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Introduction: Beginning a New Millennium of Chicana and Chicano Scholarship

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INTRODUCTION



Beginning a New Millennium of Chicana and Chicano Scholarship

The theme of the National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies 2001 conference was *I-uan g ceksan, Tuchá Aria Wa Frontierapo, Borrando Fronteras, Erasing Borders: La Educación, Salud, Inmigración e Historia del Pueblo*. The theme brings together the cultures and identities that shape us as Chicanas and Chicanos and our communities. In the spirit of the conference theme the proceedings contains papers delivered at the conference that examine the borders and intersections in which we find ourselves. Each of the papers contained here explore the manner in which Chicanas and Chicanos experience the area of community, education, literature, performance arts, and sexuality.

Reflective of that diversity are the comments of NACCS Scholars Cherrie Moraga and Cordelia Candelaria, which are reprinted from the June 2001 issue of *noticias de NACCS*. Cherrie comments on her work as a Chicana lesbian scholar while Cordelia briefly discusses her work and presents two. Similarly, the Cerventes Premio student papers examine the areas of history and sexuality. In *La Planta es Vida: Plants and Curandrismo on San Antonio's Westside*, the graduate student

winning paper by Elizabeth de la Portilla, the history of curanderismo in San Antonio is examined. Yvette Saavedra interrogates the conceptions of sexuality of Chicana lesbians in relation to the broader Chicano community in her paper titled *Chicana Scism: The Relationship between Chicana Feminists and Chicana Feminists Lesbians*.

The second section of these selected proceedings contains two papers dealing with issues in Chicano communities. Both papers address forms of violence in our communities, on examining racial profiling and the other examining ways to the role of art in addressing violence. In his paper, Johnson examines the importance of collaboration between Chicano and African communities in working to end racial profiling. Martinez examines the use of art in addressing violence in communities in her paper.

Section Three of the proceedings both the historical and contemporary state of education are examined. In the Yosso, Villalpando, Bernal, and Solórzano paper a proposed theoretical framework for conducting and interpreting research in Chicano education utilizing critical race theory and postmodern perspectives is presented. Heidenreich examines the treatment of Chicano populations in schools in the 19th century. Together the papers provide a contrast of where Chicanos have been in the educational process in 19th century United States and what we can achieve if alternative theoretical frameworks are used in educational research involving Chicano students.

Literature is the focus of the fourth section of these selected proceedings. Each of the papers speaks to the complexity of identities in the Chicano community. In his paper, Anderson analyzes Rudolfo Anaya's *Jalamanta* to delineate how the understanding the past roles taken by persons in Chicano communities can provide guidance to current challenges faced. Cantú examines four autobiographical texts to give light to what it was like growing up on the U.S./Mexico borderlands early in the twentieth century. Mayan themes in Chicano literature are the focus of Martínez's paper.

Three of the four selections in the section focusing on performance arts deal with music while the fourth deals with art as enacted. Holscher and Fernández examine the status of *narcocorridos* and the rise in popularity of this musical form in certain segments. In his entry San Miguel's contribution examines the development of *musica Tejana* throughout the twentieth century. The contributions of Chicano rap as a reflection of the marginalization experienced by Chicano inner city youth is the focus of McFarland's paper. Mayorga's paper presents an analysis and interpretation of Chicano performance art as resistance to dominating powers.

The final section of these selected proceedings deal with sexuality. Two of the three selection deal with identity as seen in literature while the third provides a self-analysis of identity. Rodríguez Kessler utilizes Rodríguez's *Hunger of Memory* and Villarreal's *Pocho* to examine identity of non-heterosexual Chicano men situated in a homophobic society. Examining the works of John Rechy, Pérez follows changes in the descriptions and actions of gay male characters and the result of those developments on identity in gay male culture. Pendleton Jimenez presents a portrait of a drag king by examining her identity as a Chicana drag king living in Toronto.

The selected papers contained in these proceedings are just some of the areas of scholarship that Chicanas and Chicanos are pursuing as we enter into a new millennium. These and other lines of research will contribute to our understanding of the diversity found in Chicano communities and the borders and intersections that we shape and challenge as we move to develop as scholars, activists, and individuals. It is hoped that these papers will spark discussion and new avenues of research as Chicana and Chicano scholars and activists proceed into the new millennium and challenge ourselves and the broader society.

The papers presented in these proceedings are to be considered works in progress. Presenters at the 2001 National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies conference were invited to submit their work as presented. Thus, other than minor editing and formatting, papers are

in the form in which they were heard at the conference. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of NACCS authors used formats accepted in their respective disciplines. Any digression from standard formats is the result of attempting to bring some uniformity to the final printed proceedings.

Thanks to those individual of the Coordinating Committee who assisted in the completion of this project. Julia Curry Rodriguez and Kathryn Blackmer Reyes assisted with the logistics of contacting presenters to submit manuscripts. Thanks to Raul Coronado Jr. for collecting and organizing manuscripts submitted. Special thanks to Yolanda Chavez Leyva, Deborah Vargas, and José Ibarra-Virgen who assisted in reading manuscripts submitted for consideration.

Jaime H. García

JANUARY 2004

SECTION
ONE



*NACCS Scholars and
Cervantes Student
Premio*



CHAPTER
ONE



Cherrie Moraga
2001 NACCS Scholar Award Speech

Gracias. Well I think it's befitting that Jorge introduced me in this context. All the words that were read were really beautiful. One of those things about being an artist or being a writer is contingent on feeling very *loca*, most of the time. It's necessary, if you don't feel *loca* when you're doing it, you're doing something wrong. And, I mean it quite sincerely so it requires you to be alone a lot. And, in the places where you're not alone there is no guarantee that anybody's listening. What I want to thank you for is listening. I don't say thank you, I thank you just for listening to me. I thank you for listening to us. I always have felt that whether to love the good fortune or privilege I was able to speak, and to write. But certainly it wasn't about having books at home. It's not about having a library book.

I was very glad that I was born in 1952. Because when I came of age I came to age, I think, in my opinion at one of the best possible times. Which is to come of age at a time in which you believe that the future meant progressive politics. Because, everybody was doing progressive

politics, Chicanos, Blacks, Queers, Feminists, all of these. And one was rolling into the next, and into the next, into the next. So I am grateful that I came of age at that time because if I had not come of age at that time I personally, and I say that with all the “we’s” behind me that have had a similar experience, I personally would never have written a line. Because, I wrote in the context of a movement. And those movements were multifaceted. Those movements, for me, were places of rejection and acceptance, rejection and acceptance, rejection and acceptance. But it was always in the context of a movement that I felt that I had the right to write. Outside of that we would still be writing trying to imitate the white man.

Its very significant that, in fact, also that I am sharing this stage, this honor, with Cordelia and that Jorge introduced me. Because I have to credit the two of them for being two of the people I remember quite distinctly for having the guts to speak favorably and critically in a good way, intelligently, and take Chicana lesbians seriously. This was in 1986 that I believe that Jorge wrote this review of *Giving Up the Ghost*. And also around the same time Cordelia had invited me, to speak at the University of Colorado, in Boulder. And I can’t tell you, I remember getting Jorge’s review. I went “Damn, a Chicano wrote this!” I mean this, this was an amazing moment in history. You don’t know that, but it was somebody who had the willingness to look at a play by a Chicana lesbian as a love story. And a line I remember so much from this was he wrote something like “It would be a shame if people just thought of this work as...” you know, like those categories, Chicana plays, Lesbian plays, all of the great categories to be in. But he was saying it was art. He was saying it was art. That made a world of difference to me. So whenever you sort of wonder about the relationship sometimes between criticism and art, those are those beautiful moments that have a potential of happening.

And it was right around the same time that I came to campus over there in Colorado, but then I started, I got this notion that possibly there was a community there. I’m not going to read the chapter

opener, but what I wanted to talk about was as Cordelia had first said in her discourse of being a *veterana de tres guerras* you know, of going though what it was she knew as Chicano studies. This was not the war I fought. I did not be, I have not been active in NACCS. I have come a few times, but this has not been my battleground. And I really want to honor and respect particularly in all of those women like the women's caucus and all of those organizers from the lesbian caucus. All those women, when I use to hear the names Emma and Deena. You know its like, you'd hear these names, but I wasn't doing work here. I heard about the formation of these caucuses for the first time trying to raise specifics about gender politics and lesbian/gay politics. So I honor and credit them tonight.

But it was a war to get here. And, the battle that I remember that, I'm holding this book *Loving in the War Years* because this is a new edition that came out 20 years after some of the first poems in here. Some of the first poems were written in 1977. When I wrote this book I was living in New York City. When I finished the book in 1983 it came out and it was after *This Bridge Called My Back*, and I finished the book, I gave it to my publisher and Rudy Anaya had written a thing about the "Tenements of New York." It was a very beautiful little blurb and I thought there was some possibility here, the godfather of Chicano literature could write about a dyke. It was a good piece of work.

Again, those things are very important to me. But, I was terrified. I though even though I was living at New York at the time it was almost the distance of New York that allowed me publish the book. I published the book and New York was not far enough. I had to leave the country. I needed to go to México. So, I went to México, and I remember being in a little hotel in the D.F. And, my girlfriend at the time went ahead and sent me *Loving in the War Years* any way. And, I was trying to get away from it. And, quite honestly I have to confess I was terrified. I was terrified because I had never read the words lesbian and Chicana in the same line unless somebody was putting us down.