworker rights and working conditions.

For purposes of this dissertation, I use Chican@<sup>17</sup> to refer to the politicized, self-identification of Mexican Americans. Furthermore, I use it to privilege indigenous consciousness. While I sometimes say indigenous-centered Chican@, this does not mean that when I do not specify indigenous-centered I am leaving that conversation out. When I use Mexican, I am referring to people who identify as citizens of the nation-state Mexico or those who still identify as such, even if they live in or hold citizenship in other parts of the world (including the U.S.). This allows for their personal identification practices to be privileged. When I use Mexican American (or the adjectival form, Mexican-American), I am most likely referring to people on the U.S. side of the border construction who either do not identify as Chican@ or do not make their identity known—this works to move me away from making political assumptions on their part. Because of room in this dissertation, I use the term Chican@ generously and, unless absolutely necessary, do not differentiate between Chican@s in various parts of the U.S. (e.g. California Chican@s and Texas Chican@s). Finally, it is important to realize that many people see Chican@ or Chicanidad as a frame of mind or an activist consciousness—specifically when using the feminine Chicana. Again, I do not designate anyone as having a Chican@ consciousness unless she/he does so first.

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<sup>17</sup> While the use of the “@” to replace the more gendered use of Chicano, Chicana, and Chicana/o has been in place for several years, the use is still somewhat contested for several reasons, including it not being familiar to many people, it not following Spanish-language rules, it’s inability to have a single pronunciation, etc. I use the term specifically because of its non-specific gender, and when I use it aloud, I often use the feminine Chicana—or switch between the -o and -a pronounciation. However, if I use the gendered versions, it is purposeful. This discussion also holds true for Latin@.



Besides *Chican@*, I also use the identity marker *Latin@*. While this term is used differently throughout the United States,<sup>18</sup> generally, it is used to designate people with ties to both a “Latin American country” (including areas in the Caribbean) *and* the U.S. If I am speaking of groups that include but are not limited to *Chican@s*, I use *Latin@*.<sup>19</sup> I specifically use this term in place of Hispanic, a limited term chosen by the U.S. government in the 1970s to designate people with a historical relationship to the Iberian Peninsula. It privileges colonial Spain in the Americas, and, therefore, has led to statements like the one Sandra Cisneros’ character makes in “Little Miracles, Kept Promises”: “I would appreciate it very much if you sent me a man who speaks Spanish, who at least can pronounce his name the way it’s supposed to be pronounced. Someone please who never calls himself ‘Hispanic’ unless he’s applying for a grant from Washington, D.C.” (*Woman Hollering Creek* 117).

Finally, I use the identification terms indigenous and American Indian (also, Native American).<sup>20</sup> While all three overlap, I use indigenous to speak to peoples native to their own lands (whether in the U.S., Ireland, or South Africa). I tend to use indigenous when speaking about indigenous peoples of the Americas, New Zealand and Australia because of the theorists, scholars, and activists I am privileging. When I use

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<sup>18</sup> For instances, some areas leave Mexican Americans and *Chican@s* out when using this term. On the eastern coast of the U.S., certain Caribbean groups are emphasized when using *Latin@*.

<sup>19</sup> Latin American, on the other hand, most often refers to people who identify as still being part of “Latin America,” or not in direct identification with the U.S. However, not all land bases (whether in the Caribbean or on the larger continent) in “Latin America” identify in this way. See Mignolo’s *The Idea of Latin America* for a complication of these terms.

<sup>20</sup> I use American Indian and Native American because of their political capital in the U.S.

American Indian, I am referring to tribes and peoples most often associated with indigenous groups in the U.S. Both indigenous and American Indian may often include Chican@s, Mexican Americans, and Mexicans. This often depends on tribal lands, colonization patterns, self-identification, and language.

All of the above identity monikers and descriptions should be understood as unstable, constantly shifting in both time and space, and varied among various groups of peoples using these identity markers.

*Calling for and Building Chican@ Rhetorics*

As noted above, Kendall León makes an important move by situating aspects of Chicana rhetorics in the experiential instead of the “traditional tradition.” This is not to say that there are not crossovers, discussions, and alliances with the “traditional tradition,” but using the experiential means recognizing that Chican@s and Chican@ scholars do not have to find a direct rhetorical ancestral relationship to Aristotle in order to be able to talk about a Chican@ practices as rhetoric.

Perhaps in order to legitimize our work and practices, many of us are still trying to trace a Greco-Roman lineage. From Spanish-accent pronunciations of *Plato* to elaborate diagrams that prove rhetorical relationships between Chican@ narratives, Aristotle, “the Rhetorical Tradition,” many presentations on Latin@ rhetoric, composition, and technical writing feel the need to prove why we and our practices belong in the field—while those who already feel as though they and their work are connected to the “traditional tradition” seldom present or write with the intent to convince anyone they belong in these spaces. This is not meant as a critique of Latin@

scholars; instead, I want to challenge others of us to follow in Villanueva's and León's footsteps and do the hard labor of opening methodological approaches that privilege our epistemologies.

I do not use the word *labor* lightly; I understand that many members of our Latin@ communities labor in fields, in houses, on lawns. I use it specifically to invoke the necessary practices of the body in order to open up spaces for our bodies to be visible. I use it because we disappear our embodied experiences in order to make a space for us in our fields. I use it to invoke the pain that our bodies will experience when we “put our asses to the chair” for long hours in order to write out these presentations and chapters. I use it to remind us that the tears that we cry are real when our departments and colleagues make us feel que somos locas. I use it to remind us that we do this late into the night because we have children who need our attention in the day, mothers who we take care of from brain tumors, amig@s who need to be encouraged. I use it to remind us that we have to tell the stories of our abuelas being made to walk through the back door because of the language they talk or the skin they wear. I use it to remind us that we use our bodies to remind everyone else—including ourselves—that we have bodies, and our brains and minds are connected to them.

Finally, I am not arguing that there are not Chican@s and Latin@s in the fields of rhetoric, writing, composition, and linguistics. Indeed, much work is done in linguistics on language practices and patterns, composition, and pedagogy. And important collections about discourse in the classroom, including Villanueva, Michelle Hall Kells, and Valerie Balester's *Latino/a Discourses*, exist. However, how can we

continue to construct an understanding of rhetoric specific to Chican@ peoples culturally situated in the Americas that works beyond these areas in order to make visible our places in the histories of rhetoric?

### **Embodied Storying**

Part of the labor of opening spaces of culturally situated Chican@ rhetorics is thinking through approaches and methodologies that we can offer to our communities that help us inform each other's work. In the end of the play *Giving Up the Ghost* Cherríe Moraga's character Marissa, says, "It's like making familia from scratch, each time all over again . . . with strangers, if I must, if I must" (63). Marissa recognizes the ways in which her life depends on the continual re-creation of webs of relationships and stories necessary to understand her identity formations. This recognition is both hesitant—"If I must, If I must"—and hopeful—there is, after all, familia-making. Much of Moraga's work pieces together and/or works through her understandings of race, culture, gender, sexuality, indigeneity, and colonialism. Making familia from scratch, then, allows for the contradictory components and understandings of Chicana identity—and this making acts as embodied storying.

Placing Moraga's familia-making in conversation with Chela Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed* shows a similar argument of how Chicanas have learned to maneuver among practices that will decolonize power relations that consistently leave out women of color. Moraga's and Sandoval's works allow a methodological (re)thinking of relying on a historically accepted Greco-Roman-Euro-American understanding of a Chican@ rhetoric in that Chican@ rhetorics may intervene on

various fronts at various times while still enacting some similar tactics within rhetoric. In doing so, Chican@ peoples continue to combat colonialist efforts to erase, deny, and/or subjugate epistemological practices that affect how Chican@s can study their own rhetorical practices.

The approach-from scratch I work through, then, in this dissertation is “embodied storying.” I theorize embodied storying as a three-pronged heuristic that epistemologically situates Chican@ rhetoric, centers physical bodies as always present and necessary in the practices of rhetoric, and emphasizes narrative-making as central to influencing Chican@ rhetorical practices. Embodied storying, then, is the *active* and *continual*, flesh-and-bone *practicing* of stories—as both tellings and theorizing—that shows the production of cultures, identities, histories, and rhetorics.

*Embodied Storying Prong One: Situating Chican@ Epistemologies*

### **Chican@ Epistemologies as Indigenous**

While embodied storying already builds from a cultural rhetorics approach to rhetorical studies, embodied storying further calls for epistemologically situating the rhetorical practices being used, analyzed, built, produced, and/or practiced. Important to this methodology as a way to discuss Chican@ rhetorics is the recognition of our indigeneity and the ways that our epistemologies are often grounded in the Americas.

In reaction to Arizona’s overturning of Mexican-American studies programs in their high schools in 2012, Sherman Alexie said, “Let’s get one thing out of the way: Mexican immigration is an oxymoron. Mexicans are indigenous” (Alexie). Privileging an indigenous approach can be both oversimplified (e.g. the assumption that all

indigenous peoples in the Americas—or across the planet—have the same cosmologies) and extremely daunting (e.g. the possibilities for individual community knowledge bases and practices across the Americas alone can be insurmountable). Privileging indigenous alliances, however, can work to create indigenous methodologies that can inform each other without requiring a single outcome. Like Angela Haas’ work in American Indian rhetorics,<sup>21</sup> Chican@ rhetorics can “forg[e] intellectual trade routes and alliances” (“A Rhetoric of Alliance” 43) with various groups while still privileging their own experiential knowledges and practices. Therefore, while Chican@s often identify as mixed-blood indigenous peoples,<sup>22</sup> our theoretical and methodological approaches are greatly influenced by indigenous peoples outside of what is now Mexico and the U.S. Southwest.<sup>23</sup> An indigenous-centered Chican@ approach to embodied storytelling, then, means understanding that Chican@s are connected to a much larger world view than an a-historical and static “Mexican-American” identity.

Furthermore in privileging Chican@ knowledge bases, we must recognize that, as Chican@s, we often identify with various indigenous groups depending on spatial identity practices, knowledge of ancestral lineage, continued mixing among Native groups, and an ever-shifting identity politic. However, communities have recently made calls for indigenous peoples in the Americas to build hemispheric alliances, and recent

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<sup>21</sup> Haas discussions work with and through conversations among indigenous studies, rhetoric and writing studies, and technology theories.

<sup>22</sup> I use mixed-blood here as a term of reclamation, as Malea Powell does in “Blood and Scholarship: One Mixed-Blood’s Story” (12).

<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, Chican@ understandings of ourselves have also been greatly influenced by many marginalized communities—some that are already part of our Chican@ communities and some that do not identify as Chican@, Mexican, or Mexican American at all.

publications and groups have allowed for indigenous peoples across lands and oceans to form—also re-form/reform—alliances concerning various issues from land rights to language acquisition. Because of these alliances, groups that identify as indigenous both within and outside of the academy have begun to practice indigenous theories and methodologies, as well as inform each other’s scholarship and activism.

### **Chican@ Epistemologies as Needing to Decolonize**

One of the most significant moves to come from indigenous communities across the globe is the practice of decolonial methodologies. While I hesitate to argue that a Chican@ epistemology is by definition decolonial, a move to decolonize has been asserted through many Chican@ activists, artists, and scholars.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, making transparent the multiplicities of colonialism across the globe also necessitates the multiple routes of decolonization for various peoples, places, practices, and knowledges. But for Walter D. Mignolo these ideas join together for decolonial methodology precisely because “The decolonial paths have one thing in common: the colonial wound, the fact that regions and people around the world have been classified as underdeveloped economically and mentally” (“Epistemic Disobedience” 161).

Linda Tuhawai Smith and Shawn Wilson specifically call for practicing indigenous decolonial methodologies and methods in their books, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* and *Research Is Ceremony* (respectively). Both call for indigenous scholars to be aware of the methodologies and

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<sup>24</sup> Including but not exclusive to Gloria Anzaldúa, Cherríe Moraga, Chela Sandoval, Norma Alarcon, Paula Moya, Ana Castillo, Norma Cantú, AnaLouise Keating.

methods they are using to “study” and discuss their own and other peoples. These practices should be done with relationship at its center, rather than what Smith refers to as the western academy’s tendency toward “regimes of truth,” which often fail to recognize its own “language games” system (Lyotard). Rather than pretending to have an a priori world-wide knowledge base, Smith and Wilson ask that scholars remember that all peoples are connected and that indigenous communities rely on complex relationships of land, practice, and peoples to practice. Relationship includes being conscious of who gets privileged and who is the end-state audience of your work. If both academia at large and indigenous scholars specifically, fail to situate their own community’s practices in relationship to the community’s epistemologies, then colonial erasures continue.

As briefly stated above, Mignolo asks for a delinking process—a process that involves not only changing the content but also changing the context. In Mignolo’s theories of decolonial moves then, changing the context means moving away from ego-politics, that is the self as individual and toward community mentalities based on geo-politics. That is, Mignolo theorizes decolonization as a move away from the colonial religious (theo-) and individualized (ego-) politic and toward land-based (geo-), embodied practices:

Epistemic geo-politics implies a de-colonial shift and acquires its meaning, here, not in relation to an object (the earth), but in the frame of epistemic embodiments (geo-historical and body-graphical) in the spatial organization of the modern/colonial world: the geo-politics of knowledge



names the historical location (space and time, the historical marks and configuration of a space and a place, etc.) and authority of loci of enunciations that had been negated by the dominance and hegemony of both the theo-logical and ego-logical politics of knowledge and understanding. (460)

The body's relationship to its community members and their space (time, place, and practices) form the bases to a theory similar to what Emma Pérez calls the decolonial imaginary. The decolonial imaginary uses "third space feminism" to "locate" Mexican women's voices that are typically ignored and thus allow for patriarchal histories to stand at the front of Mexican American histories (32-33). "Through the decolonial imaginary, the silent gain their agency" (33), thus the decolonial imaginary is a "tool" and a space that challenges colonial constructions of the colonized. It is a decolonizing methodology that makes visible the marginalized.

### **Chican@ Epistemologies as Communal**

We can approach an understanding of Chican@ rhetorics from an epistemology situated within Mexican American communities but influenced by mixed-blood community, scholarly, and activist genealogies. For instance, citing a theory of the flesh as coming from a Chicana's<sup>25</sup> theorization is important; however, understanding that this theory and way of thinking came together because of a communal effort of women of color who understood the materiality of their lives as directly influencing their writing (and vice versa) recognizes the varied lineage of Chican@ scholarship. To assume, then,

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<sup>25</sup> Cherríe Moraga. This theory is discussed at further length in the next section, "Centering the Body."

that this theory comes only from a Chican@ knowledge base neglects the many other women who informed the theory Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa put forth—and furthermore, this assumption actually undoes this theory because it undoes the community built through pieces. It ignores the invited calls in its very pages—ignores Audre Lorde’s call to make community past the academy in order to make possible the “dismantl[ing of] the master’s house” (99);<sup>26</sup> ignores Genny Lim’s question, “Why must woman stand divided?” (26); ignores Anita Valerio’s vivid dreams that tell her eventually, she will return to community practices, “to the Indian way” (45).

Finally, recognizing the convergence of these thoughts in Chican@ scholarly and activist genealogies may begin to not only “change the content of the conversation” but also “change the *terms* of the conversation” (“Epistemic Disobedience” 162). Instead of using an individual-based knowledge—whether as a person or community—it recognizes a web of interrelated relationships that help form our practices and theories.

*Embodied Storying Prong Two: Centering Bodies*

With the Cartesian split serving as a prominent construction of modern<sup>27</sup> philosophy and many postmodernists working from this understanding of modernity, the fight between which to privilege—the body or the mind—continues to influence western understandings of rhetorical philosophies and practices. René Descartes’ first meditation of how he exists culminated with the following:

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<sup>26</sup> From “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House”—first presented at the Second Sex Conference in 1979 and later again published in *Sister Outsider*.

<sup>27</sup> Here, I mean to use modern in its theoretical/academic terminology—and not modern as in description of the contemporary time period.

And there are so many other things in the mind itself which may contribute to the elucidation of its nature, that those which depend on body such as these just mentioned,<sup>[28]</sup> hardly merit being taken into account. But finally here I am, having insensibly reverted to the point I desired, for, since it is now evident to me that even bodies are not properly speaking known by the senses or by the faculty of imagination, but by the understanding only, and since they are not known from the fact that they are seen or touched, but only because they are understood, I see clearly that there is nothing which is easier for me to know than my mind.

(Descartes 26)

The ramifications of how rhetoric would be constructed to unsee, unfeel, unhear, untaste, and unsmell the senses—in essence, the body as a whole—were numerous. While some argue that Descartes’ meditations on knowledge—and by extension, knowledge bases—shift “subjectivity to the center of philosophy” (19), this split actually rejects subjectivity if it works to explain a single experience for all humanity, much less all rhetorical practices; for the only subjectivity that gets privileged is the subjectivity that is privileged through this practice. This split—the mind as immaterial and the body as unreliable—as a way to construct a single epistemology on all cultures enacts an epistemic violence on *both* the body and the mind in communities and cultures that have always already practiced a recognition of the body as conduit and necessary part of the

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<sup>28</sup> This refers to the descriptions of working through whether wax existed because his body was touching it and relaying it to the mind or wax did not exist because his mind was already inventing it.

mind. Furthermore, the body works *with* the mind—separating the two creates an unnecessary binary in many indigenous epistemologies—as a very real part of the interaction of material, mind, body, and spiritual modalities.

Instead, the various practices and productions of rhetoric for and by indigenous peoples throughout the Americas are intimately intertwined with the enactment of their bodies as part of their knowledge-making—as part of their mind’s knowing. Therefore, storying as narratives divorced from the body who produces them and the bodies who listen/read them—whether oral, written, visual—does not constitute a responsible understanding of the production and discussion of an indigenous-centered understanding of Chican@ rhetorics. The interaction of the material world with the epistemic and spiritual is vital to understanding the ways that stories and bodies are dependent upon each other. Bodies work to produce stories, and stories help produce embodied practices.

In *This Bridge Called My Back*, Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga edit a collection of writings by women of color who seek to tell their ignored and othered stories. The book’s pieces are part of, are in reaction to, and produced by women’s bodies, without which, these pieces would not exist. Moraga makes this connection between the bodies who contributed to the book and the actual pieces they produced:

The materialism in this book lives in the flesh of these women’s lives: the exhaustion we feel in our bones at the end of the day, the fire we feel in our hearts when we are insulted, the knife we feel in our backs when we are betrayed, the nausea we feel in our bellies when we are afraid, even the hunger we feel between our hips when we long to be touched. (xiii)

In this quotation, Moraga refers specifically to the physical and material circumstances that brought about the various essays, letters, and poems.

Out of the understanding that the “physical realities” directly contribute to how women of color tell their stories came what Moraga coined a “theory of the flesh”:

A theory in the flesh means one where the physical realities of our lives—our skin color, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings—all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity. Here [in this book], we attempt to bridge the contradictions in our experience:

We are the colored in a white feminist movement.

We are the feminists among the people of our culture.

We are often the lesbians among the straight.

We do this bridging by naming ourselves and telling our stories in our own words...

This is how our theory develops. We are interested in pursuing a society that uses flesh and blood experiences to concretize a vision that can begin to heal our ‘wounded knee’ (Chrystos). (Moraga 23)

The stories—in their various forms: fiction, poetry, personal essays, hybrid forms—are meant to have life because they are produced by through lived processes, and they are meant to give life because they are produced to become part of someone else’s life. And their life continues when someone reads them and produces their own stories through them.

*Embodied Storying Prong 3: Telling and Listening to Stories*

The third prong of embodied storying—privileging narratives as means of living and theorizing—is vital because Chican@s use stories to inform our communities, challenge dominant stories told *about* Chican@s, and pass on ways of knowing and making that have otherwise been disrupted—though not erased. Chican@s tell these stories not only as part of what has happened to them but also as part of what they continue to *make* happen to them. These stories recognize the actions done *to* them, the identities placed onto their bodies, inserted into their own practices, and portrayed in their communities. However, these stories also produce a kind of creation story—in fact, allow for multiple creation stories—about their communities in spaces traditionally inhabited by Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and Latin@s, as well as in spaces that have become part of long practiced migratory patterns.

A continued indigenous presence in Chican@ rhetorical practices relies on the recognizing, telling, and taking back of stories consumed by History. In the preface to *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*, Gerald Vizenor argues that stories are substantive force in the lifeways that seek to preserve, create, and sustain an indigenous presence. Furthermore, American Indians act as their own story holders and tellers—as “storiers”—to sustain this continued, practiced presence: “Native American Indians are the originary storiers of this continent, and their stories of creation, sense of imagic presence, visionary memories, and tricky survivance are the eternal traces of native modernity” (vii).

Importantly, in this capacity, a stori<sup>er</sup> is not merely one who tells a narrative orally and/or visually through alphabetic text, images, “body language,” and a myriad of other sign systems. A stori<sup>er</sup> requires a *present* body--a body that practices not only the telling of stories but the creation and production of stories. These stories may have been passed down for generations through material productions,<sup>29</sup> such as Lakota Winter Counts and the Codex Borgia<sup>30</sup> or through more (at least) apparent performative methods like song and dance. Or these stories may be revived, revised, and/or created from historical and archival research, from a move to privilege the oral as relevant, and/or from a deliberate move to make visible stories that were erased or ignored. This happens not only through the theories Native peoples hold in their bodies but also through the practices their stories continue to enact and produce. If stori<sup>er</sup>s tell stories of visionary memories, then memories are required, remembered, revived, and (re)lived by those sharing them. These memories are produced first through the body; they require a lived process, and this lived process works both through the acting out of the stories and the continued use of these stories. This continued embodiedness of the stories rely on survivance (also coined by Vizenor), a concept that in itself relies on bodies still present in the Americas that act as a continual survival since before contact *and* a resistance against colonial presence since contact.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> These materials productions do not erase the bodily involvement in their productions and/or continued tellings.

<sup>30</sup> I will briefly discuss Lakota Winter Counts in Chapter Three and codex practices in Chapter Two.

<sup>31</sup> My understanding of survivance is also greatly influenced by Malea Powell’s work in theorizing “Rhetorics of Survivance.”

In direct opposition to Native erasure in Mexican communities both in the nation-states of Mexico and the U.S., Chican@s have long retold stories that situate indigenous understandings and roots into their past and contemporary histories. These stories work to not only contest colonial stories of European presence and Native erasures in the Americas, but they also work to give a living, breathing, *embodied* presence as a continued practice of peoples in the Americas. Therefore, in following Vizenor's stance that Native American Indian stories both originate in the Americas and work to actually originate the stories of these land bases, Chican@s—as mixed-blood Native peoples—are storiers. Chican@s tell stories that remember, revive, and (re)live memories of their indigenous ancestors through present bodies that continue to survive and resist.

Furthermore, how Chican@s can define their own rhetorics relies heavily on recognizing them as storiers of this continent--storiers that rely on practices and places originating on these continents to produce their stories. In failing to recognize the ways that Chican@s, Mexicans, and Mexican Americans have long relied on stories to inform and pass down community practices would be to misconstrue these groups and their identity formations all together. From family stories of La Llorona to (re)constructions of Mexican histories and from narrative corridos to contemporary novels, telling stories exists as a central praxis in Chican@ communities.

Rather than argue that Chican@ rhetorics have yet to be produced, I argue instead that the heavy attention paid to Chican@ literature (including but not limited to oral stories, visual pieces, plays, poetry, short stories, and novels) actually points to



Chican@ rhetoric being heavily dependent on and produced through storying. Storying as praxis means that *theoretical* implications are informed, practiced, and described through the *practice* of passing down, (re)writing, and creating narratives. There is not the theory produced by dissecting and explaining stories although this certainly happens. There is the actual theorizing through storying.

Sandra Cisneros, for instance, uses her novela *The House on Mango Street* to engage her disconnection with the supposedly universal understanding of place and space in Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*. Gloria Anzaldúa challenges understandings of indigeneity, mixed-blood identity, gender, and spirituality through narrative, poetry, and contested histories in *Borderlands/La Frontera*. Ana Castillo reconstitutes linear time and colonial place markers in *Sapogonia* through cyclical memories, delineated spaces, and memory-places. Cherríe Moraga engages colonial and indigenous understandings of land, gender, and identity practices in *Giving Up the Ghost*. And while the focus of this chapter is not literature as rhetoric, these works do show how Chican@s regularly engage theoretical, epistemological, and ontological discussions *through* storying--and not only in the converse (theory from discussion of story).

While Bizzell and Herzberg include Gloria Anzaldúa in *The Rhetorical Tradition* and while Anzaldúa has certainly contributed to and expanded our understanding of Mestiz@/Chicin@ rhetorics, her embodied storying in *Borderlands/La Frontera* and various other works practices and points back to the narrative underpinnings of

rhetoric—and therefore, helps to solidify embodied storying as a relevant Chicana rhetorical process.

### **Chapter Outline**

I used Chapter One in three ways: (1) I pointed to how a single history of rhetoric is implemented and how it consciously and unconsciously bars certain bodies access to both the discipline and the practice of rhetoric, (2) I began to answer Victor Villanueva’s call to “Break precedent!” by showing the need for and beginning to explore Chican@ rhetorics, and (3) I laid the groundwork for the three-prong heuristic of embodied storying (epistemologies, bodies, and active storying) as a way to begin to work through Chican@ rhetorics.

In Chapter Two, I begin to work through and from the concept of embodied storying by looking at the ways in which Chican@s are produced through History and produce their own histories. Because I privilege indigenous epistemologies in both the lens of embodied storying and the identity practices of Chican@s, I look at how indigenous codices—specifically the Nahua Florentine Codex—were practiced and are practiced. By pointing to the ways that Spanish colonizers, contemporary scholars/publishers, and Chican@s often disembody these makings, I then call for a rethinking of how we privilege and practice codices. By looking at the various ways we story—both tell stories and theorize through and about them—about Malinche, I point to ways that Chican@s have attempted to privilege the bodies in other indigenous and Chican@ stories.

In Chapter Three, I use concepts from embodied storying to work through cartographic practices in the construction, un-construction, and deconstruction of bodies, places, and spaces in the Americas. By pointing to the ways that indigenous peoples already practiced mapping by privileging the bodies who inhabited (or traveled through) those spaces, I show how colonial maps (both during early colonial times and during the present) rely on place-based conceptions of land in order to create imperial borders *and* rely on space-based conceptions in order to ignore and remove indigenous peoples, including Mexican, Mexican Americans, Latin@s, and Chican@s from their lands. Importantly, I also use the concept of “pueblos” to point to the ways that indigenous peoples practice place into space through community.

In Chapter Four, I work through foodways as a practice of rhetoric, identity, community, and space. In order to begin working through how food can work as an embodied story as not necessarily dependent on language (as attached to the alphabetic text, de Certeau), I confront my own discomfort of using personal, familial, and community knowledges to discuss Mexican American food practices—even as I have argued for the body as an active part of knowledge making and writing. Throughout this chapter, I argue that foodways are rhetorical in that they affect and are affected by Chican@ identities. In this way, food practices can challenge the conception of rhetoric as being solely attached to text (written or oral) and privilege the body.

Finally, in Chapter Five, I look at the ways that Chican@ rhetorics and embodied storying can affect the field of rhetoric. I ask three specific questions: (1) How can we

use embodied storying in histories of rhetoric? (2) How can we use embodied storying in Chican@ Rhetorics? (3) How can we use embodied storying in our pedagogy?

### **A Note on My Writing Methods**

As apparent from the opening of this chapter, I have relied on stories—sometimes completely personal, sometimes those I have read in my research—to help me think through the this dissertation. All of these stories rely on my own body’s practices—of sitting for hours on end and writing, of crying through remembered stories of my abuela, of working through headaches, of enjoying the process of coming to know a bit more.

Because I am challenging how we make meaning through embodied storying, using stories and theorizing through stories is completely necessary in this work. Throughout the rest of my dissertation, I use stories to open chapters, stories to help us through chapters, stories to finish chapters. Some chapters have more than others. The stories are not there as scaffolding—and are not meant to be read as such (though I cannot control how you decide to use them). These stories are meant to help produce this knowledge process; therefore we will work through them together (though you have the benefit of my revisions, and I have the benefit of working through these revisions). By pointing to the ways indigenous peoples and Chican@s rely on stories (and you will continue to see the ways throughout my dissertation), I have begun to show you the methodologies behind this method). I invite you to piece the stories together with the research.

I invite you to work through embodied storying.

CHAPTER II  
 FROM PAPER TO PRACTICE: RE-MEMBERING  
 BODIES, RE-READING CODICES, AND RE-TELLING STORIES

“... and all other  
 souls alive, live only in the inks,  
 in the red and black, for only in  
 codices do bodies truly animate”  
 — Alfred Arteaga, *Frozen Accident*

“Maybe we *are* modern-day Malinches. Not traitors but  
 translators, women who tread dangerously among  
 the enemy, driven by a vision of change  
 that may only be intuitively known.  
 This is what is said of Malinalli’s vision.”  
 — Cherríe Moraga, *A Xicana Codex*

*My great grandmother told my abuela this story, and she told my mom who told  
 me about this India in Mexico who slept with Cortés. She had babies, and these were the  
 first Mestizos. They call her La Malinche.*

*There is also a story about La Malinche as mother to a daughter that no one  
 talks about, and she is the one who bore more Mestizo children in colonial Mexico.*

*There is a story that makes Malinche subject, that allows for Mexicanas, Mexican American women, Chicanas to take action rather than sit passive.*

*Interwoven throughout these stories are the accounts of what happened, the ways I and others were told what happened, the ways Chican@s have (re)told what happened—and the lines among these stories will blur. Sometimes, I cannot tell you which parts continue to happen and which parts have ceased (or if they have at all) because these stories have changed so many times—at times by us, and at other times, not by us—that we cannot keep track any more. But importantly, these weavings, these changes, and this blurriness matter. These weavings matter deeply to discussions of who gets to tell whose stories and how these stories get told; these changes matter deeply to whose stories get erased and whose histories get told at all; this blurriness matters deeply to a (re)emerging identity that reminds Chican@s of their indigenous epistemologies and practices. They matter to the Chican@s whose bodies have both been storied upon and done the storying themselves.*

In this chapter, I use embodied storying as a lens that not only interrogates ways that history-making acts on indigenous bodies but also looks for ways that Chican@s counter this marginalization through (re)telling stories. Rather than only working from within the often disembodied understandings of archives and writing, this chapter carves out spaces that work to challenge the erasures and emptiness. Carving out spaces means listening to sounds that have been silenced or (re)writing over histories that (re)wrote Chican@ histories, as Perez practices through the decolonial imaginary.

With embodied storying working as one way that we can analyze Chican@ rhetorics, then, this chapter explores ways that Chican@ rhetorics are gathered, informed by, and *tactically*<sup>32</sup> (re)written through colonial and transformed understandings of histories, the archive, and writing. This chapter highlights the rhetorical implications of two stories that often inform Chicana histories, writing, (re)writing, and identity formations: the *Florentine Codex* and Malinche. The portion of the *Florentine Codex* in this chapter acts as a small sampling of material from multitudes of codices and an even smaller example of Chican@ histories in the Archive. However, the colonial use of this codex is set up to capture History through text and images while a Chican@ "reading" can seek to remind the community of its making and practicing through not only alphabetic readings but oral presentations, embodied dances, and cross-cultural understandings. This kind of enactment produces a reminder of the embodied storying that I argue Chican@s perform in their rhetorical practices.

The storying of Malinche in this chapter, on the other hand, exemplifies Malinche as rhetorician, as rhetorical agency, and as rhetorical production. In order to combat colonialism, sexism, and racism, Chican@ artists, writers, and scholars flock to Malinche as mother, (re)invention, story, and muse. Despite Malinche being akin to a (w)rite of passage, challenging Malinche as only metaphor and/or archetype allows for embodied storying even while understanding the need to look to her as part of Chican@

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<sup>32</sup> See de Certeau's discussion of tactics in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (29-42)—briefly: A strategy is attached to the dominant group with power and ultimately consumes what is in its path without being able to see itself critically. A tactic, on the other hand, comes from a marginalized group and subversively works within the dominant system by also working in multiple social spaces.

ancestry. These analyses will show how Chican@s continue to practice an embodied rhetoric through story writing, (re)writing, and telling that helps to make “familia from scratch, each time all over again” (Moraga 58).

### **Interventions in the Making and Writing of History**

*There is this story about a family who crossed from Mexico to el otro lado. They came here because they thought they might have a better life or because they were running or because they were removed from homelands. Actually, there are multitudes of families who did this for multiple reasons. They are called Malinchistes.*

*There are people who never crossed at all and lived in el otro lado before it was el otro lado. They already lived on “this side,” waded across rivers to see families before there were borders and fences for a christening or to walk Dia De Los Muertos. Some of them speak Spanish; some of them don’t. Some of them blend into the melting pot; some of them don’t. They, too, are often called Malinchistes.*

Using embodied storying as a heuristic and (re)telling histories from the perspective and practices of marginalized peoples challenges a single way of telling, reading, or gathering History and makes visible Chican@ rhetorical practices. Interestingly, “History” and “the Archive” are concepts thrown around as if they have one meaning for all peoples. In fact, assuming anything else in the U.S. often brings quizzical looks and a multitude of questions, including “What do you mean there is more than one history?” However, definitions of *history* and *the archive* are not the only concepts in question. Continued erasure happens when people assume that different peoples not only have the same definitions for these concepts but the same cosmologies



and practices concerning history and archives. And even if we are simply discussing history as a field and archives as a vehicle within this field (among others), the use of these words are necessarily vague and all-encompassing whether or not a definition is explored.

In *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*, Carol Steedman looks through understandings of the archive—and in doing so, the creation of history. Because of her allusion to Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever* in the title, Steedman necessarily begins her book with discussions of Derrida's piece and his metaphorical use of actual physical and psychological ailments produced through extended hours in archival buildings and direct contact with the pieces housed in these places. The importance of Steedman doing so becomes important to this chapter's overall assertions for two reasons. First, the physical ailments that she calls forth point back to the physical *bodies* who go into the archive, respond to the archive, and bring back from the archive. In *Archive Fever*, Derrida uses the metaphor of a fever to explore his understandings of the archive. Derrida necessarily sees the massiveness of the archive, which both seeks to gather information in order to explain origin/creation stories<sup>33</sup>—and disregard, hide, consume, or erase information and practices that could destroy the Archive (read: History and Empire) from within. Both processes allow for the building of an empire that disseminates information as it sees fit; in fact, Derrida's discussions of what the Archive consumes and disappears further utilizes the rhetorical strategy of personification since the Archive clearly also acts as an all-encompassing empire in this understanding.

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<sup>33</sup> This takes place with his conversation that interrogates Sigmund Freud's need to explain humanity through his psychoanalytic stages and assumptions.

Secondly, Steedman's discussion of the physical place of the archive necessarily draws attention to the spaces—full or assumed empty—present in the archive. These spaces are where Steedman argues historians look for their own storying when she asserts “that if we find nothing, we will find nothing in a place; and then that an absence is not *nothing*, but is rather the space left by what has gone; how the emptiness indicates how once it was filled and animated” (11). Steedman further asserts that “historians read for what is *not there*: the silences and the absences of the documents always speak to us” (151). Steedman argues here that in the spaces of what is “not there,” there are voices—even if, perhaps, she is referring to the metaphorical speaking and listening. There is, in fact, not the physical nothing—the absence of a presence—there is, however, the perceived nothing that may hold a silenced narrative, practice, or body. Just as there are the bodies in the spaces that Perez listens for in ignored histories of Mexican and Mexican American women deprived of their agency in History. When is *nothing*, in fact, the absence of something and when does *nothing* refer to a something that is there but perceived as not being? For instance, how can one find “nothing” in a place? And how can we locate the erased bodies of colonialism?

Constructed space is not all together incorrect, but the centering of the everyday in Michel de Certeau's discussion of place and space allows for both communal and outside influences that help to construct, un-construct, and deconstruct multiple spaces within places and already practiced spaces. In thinking about how embodied storying works to (re)create Chican@ rhetorics and histories, Michel de Certeau's designations of

*place* and *space*<sup>34</sup> play a significant role in thinking about how both the bordered *nothings* and *somethings-around-these-nothings* create spaces that are not, in fact, empty or inanimate. These *spaces* are intimately, physically, spiritually, and historically tied to the practices of how marginalized peoples continue to practice and write stories for and about themselves. These spaces are alive with and through the practice of bodies that work within and defy the imperial practice of erasure and a single-linear-history writing.

There are moments when we forget that spaces, histories, theories, and stories are about *real* peoples and *real* bodies and that these histories and theories and stories truly affect *real* peoples and *real* bodies—and when we do forget, what we are actually forgetting is not how to describe the theories, see the stories, or tell the histories—but instead, we are forgetting the bodies that both produce and practice these theories, the bodies that both tell and live these stories, the bodies that pass down and continue to practice these histories. Qwo-Li Driskill writes,

And it occurs to me that I'm engaged in a subversive act, performing a story that is the antithesis of the colonial project... The archival project was not created *for* Indians. It was created to consolidate knowledge *about* Indians ... And yet here I am, an Indian in the archive, using it as a *tactic* ... Sitting in the archive, touching books that my ancestors may have touched, feels like a Ghost Dance. The library throngs with (g)hosts ... Historiography as a Ghost Dance understands that part of our work as

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<sup>34</sup> I got into a deeper discussion of place and space in Chapter Three; however a brief explanation follows: place is “locatedness,” geography not necessarily attached to practice. Space is practiced into being and does not solely depend on location (91-130).

Native historiographers is sustaining relationships with our ancestors, bringing back their words and acts that have too often been stolen or hidden from us. (107-108)

However, as Driskill asserts, peoples not meant to use materials produced by and/or about them may use tactics that challenge the outcomes of archived materials. In *The Practice of Everyday Life* de Certeau argues for clear—yet shifting—understanding of these two terms tactic and strategy. A strategy is attached to the dominant group with power, hinges on a connection to *place*, works on an understanding of spatial understanding that disconnects the dominant view from time, and ultimately consumes what is in its path without being able to see itself critically. A tactic, on the other hand, comes from a marginalized group, connected to a dominant *place* and *space*, challenges the space by using it for its own purpose, works out of a space that is expected to shift through an understanding of time, and subversively works within the dominant system by also working in multiple social spaces.

And, yet, like de Certeau's examples, Driskill works within the confines of the archive to subvert its power from within. While Driskill positions the archive (and archive materials) as a place of imperialism, it is Driskill's positionality as an Indian looking for Cherokee theater practices within a place not meant for Indians to comment on and use to *continue to* practice their own histories. Driskill takes the imperial project and changes it from History to an embodied storying of histories.

Simply recognizing the ways that archives and History unsee, distort, and/or consume certain histories, epistemologies, and bodies is not enough. In this recognition,

we have already begun to open up (both metaphorical and physical) spaces that through our own research, practice, storying, and writing can help us, as Driskill calls for, “[sustaining] relationships with our ancestors, bringing back their words and acts that have too often been stolen or hidden from us” (107-108) in order to re member/re-member ourselves.<sup>35</sup> We must see what is meant to be unseen by (the physical and historical) bodies that are meant to be forgotten, as well as the bodies that are present as we research histories in the archive.

In *Remedios: Stories of Earth and Iron from the History of Puertorriqueñas*, Aurora Levins Morales subverts the colonial and male-constructed history of Puerto Rico by challenging what archives can be and what they can produce. In order to (re)write that history of Puerto Rico, Morales positions her assertions by working through the healing quality of plants, as well as the female body, as markers of historicity. The archives of Morales, then, become changed, changing, living, and breathing.

In thinking about decentering knowledge bases from Euro-American frameworks as Morales does, Mignolo calls for a de-linking of epistemologies that privilege the ego and the religious; instead, he centers body and land as necessary for understanding epistemologies and knowledge making. While Mignolo does not necessarily identify as a rhetorician, his work on codices and “writing” in *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*

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<sup>35</sup> In *Loving in the War Years*, Moraga formulates re-membering as the piecing back together of her mind, soul, body, land, and memoery; in *The Woman Who Owned the Shadows*, Paula Gunn Allen coins this process re membering.

creates a direct challenge for those people in the fields of rhetoric and writing—and more specifically, a disembodied, alphabetic-text-defined—discipline.

In recognizing that Mignolo's work often relies on looking at power through a larger systemic/systematic approach, I position his work in conversations with theorists who seek to centralize praxis and bodies. For instance, Diana Taylor speaks into the space between the body and the archive in recognizing the archive-body split that colonization instituted. Jacqueline Shea Murphy further argues body praxis in that she says

...dance theorizes... it's not that there's the dance, and then there's the scholar theorizing about the dance—it's that the dance itself is theorizing, the body is thinking, commenting, critiquing, investigating... [Native peoples] articulated their dance making as a way of connecting to ancestral histories and practices and lands, as a way of knowing history and countering historical oppression/colonization.... (10)

Recognizing that the body can be the conduit and *practice* of theory—and not just the way to discuss theory or theory-making—is central both to indigenous peoples and many Chicanas. Moraga, among other Chicanas, has long made calls to re-member (with the purposeful inclusion of a hyphen) our bodies in theoretical and everyday practices.<sup>36</sup> Understanding this connection means understanding the body is imperative in the making of history through active storying.

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<sup>36</sup> With this in mind, we also need to be aware of not falling into an easy trap of asking or requiring the body to be a type of imperial archive in which we store knowledge and information.

### **(Dis)embodying Codices**

*There is this story that Octavio Paz tells about this woman who betrayed all the peoples of Mexico. She slept with Cortés, translated his wishes, and brought down the city of Tenochtitlan and the Aztec empire—because, well, she was a woman*

*There is a story about Moctezuma, the one that no one tells though it's drawn into codices, the one where he hides when Cortés attacked—because, well, he was a man.*

As various fields from Rhetoric to Anthropology build the History of Writing, discussions of how codices belong—or don't belong—in this history range from understanding codices as pre-historical to pre-writing and a-writing to writing. Definitions of writing and “the book” become relevant to discussions of history-making because in the 1500s denying the existence of alphabetic writing in the Americas allowed for creating a history-less peoples (Isidore qtd. in *Darker Side* 138-139). This argument predicates itself on whether or not a people could record their stories through an alphabetic system that does not look like European sign systems. Writing, during early colonial eras, attached itself directly to understandings of the European alphabet and the sounds this alphabet produced.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, codices—largely and complicatedly

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<sup>37</sup> This argument relies on the European alphabet having an a priori knowledge system directly attached to its symbols. Accepting this argument would, therefore, erase indigenous language systems as valid and require they be transcribed/translated into a European system for legitimization.

pictorial—were negated not only as writing but also books, record keeping, sign systems, and histories.<sup>38</sup>

As the rest of this chapter and dissertation argues, however, codices should not be forced to fit into a prescribed European notion of what writing is—and therefore who holds or has history and knowledge. If we privilege body- and land-based knowledges over Knowledge (“De-linking”), understandings of what codices are/do must be held in relation to the indigenous peoples who practiced—and continue to practice—them and the land bases to which they are attached. It would make sense, then, why European colonists did not understand the pictorial images that allowed for the speaking across peoples in the Americas. They were attaching these signs to knowledge systems produced by European philosophies, which were unattached to bodies and land bases in the Americas.<sup>39</sup>

An attempt at understanding codices without privileging the Spanish-European lineage, then, allows for a different, complicated, and unsettled understanding of writing—and, therefore, codices and histories. Because many Spanish colonizers designated codices as books—even while systematically denying them as writing and/or destroying them—the word *amoxtli* became the translated term to designate book.

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<sup>38</sup> This argument, while still in use, becomes more complicated as letters from what is now Mexico and Central America to Spain show a clear thinking of codices, as well as other record keeping systems, as a type of book that was considered irrelevant due to its “superstitious” and non-Christian contents (*Darker Side*).

<sup>39</sup> My understanding of this comes from Gabriela Raquel Ríos’ work on language systems and their connection to biodiversity in her dissertation, *Ixtli In Yollotl/A (Wise) Face, a (Wise) Heart: (Re)Claiming Embodied Rhetorical Traditions of Anahuac and Tawantinsuyu.*”



However, *amoxтли*<sup>40</sup> translates more as “paper,” “stacks of paper,” “writing surface,” “writing material(s),” and importantly, “paintings.”<sup>41</sup> This loss of translation becomes relevant when we understand that codices (or *amoxтли*) were not necessarily read in a certain order—for instance, from front to back or left to right. In fact, many codices did not look like modern books. They ranged from accordion-style parchment to folded maps. Further complicating discussions about how *amoxтли* are practiced record-keeping systems, Mignolo argues that the translation for *amoxтли* transcends European understandings of books, geography, and history in that this term could also refer to “territoriality” (*Renaissance* 10). Mignolo argues, then, that because both “past memories were preserved and . . . spatial boundaries were traced” in *amoxтли*, this word designated more than only history or place (10-11). Instead, *amoxтли*, when used in communal participation, produces a realm of practiced space.

Codices, as a generalization, are largely pictorial.<sup>42</sup> While epistemologically and cosmologically centered within various indigenous groups in the Americas, presupposed European understandings of signs, symbols, and images should not be assumed. Consistent, yet not universal, identity designations can be seen across codices. For instance a filled-in circle system stemming from an animal head can be seen in the

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<sup>40</sup> I italicize “*amoxтли*” when I am referring to the word, as done in SAE grammar; however, when I am speaking of the practiced object (or codex), I do not italicize the word.

<sup>41</sup> I use my own study of Nahuatl here, but other peoples who argue this include Elizabeth Hill Boone, Walter Mignolo, and John Sullivan.

<sup>42</sup> Some pre-contact Nahuatl codices rely solely on pictorial signs and symbols while others (at various times, unattached to a linear history) include what would be considered phonetic symbols. The problems with this explanation, however, is that it is still relying on a Spanish alphabetic understanding of language in that they attempt to correlate images/symbols with already recognizable sounds.

Codex Borgia to designate family lineage and generations. In several post-contact codices (for example, the Florentine Codex and the History of Tlaxcalla) gender identities<sup>43</sup> are drawn through hair and clothing styles. Finally, as referred to above, the content of both pre- and post-contact codices varies from geographical-spacing to spirituality to historical, including but not limited to histories of peoples, communities, and stories.<sup>44</sup>

Upon Spanish invasion, codices were simultaneously and systematically destroyed and archived. The purposeful colonial and neo-colonial destruction of indigenous rhetorical practices allows for *both* erasing peoples, knowledge systems, and practices--*and* historicizing peoples into a single History. These destructions and confiscations include the burning of codices and carry into the erasure (and/or purposeful distortion) of Mexican American histories and destruction/distortion of Chican@ language/discourse practices. Starting in the 1500s, Spaniards decided what and for what reasons indigenous holdings and practices could be destroyed: “We found a great number of books in these letters, and since they contained nothing but superstitions and falsehoods of the devil we burned them all, which they took most grievously, and which gave them great pain” (de Landa qtd. in *Renaissance* 82). In this way, those writing back to Spain were able to claim codices as inconsequential (that is,

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<sup>43</sup> Gender identities in these cases seem to rely on Spanish gender/sex understandings; however, the gender markers in the codices do seem to mark gender and not necessarily sex.

<sup>44</sup> Further discussion of codex materials ties these practices to the land. The materials were often animal hide, rock, and plant—and, especially after invasion, paper or papyrus. Paints came from plants, animals, and minerals—with red and black making up a large portion of the color scheme

they did not hold histories and practices), as well as threatening enough to burn (that is, they held “evil” ways).

However, destroying pre-contact codices did not signal the end of their use. Two of the ways these record-keeping systems remained in use were through continued indigenous creation and through Spanish friars who called for the re-creating of their ideas of codices. The second occurred in the context of education and literacy campaigns directly connected to European ideas of religion, humanity, and civilization.

These indigenous-Spanish collaborations acted as ways to record indigenous peoples’ histories for imperial archives<sup>45</sup> and disembodied histories to take back to Europe. Beyond the physical separation of peoples’ materials from their communities, however, were the separations of parts of indigenous rhetorical practices in order to collect archival knowledge. de Certeau’s explains separation of materials and practice through the privileging of certain knowledge systems in the following way: “... the imposed knowledge and symbolisms become objects manipulated by practitioners who have not produced them” (*Practice* 32). Here lies the difference between a continued indigenous record-making system and one (re)taught to them with European understandings of art and alphabetic systems.

In Spanish-commissioned, post-contact codices, such as the Florentine Codex, understandings of indigenous epistemologies were often ignored—and perhaps incomprehensible in that colonial moment. While Spanish collectors attempted to rely on indigenous-based ways of recording, the alphabetic text often became central to the

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<sup>45</sup> I use “imperial archives” here as discussed by Thomas Richards.

creation of these documents. Images, instead of actually constituting the recording (as was traditionally practiced), accompanied the Spanish and Nahuatl alphabetic writing—resulting in marginalization of these images. Furthermore, Spaniards ignored the multi-mediated re-telling of codices through oration, dance, and prayers as an integral part of re-telling practices and histories (Boone 77). The erasure of the bodily practices that created and informed the “writing” and “reading” of codices continues to affect contemporary readings of both pre- and post-contact codices. Simply “teaching” and then asking Nahua peoples to re-make their histories by drawing them and writing them in newly learned alphabetic form does not re-create a practice—and certainly not constitute the *understanding* of the practice. And further failure today to recognize erased practices intimately involved in codices (re)constitutes a misunderstanding of codices.

*Micro-analysis: (Dis)embodiment in the Florentine Codex*

In a decolonial move to place indigenous peoples as central to Mexican and Chicana@ histories, scholars often forget that the Florentine Codex was commissioned by a Spanish missionary, Frey Bernardino de Sahagún, and this codex was originally titled, *La Historia General de las Cosas de Nueva España*.<sup>46</sup> The original title makes a rhetorical and historical move to insert the Mexico land base into Spain’s—and, thus, Europe’s—History. However, recognizing its origin does not minimize the work done by the bodies of Nahua peoples. This recognition, however, does call on readers to recognize subversive moves made within the thirteen-part Florentine Codex even though

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<sup>46</sup> The General History of the Things of New Spain

Nahua scribes were trained and overseen by Spanish missionaries. In fact, though this is not the focus of this chapter, there are multiple ways of subversion and survivance, as discussed by Gerald Vizenor and Malea Powell, that Nahua scribes used in creating spatial features and language use within post-contact codices.

Looking briefly at the widely used English version of the twelfth “book” of the *Florentine Codex* compiled by Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble, however, allows us a contemporary understanding of the colonially instigated split of aspects within indigenous rhetorical makings.<sup>47</sup> These splits help to instigate and continue the disembodiment of storying in the fields of rhetoric and writing. One of the ways these splits occur in the readings of this book includes the separation of storytelling methods.<sup>48</sup>

Traditionally, “reading” indigenous codices was not divorced from the body. In fact, use of the body through community and bodily participation was integral to understanding their contents. Practice included not only the speaking and the hearing but also the creation and the body. Although he did not continue the practice, even Sahagún somewhat recognized the relationship between song, dance, poetry, and paintings (Boone 21).

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<sup>47</sup> While several translations exist, most translated codices are described as being accompanied by pictures rather than as translated/transcribed with all of their necessary printed portions—images, alphabetic text, or otherwise.

<sup>48</sup> Other contributions to a disembodied practice of the Florentine Codex include (1) the format of the codex as a contemporary book, (2) the necessity of verifying information within the “original” codex with contemporary historians, (3) the cutting of some images from the viewpoint of the translators who are already privileging the alphabetic as the “real,” (4) the translation from “the Aztec into English,” which necessarily ignores the ways that Nahuatl (and not “the Aztec”) was alphabetized and phoneticized through the Spanish language, and (5) the use of maps that rely solely on geographically places.

In *Stories in Red and Black*, Elizabeth Hill Boone clearly calls attention to the way knowledge was practiced through codices: “It is clear that the spoken word is inextricable from and complementary to the painted document and that both together fill the category of knowledge that is history” (21). Furthermore, scribes acted as more than only painters. They were also responsible for gathering, grinding, and preparing their materials. These practices, necessitated the physical body for both preparation and drawing.

Physical and acting *bodies* were responsible for the production of these materials. There were not suddenly materials. There were not suddenly readers. There were the sweat and touch of the bodies that went into the making and receiving of these materials. There were the calls and responses by communities. These materials acted as embodied storying. If this kind of exertion went into the making and telling of codices, then why is that this English translation disconnects the images and the alphabetic text? And even further, why does this text *privilege* the alphabetic text over the images?<sup>49</sup>

This disconnection and the privileging occur in several material ways in this translation. First, among the title pages of this text that the editors and publishers printed as a modern book, the following appears: “Translated from the Aztec into English, with notes and illustrations” appears under *Book 12 — The Conquest of Mexico*. This quote is seemingly unimportant due to our contemporary practices of seeing the alphabetic text of a book as the central portion and images (in whatever form) as periphery. From its opening pages, then, this book’s structure already runs antithetical to the practice of

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<sup>49</sup> This only begins to speak to the disconnection of bodily action from the images—something which there is not room for here.

codices because the images act as secondary information to the story line in the alphabetic text. In this way, indigenous bodies can be talked about and the images of bodies ignored.

Furthermore, while the original codex places picture and alphabetic text in tandem, this book systematically creates separate sections for each. The viewer is not only prepared for it from the above quote but reinstated to the practice with the “Contents” page. These three pages separate the codex’s contents into forty-one chapters, and each chapter is given a two to three line summary. Following these pages, there is a “List of Illustrations... from *Florentine Codex*, Book XII.” The editors number each illustration,<sup>50</sup> title it, and encase the chapter section in parenthesis. This works further to separate the illustrations from the alphabetic text. Again, while seemingly inconsequential, viewers of this edited volume are being further trained to see this text as a contemporary book since it is produced to be viewed as such.

Finally, the complete separation of the alphabetic storytelling from the image storytelling continues to solidify this book as separating indigenous embodiment and “reading” practices from narrative. The physical form of the book necessitates a flipping from one page to the next in order to allow for a linear telling of the book; however, between pages 45 and 46, there is an insertion of pages for the “illustrations” that can easily be skipped over. Further distancing the images from Spanish invasion, the “illustration” pages are not even given page numbers—clearly delineating them as appendages to the alphabetic text as the actual story. And while the alphabetic text

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<sup>50</sup> Note, however, that not all illustrations from the codex are included in this version.

sections are given ample space for reading, there are a mere twenty pages for just under 161 of the original images. Most are cramped together and the size of one-eighth of a page. The images in this edition (as well as other translated editions) fade into the background of the overall storying.

On a visual level, one could read this entire book—no longer acting as *amoxtli*, despite its title—without coming across the drawing of the Nahua scribes who created the original pieces. The possibility of ignoring the visual representations of physical bodies points to the further erasure of indigenous peoples and their bodies in the Americas. What becomes highlighted in this edition of the twelfth book of the Florentine Codex, then, is a colonizing peoples' alphabetic project in a story that already centers the Spanish invasion as central to a Spanish History. Creating contemporary versions of this codex that separate alphabetic text and images signals the continuation of looking at indigenous makings as separate from cosmologies and epistemologies that privilege the lands and bodies with which *amoxtli* were created.

#### *Necessary (Re)readings*

However, recognizing these separations should not be enough. When Chican@s look at codices as part of our rhetorical heritage, disconnecting them from indigenous bodies may only continue to institute a disconnection of Chican@s from our rhetorical practices and histories. As Cherríe Moraga asserts in *A Xicana Codices of Changing*



*Consciousness*,<sup>51</sup> Chican@s should consider ways to (re)define, (un)practice, and (re)practice writing so that our bodies are always relevant in various aspects of storytelling.

This may require situating (re)vision within a decolonial methodological framework that relies on decentering writing—in history, as well as in cultural makings and practices—as having a single definition. Even more importantly, we must challenge the ways in which writing without the recognition of bodies implicit in its practice becomes the major medium of History and Rhetoric. I am not arguing that people should not use writing; however, we should interrogate the ways and circumstances in which we feel the need to situate all makings that hold and encode knowledge as writing—whether wampum, baskets, quipu, or a myriad of other ways our communities practice—in order to legitimate them.

Instead, Chican@s may ask how we can recognize ways in which are bodies are always present in the practice of writing? Furthermore, how can we center codices as a rhetorical making, practices, and carriers—and not only as writing? And just as importantly, how can we think about the bodies that are constantly practicing as being intricately and intimately part of the making and re-telling of these materials? In other words, how can we see embodied storytelling being enacted in our everyday practices?

With many Chicanas attempting to situate their works in theories of the flesh, what must become *necessary* is our interrogation of *if* and *how* we look at codices as

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<sup>51</sup> This work, while looking like a book, also allows for images interspersed throughout the book to do their own speaking without requiring alphabetic text accompaniment. Furthermore, Moraga uses this work as a conscious effort to (re)unite her body, her experiences, and her reading as necessary ways for Chicanas to work through colonial mindsets.

embodied practices, codex makers and readers as relevant and real bodies, and understandings of histories as always already affecting living peoples—and not simply as a way to try to legitimize Chicana histories. We must further recognize that the identities and practices built through these codices, such as the claiming of Malinche for many Chicanas, may have complicated relationships with both the peoples building them and the peoples being claimed.

### **Rhetorics of Malinche**

*I will tell you the stories about Doña Marina / Malintzin / Malinche. I will tell you that...*

*I like the story about the woman who tells the Spaniard no, who says she will not wag long like his tongue, the story about the one who does not make the first Mestizo (who, after all, is not really the first Mestizo). I like the part when she saves the people of Tenochtitlan so that we won't name border restaurants after her, so that we won't drag her name across those of us who have left the land and live here, in el otro lado.*

*And I like the story about the woman who speaks for the Spaniard, the one who has the first child who is half white Catholic and half brown earth (who, after all, is not really the first half white, half brown child). I like the part when she saves what she can by sleeping with the man that would fissure the land so that we would learn to call her the mother of a new people on both sides of an invisible borderline.*

*And I like the story about the woman who lives as neither—the one, who is woman... the one, who wove words into stories... the one, who continues to make story.*

In order to combat the erasure and demonization of Native women, Chicana scholars and activists often (re)tell stories of Malinche. Furthermore, the demonization of Malinche as a historical figure of traitor, in particular, is used as a metaphorical moniker for both Mexican Americans who live in the U.S.<sup>52</sup> and for women who do not practice expected gender and sexuality roles. Chicanas often (re)tell these stories, then, to challenge and legitimize not only Malinche but also themselves. For this reason, the storying of Malinche is a prominent feature in Chican@ rhetorics and writing. The bodies who tell and enact these stories through experiential processes influence the production of Chican@ rhetorics, the historical accounts of colonialism, and the enactments of Chican@ identities. Therefore, not only does Malinche, the person, act as rhetorician but these tellings also provide a discourse on the production of history and a rhetoric of community identity.

One way in which Chican@s often practice embodied storying through indigenous codices is by looking at representations of Malinche in these codices and enacting her methods of translation as a lived process of survival. We can find some of the more specific references of Malinche in the Florentine Codex both in the alphabetic texts and in the representational images central to codices as embodied texts.

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<sup>52</sup> Those who use this moniker for Mexican descendants who live in the U.S. often do not interrogate histories of imperially produced borders that split families and lands contradictory to earlier migration practices (further discussed in Chapter Three); neither do they take into account the way this name-calling rehearses gendered slurs.

Figure 1, “Malinche Translating from Roof Top,” is an example of one image, in particular, that is often referenced from the Florentine Codex in order to argue and/or to affirm Malinche as beloved by indigenous peoples, particularly after Octavio Paz’s indictment of her in the middle of the twentieth century as the woman who betrayed Mexico (Paz 66-87).

This contestation of his claims works as part of a process of Chicana affirmation to show a place of respect of Malinche among indigenous peoples. Scholars who study representations of women in colonial Mexico often use this particular image for two reasons: (1) a Nahuatl person drew this piece and (2) she, as a Nahuatl *woman*, plays the central figure in this frame. In this image, Malinche sits on a rooftop with Cortés and translates between him (as exhibited by her finger pointing toward him) and an indigenous man on the street below them (as exhibited by the positioning of her face). Her position in the frame places her as holding the power of translation, as indicated through the drawing of tongues, and as holding a position of respect through her placement on the rooftop.



Figure 1: “Malinche Translating from Palace Roof Top” (de Sahagun, et al.)

In pointing to the unseen (and, arguably, historically erased) body who produced this image, the placement of bodies who are part of this interaction, and the visibility of the two indigenous people who are actually producing speech, indigenous bodies—and Malinche’s body, in particular—become visible as active producers of their own histories. In this way, stories of Malinche should not stay on the page. Stories of Malinche can act as spaces of resistance today both through stories and through descendants (even if metaphorical).

Furthermore, while the story of Malinche as traitor often permeates the (re)telling of her story, contemporary stories written by Chicanas often look past this construction and, instead, posit her as acting within what Malea Powell calls a rhetoric of survivance (“Rhetorics of Survivance” 400). Powell, in fact, theorizes this rhetorical practice in its varied forms by working in conjunction with Gerald Vizenor’s own coining of the term survivance in his activist scholarship concerning indigenous peoples. In brief, survivance is a combination of the words survival and resistance. Survivance is a concept that implies both a *continued* survival that speaks to pre-contact existence, as well as *active* resistance post-contact. It continues to tie people to land and community practices even if—and especially when—people critique Indians for not being “authentic.”<sup>53</sup> This decolonial discourse allows us to recognize often oppressed peoples—in Powell’s writings, North American Indians; in Malinche’s story, Mexican peoples—not as objects but as subjects, “a presence instead of an absence” (“Rhetorics of Survivance” 400). Survivance, then, constitutes a continual action because the struggle past survival creates agency through its resistance.

Although Powell and Vizenor work most closely with American Indians—or as Vizenor contends, the postindian—their scholarship also challenges us to think through ways that we are all related.<sup>54</sup> Practicing indigenous relationality brings various peoples in the Americas into conversations about survivance. One of these survivance stories

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<sup>53</sup> While there is not room to fully discuss this here, I should make known that ideas of “authenticity” play out differently in the United States, Mexico, and U.S.-Mexico Borderlands among indigenous, Mestizo, Mixed-Blood, and European peoples.

<sup>54</sup> See Winona LaDuke’s *All Our Relations* to work through relational practices that extend beyond peoples to include land, nature, and other life forces.

includes Malinche—blamed both historically and metaphorically for the downfall of indigenous peoples in what is now Mexico but also upheld as indigenous mother. Discussing Malinche in this way already implies and demands a purposeful recognition of embodied practices, allows for a complication of Malinche as both a metaphorical figure of Chicana resistance practice through embodied storying of narratives, poems, and plays—and as a historical person who already practiced a rhetoric of survivance that displaced European expectations

Because historians debate how readily Malinche acted as an integral part in Hernán Cortés' campaign to bring down Moctezuma, several stories remain in circulation. These range from Malinche obeying orders as Cortés' slave to Malinche being coerced as Cortés' lover—and from Malinche exploring her own hunger for power to Malinche's fulfilling cosmological prophecies. Whether one story is accurate or several work in tandem (as I am apt to believe), Malinche complicates colonially imposed roles through her ability to defy both historically and contemporarily defined expectations. Spain's attempt to overlay indigenous roles and practices with distinctly European prescriptions results in identity roles that are based on spatial practices that already disconnect peoples from lands—and, therefore, creates rifts in how Chicana@s see Malinche.

Despite this—or, perhaps, because of this—Malinche as both person and figure requires the recognition of various cosmological practices working within the rhetorics of Malinche. After all, she challenged traditional Spanish feminine roles by participating in war negotiations, a discourse the Spanish often reserved for males. She acted within

European conquest by acting as tongue for Cortés—but was also distinctly accepted as indigenous by Moctezuma. She is blamed for loss of patriarchal dominance but is now storied as a matriarchal figure in a “new” people. Through her multi-faceted roles, she not only practiced survivance as an individual but also continues to call for acts of survivance from the peoples she has metaphorically mothered. These rhetorical practices position Malinche as working in multiple spaces not only during her own lifetime but also as continuing to work in Chicana bodies today.

*Embodied Storying of Malinche*

As Chican@s, we may have heard some of the stories about Malinche before; we may already know “the facts.” However, when we (re)tell these stories, we are practicing the implications of Thomas King’s *The Truth About Stories*—we recognize that *that* is all we are. And when we realize that our lives are built on and by and through stories, we can understand the need to repeat stories that have been passed down to us, even if we already know them. These stories build and inform our histories and identities. They work to combat erasure and confusion.

One way that rhetorics of Malinche are (re)produced is through the storying of her names. Because some say that Nahua tradition often dictated naming a child for the calendar day of birth, a possible primary name is Malinalli (Cypess 181; Karttunen 291). However, when Cortés required the spoils of women in his camp to be baptized, she was given the Christian name of Marina—and later, out of respect for her usefulness to the Spanish cause and her position with Cortés, Doña Marina. With its similarities to her birth name and because of the absent *r* in Nahuatl, indigenous peoples may have called



her Malina. However because of the esteem they bestowed upon her even as she was attached to the Spaniards, they added the honorific suffix *-tzin* to her name, a term of endearment. Both Spanish and indigenous records show that Native peoples used the name Malintzín when speaking to her and when speaking about her. Thus, Malintzín, one of her three most prominent monikers, became the name brushed upon codices and spoken from the tongues of indigenous peoples. The Spanish inability to hear the “whispered *n*” at the end of her honorific Nahuatl derivative and the confusion of the *tzi* with *ch* finally resulted in the contemporary *Malinche* (Karttunen 292).

In this story, I refer to her as Malinche, a name which works to both honor her indigenous heritage and recognize the Spanish influence on her life, as well as countless lives since Spanish colonization. The evolution of her name took two paths and told at least two stories, once during her physical, embodied life—from Malinalli to Marina to Malintzín to Malinche—and in her “contemporary” historical life—from Malinche back to Malintzín to Marina and finally back to Malinalli. These two stories speak of the multiple spaces she occupied throughout her lifetime and her following legacy. Besides during her childhood when she, at least in legend, acted fully as her first supposed name of Malinalli, at no other time does her name parallel her participation in one culture (Spanish or indigenous) at a time. She did not become only Doña Marina in the presence of the Spanish, for her name alone implied her elevation from concubine-slave to revered mistress. Neither does a return to a Nahuatl name—Malina or Malinalli—allow her to act only as indigenous, for she also inhabited Spanish spaces. She may have not only mothered the (metaphorical) first *mestizo*, but she also acted as the first *mestiza*.

Her identities moved between between several cultures, several activities, several expectations, and several peoples—and she learned the rhetorical situations each time. As Anzaldúa argues, she carried them all on her back (216), and through the stories of her life, her name continues to carry them all.

Malinche’s talent for learning language and translating those languages between two very different cultures yields a kind of rhetoric that reaches beyond that of surface-level stories of her as simply translator and traitor. It required an indigenous body for one side and a speaker of Spanish on the other. It required her to move between both feminine and masculine spaces, as well as between indigenous and Spanish spaces. Everything from her body to her tongue acted in ways that allowed for this movement. Some of these movements are remembered in codices, others in letters, and even others in retellings by Chicanas. This translation then reaches past Malinche’s own agency and allows for a continued practice of rhetorical agency in Chicana women today.

How Spaniards and Indians treated her during the conquest is not how colonial Mexico would later (re)formulate her existence. Malinche wasn’t always spat as a derogatory term for someone who had crossed over the Rio Grande to el otro lado.<sup>55</sup> *Malinchiste*, with all of its negative connotations of traitor and deserter, came only after Mexico attempted to reinvent itself as a nation-state separate from Spain. Before these demotions, she held places of honor and reverence; she was, perhaps, a royal Nahua daughter given away to make way for her brother; she capitalized on her intellect to distinguish her from the many other captive women in the harems of Spanish

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<sup>55</sup> “The other side” is depended on location—but often refers to areas north of the U.S.-Mexico border.

conquistadors; she survived massacres through the saving graces of both Indians and Spaniards; she was a woman who navigated the masculine world of negotiations and war.

While the ways we discuss Malinche have evolved in various ways since the sixteenth century, her ability to act within several spaces and time periods leaves a legacy of multiplicity with those of us who have come after. Today, we should see her not simply as the woman who gave away Mexico, nor as the indigenous woman who was raped. We must also see her as a rhetorical practitioner of a people who would have to learn to walk on two sides of an invisible line. We must, perhaps, recognize what Cherríe Moraga says: “Maybe we *are* modern-day Malinches. Not traitors but translators, women who tread dangerously among the enemy, driven by a vision of change that may only be intuitively known” (*Xicana* 250).

The different tellings of these stories disrupt the linear narrative that silences Mexican and indigenous women through colonization. This is a story that says we have been speaking all along—that we were silenced neither in that time period before Sor Juana nor in the time between Sor Juana and Gloria Anzaldúa. This is a story that establishes a long history of women who practiced—and continue to practice—rhetorics that may not, at first glance, be recognizable. This, however, is a story of rhetorics that, nonetheless, confirm indigenous epistemologies that privilege body, practice, land, and relationship—even if not an easily condensed, traitor-savior binary.

Through this binary, colonial stories continue to be written not only on the back of Malinche but also on and through the bodies of Chicanas. However, when Chicanas

feel written on through the storying about Malinche as traitor, they can write back,<sup>56</sup> as Moraga does:

Writing too is one of these acts. The best of creative writing, so grand in its particulars, is able to traverse great borders of mind and matter. The distinctions disappear. Our present moment becomes history. History is enacted myth. Myth is remembered story. Story makes medicine. I am in daily search of these acts of remembering of who we ne were, because I believe they will save our pueblos from distinction. (*Xicana Codex* 81)

There is more to Malinche's story, and there are more women to her story. Malea Powell says, "I have been working to tell [my] story, in some form or another... [My] story comes, as all stories do, from a much larger, more complicated accumulation of stories" ("Down by the River" 38-39). And I, as many Chican@s before and with me, have been working to tell my family's story because my mother started this story in me and her mother in her, and *she* started this story in *her* mother, and her mother before her, and her mother before *her*, and *her* mother... and the story goes back further than that and farther past the winding, moving borderlands. This is *one* of the stories of Malinche, *one* of the stories of the traitor, *one* of the stories of the mother, *one* of the stories of the woman—and those of us that follow.

What would it mean, then, to realize that Malinche's story did not begin with Cortés' barely mentioning her in his letters written in Spanish? What would it mean to listen to stories before Chicanas and Mexicanas in the U.S. began to reposition her

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<sup>56</sup> In "Dreaming Charles Eastman," Powell says, "If you feel written on, write back" (118).

stories (both in English and Spanish) with her being more than *la chingada*? While these stories are part of her story and ours as well, what would it mean for us to realize that she used her own body and tongue to tell stories in her time—and that even her stories were years and years old, passed down through the bodies of her own people. What does it mean that we can not only enact a rhetoric through Malinche—but continue to practice a rhetoric that she, as a Nahua woman, practiced?

### **Re-membering**

*I asked a Nahua friend from Mexico once what he thought about Malinche.*

*He shook his head like he'd never heard of her.*

*I said her name again, "Malinche."*

*He drew up his shoulders, saying he didn't know.*

*So I started to tell him the story, and before I finished, he stopped me, explained he knew the story, but that his community never cared much one way or the other about her.*

*There is a story of Malinali who became Doña Marina and also Malintzin and eventually La Malinche—and not always in that order or all of those names or any of those names.*

Even as Chicana@s learn to practice a rhetoric of Malinche, we must continue to interrogate why assumptions are made about several post-contact codices as where we must go back to in our histories—particularly when these codices were separated from necessary embodied practices. Furthermore, even as we claim this rhetoric, we must continue to question the metaphor of Malinche as mother for two reasons: (1) not all

Chicanas are Nahuatl peoples—and so this may do some very clear erasing of indigenous kin that do not identify as Nahuatl or from that lineage and (2) using real bodies, such as that of Malinche, as metaphors without also taking the time to recognize that there are, in fact, *real* and *physical* bodies attached to these stories (both *now* and *then*) may also work to erase indigenous peoples—both those who do and do not claim a Chicanidad.<sup>57</sup>

As Chican@s find ways to define our own rhetorical practices, what we do need to do is interrogate ways we inadvertently continue to disembody codices, writing, and stories that then allow for a practice of disembodied rhetorics and metaphors—even as we attempt to privilege theories of the flesh that call for a recognition of the body in our praxis. We need to interrogate ways our stories disembody indigenous communities that are both ancestors and *present*. We need to recognize that as we work within and through stories of Malinche to fight racial, class, and gender inequalities, we story from particular contexts for a specific audience that even while important may erase or obscure our indigenous-Chican@ identities and indigenous communities to which we attach ourselves. Chican@ practices and lineages are complicated, varied, and connected to indigenous communities still here.

However, Chican@ practices also work to rectify the erasure of our indigenous identities by actively claiming a lineage that privileges embodied storying—and because

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<sup>57</sup> I am *not* saying that revitalization projects that allow for Nahuatl language and practice revitalization both in the U.S. and Mexico are unimportant and/or vital to communities de-linking from a colonial practices of disembodiment and forced epistemological shifts. Clearly, they are, and clearly, we need to participate in language revitalization projects that privilege indigenous peoples.

one of the ways we story is through Malinche, we are claiming a matrilineal lineage that disassembles European genealogies of patriarchy. Chican@s are also claiming connections to practiced space on this land. The next chapter provides analyses of how indigenous mapping systems require embodied memory in the actual production and reading of cartography. As rhetorical systems that include images, alphabetic text, and oral recitation, many indigenous maps carried the concept of practiced *space*, and we can further reveal these practices through the heuristic of embodied storying. Recognizing this epistemological nuance, I show how contemporary mapping systems that rely on supposedly immovable geographical *place* produce imperial borders that map racial and cultural identities onto indigenous and Chican@ bodies. This rhetorical mapping requires the recognition that Chican@s constantly have to navigate power structures that affect the production of rhetoric.

Through all of this, we tell stories to (re)write our own histories. We tell stories to re-member ourselves. We tell stories to re-member ourselves with our lands.

CHAPTER III  
 (RE)MAPPING OUTSIDE THE LINES:  
 MIGRATION, BORDERS, AND BODIES

1,950 mile-long open wound  
     dividing a *pueblo*, a culture,  
     running down the length of my body,  
         staking fence rods in my flesh,  
             splits me      splits me  
             *me raja*      *me raja*  
             This is my home  
             this thin edge of  
             barbwire.

— Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*

"And for a moment  
 I see  
 the bridge(s)  
 The "bullshit borders" dissipate  
 those the lines between "nos/otras"  
 and all the lines between all the parts of me  
 for just



a moment

gone"

— Gabriela Raquel Ríos

*I'm half way between  
Mexico desert and  
Alabama mountains,  
can look over my  
shoulder and see the bridges  
arching their backs over a  
the little big river  
that I didn't know we crossed for  
haircuts and needled acupuncture,  
that I didn't know we crossed for  
cheapened brown leather and ripe fruit,  
that I didn't know we crossed until  
Diganles que son Americanos. You tell them,  
You tell them American.  
Lita says,  
eyes each one of us and tries to pin our wiggling*

*bodies into the  
backseat.*

*Dustin and me laughing, Mexican, Mexican,*

*Then practicing Mejicano that rolls off my tongue*

*And chops his*

*Off.*

*We sit in the back seat with fresh-cut*

*hairs sticking wet to our heads,*

*My brother's already starting to mutiny into curls,*

*On the bridge, buying chicles,*

*purple and pink,*

*green and white and red, those three colors always waiting last in the candy dish,*

*fresh fruit popsicles, sandia and fresa,*

*sticky fingers and rimmed sugared lips.*

*Mejicano, Dustin struggles out when the border patrol asks us what we are*

*but me sucking in the last of the not-funny-any-more*

*chiste and Lita with no papers for us, of course,*

*but with pinched shoulders and*

*daggered eyes sharper than the scissors that just*

*cut our hair.*

*And her red red knuckles pulling the car*

*to a place striped with fresh painted yellow bordered lines.*

*Passports, papers please,  
from behind dark sunglasses like cops in the movies.  
And Lita unfolding her green-card papers,  
And nothing to show for us American crossers,  
Me and my brother.  
And finally letting us go when Dustin has  
no  
more words to say in  
Spanish.*

My own experiences with crossing the El Paso-Juarez border on a weekly if not daily basis through much of my childhood speaks to the necessity of thinking about manmade borders and the ways we see them, unsee them, and move them. Whether through physical encounters with the Mexico-U.S. border or through psychological interactions, many Mexicans and Mexican Americans confront cartography through imposed border relations. And because migration issues directly affect Chicana@s throughout our lives, one of the ways I situate Chicana/o rhetorical practices is through cartography. Cartography, rather than only the study of maps and their productions, work within and through bodies, specifically indigenous bodies that have been practicing on these lands far before—and even during—colonialism. Therefore, I argue that a culturally situated rhetoric—in this case, Chicana rhetorics—cannot ignore the “othering” and spatial navigation that occurs in everyday lives.

In the previous chapter, I showed how using the heuristic of embodied storytelling looks as an indigenous methodology for interrupting archives, histories, and stories. This storytelling acts as a central praxis for Chican@ rhetorics; therefore, this chapter continues to rely on storytelling as a way to draw consideration toward the very real bodies affected by colonial mapping practices and migration control. In order to flesh out the connections between land bases, spatial (re)constructions, and bodies, I will look at mapping as part of migration control and practices as theoretical lenses in order to analyze ways in which legal “logic” attempts to map over, on, and through Chican@ bodies.

In this chapter, I will analyze ways in which restricting and (an attempted) stabilizing of bodies and land bases works through erasure of memory-practice, border-making, and immigration laws. In order to historically situate ways in which Chican@ patterns of migration and spatial practices were performed long before Spain moved through indigenous lands and long before the U.S. systematically implemented its devastating manifest manners (Vizenor),<sup>58</sup> I situate shifting mapping practices as colonial and rhetorical methods to control indigenous bodies in the Americas.

### **Colonizing Mapping Practices**

Because Europeans did not have a lived and experiential relationship with the land bases of the Americas, they began to map the land in order to learn the layout,

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<sup>58</sup> Manifest manners are the simulations of dominance; the notions and misnomers that are read as the authentic and sustained as representations of Native American Indians (5-6). Vizenor uses this concept to reveal the ways that the U.S. worked its way across the land in order to erase Indian presence and tell the story of dominance.

create travel routes, and mark territory. Their nonexistent relationship, then, allowed them to designate geographic places over already practiced spaces. While place and space certainly overlap in the creation of maps, Michel de Certeau designates a place as “an instantaneous configuration of positions. It implies an indication of stability... a determination through objects that are ultimately reducible to the being-there...” (117-118). A place, therefore, can be designated by a body but does not necessarily require an interaction between the body and the place. For instance, I can place a pin on a map, give it a name, and make it a place without having to understand the life forces already interacting with that place. This would work similarly to the imperial practice of forcing a stake or country’s flag into a mass of land and designating it as belonging to a person or corporate body. Granted, there is body and action staking the claim, but there is not need to further a relationship between this place and the body in order for a third party to designate it.

A space, on the other hand, is an area through lived experiences that is not necessarily tied to that designated place or geography—

Thus space is composed of intersections of mobile elements... in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it... occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situated it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities... In contradistinction to the place, it has thus none of the univocity or stability of a “proper.” (117)

A space, then, requires interaction among bodies and physical geographies—and these interactions shift, move, and change in ways that do not allow for a stable, never-changing map to be produced. For instance, rivers, if not dammed and directed by humans tend to shift routes and change the landscape around them. The places around them are affected spaces over time—and when human bodies interact with these places, spaces further shift or stabilize. The initial production of modern and colonial maps assume a static quality for land bases, then, that produce places over already practiced indigenous spaces. Those that produces maps delineated these assumed permanent qualities by drawing symbols on pieces of papers. While some colonial maps used various symbols (winding lines, open-ended triangles, closed circular features, etc) to mark geographical features in the Americas, many of these demarcations were divorced from the embodied, storied spaces of peoples already practicing on and around them.

Interestingly, colonists produced these geographic place-maps in ways that both erased and relied on the indigenous stories which they ignored. In *Imperial Eyes*, Mary Louise Pratt shows how staking land happens through colonialist travel writing, and in *Mapping the Americas*, Mark Warhus reveals the ways that colonists found temporary maps on rock and trees and used them to navigate and then lay claim to land bases. Erasure worked in ways similar to the above—finding a geographic place and staking claim either through inserting objects into the land or by taking up residence. I will further discuss the use of European bodies in setting up place-spaces late in this chapter.

Another way that Europeans made place maps were through the use of indigenous bodies and knowledges. By using maps collected from indigenous peoples,

Europeans began to make their ways through the Americas. Sometimes this meant they physically made the treks. Other times, colonists or scientists relied on indigenous stories to mark places on the maps they were producing for later trips or for European archives. In fact, stories—and not always true stories—of “Native guides” abound and are often gendered—Pocahontas, Sacagawea, Malinalli.

The “use of indigenous bodies,” however, does not equate to honoring or recognizing the spatial and relational land practices of indigenous peoples. The geographical knowledge gained through indigenous sources were for the empire—either for expansion or archives. Myriads of maps, some in the forms of codices, were shipped back to monarchies in Europe in order to lay claim to those places. In essence, these mapped lines signify on bodies in way to control movement—instigating a visual rhetoric that may be seemingly unattached to the oral-written rhetoric binary.

Because peoples in the Americas have long practiced migratory patterns that can complicate static living spaces, imposing modern mapping practices that can and do limit bodies to physical places requires ripping peoples from their community spaces. What if our ideas of cartography or mapping looked--or more importantly were practice--more similarly to indigenous perspectives then?

From images of footsteps representing migration movements to circularly winding pictorials for Lakota Winter Counts (see Figure 2), mappings created by indigenous peoples throughout the Americas show how previous motivations connected mappings to peoples and land bases through practices (Boone 77-80, *Lakota Winter*

*Counts, Darker Side, Practice* 91-130, Warhus). More than only place markers, “maps” also told—and can continue to tell—histories, stories, movement, and direction.



Figure 2: Lone Dog Winter Count (“Lone Dog”)

The making of maps was not necessarily a way to enforce man-made concepts onto land bases that always already enact their own life forces nor were they representing geographical places that had *a priori* understandings. Indigenous mapping ways were cosmologically shaped through interactions with the land, people, and time, thus creating practiced space that did not need to only refer to a specific *place*. As Anzaldúa asserts, the body is required in the construction of spatial practices:



"Caminante, no hay puentes, se hace puentes al andar (Voyager, there are no bridges, one builds them as one walks)" (Moraga and Anzaldúa v).

While not all groups of the Americas migrated across large land bases, connections across nations, communities, and peoples were prevalent, as were established trade and migratory routes. They demand that we remember, as Joy Harjo so superbly puts it, "There is no such thing as a one-way land bridge. People, creatures, other life will travel back and forth. Just as we will naturally intermarry, travel up and down rivers, cross oceans, fly from Los Angeles to Oklahoma for a powwow" (19-21). And it is not simply the physical traveling that interrupts European notions of borders and migration patterns; it is also what Robert Allen Warrior calls, "intellectual trade routes":

Ideas do not, however, need to make their way literally across geographical or cultural space to travel. At times, ideas have traveled through the medium of a single person's mind across time and space... The movement in the history of ideas that occurred in the encounter between Europeans and the indigenous peoples of the Americas has most often been considered a one-way process... Trade routes, however, have existed in the Americas since the first pathways linking people emerged in a time that no one can remember. (181-182)

However, what if we took up calls by Paula Gunn Allen to re member ourselves? And Cherie Moraga's call to re-member ourselves? Both of these terms refer not only to calling attention to the ways our bodies have been dismembered by colonization but

ways that our bodies have been dismembered from land practices. Leslie Marmon Silko theorizes this through not only forced and un-allowed migration *across* lands but also a more nuanced understanding of connection to land:

The people and the land are inseparable, but at first I did not understand. I used to think that there were exact boundaries that constitute ‘the homeland’ because I grew up in an age of invisible lines designating ownership. In the old days there had been no boundaries between the people and the land; there had been mutual respect for the land that others were actively using. (85)

In recognizing that land practices do not *only* rely on physical boundaries for indigenous peoples, how can American Indians and Chican@s together reimagine spaces that are both already here and are to come? I do not say this lightly; I am not calling for a dismissal of continual American Indian land practices or ask Chican@s to undo practiced stories. I am, instead, looking to put Silko in conversation with Anzaldua’s words about borderlands:

The land was Mexican once,  
   was Indian always  
   and is  
   and will be again. (25)

Putting these into conversation mean that we need to re-recognize how cartography worked as practiced space rather than as place demarcation. For instance, the map of

Tolcayuca (pictured below in Figure 3) requires the practice of both the space creation of the map and the person using the map.



Figure 3: San Juan Tolcayuca Mexico (“Mapping a Land Claim”)

Even though this map was created post-contact (notice the Christian church in the middle of the town), this map was created not with the understanding of what is north, south, east, or west--but instead what is positioned according to the bodies practicing in this place-space. The footsteps marks place of travel within and outside the place, and they do not necessarily coincide with the roads drawn into show place-based travel constructions. These footsteps reveal the human bodies and cultural practices necessary in creating this space.

Furthermore, these footsteps and the drawings of buildings reveal the orientations to the map. There is not a single orientation that coincides with the contemporary

practices of using compass images to show orientation. The map is looked at according to wear the person holding the parchment stands. Many Nahua spaces are constructed near or around mountains and hills (in Nahuatl, *tepetl*). This plays into cultural practices of ceremonies, and each set of mountains or towns are drawn to center the spaces of practice rather than as monolithic orientations for uniform drawings. These drawings, then, create practiced spaces that are reliant on the peoples who practices them.

### **El Pueblo Unido**

“El pueblo unido jamás será vencido,” was echoed by protestors and reverberated back at (nos)otr@s throughout the United States as migration issues again came to a head after the passage of Arizona SB1070. Thousands of us shouted this at a Houston immigration reform march on May 1, 2010—“The people united will never be defeated.” A group of people marched with a large vinyl side that said, “Immigration Reform Now.” There were Dream Act groups, and Latin@ Queer Pride groups, elementary students and labor groups.

This was not a new chant, however. Since its inception as a Chilean protest song in the 1970s, millions have shouted these words, which have been translated across countries far beyond the Americas, across times and spaces far beyond immigration protests. Therefore, these words act as more than a one-time chant, a one-time story. The protest chant’s international resonance is carried in bodies past borders, in air waves past blockades, and into ears past fences. This chant unifies people that are often unseen on maps.

Importantly, when thinking about cartography and the use of the word *pueblo* we find a necessary remembrance of the concept of embodied storying in how this protest rhetoric was created and is continually used. The very word *pueblo*, so central to this chant, translates both as “a town or village” and as “a people.” Its experiential definition folds in on itself in that a town, as we commonly think of one, only becomes such when bodies—a people—practice within it. The place becomes a town precisely because it is practiced into a space; there is no *a priori* expectation of a place to exist on a map until the place is inhabited.

Furthermore, as de Certeau sets forth, spaces, unlike places, require practice and are not necessarily stabilized within a certain *physical* limit. Towns, peoples, practices, borders are moveable. If pueblos are created through the unification of peoples and if peoples are unified through shared practice, then the mapping of pueblos work along axes of the stories people create, share, and practice about them. The translation of pueblos becomes an act of embodied storying—pueblos are culturally situated, produced by bodies, and practiced through narratives. The very practice of the word works across both physical and psychological borderlands to unite peoples and towns who dare to migrate across institutional and “legal” limits. Understanding this chant in this way further shows how the practice of the word, *pueblo*, as both town and people demands the always already presence and participation of bodies and, necessarily, makes for a rallying cry of peoples who have always already practiced migration across these continents. This understanding of the world *pueblo* and the continual practice of this chant act as ways to enter into discussions about Chican@ rhetorics. And because

Chican@ rhetorics constantly directly or indirectly interact with borders, understanding the mobility of peoples and spaces through stories is crucial. Through narratives, “boundaries are transportable limits and transportation of limits” (*Practice* 129).

As a chant, “el pueblo unido” also acts as a call for remembrance *and* response among communities that were torn apart through colonial mapping practices. Because this call-and-response element is essential to both American Indian and Chican@ communities, the call and response practiced into these words assumes a both a kinship and rhetorical alliance in this chant between communities that require practice and participation to continue lifeways that have existed long before the U.S.-Mexico border (Driskill 52).

Using this chant disrupts not only the border split that was initiated by imperial rhetorics in this march, but it should also work as an interruption for the following two stories—one about land and language claims from this same Houston rally and one about Texas legislation that claims place for certain bodies.

### **Creating and Dismantling Borders**

In the creation of places through mapping and the creation of spaces through practice, we are both demarcating what and who becomes part, as well as what and who is left out—but these demarcations also shift through practices. Even through colonial mapping practices that attempt to designate stable and claimed places, practice becomes a major element of how these places are garnered and maintained.

*“Sacred: Border. Language. Culture.”*

At the Houston 2010 Immigration Reform March, a steady stream of people marched across the street from us. As pictured below in Figure 4, a large sign read, “No Amnesty! Sacred: Border. Language. Culture.” Other mass-produced signs read, “Speak English.” And while we chanted in both English and Spanish, they often cupped their hands over their ears and shouted that they couldn’t hear us—or rather could not understand us.



Figure 4: No Amnesty (“May Day 2010 Protest March”)

Sacred Border? The one we crossed for haircuts and doctors, for fruit and family? The one my mom didn't know was there until she was 16? The one that was agreed upon in 1848 and then moved anyway? The ones that moved with peoples who moved before?

Sacred Language? The Spanish my abuela had me speak until she didn't make my brother? Or the English she refused to learn because she was always going to go back one day? Or all the languages—Mayan, Nahuatl, Rarámuri, Navajo—covered up like they were never here?

Sacred Culture? The one with breaking piñatas for big-family birthdays in too-hot backyards? The one with egg yolks in cups under beds and hand-to-face touches for no evil-eyes?

Besides relying on the U.S. as the sole and lasting authority on legal matters, the group who made this sign relies on several assumptions in their assertions about sacredness: (1) that borders are a fixed and “natural” demarcation, (2) that the English language is required to practice on the northern side of that demarcations, (3) that the people in the immigration march could not speak English, (4) that “American culture” is ruined by “outsiders,” and (5) that all the people in the march were, indeed, “outsiders” and/or immigrants (which, then, according to this logic, negates these protestors as immigrants on someone else's land).

The large sign (pictured above) holds an assumed subjectivity that already denies any other histories, peoples, or languages that practiced on these lands besides the Euro-American colonial history that nativizes peoples other than indigenous peoples. The



purposeful word choice of *sacred* calls forth both religious and reverent connotations that further seek to stabilize a settler colonial presence. These connotations assume colonial borders as predestined and sound logic that are unquestionable. Through this logic, *sacred* attempts to create U.S. places as stable constructions that exclude other places and peoples—when convenient. Furthermore, *sacred* attempts to establish a logic that relies on an *a priori* knowledge of not practiced land bases but instead conquered place-territories.

These *a priori* knowledge assumptions erase other epistemologies—as well as ontologies and cosmologies —practiced by Mexican and indigenous peoples before the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. It erases the history of the Republic of Texas—and then the U.S.—strategically moving the Mexico-Texas/U.S. border from the Nueces River further south to the Rio Grande. And while this small cession of land may seem insignificant, it forces a reliance on U.S.-Anglo land rights and ignores Mexican territorial practices in the 1700s and 1800s. The earliest this “sacred border” can be dated is 1848—and that is with the assumption that peoples practiced a fixed border then. It negates continual migrational patterns that moved through what are now considered borderlands for centuries.

Furthermore, working from these dates alone erases the peoples here before Spain colonized regions of what is now Mexico. In *Manifesting America: The Imperial Construction of U.S. National Space*, Mark Rifkin works through U.S. federal and Republic of Texas laws that racialized peoples and mapped lines across the southern Mexico-U.S. Border:

The disavowal of native territorialities provided a template for dismissing Tejano claims as well, linking ‘Mexicans’ to ‘Indians’ as similarly barbarous threats to the security and jurisdictional cohesion of Texas space... in Texas, California, and other areas wrested from Mexico, the United States confronts an existing Euramerican system of governance and property-holding, which previously had been acknowledged as foreign... Instead of engaging in an explicit program of removal, the United States defined non-native residents of annexed regions as potential citizens, recasting the confrontation between Euramerican systems as an assessment of the legal status and land claims of individuals. (110)

The Comanches, for instance, lost their grounds for cyclical movement patterns to sustain their lifeways and were constructed as uncivilized while Mexicans, also practicing differing understanding of land practices and legalities, were grouped with “barbarous” Comanches and racialized as “savage” in order to remove them from a growing Anglo landscape (109-112). Comanche bodies became a ground zero for exclusion and extermination while Mexicans—and Tejanos—were guilty by metaphorical (and ancestral) association.

This *a priori* legal land knowledge assumes a single, correct Knowledge and History. Francois Lyotard, on the other hand, in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* works through the ways that these knowledge assumptions as “language games” that fail to realize that all logic begins with a non-neutral assumption. Specifically, Lyotard tangles the supposed linear scientific and legal logic in a way that

shows its circularity, for if one were to use philosophical proof to show the basis of this logic, there would be a point where an assumption *must* be made. And *that* first assumption comes from epistemological understandings, and is often made invisible by assuming a single Knowledge origin (Lyotard, “De-Linking”). While even this argument comes from its own epistemological assumptions, the point is to recognize that the sign, as well as the racializations of certain unruly bodies, above does not recognize multiple ways of knowing, and in not recognizing this, the logic attempts to remove some Latin@ and indigenous epistemologies as a valid part of discussions about migration and spaces that have gone on for centuries.

While these suppositions may seem like coming from only a small group of people, U.S. national arguments on everything from immigration issues to English-only laws rely on the rhetoric of naturalizing of European peoples on practiced-lands of the Americas, also known as “settler colonialism.” Lorenzo Veracini argues that

Both migrants and settlers move across space and often end up permanently residing in a new locale. Settlers, however, are unique migrants, and as Mahmood Mamdani has perceptively summarized, settlers “are made by conquest, no just by immigration.” Settlers are *founders* of political orders and carry their sovereignty with them (on the contrary, migrants can be seen as *appellants* facing a political order that is already constituted). (3)

In relying on unacknowledged notions of settler colonialism, legislators attempt to map onto bodies lines to rhetorically control indigenous movements. The use of indigenous

here is purposeful because while the U.S. imagination constructs Latin@ immigration as a move from “outside” to “inside,” American Indian removal and forced migrations throughout what is now the U.S. also (re)mapped lines on top of already practiced spaces and stories—and, therefore, bodies. These lines allowed for states and the federal government to move American Indians from “inside” their tribal lands to “outside” their tribal lands—a forced *emigration*. Furthermore, the constructions of these maps through forced movements of people often identify indigenous peoples in terms of American Indian peoples colonized by French and Anglo populations, which, again, constructs all Latin@s as coming from outside the U.S. norms of language and cultural settlers.

The naturalization process of settler colonialism, then, erases a myriad of bodies that have always already practiced on these lands—and practiced in complicated ways as languages change, cultures shift, peoples move. Instead, British and French legal precedents were used to set up U.S. Federal Law. These were—and are—considered legitimate sources of law while conversations with indigenous peoples—from the Iroquois nation’s influence on the U.S. Constitution to the Treaty of Guadalupe—were not acceptable legal bases. Because British and French legal referents were honored, Mexicans, specifically, were cast as foreign, and “[c]asting Mexicans as foreign *distanced* them both from Euro-Americans culturally and from the Southwest as a spatial referent: it stripped Mexicans of the claim of belonging that they had had as natives, even as conquered native” (Ngai 133).

The continual settler colonialism process, then, allows for signs like the above to be logically sound on one side while inconceivable from another point of view. Instead

of understanding *sacred*, *border*, *language*, and *culture* as words and practices attached to various epistemologies, legalities, and stories, this sign assumes one Story that as de Certeau says, “[precedes] the judgment that regulates and settles” land bases (*Everyday Life* 126). It refuses to see that there is always the story before the “legal” story. There are, as Thomas King argues, “turtles all the way down” (92).

Rhetorically, this sign relies on the assumption that all Latin@, Mexican, and Chican@s bodies move from outside to inside—and that, in fact, outside to inside is a stable category and land structure. It fails to take into consideration the many peoples who already lived on these lands long before the U.S.—and Spain/Mexico—drew its boundaries on papers and land bases. It forgets that many peoples have migrated throughout the Americas (or “back and forth” when the border becomes the point of annunciation) through trade routes and sustenance gathering cycles. It forgets the land disputes that are still occurring because of land squatters who took lands from Mexican peoples who were promised their properties would remain theirs after the Mexican-American War. And these lands claimed by Mexicans and topographically mapped by the Spanish crown were built on top of the lands settled on top of numerous groups of indigenous peoples’ lands.

Recognizing the rhetorical moves of “sacred,” then, as being locked on the idea of a border being fixed on fixed mapped places, then, means that Chican@s are constantly having to navigate the *idea* of the border. It is the idea of the border, here, the idea of sacredness and fixedness, that more often than not requires to Chican@s to

situate themselves according to it in the popular imagination of U.S. identity constructions.

But with the idea of the border has also become a marker within Mexican, Mexican American, and Chican@ identity formations that both feed into and contradict the idea of sacredness. I have been in Latin@ academic spaces in which people introduce themselves by saying when their family came to “this side.” It sounds something like what I say when my identity is questioned or when I am trying to situate myself in a space: “I am second generation on this side. On my grandmother’s side, we came from Chihuahua.” In Latin@ spaces, this also means specific sites from all over the Americas. Or it sounds something like this: “My family has always been on this side.” This last one sounds like the cry from many Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and Chican@s—“We didn’t cross the border; the border crossed us”—in which we are challenging the border by also acknowledging it. This is something that both ties to the sacredness called to in the sign and challenges it.

I am not arguing that we should—or should even have to—situate ourselves this way. I am pointing to the ways that our cultural practices often lead us to situate ourselves according to family lineage—but also to the ways sentiments that work in conjunction with the “sacred” sign force us to point to our relationship to the border. When did you cross? How did you get across? What do you mean you’ve never been to Mexico? What language(s) do you speak? How come you don’t speak Spanish? Why do you eat flour tortillas? Why does your family live in different cities?

It means that our rhetorics are almost always in relation to the border—whether in Los Angeles, El Paso, or Chicago—that we navigate them both when these signs are thrown in our faces and when we are trying to make cultural arguments for our ever-shifting, spatially-situated identity practices.

### **Texas House Bill 1202: Using Bodies**

Furthermore, recognizing that Chican@ rhetorical practices are constantly navigating mapped spaces of physical and psychological border spaces means that when immigration laws come up, many of us have an interest—and not a uniform interest—in how immigration is discussed and the laws that are proposed and/or passed. From advocating for amnesty to agreeing with prosecution of undocumented migrants, many Mexicans and Mexican Americans find themselves navigating the terrains of borders. Furthermore, we also see how our bodies get defined and used in decided who gets to cross these terrains and how.

With much U.S. legal discourse—both federal and state—relying on a *single* a priori epistemology concerning language, logic, and place structure, recent legislation has, once again, begun to force understandings of the U.S. as an enclosed stable place that is settled by certain bodies and closed off to others. Because some of this discourse and proposed legislation relies on physical structures, including fences and walls, the U.S. literally tries to interrupt spatial practices of migration that allowed for cyclical movements for sustenance, work, kinship, and cultural practices. However, passing laws criminalizing these practices also seek to restrict this kind of movement.

Since Arizona's passage of SB 1070, at least twenty-four states—among them, Texas, Georgia, Alabama, Kansas, Minnesota, and Maine—have followed suit in attempting to create legislation that not only criminalizes undocumented peoples but also requires various racialization processes to identify these bodies. In attempting to set precedent, Arizona laid groundwork for a discourse that continues to hide in and on an a priori legal system that exists in place geography and ignores spatial practices. The multiple ways in which other states have picked up and furthered Arizona's legal rhetoric of exclusion speaks to the ways in which Manifest Manners continues to permeate U.S. consciousness and imagination. By relying on Manifest Manners, the U.S. Assumes denies that people were present (and practicing) on lands in the "West" and then denies them access to these same lands. However, because denying that peoples were present often relies on certain types of bodies, this same consciousness continues to allow these same bodies to be used as labor forces. These labor forces were racialized in manners that allowed for the objectification of Latin@ immigrants (Chavez 1-69, Lugo, Ngai 127-166).

One of the immigration bills that worked its way through the Texas state legislature in 2011 attempted to move the discourse of immigration onto those who hire undocumented workers. Proposed by Debbie Riddle, Texas House Bill 1202 attempts to create harsher penalties for those who seek to hire "unauthorized aliens," a term it justifies by relying on federal law (TX HB 1202): "A person commits an offense if the person intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly (1) employs an unauthorized alien..." (TX HB 1202). This section goes on to specify how a person may employ "an unauthorized



alien.” While this first section seems to be laying groundwork to punish U.S. citizens for hiring undocumented (or correctly documented) workers, the ultimate goal is to get rid of reasons for “unauthorized aliens” to migrate across borders.

In the writing of this bill, Riddle, perhaps unknowingly, continues to rely on the settler colonial rhetorics that borders—here, specifically Texas borders—are stable and have been stable and enforced in ways that look as they do today. She assumes that peoples cross over, crossed over as adults, cross over for labor purposes—and in thus assuming, she paints migrants as “alien” to the northern side of a U.S. colonially enforced border. By couching it in terms of “unauthorized” and “aliens” and by specifically appealing to U.S. federal law, this bill builds off the understanding that U.S. is a sovereign, unchanging, stable-bordered, body-controlling entity. And because this logic relies on an internal model of a controlled border, it does not recognize or admit to the way that U.S. “interventions” in other parts of the world—and, in this case, the Americas—is also responsible for continued migrations within the Americas. As Charles D. Thompson, Jr. argues,

The presence of farmworkers in the United State is no that about ‘Mexicans’ trying to get a piece of the American pie, as some might assume. Rather, while individuals from Latin America and elsewhere attempt to maximize their incomes by taking jobs as farmworkers in the United States, they are also pushed northward by failing local economies due in part to U.S. trade policies... (Thompson, Jr. and Wiggins 10)

The assumption of U.S. (and Texas) enclosure on the part of Riddle, as well as a myriad of others in the U.S., then sees migration in terms of “illegal immigration” because it continues the narrative of Latin@s as outsiders without interrogating ways that the U.S. acts as an imperial force in other nation-states that already relies on a the construction of the U.S. as a legitimate force in the Americas.

While many peoples see immigration reform as a way to fix the current immigration problems, Leo R. Chavez argues that “... Immigration reform legislation is an exercise in inclusion and exclusion when it comes to defining who is legitimately able to join the community of citizens” (Chavez 6). Therefore, we can also view immigration reform as working not only as a way to federally “legalize” bodies currently in the U.S. through acts including the Dream Act but also as a way that laws like TX HB 1202 as a way to constrict Latin@ movements through controlling jobs, which the bill goes on to do in very specific ways.

Riddle’s one-page bill proposal not only restricts access to jobs, it also attempts to control *how* immigrant bodies—in Texas, most often assumed as Mexican bodies—can be *used* by U.S. citizens without these citizens getting penalized. According to TX HB 1202, U.S. citizens are exempt from penalization if they have “(1) employed or contracted with the unauthorized alien, or entered into a contract or subcontract described by... for the purpose of obtaining labor or other work to be performed exclusively or primarily at a single-family residence in which the actor resides...” (Riddle). Essentially, this bill seeks to criminalize undocumented peoples and people

who hire them—*unless* the undocumented workers are working as maids, nannies, or lawn workers for individual families.

In this part of the bill, then, Riddle sees immigrant bodies as necessary for the U.S. construction of family units—as appendages of the upkeep of citizen-families through caring for children, cleaning houses, and maintaining lawns (among other things). However, Riddle does not account for the actual immigrant bodies who are being used for these kinds of labor; she simply gives a free pass to those using these bodies. In this way, she both erases these bodies from the U.S.-Texas landscape and sees them as necessary for maintaining U.S.-Texas border practices of using immigrant bodies as labor providers.

While these two acts—erasure and visibility—may seem contradictory for maintaining a place-based U.S. construction, they are both necessary in creating legislation that seeks to stabilize U.S. claims to mapped borders. Recognizing—or seeing—these bodies as “alien” confirms U.S. imagined places as being invaded by outsiders. However, erasing these bodies into used labor sets up the U.S. American Dream that fails to recognize that way it is built on the backs of people of color—and, here, Latin@s. Furthermore, because many Texans assume only Mexicans as immigrants, it further erases other movements from other parts of the Americas. Elaborate trade routes existed between what is now Mexico City (Tenochtitlan) and St. Louis (Cahokia) (Morales, Warhus). To assume that Mexicans and indigenous peoples were not already traveling back and forth pre-colonization continues to erase bodies and practices in order to build imperial borders.

The discussion of this proposed Texas legislation may seem to place the discussion of Chican@ rhetorics in the hands of who creates U.S. law. It may seem as though this analysis is paying attention only to how Chican@s are constructed in legal discourse. It may beg the question, “What does this mean for Chican@ rhetorics then?”

However, one of the ways that Chican@s engage in their own rhetorical practices is how they practice in the face of these kinds of laws and how they respond despite (or in conjunction with) these laws. Our continued presence and movement to and out of the U.S. means that we often have to position ourselves when we crossed, if we crossed, and how we crossed. It means that some of us have to decide how we will pass—as citizens, as migrants, as not Mexican, at all. It means that our papers work as a U.S.-based rhetorical pass, and it means that some of us don’t have papers but look like we should.

I do not and cannot pretend here that imperial *physical* borders disappear because I wish them to, that I can undo them solely with my discourse, that there are not people who restrict bodies from crossing or moving, that peoples are not turned away, picked up because a police officer can tell someone is “illegal” by the shoes she wears. I refuse to un-see the proposed laws that would legalize the use of undocumented maids but legitimate the firing of immigrant—whether documented or not—workers from restaurant chains. I cannot un-know that my Mexican grandmother married my Irish-Cherokee grandfather to gain her own legal status. These borders are physical. They are painful. They are, as Anzaldúa calls them, “brechas, open wounds.” In the next chapter, I look at ways that Mexican Americans create spaces through food practices that work past border structures. Some practices connect back to our indigenous ancestors; other

keep our communities alive on the U.S. side. In any case, honoring our ancestors and preparing for those to come, we must come together to heal our bodies, and we must find ways to bridge *among* our own bodies to help disappear what Gabriela Rios calls “those bullshit borders... those lines between ‘nos/otras.’”

*Someone forgot to remind us that*

*Lita always said we were going*

*back.*

*Back before bulging tumors*

*Back to lost loves,*

*Back to tíos who stole,*

*Back to primas and sisters,*

*Back to Mexico,*

*Back to what wasn't there*

*Back to what was part of here until*

*Borders and*

*Barbed wire and*

*Straight-backed soldiers said*

*Passports please.*

## CHAPTER IV

KNEADING MASA: THE FOODS WE CRAVE,  
THE STORIES WE TELL, THE RHETORICS WE MAKE

“Had Aristotle cooked, he would have written a great deal more.”

— Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, *La Respuesta*

“Food is life. Food as knowledge feeds our hunger for understanding, for belonging, and our need for change.”

— Meredith E. Abarca, *Women in the Kitchen*

“Take care to chop the onion fine. To keep from crying when you chop it (which is so annoying!), I suggest you place a little bit on your head. The trouble with crying over an onion is that once the chopping gets you started and the tears begin to well up, the next thing you know you just can’t stop. I don’t know whether that’s ever happened to you, but I have to confess it’s happened to me, many times.”

— Laura Esquivel, *Like Water for Chocolate*

This chapter is largely personal. It is also largely collective. This chapter is about the way we make meaning from food and the way food makes meaning for us.

This chapter has been the hardest for me to write. I tried to edit this section out, tried to convince myself this was just scaffolding, tried to tell myself it was just a way to get to what I will say next—but saying this, putting this struggle in this text is important to the completion of this chapter *and* this dissertation. It is important because what I have been writing about is how to challenge Chican@ rhetoricians to pay more attention to our bodies—and not just give lip service to the theories of the flesh that we claim. It is important because I have been writing to challenge the discipline(s) of rhetoric and writing to think about the bodies—the raced ones, the (dis)abled ones,<sup>59</sup> the classed ones, the non-conforming gendered and sexed bodies—that we disappear in our everyday writing habits. It is important because in trying to make space for all of these moves through embodied storying, I, myself, often forget privilege bodies in rhetorical practices.

I wanted to make sure this chapter about food was academic enough, rigorous enough, textualized enough—all of these are often coded language for “smart enough.” And by not remembering that theories of the flesh may privilege personal stories, I was playing into that coded language that displaces the body and its cultural knowledges and practices.

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<sup>59</sup> As I have written my dissertation, Stephanie Wheeler has challenged me to pay attention to how I construct bodies in my thoughts, rhetoric, analysis, and writing. I am forever grateful for her challenges to decenter the “able body” in my work and life.

Why is it necessary for me to say all of this, then? Why not just know it and move on? Because after having the following conversation with my mom during my months-long struggles with this chapter, I realized I was not privileging the body, my family, and my culture in its/our everyday practices, and its/our knowledges/makings:

Me: I just can't seem to write this chapter.

Mom: Which one is it?

Me: The food one.

Mom: Well, you remember when I taught you how to make chiles rellenos and we made them together?

Me: Yah, but I mean, that's just not enough. I need, like, more. I've read the theory stuff I want to use, but I need, like, more.

Mom: And you and your lita made tortillas, and in Louisiana, you started making them again when you were homesick...

Me: Yah, but I mean more, like the academic stuff that will show I know what I'm talking about.

Mom: And Marisela's [my great aunt's] cooking and tamales and Christmas Eves at her house with everyone cooking and eating...

Me: Yah, but I have nothing to actually work with.

This conversation is not actually a single conversation; it is several mixed together—each one similar, each one with different examples, each one with my saying I did not actually *have* anything. We had this conversation over and over—until I hung up the last phone call and realized I was afraid to say that I know the things that I am



talking about for fear of having to find sources for the culture I live, until I hung up and realized that embodied practices mean recognizing my own body in Mexican food productions, until I hung up and realized I cannot put the pieces of this chapter together without listening to my mom, my family, and my culture(s).

Like my other chapters, I weave stories into my discussion—and ask readers to think what that means for academic boundaries, what it means that writers and readers have to do work to place personal stories and theories together, how personal stories and theory produce each other, what it means that personal stories belong in the middle and not just in the introductions, conclusions, and margins of a dissertation. And like my other chapters, I ask why paying attention to bodies in all of these practices matter.

My intent in this chapter is not to give a stamp of academic approval to Mexican cooking and food practices. My intent is not to claim a space for Mexican and Mexican American feminisms in the kitchen—Meredith E. Abarca has already done this amazingly in *Voices in the Kitchen*. My intent is not to create a philosophy of Mexican cooking. My intent is not to take anthropological measures to call certain food practices authentically or inauthentically Mexican. While this is written in alphabetic text format, my intent is not to reformulate food practices into a text by showing how it is or can be viewed as literature. Recognizing what my intent is *not* is important to this chapter because sometimes formulations, like definitions, require understanding what something is *not* (or does not have to be) in order to try to (re)imagine a different space for rhetoric. And this space, in this chapter, imagines the ways that Mexican Americans use food for purposeful identity—and thus, rhetorical—constructions. This imagining comes from

looking at the spaces Emma Perez says are silenced by patriarchy and colonialism, from listening to the stories feminism hushed in order to fight patriarchy (Abarca 19, Perez 4-5).

I *do* want to think about Mexican foodways as a method of rhetorical productions. However, rather than only seeing Mexican food as a product to analyze, I suggest that the making and spaces of the food—through alphabetically written recipes or through memory, through group cooking or through solo cooking, through “traditional” means or through shortcuts—act as rhetorical practices that involve both the physical body and the collective (though ever-changing) cultural body. de Certeau argues in *The Practices of Everyday Life* that there are some practices that do not require language to make cultural meaning—“Enunciation furnishes a model of these characteristics, but they can also be discovered in the relation that other practices (walking, residing, etc.) entertain with non-linguistic systems” (*Practice* 33). With cooking being both verbal-language based and body-encoded based (and not necessarily both at the same time), foodways work as production, initiation, interruption, and continuation of cultural identity.

Because Mexican-American foodways both implement and react to Mexican American culture(s), thinking about how food and cooking practices are rhetorical expands definitions of rhetoric beyond the oral-written binary. From the gathering to the preparation, and from the conversation to the consumption, Mexican-American food practices, like many cultures’ food practices have distinct food identities and are often

central to cultural practice. This chapter asks us to think about how food becomes part of what makes Chican@ and Mexican-American identity purposeful and rhetorical.

On the scratched-up surface of my abuela's secondhand heavy, wood table, she and I pressed out dough for tortillas together. With our hands, we would knead the dough, roll it out, knead the dough, roll it out, make balls of dough, roll them back out. Finally, she'd flop the flattened dough on to the small gas stove against the wall of her tiny shotgun kitchen. Years later, after she'd gone on, I started making my own tortillas when I would get lonely. And as I have made my own familia-from-scratch in graduate school (and before and beyond), we continually discuss food—making it, eating it, remembering it. Our most challenging, theoretical discussions often come while partaking in—and then discussing—food. We roll out the theories (not always new) and flatten them out, roll them out, flatten them out. We learn to *practice* them.

In this way, these participatory experiences become more than only cultural productions; they also become a way of practicing epistemologies. Through our families and through our familias-from-scratch, the coming together passes knowledge from and within our bodies. Ultimately, these everyday community performances allow for a continual renewal of memory and body ritual through indigenous connections to shifting and adaptable Chican@ practices.

### **Foodways and Culture**

“It was in my mother's kitchen in that small adobe home that I learned to cook. There that she passed down to me her knowledge of foods and hers; there she fed my body and nurtured my soul,” says Lucy Fischer-West in her memoir, *Child of Many*

*Rivers* (95). Conversations about food are part of rhetoric as I defined in Chapter One—part of meaning-making and, in many ways, part of power contestations between that which seeks to incorporate cultures into a “melting pot” and those which seek to practice community-based culture. In “Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption,” Roland Barthes compares nation-state food preferences in order to discuss food as cultural, and in doing so answers the question, “For what is food?”

It is not only a collection of products... It is also, and at the same time, a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of usages, situations, and behavior... People may very well continue to believe that food is an immediate reality (necessity of pleasure), but this does not prevent it from carrying a system of communication... (29-30)

While Barthes’ article privileges both nation-state and class structures (systems which must be interrogated in food practices), he also points to the ways that food plays into discussions of power contestations because as Counihan and Van Esterik argue, “Food touches everything. Food is the foundation of every economy. It is a central pawn in political strategies of states and households. Food marks social differences, boundaries, bonds, and contradictions” (6). And as Chapter Three looks at the ways our stories and other peoples’ stories cross and disrupt colonial borders, so, too, can food cross these imperial nation-state borders. However, food also helps construct borders to build communities as separate from other communities. Food lands on our plates not as only nutrition but also as communicative practices that affect why food matters to us and why we matter to foodways.

Whether through ritual practice or through everyday practices (de Certeau), whether through the making or the conversations about making, choices of what to eat, how to make the food, where to go to get/eat it and how to present it are among the practices of Chican@ rhetorics. Refugio I. Rochin, in discussing Mexican-American food and identity, says that “Food is always more than food. It is status, symbol, a way of expressing identity. Food is a way to preserve an ethnic connection. For those of us who prepare salsa, barbecued beef, or carnitas, sheep heads or go out of our way to find pan dulce, tunas (prickly pears), food is a way to show our Mexican roots and solidarity” (Rochin 68-69). When I miss El Paso and family most, I find myself craving Mexican food, and so I drop bags of pinto beans and corn tortillas, green “Mexican” squash and extra jalapeños in my grocery cart. These foods are physical connections to my family, ways of expressing myself at home, and forms of practice that keeps me tied to my roots. They are also ingredients I work with so that my body can go through the motions of making—meaning and food. When I use them in the kitchen, I am once again in my abuela’s small, shotgun kitchen, watching her stir her *mole*, or in my mom’s cobalt-blue kitchen, watching her briefly dip tortillas in oil for enchiladas. I carry on those practices.

Foodways are partially about the food choices made by people—“No more so that any other elements of material life, food is not presented to humans in a natural state. Even raw or picked from a tree, fruit is already a *cultured foodstuff*, prior to any preparation and by the simple fact that it is regarded as being edible” (de Certeau and Giard 75-76). However, foodways are also more than the actual food on the plate. There

is interaction in the practice of foodways that goes beyond the actual materiality of the food as separate from the body. Lucy M. Long defines foodways as participatory; it

implies the full spectrum of activities surrounding food.... a network of activities and systems—physical, social (communicative), cultural, economic, spiritual, and aesthetic. Participation in this multifaceted universe involves the procurement and/or the production of raw materials, the preparation of those materials into food, the preservation of foods, the planning of menus and meal systems, the presentation of dishes, the performance of eating styles or techniques, the system of food habits, food ethos and aesthetics as well as the actual consumption of food. (182)

Food, foodways, and food practices then become a multi-faceted example of a cultural practice that helps inform the rhetoricity of Chican@ identity, as well as the ways that Chican@s practice rhetoric.

### **Purposeful and Rhetorical Food and Community Making**

Foodways can provide an example of purposeful enactment of practiced space through the heuristic of embodied storying—epistemology, bodies, and active story-making. Chapter One looked at how narratives can create spaces of rhetoric through history, writing, and story-telling. Specifically, it looked at the ways we often forget to practice codices in a way that affirms a continued, practiced community through public story-telling that involves multiple processes, but it also looked at the ways the bodily enactment of codices lives on through the (re)crafting of stories about Malinche in order to create spaces for challenging Chican@ identities. Cooking practices, or foodways, act

as a form of purposeful story-making that creates space for identity affirmation. The following story about making tortillas with my abuela helps piece together a larger story of Chican@ rhetorics, and it helps us work through the way embodied storying is constantly enacting epistemologies, constantly referring to and produced by bodies, and constantly retelling itself, story after story.

*Tortillas, Sazón, and the Body*

*My abuela and I used to make tortillas together when I was a child. If we made flour tortillas, we made them from scratch. She wiped down the table. It was an ornate dark brown table that was probably too big for the room but never big enough whenever everyone came to eat. There were some areas on the table that were scratched like a schoolhouse desk, scratched so that the lighter, unpolished wood came out. When she wiped down the table, she made long, strong strokes with her arm. Her shoulder muscles were tense and strong, her knuckles red from holding tight to the cleaning rag she dragged across the table. Eventually, I was in charge of wiping the table down before we started—"Limpiela," she would nod her head toward the table from the shotgun kitchen and hand me the rag.*

*Sometimes we mixed everything in a bowl—the flour and the lard and the baking soda, the salt and water. Sometimes, the lard was Crisco. Sometimes, it was from leftovers. Other times, the times I remember more, we skipped the bowl completely. She dumped flour straight from a paper bag—how much ever she needed—on the newly cleaned table. Then, with her fingers, she dug out a small hole in the pile of flour. She used her fingers to dig out the lard from the container and dropped it in. She splashed*

*water from a bowl on to the mixture and added salt. She didn't use measuring cups or spoons. She used her hands to feel it out, to feel out whether the mixture was too wet, too dry.*

*With the heel of her hands and cupped fingers, she pushed the surrounding flour up to cover the hole with the lard and water with the flour, mashed it together with her hands. When it became more than just flour and water and lard, when it became dough, she folded it in on itself. When it was dough, she let me try to work with the ingredients. My hands were smaller, weaker, and so it was a slower process when I folded the dough over itself. Eventually, she would take over again. If she needed more water, she added it. If it was too wet, she added flour. Eventually, she would taste the dough to see if it needed more salt or lard or flour, and I ate pinches of the raw dough until she threatened me with stomach aches.*

*She sectioned off portions of dough into small balls, then rolled the small balls out with a large rolling pin, and she let me roll out my own small balls with a metal can. We stacked them until we had enough for the day. Then I'd stand next to her gas-burner stove, watch her put them straight on the burners and flip them with her fingers, no tongs—something I still cannot do.*

In *Women in the Kitchen*, Abarca works through a concept she calls “sazón,” “the language spoken in the kitchen” (51).<sup>60</sup> It is the concept in which the body learns to know and feel how it participates in cooking and culture:

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<sup>60</sup> Thank you to Marcos Del Hierro (and later Victor Del Hierro) who reminded me of Abarca's discussion about sazón at the 2010 El Mundo Zurdo Conference—and for the many discussions about food practices and eating, in general.



... The sazón becomes the culinary discourse to conceptualize and articulate aspects of their personal and social cultural environment. The kitchen and the sazón represent a form of ‘sitio y lengua,’ to quote Emma Pérez, that offers a site of power (the kitchen) and a discourse of empowerment (the sazón) to those historically silenced by colonialist, imperialist, and patriarchal social mechanisms. (51)

In order to work through this practice though, Abarca looks and interacts with lived practices in the kitchen. She learns this concept by watching and conversing in the kitchen—not by reading cookbooks but by participating. The following takes place between two women as Abarca learned how to make their versions of “Mexican” rice, a dish that takes patience and attention:

Irma: I think that is something you learn because I never measure anything. I just add water, and the rice comes out perfect. I guess I learned well. I feel it. I stir the water in the frying pan, and I know.

Meredith: You can calculate just by seeing the water, right?

Irma: No, I think it is in my hand because I just mix the rice [with a spoon] and I know when it needs more water or when it has enough. When I add the water, I stir it. I know. I don’t know how I know. That, I could not explain to you. (50)

Through sazón, we can see that by “purposeful and rhetorical,” I do not necessarily mean that we must always be completely conscious of whether we use lard

or Crisco—or now, when both of these products are being critiqued, neither—whether we hold an avocado when we slice into it or whether we balance the avocado against the counter to do so—or what kind(s) of chiles we use to make chilaquiles verdes. By “purposeful and rhetorical,” I do not necessarily mean being conscious of why we do any of those things either.

I do, however, mean that we learn through practice, through engagement between our bodies and materials. Angela Haas, working with American Indian wampum and from an embodied hypertext theory, says that

The body remembers the weaving and the performance of wampum. Regular performances of wampum hypertexts suggest that Western hypertexts are relegated to dormancy until the moment we need to recall it... human memory (physiological, emotional, mental, and bodily) and material memories are connected—in an alliance to foster hypertextual memory. (“A Rhetoric of Alliance” 103)

While I am not trying to make discussions of food into a “traditional” understanding of computer encoded hypertext (as Haas also also moves away from), I do want to point to the ways that our bodies’ interactions with food act as memory practice through a kind of hypertextual body-memory that works with the senses and with materials.

Haas’s theorizing of the connection of human memory with the body’s purposeful interactions with materials combined with Abarca’s sazón tells the story of the body’s necessary role in the stories and rhetorics of foodways. Some of the ways we learn to cook and eat can be and are passed through cultural memory that requires bodily

engagement. Even now, I can still feel the “right” consistency of tortilla dough when I press my fingertips or palms into it; I still use a metal can to roll out my tortillas (I have yet to buy my own rolling pin), and I still like to taste uncooked dough. In Abarca’s story, Irma *feels* the consistency of the rice through her body, by the push and pull of the spoon in her hand. It is a visceral reaction to making that produces the food. Some of these food choices are learned through formal training and some of them through being chastised about the possibility of cutting into the palm of our hands. Still, others through making mistakes, such as serving rice that while it is the right red color, the grains are still too hard to chew. However we learn—in a familial, professional, or other setting—we are making meaning. We are constructing, reconstructing, and deconstructing rhetorics for, by, and about Chican@s through our own practices.

*Food as Rhetorical Space Making*

As Mexican Americans make purposeful and rhetorical choices, we are also creating spaces that mark our identities as communities. Throughout *A Place to Stand: Politics and Persuasion in a Working Class Bar*, Jule Lindquist messies the neat constructions of rhetorical participants and topics (of research and practice). Lindquist lays out rhetorical style through an Aristotelian means but also deconstructs the neat categories. As she listens to conversations and conducts interviews, Lindquist finds that the space of the bar is created by certain members of the community acting as both speaker and audience. While sometimes a speaker controls the topic of conversation, there are other times in which she/he speaks in order to hear herself/himself, to convince herself/himself, or to push forward herself/himself as the dominant member of the group.

By doing so, she/he speaks to construct the space by her/his own logic but also participates in the space as receiver of her/his, as well as others', logical appeals.

In a similar fashion, foodways messy audience/speaker/topic constructions. They do so to create a cultural space, whether in a specific place or in multiples practiced spaces that work beyond bordered places—and again, sometimes these spatial creations are conscious and sometimes not. For instance, when Rochin (quoted above) argues food is more than simply food for Mexican Americans and uses pan dulce as one of the examples of a cultural staple, he points to not only the choice of food (logic) but also those of us that eat them (the audience) and the culture who perpetuates them (a type of speaker)—but he also speaks to the ways that logic and audience and speaker intersect to create a practiced space. There are no neat, separate rhetorical components here.

As someone who grew up with pan dulces often sitting in the middle of my grandmothers' kitchen table in the mornings, passing a table with a plate or box of sweet breads brings back memories of home. It is the type of practiced physical interaction that Haas speaks of. Passing a panadería also means home and family in that it offers access to spatial memory. It means belonging and, as Rochin argues, “connection.” Important to point out is that my body has a physical reaction to a panadería on the side of I-45 in Houston or to a plate of pan dulces kept out at the welcome table of the National Association of Chicanos and Chicans (NACCS): Tejas Foco. In the first, I get a memory construction of space; in the second, I am in a physical construction of space. Both privilege my Mexican-American/Chicana identity.

In cases of memory construction (e.g. passing a panadería without stopping), I smell the sweet breads even if I am not close enough—and I am not being metaphorical. I can smell the breads, the ones with the buttered sugar spread on top (mantecados) and the ones with the brain-like brown sugar crusts (conchas). I can taste them, too, on the top, middle of my tongue because as a child when the breads would get too hard to chew, I would lick the sweet sugary tops off. My body responds through memory and reminds me of El Paso, and my grandmother's house, the old carpet on the floor underneath my always barefoot feet—and after spending a summer in Zacatecas, my body remembers studying at small tables with too-hard chairs while I licked my fingers of butter and crumbs. My mom has told me before that these smells remind her of *her* grandmothers' house. She remembers early mornings with pan dulces and a little bit of cafe con leche before all the rest of the cousins woke up—and Mexico City and Chihuahua bakeries that she and her grandmother frequented. Many Mexicans who live in places with access to panaderías buy these breads early when the bakeries first open—or often, as my family bought them, the night before for half off as day old bread because they were cheaper that way, even if harder the next morning. These breads make our mouths water; they make our bodies part of a space we may or may not physically be. As Lucy Fischer-West reveals,

Resurrecting the tastes, sounds, sights, smells, and feel of my mother's kitchen doesn't take much effort... the aroma of the garlic, the sizzle of pureed tomato mixture hitting the hot cast-iron skillet in which she had browned her rice... [my mother] would scoop up food with her hot—

often burnt crisp—tortillas... she rarely finished a meal without finding an excuse to lick her fingers. (98)

Much like in the second chapter when I pointed to the ways that the very real participation of physical bodies in the production and practicing of codices, so too is food a material substance that is produced and practiced by physical bodies. Leaving out boxes and plates of pan dulces in “Mexican spaces,” such as those of Chican@ conferences, are purposeful decisions made by the conference hosts. Choosing these specific foods to bring to a space where Mexican- American practices would be privileged brought a hypertext of materials, bodies, and practices together in order to make kinship connections and claim spaces of our collective identities. In fact, upon arrival to the conference with three friends, we looked at each other and grinned. We knew we were in a space that claimed us as its own—even while we claimed it with our bodies and memories.

As Sherrie A. Inness argues in the introduction to *Kitchen Culture in America*, “Food is *never* a simple matter of sustenance. How we eat, what we eat, and who prepares and serves our meals are all issues that shape society” (5). Foodways shape our communities—as different from or in conjunction with other societies or parts of our communities. Importantly while Mexican and Mexican-American food is often posited as ethnic or exotic and, therefore, a treat for segments of the U.S., Chican@s, Mexicans, and Mexican Americans do not practice these foodways or construct these spaces as ethnic; we construct them as community. This does not mean that an outsider would not see the food as “ethnic,” clearly taking a look at a hotel menu or an internet travel guide

lists Mexican food in this way. However, this construction is made from outside; our food practices help to solidify the community internally and, sometimes but not always, as a reaction to the outside.

While finding a panadería in a town comprised of a small number of Latin@s often demarcates a Latin@ presence, leaving out a plate or box of pan dulces in a home or not so public place may seem to be a-rhetorical. These decisions may also seem a-rhetorical when the spaces occur in neighborhoods or cities that are largely populated by Latin@s and are thus frequented without much thought. However, the access and continued presence of these foods affirms a space of community from and for members of the community.

Foodways and spatial constructions are also moveable (thus my reliance on space rather than place) and can make someone feel comfortable in a space that is not purposefully constructed for her/him. In *Drinking Cultura*, José Antonio Burciaga formulates part of his Chicano identity through his affinity for jalapeños. He ties the eating of chiles to his indigenous ancestry through land<sup>61</sup>—and, in that way, connects himself to a community that crosses imperial borders. He does so with visceral descriptions of “the piquant sensation of the tongue, the itch and tingling of the scalp, the beads of sweat on the forehead, the clearing of the sinus passages and the fogging of eyeglasses [as] part of a cultural ritual” (14). This description ties the eating experience to the very real bodily reactions. Food reminds people of the ways that bodies are required for rhetorical practices in which identity through meaning making becomes

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<sup>61</sup> Many chiles, especially the spicy variety, are indigenous to the Americas.

physical and not just intellectual. In formulating his identity through an affinity for chiles, and jalapeños specifically, he tells this story:

My addiction to jalapeños is such that I confess to have eaten at exclusive restaurants and attended formal banquets with fresh jalapeños in my coat pocket. Banquet food can be boring and asking for the Tabasco sauce is a *faux pas*. If sitting with people who find such conduct reproachable, I simply cup my hands around the pepper and bite into it from time to time without their ever knowing. I have only been caught once, and another time a table companion confessed to me he wished he had brought jalapeños with him. (17)

During the telling of this story, Burciaga points to the ways that spaces can be constructed through foodways and bodily practice. In order to make his food to his liking or to bring his cultural practices into a place that serves food he does not particularly like, he bring his own jalpeño, tucked away and hidden—but this works as an intentional practice of his own identity. It makes the bland food into a rhetorical meaning-making process in that he makes the decision to create a space for himself at the table. And the use of this uncooked jalapeño connects de Certeau's assertion (quoted earlier in this chapter) that even raw foods are rhetorical in that their meaning are not inherent until they are chosen as edible by a certain culture.

Thinking about Mexican-American purposeful and rhetorical cultural productions allows a rethinking of the ways that alphabetic text and verbal narratives are often privileged as the pinnacle of rhetoric. As de Certeau suggests, there are



enunciations dependent on practices that do not require the verbal; they can live in everyday practices, like walking, cooking, and eating. Furthermore, it is necessary to rethink the rhetorical practices and the people who use them that we inadvertently subjugate—or erase completely.

In *Women in the Kitchen*, Abarca advocates for moving the discussion, analysis and practices of the kitchen away from the “rhetorical” and toward the “living” (55). She does so after confronting the categories that Plato creates while using the socratic method in *Gorgias* and the *Phaedrus*. Through this method, Plato separates out cooking as an art that does little for the body and the soul. In this way, cooking is relegated to the unserious, to the female in his male-centered approach to rhetoric. It is no wonder, then, that Abarca advocates for moving away from the kitchen as rhetorical. When cooking activities are relegated to the “lesser sex” and to a mere thing at which to play—and in contemporary times as often a-rhetorical even when discussed in relation to cultural practices—then Abarca’s advocacy makes sense.

However, we can tell a different story about a rhetorical vs. lived kitchen if we recognize that the body is centered as part of the production and practice of rhetoric and if we recognize that Chican@ identity is always rhetorical through and in reaction to cultural productions, like food. A kitchen—or foodways, in general—can act as both lived space, as well as rhetorical productions and producers. This chapter asked that the recognition of bodies be imperative in the practice of and to the stories we tell about foodways, and the final chapter places this chapter, as well as the previous chapters, in conversation on order to consider how embodied storying can affect the History of

Rhetoric, can position Chicana@ rhetorics as an essential component in theories of rhetoric, and can challenge us to think through how embodied storying might affect our pedagogical practices. The next chapter asks us to roll the theories, flatten out the histories, add more or less, asks us to taste and try something to learn our own rhetorical sazón.

## CHAPTER V

## A CONCLUSION: CHICAN@ RHETORICS AND EMBODIED

## STORYING, CHALLENGING RHETORIC AND PEDAGOGY

“Our field’s tendency to turn everything into ‘text’  
further removes us from the realities of bodies and  
embodied knowledge as central to all rhetorical work.

We are, after all, bodies.”

— Qwo-Li Driskill, “Yelesalehe Hiwayona”

“We gather up these strands broken from the web of  
life. They shiver with our love, as we call them the  
names of our relatives and carry them to our home  
made of the four directions and sing...”

— Joy Harjo, “Reconcilliation - A Prayer”<sup>62</sup>

“It seems incongruous to be holed up in a library carrel  
writing about the cast of thousands who have contributed to this  
book. It would feel more appropriate to go out into the streets  
and break into a *Mama Mia*-type political song and dance with  
the masses! The human energies behind the projects described  
in these pages are fueled not only by critical thinking but

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<sup>62</sup> I was reminded of Joy Harjo’s “Reconcilliation - A Prayer” when rereading Malea Powell’s “Listening to Ghosts.”

also by creative experimentation and tapping of all aspects  
of our selves—body, mind, and spirit.”

— Deborah Barndt, *Viva!*

Throughout my dissertation, I have woven stories into my research, discussion, and analysis—some of them personal, some of them considered more widely passed on by communities; some of them about laws, some of them despite laws; some of them difficult to put into an alphabetic text, some of them forced into alphabetic text. But all of them, all of them have come from people and their/our interactions with stories of how history and theory and culture and rhetoric and writing are continually practiced together.

I will admit that this has been difficult—the weaving and the honesty and the balancing—not just because of the enormity of a dissertation but because, as I pointed to in Chapter Four, there is a constant battle of writing the “critical” dissertation that academia asks of us and writing the interruptive dissertation that I proposed. I use *critical* here in the way that it is used in many English departments—as a way to differentiate between a creative dissertation (of poetry, fiction, or creative nonfiction) and a non-creative dissertation (of theory, analysis, or criticism). I put *critical* in quotation marks because this adjective is often evoked to differentiate between the two in order to stabilize the seriousness of a discipline. These inter- and intra-disciplinary divides work to establish disciplines, to bar certain kinds of writing, to deny access to certain bodies and the practices that come with them, to privilege some work as the more

serious. Sometimes, these rhetorical divides rely on Aristotle's numerous categories—as well as modern rhetoric's formulations of Aristotle's categories as dependent on our contemporary understandings of literature, rhetoric, and science. They rely on hierarchal structures and systems that build themselves on top of bodies (“Listening to Ghosts”).

However, as Qwo-Li Driskill argues in hir work on Cherokee performance rhetorics, “While this makes sense in the process of building our profession, it makes little sense for those who are interested in addressing the modes of communication, expression, and civic engagement central to most people's lives” (“Yelesalehe Hiwayona”187). And for many of us who try to practice decolonial methodologies as described in Linda Tuhiwai Smith's work, addressing these modes means taking our work back to our communities rather than simply researching them and talking about them within academia. If we ignore the ways that our communities produce and practice rhetoric, the ways that our communities are affected by our work, and the ways that rhetoric is always culturally situated, then we continue to establish professions that either continually distort our communities or do not engage our communities at all. We continue to keep communities outside of academia as if there are no connections when, in fact, some of our bodies *are* those connections. We continue to ignore the racism, heteropatriarchy, sexism, classism, and ableism upon which the academy's systems are built. And we unsuccessfully continue to try to dismantle the master's house with the master's tools (Lorde 99).

Keeping this divide in tact also convinces some of us that we are not all being critical, creative, and/or theoretical in our work. To assume that doing “critical” work

does not include imagining a contribution to knowledge-making assumes that we are not being creative in those imaginings. To assume that our creative work is not theoretical is to assume that our creative work will not show a world view that we—or our characters—produce. Among other works,<sup>63</sup> Aydé Enriquez Loya's dissertation makes an argument for bringing the rhetoric-poetic split to a close and undoes our assumptions that the creative merely happens—instead of also interrogating the ways that the creative comes from epistemologies that inform theory making, translational practices, memoir writing, and poetic images. Driskill's work on performance and Enriquez-Loya's work on rhetorical choices in creative writing remind us that, as Malea Powell says, “the only difference between a history, a theory, a poem, an essay, is the one that we have ourselves imposed” (“Listening” 15).

This is what I mean when I say that this work has been difficult. I have argued with myself about how much of the creative belongs in here and how much does not contribute to the academic. I have attempted to guess at what will not be considered vigorous enough. I have attempted to justify what I am doing.

However, one of the ways that I have attempted to challenge this creative-critical binary is by employing the heuristic of embodied storying. Embodied storying has allowed me to think through the rhetorics of stories, theories, and histories and their continual storied processes as situated in epistemologies reliant on the body's productions and knowledges. In Chapter Two, I laid out the ways that Chican@s need to

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<sup>63</sup> There is such a large host of people who undo this split that I cannot even name them all, but here are a few that have contributed to my thinking: Sor Juana de la Cruz, James Berlin, Jay Dolmage, Gloria Anzaldua, Cherríe Moraga, Malea Powell, Kendall León, Qwo-Li Driskill, Victor Villanueva, Hayden White, Norma Cantú.

think through how we are engaging with indigenous communities through both the disembodied and embodied storying we do through the reclamation of Nahua codices and our continual (re)tellings of Malinche. In Chapter Three, I challenged disembodied cartographic practices by laying out the systematic erasure of Chican@ bodies that have already been practicing and storying on these lands. In Chapter Four, I showed how Chican@ foodways can act as methods for Chican@ rhetorics that both affect and are affected by bodies.

After having worked through those chapters as specific examples of how this heuristic can contribute to the analysis of Chican@ rhetorics, I now ask how embodied storying contributes to the field(s) of rhetoric and writing. How does embodied storying affect histories of rhetoric? How can embodied storying affect Chican@ rhetorics? And how can we use embodied storying in our pedagogy and classrooms?

### **How Can We Use Embodied Storying in Histories of Rhetoric?**

As I discussed in Chapter One, actual acceptance and practice of expanding rhetorical traditions are still points of contention. In order to keep a single rhetorical tradition in place, we have to practice keeping it in place by privileging those selected authors and readings. And in order to recognize various rhetorics in context of their own epistemologies, we also have to practice recognizing them by working to find the silenced, ignored, and erased voices. As Malea Powell says in “Listening to Ghosts,”

If dominant narratives only attain dominance through imagining themselves whole in contrast to other/Other narratives, then we must imagine those narratives differently, imagine ourselves in a different

relationship to them. The challenge, then, is to imagine an alternative, not an Alternative, one that confronts difference and race, racism and empire, in the very discourses that bind us. (18)

Practicing this expansion means imagining—it means recognizing our own creativity, bodies, and participation in order to see what established traditions have erased.

How, then, can we use embodied storying to affect the History of Rhetoric? And since my formulation of embodied storying comes from a Chican@-centered approach, do we have to place Chican@ methodologies in conversation with not only the History of Rhetoric—but also multiple histories of rhetoric? In short, for *this* dissertation, yes. Just as I am being forthright about the center from which I am working, we need to recognize that the established History of Rhetoric also has a center from which it works. It upholds certain values.

To read Aristotle without also recognizing his categorization of disabled bodies in the *Generation of Animals* means that we do not recognize the ways in which we have closed off access to rhetoric—just as recognizing the ways that Chican@s sometimes erase their indigenous kin and ancestors. To include Sor Juana as important to a single rhetorical history because she uses the tropes of medieval letter writing means that we still include her based on European standards. To include Henry Louis Gates, Jr. because he directly engages language and not because he is also directly engaging hegemonic power structures as a form of rhetoric means that we are still looking for ways to define African American rhetorics with “traditional tradition.” Instead, we should do the



difficult work of engaging rhetoric through multiple lenses and through different cultures' epistemologies and/or definitions of rhetoric. Paula M. Moya argues that

When a hegemonic culture confuses what *it* finds valuable with the concept of value as such, it fails to acknowledge the way different cultural practices or artifacts are valuable in different ways for different people. When we do not carefully consider for whom and to whom a culture or a cultural practice is valuable, we can easily conclude that something foreign to us has no inherent value. (162)

Embodying storying—even with my use of a Chicana@-centered approach—can help us read across rhetorical practices and engage with multiple rhetorical histories. From this heuristic, we can see that all cultures have epistemologies that we need to recognize, all cultures have bodies that we ignore, and all cultures tell stories (and have stories told about them). As an example, conducting research about “the classical era” (or any era or culture) means, at the very least, that we recognize two things: (1) that the classical era has its own cultural realities and (2) that we are historically and culturally situated in understanding those realities.

When looking at the sophists, Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, Aspasia, and the myriads of others who influence understandings of rhetoric, we should realize that while we engage them from our own cultural centers, that era had a multitude of cultural influences that do not allow them straight translation into our era. They had different communities, understandings of the world, and artistic influences. These things helped them define rhetoric.

Secondly, we need to confront the ways that we are historically and culturally confined in our understandings of the construction(s) or rhetoric. As Martin Bernal argues throughout *Black Athena*, we need to recognize the ways that having a supposed single lineage of rhetoric, as well as philosophy, literature, and science, encourages us to think about the Greco-Roman lineage in terms of today's imperial system(s). Bernal, in fact, argues that the area of the world in which Greece is situated is much more likely to have been part of what is now Africa and Asia. How does this understanding of the world shift our understandings of how *the* rhetorical tradition has been constructed? We need to think about this as we continue to construct, reconstruct, and deconstruct this single lineage.

One of the ways we can do this is by bringing in multiple histories into our understanding of rhetoric(s). Gabriela Raquel Ríos' work argues that indigenous language practices and (non-)writing may not be as intertwined in European systems as we have been led to believe. What would it mean to look at khipu through the lens of the cultures that produce them rather than trying to situate them in European writing systems? Guaman Poma's work on Andean government, identity, and colonialism during the 1500s makes direct intervention in identity and argument, yet few rhetorical scholars bring him into non-specialized history of rhetoric courses or lineages. What would it look like to bring works by Averroes into a history that ignores the rhetorical work done by Muslims in translating and thinking through Greco rhetorics?<sup>64</sup> All of

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<sup>64</sup> For a larger discussion about this, please see Maha Baddar's article, "The Arabs Did Not 'Just' Translate Aristotle" and Baddar's dissertation, "From Athens (via Alexandria) to Baghdad: Hybridity as Epistemology."

these discussions would ask us to expand our understandings of rhetoric as only attached to argument, its tropes, and its European connections by situating rhetorical histories in differing epistemologies.

### **How Can We Use Embodied Storying in Chican@ Rhetorics?**

Many Latin@s in the field(s) of rhetoric and writing have gained access to the field(s) through language acquisition studies, discourse studies, composition, and pedagogy. And while these interventions are completely necessary, so is recognizing that Chican@s have our own rhetorical histories beyond these areas. These areas allow us to take up already accepted theories in language, writing, form, and grammar—one of the ways that Bizzell argued for certain inclusions into *The Rhetorical Tradition*—and apply them to marginalized communities. However, if we do not start (re)considering the ways that marginalized peoples—including Latin@s and Chican@s—have always already participated in histories of rhetoric, we will continue to construct histories as traditional and necessary, or radical and extraneous.

How, then, can embodied storying help us to imagine and analyze Chican@ rhetorics? Because Chican@s are still attempting to figure out our histories in conjunction with and through our own definitions of rhetoric, we are also uncovering how we can look at Chican@ rhetorics. As I mentioned in Chapter One, some Chican@s map out a Chican@ rhetoric through mapping a lineage to rhetorics based in Greece. However, by using embodied storying as a heuristic, I provide a lens (one of many that will develop as we continue to participate in the field(s)) through which we can examine

our practices in all of their varied forms. Codices, maps, and cooking were simply—and not so simply—the three examples I chose to work through the process.

Importantly, those of us who work in the field(s) through language studies or writing studies need to find ways to interrupt the dominant narrative about rhetoric. Yes, there are scholars who have contributed greatly to language acquisition and Latin@s in the classroom—and these contributions are important and needed—but how would these studies differ if we were not forcing ourselves to fit into a mold that was never made for us? How would we understand second-language acquisition differently if we understood not only Spanish to English learners but also understood—or attempted to understand—how Spanish practiced in Mexico has been influenced by its indigenous speakers in Mexico? What might it mean to confront our erasure from and relationship with the histories of rhetoric before and while we challenge what composition (as attached to the traditional rhetorical model) studies practices?

The very real danger for Chican@ rhetorics is to continue to assume that we must fit ourselves into a preconceived notion of rhetoric that intentionally and unintentionally marginalizes our varied identities and practices that are based in the Americas. Simply placing Gloria Anzaldúa in *The Rhetorical Tradition* does not accomplish anything if we do not recognize that Anzaldúa's very work is arguing for a decentering of western epistemologies. Including her in this anthology because she speaks about identity construction through language and not considering the ways that she actually dismantles a normative definition of rhetoric and language does an injustice both to her and rhetorical productions.

The only other person of Mexican heritage in this volume is Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, which because of the book's title, lends newcomers to believe that not only were Mexican women silent between these two women and time periods—but also before them. It inadvertently erases the many peoples—indigenous, Mexican, and Mestiz@—who spoke before Sor Juana. Furthermore, while I am not arguing for their omission in this text, I do want to point to the ways that these women are often read in line with a U.S.-European history—a history that, as discussed earlier, Dolmage and Bernal argue is already misconstrued.

Embodied storying gives a lens to begin to think through how Chican@ peoples practice rhetoric. Embodied storying asks us to think about the epistemology of what we are analyzing/practicing, asks us to recognize the bodies that are being centered in the discourse, and asks us to privilege the process(es) of stories and story-making. Embodied storying, then, affords ways to approach what might be considered rhetorical—history-making, definitions of writing, oral narratives, cartography, and foodways. Furthermore, placing these practices as active stories and as actively being storied about/on, reminds us that bodies and their knowledges help construct rhetoric, how rhetorical practices help to construct cultures, and that cultures are already rhetorical.

In essence, experience matters in both the practice of rhetoric and the production of identity. Rather than think about rhetoric and identity separately, we can see Chican@s as part of a larger discussion of the experiential, as part of that which informs embodied storying—theories of the flesh. As León argues,

But, perhaps more importantly, experience matters because it is from experience that rhetorics are made. Building a Chicana rhetoric as a research project has really been an investigation into Chicana experience. And it has also meant that as a rhetoric it is grounded in lived experience, it nonetheless is alterable and adaptable as our conditions and articulations shift, often in response to our enacted rhetorics. (154)

Chican@ rhetorics, then, should not and cannot be ignored because ignoring our rhetorical practices also means ignoring entire experiences. Ignoring and minimizing experiences continues to erase Chican@ peoples and our indigenous ancestors, not only from histories of rhetoric but also from everyday lived (hi)stories.

Furthermore, because embodied storying can help us to work through Chican@ rhetorics, it can also help us to think through how Chican@ rhetorics can inform definitions and histories of rhetoric. I briefly discussed what embodied storying, in general, can do for thinking through histories of rhetoric, but we also need to recognize that Chican@ rhetorics have something to offer to the discipline(s) of rhetoric and writing. Right now, the model for Chican@ rhetoric often works one way: Rhetoric → Chican@ rhetoric. We need to shift the model so that Chican@ rhetorics also inform rhetoric, at large, as well as creates bridges between the two: Chican@ rhetorics ↔ rhetorics. The second model allows for reciprocity, which means that Chican@s have something important to contribute to the field(s). As Powell suggests, we need to imagine our way into these spaces (“Listening to Ghosts” 20-21).

### How Can We Use Embodied Storying in Our Pedagogy?

I was twenty-one years old and three years into my undergraduate degree before I heard my family's voice echoed back to me in a book. It was an American literature class, and we read two short stories from Sandra Cisneros' *House on Mango Street*—"Hairs" and "The Monkey Garden." After reading these two short stories the night before class, I rushed to the bookstore before it closed to find both *The House on Mango Street* and anything else by her. I picked up that book, along with *Woman Hollering Creek* and *Loose Women*. In those books, I saw my tías and my abuela, as well as my great grandmother, my cousins, and family friends. I found stories about La Llorona and La Malinche that had been part of stories growing up. I heard the languages I'd heard all around me in El Paso. I read all night. By the end of that semester, I had also read Ana Castillo's *So Far From God* and Denise Chávez's *Loving Pedro Infante*. These stories made sense to my world. Why hadn't any of my teachers in El Paso, Texas, bothered to bring Mexican American stories into our classrooms when we lived right on the border? These experiences and aggravations lead me to bring multiple voices into the classroom, and I often find that many of my students share similar stories about seeing their voices reflected back to them in our classroom for the first time. And, as Stuart Hall argues in "Racist Ideologies and The Media," "How we 'see' ourselves and our social relations matters, because it enters into and informs our actions and practices" (272).

Because of my experiences, I think about not only Mexican American peoples but all peoples who have yet to recognize—or know to look for—themselves in a monolithic classroom. What would it mean if we recognized that implicit in academic

logic are often biased legal expectations (Williams) and a supposed neutral scientific reasoning (Lyotard)? What if classrooms were recognized as communities (hooks, Barndt, Keating)? What would it mean to accept other ways of writing—or to privilege other ways of making meaning as relevant (Boone and Mignolo)? What would it mean to decenter a linear history of rhetoric and writing (whether hailed as postmodern or not) of an invisible (white, able-bodied, middle-class, straight, male-centered) cultural norm that not only privileges a Euro-American history but also denies, belittles, and/or erases multiple voices? What would it mean to think about how we teach through the heuristic of embodied storytelling?

Because of the power systems at play in keeping a single History of Rhetoric, as well as the “established” History of Writing and Composition, it is essential that the discipline(s) challenge these histories in order to challenge the dominant power structures within pedagogical philosophies and within our classrooms. These challenges lead to, as Mignolo argues, a decentering or de-linking (“De-linking”). This does not mean that we institute a single way of teaching rhetoric, rhetorical theory, history of rhetoric, writing, or composition. As Walter Mignolo argues throughout *Local Histories/Global Designs*, to privilege any single epistemology or knowledge—even if a usually marginalized one—over all others re-institutes a colonial logic. Decentering means taking seriously what Paula Moya argues is essential for learning—both on the parts of educators and students—

A curriculum and pedagogy that self-consciously or un-self-consciously privileges the experiences and values of the dominant members of society



rarely helps, and in many cases actually harms, those members of society whose lives and experiences have been or continue to be subordinated within that social order. This is fundamentally an ethical issue and involves the self-conception of American society as a whole. (174)

Recognizing this is important both for the student and for the instructor. bell hooks argues that “Any classroom that employs a holistic model of learning will also be a place where teachers grow, and are empowered by the process” (21). Too often, as instructors we ignore our bodies and attempt to seem more neutral in order to seem more competent or to help our students learn. However, in doing so, we also pretend that we do not have cultural centers from which we work, and then we re-implement an assumed center of neutrality. Not only do we re-instigate the Cartesian split and ignore our bodies, we teach our students to do the same.

What does it mean, then, to teach without privileging the dominant members of society (as Moya advocates) *and* to recognize that instructors need to grow throughout their classroom experiences (as hooks points to)? One way to think about the de-centering the hegemonic power structures that both of these scholars push against is to recognize what Haas argues:

decolonial pedagogies de-center democracy as the primary aim—as it is a myth that cannot be fully realized given the biases of every member of any learning community— and instead reposition the critical inquiry of the relationships between colonialism and power and justice in all

culturally-situated learning environments as its goal. (“A Rhetoric of Alliance” 158-159).

It means that we recognize not only the multiple ways that we can construct these courses but also the multiple ways that students will learn in these courses—the multiple ways they will understand the materials, the multiple ways they will read them, the multiple ways they will talk about them, the multiple ways that they will produce their own work from them, and the multiple ways they will take them outside of the classroom and into their other communities.

This is what embodied storying can do to our pedagogy and in our classrooms. Embodied storying can challenge those of us that teach to remember that our students have their own knowledges that they bring with them into the classroom. Embodied storying means that we continually remind ourselves that their bodies are present in the classroom—in their various ways—and that these bodies affect the classroom and the community. Embodied storying can help us remember that our students continually produce stories as they read stories and they come from stories they already know.

In order to imagine how we might enact this kind of pedagogy, we can look at a concrete example in Christine McKenzie’s work with artists in Toronto. McKenzie’s work is part of the Viva! project, which is a transnational project that works with community organizations and university activists to challenge hegemonic education and practice a “cross-border exchange of popular education and community artists” (Barndt x). With a direct focus on community engagement, the organization privilege stories and the people who tell them. For example, in the beginning of McKenzie’s project with

artists in Toronto, she not only recognizes but begins to help her students realize that even with Toronto's attempt to capture a wide array of histories, "many stories are not told, because they fall outside the accepted image of multiculturalism that obscures racialized oppression" (75). Acknowledging upfront that histories of racial oppression matter in constructions of histories and the visibility of certain stories is essential to her community courses. She works through de-centering, learning, and practicing through what she calls a "spiral model of popular education." As stated in its moniker, it is a methodology/method that works from the inside out. This educational form spirals out in the following ways to engage "unequal power relations":

1. Start with the experience and knowledge of the participants
2. Identify patterns
3. Add new information & theory linked to the patterns in what people know
4. Practise skills, strategize, & plan for action
5. Apply what's been learned in the world (78)

McKenzie's model means that we privilege our students' knowledge bases. Instead of assuming they know nothing or that they (and we) are neutral practitioners, we purposefully encourage them to access their own experiences. We ask them to think through them and understand that as they read, talk, and practice throughout the course, they will read through those lenses. We also, however, ask them to recognize that there are other people around them with different cultural centers. We ask them to rhetorically listen. If we use Krista Ratcliffe's formulation of rhetorical listening, this means that we

recognize our privileges. For some, this will mean their whiteness; for others, this will mean their non-disabled bodies, for others their gender and/or their sexuality. Even as we learn to recognize our own centers, we also learn to *listen* to other knowledges, histories, and cultures.

While McKenzie challenges histories of oppression through her community art courses, she is also creating community with people outside of academia. By influencing students through her activist pedagogy, she is helping her students to influence the world as artists outside of academia. McKenzie and these artists, then, do what Ellen Cushman advocates for in “The Rhetorician as an Agent of Social Change”—they take on their learning as part of civic engagement. Cushman says that “if we see ourselves as both civic participants and as preparing students for greater civic participation, then activism becomes a means to well defined end for approaching the community” (12).

Like McKenzie, Ana Louise Keating works from the idea that there are no “status-quo stories,” no stories that *everyone* knows, *everyone* practices as their core beliefs (23-24, 40). In order to combat the idea of a universal system that everyone relies on, Keating takes these “presuppositions” into her class discussions:

1. Social injustice exists.
2. Our educations have been biased.
3. Blame is not useful, but accountability is.
4. “*We are related to all that is.*”

5. Categories and labels shape our perception.
6. People have a basic goodness.<sup>65</sup> (125-126)

Both McKenzie's and Keating's pedagogical views and practices acknowledge differing epistemologies, the presence of both instructor and student bodies, and their reliance on stories. Their ideas and work epitomize what is necessary in working with embodied storying in the classroom. What would it mean, then, to work through embodied storying as a rhetorical and pedagogical lens in the classroom? It means that we actively work to decenter colonial structures that keep our students from finding and experiencing themselves in their writing and in the classroom.

### **I Dream...**

I opened my dissertation with a story because it reminds me of where I come from—my knowledge processes, my body, and my story. I share it with you because while my dissertation is about Chican@ rhetorics and the heuristic of embodied storying, it is also about me, my family, my familia-from-scratch, and my community. It is also about weaving stories with theory even though stories and theory are already woven together. And it is about our making and practicing knowledge together.

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<sup>65</sup> Keating places her fourth presupposition in quotation marks because this is a quote from Inés Hernández Avila's "An Open Letter to Chicanas" in *Reinventing the Enemy's Language*.

This sounds idealistic—I know. It sounds unscholarly—I know this too. It sounds like community-building and rhetorically challenging—I hope. And in this hope, I dream, like my abuela and mother dreamed me, that we will continue to challenge the confines of “the” rhetorical tradition.

*She wants you to know you're ready, mija.*

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