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BUILDING A CHICANA RHETORIC FOR RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION: METHODOLOGY, PRACTICE, and PERFORMANCE

By

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ABSTRACT

BUILDING A CHICANA RHETORIC FOR RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION: METHODOLOGY, PRACTICE, and PERFORMANCE

By

Kendall Marie Leon

Chicana rhetoric frequently begins with the assumption that Chicanas—or typically women rhetors from *Mexicana* origins—are altered (or alter) through employing rhetoric. Studies on Chicana rhetoric generally center on language and the use of metaphors in Chicana literary writing. While this previous research has been instrumental in building a richer history of scholarship on Chicana writing, what Rhetoric and Composition as a field has failed to do is pay attention to what Chicana rhetoric can teach us about rhetoric in general—both how it occurs in the world and how we must then study such activity. The questions then that ground this dissertation project are quite simple: If Chicana identity is self-selected, boundaried, and it has something about it that is shared—a set of practices, or beliefs—then what is it that makes it Chicana? How does "Chicana" operate in the world rhetorically? And, methodologically, how do we study such moments of rhetorical performance?

To address these questions, this dissertation project collects historical moments of Chicana rhetoric in scholarship and activism. "Chicana" operates in these spaces as it mediates scholarly activity; is itself a political act of identification; and contributes to the remembering and revisioning of histories. To collect such moments, this project turns to the poetic and philosophical writings by Chicanas, interviews with Chicana identified scholars, and the activist and archival practices of one of the first Chicana organizations. I first demonstrate that Chicana identity is rhetorical in that it is ideological. Claiming one

is a Chicana carries explicit political implications that mediate performances of what it means to be a Chicana. One of the invocations of Chicana identity is the use of shared methodologies for making meaning about experience.

The primary focus of the dissertation is based on archival research on one of the first Chicana activist organizations, *Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional (CFMN).* Utilizing theory in the flesh as a methodological heuristic to analyze documents contained in the *CFMN* archival collection, I examine the way Chicanas use experience to make things: like organizations, histories and practices. By looking at the organization as an instantiation of Chicana identity, I examine the way that Chicana subjectivity is evident in the emergence of the organization. Rather than focus on what are perhaps the more typical and public performances of Chicana identity, experience as shaping Chicana practice is read in the nuances and mundane details of the organization and in the act of archiving.

This dissertation demonstrates that Chicana rhetoric when read alongside Rhetoric studies demonstrates a shift in methodology that accounts for rhetoric collectively and connectively. This dissertation, then, will prove that learning about the rhetoric of Chicana is not only beneficial to Chicana scholars but can be used to complicate the field of Rhetoric and Composition and its conception of rhetoric in the world.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is quite satisfying to be able to write the acknowledgements page, not only because it means I am nearly finished with this part of the journey, but to also be able to thank the people who have helped me along the way.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Whenever a scholar undertakes to study something, she must have a conception of what her object of study is. In the case of the ethnic studies scholar, who takes as her object of inquiry groups of people such as "Chicana/os," the concept of identity provides the organizing principle that justifies her scholarly focus. Unless "Chicano/os" exist as a sociologically distinct with identifiable characteristics that can be specified and described, and unless studying them will help the scholar understand something important about them and the world in which they are constituted as "Chicana/os," it makes little sense to engage in studying them as "Chicana/os." What would be the purpose of studying their conditions of existence, their cultural practices, or their literary productions unless doing so might yield information that contributes to the scholar's understanding of herself, the others with whom she interacts, or the world in which she lives? And how can she study that group without a good conception of who they are and where they fit into existing social structures? The need to have a good conception of her object of study thus brings her right back to the question of identity, and makes urgent the necessity of having an adequate theory guiding her as she goes about determining both who "Chicana/os" are and what aspects of their lives are most crucial to her study.

Paula Moya, *Learning from Experience*

In 1971, more than 600 Chicana women met in Houston, Texas to hold the first national Chicana conference. In a survey administered by some of the founding members of the newly forming *Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional* to the women attending the conference on the issues that defined and impacted Chicanas, 84% of the respondents stated that they felt there was a distinction between the problems and experiences of Chicana women from other women. However, in a follow up question that asked how the distinction is manifested, all of the respondents left it blank. The same question was also asked about Chicanas in relation to Chicanos, with similar results[1] (Flores, "Women on the Move"). This survey was reprinted in countless newspaper and journal articles, and

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1 More respondents, though, could articulate the difference between the problems facing Chicanos and Chicanas.

was also adapted to be used by other identity-based women's organizations[2]. The reproduction of the survey, its adaptations and circulations, speak to the importance of the very act of administering the survey, as well as the responses that were included, as one definitional moment for the Chicana movement and by correlation the development of Chicana identity.

The same holds true for countless texts that surround the emergence of Chicana identity, in which Chicana writers talked about how *Chicanisma* is different than Anglo feminism and culturally distinct, but that difference was not thoroughly articulated. And yet, this felt and later theorized difference has been used to do things—to establish "la Chicana", to organize people, and to make visible change. There is a difference that is perceived, a felt knowledge that exists—albeit mediated—that allows people to incite transformation. This difference—a difference that is created, sustained, reproduced and altered through discourse and experience—is Chicana and it is rhetorical.

It is for this reason that I opened this chapter, and more expansively this dissertation, with the epigraph by Paula Moya. In the epigraph she challenges scholars to explain the ways we define and identify our "objects of study," and to make evident what aspects of our lives are most "crucial" to our scholarly endeavors. In a sense, Moya is asking us to take a step back and work at the definitional—a type of move that is foundational to rhetoric, and yet happens infrequently in Rhetoric studies. This is especially relevant for those of us who locate our research as investigating Chicana identity and its effects in the world. Tellingly, in most scholarship on Chicana rhetoric in Rhetoric and Composition, "Chicana" works to specify the actors performing the otherwise stabilized "rhetoric."

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2 See Azizah Cox al-Hibri's letter to Francisca Flores as an example of such reuse.

In other words, Chicana becomes the dependent variable in relation to rhetoric, the independent variable. However, what if we were to treat rhetoric as the dependent variable—as that which we observe as altering with and through Chicana production?

The purpose of this dissertation then is twofold: to treat Chicana identity as rhetoric, and to build this rhetoric against the dominating theories and practices in our field for studying rhetoric and writing. To do this, I focus on the emergence of the *Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional,* one of the first Chicana feminist organizations that started in 1971, as an instantiation of Chicana identity and rhetoric. Specifically, I analyze the programmatic writing and actions of the organization, including marginalia, as well as the movement between documents housed in their archival collection. I do this to demonstrate that Chicana identity and rhetoric, while evident in poetic writing, can be articulated and thusly examined in other types of writing as well.

Accordingly, the central ideas motivating this dissertation is that there is a Chicana rhetoric that needs to be built through the investigation of different moments of Chicana rhetorical practice and performance; second that Chicana rhetoric is an especially pertinent area of study as it is an intentional sign of both an ideologically mediated identity claim and embodied "real" referential knowledge; and finally, that this particular rhetoric aligns with a "post-positivist" realist perspective that opens rhetoric to a research approach that treats different types of data as connected to a material reality that is subject mediated, yet objectively defensible (Martín-Alcoff, *Visible*; Martín-Alcoff and Mohanty; Sánchez; Moya, *Learning*). The recognition and utilization of Chicana identity as a starting point from which to build a rhetoric is useful because it treats

identity as rhetorical, meaning that identity is a position from which people in the world do things: such as connect, incite transformation, or mediate lived experiences. If we can agree that identity is rhetorical, we can see how beginning from this location is beneficial for our field in considering how rhetoric emerges through this standpoint. In this dissertation, I focus on Chicana identity as not only reflecting a reality but as an epistemic that incites correlative actions.

To begin, in this introductory chapter I will do the following: I first locate the way that "marginalized" rhetorics are conceived in our field and then move to a specific discussion of Chicana rhetoric; next I explain why identity should be studied in rhetoric and writing studies and then explain "Chicana" as a domain of research as an identity marker; and finally, I discuss my methodology and methods for data collection. In other words, throughout this chapter I make an argument for why identity in general, and in particular Chicana identity, as a performance and a practice is relevant to Rhetoric. This dissertation, then, ultimately seeks to address three questions: What is Chicana rhetoric? How does one study Chicana rhetoric? And what are the affordances of Chicana rhetoric for Rhetoric and Composition scholars?

"Marginalized" Rhetorics in the History of Rhetoric

Cherríe Moraga aptly writes, "Ironically, the most 'universal work'—writing capable of reaching the hearts of the greatest number of people—is the most culturally specific" (*Last* 291). Likewise, our field's popular conceptualization of rhetoric theory and practice has operated on a notion that what has been treated as canonical is both universal and comprehensive. Looking at the history of rhetoric as indicated by the canonical text *The Rhetorical Tradition*, we can make the following assertions about our

disciplinary identity: that it operates on a linear and [r]evolutionary model of rhetoric marked by shifts in rhetorical practice that coincide with eras; rhetoricians and their rhetorical practice is individualized, and primarily discourse based; and rhetorics of marginalized groups (i.e. Gloria Anzaldúa, Henry Louis Gates) are misinterpreted and located within the postmodern era. Or, more often than not, rhetorics of marginalized groups remain located in liminal space in the field's conversations[3]. As Malea Powell writes, "…we must get beyond our efforts toward inclusion, not because inclusion is bad…but because cultures that do not change cannot survive" ("Down by the River" 40). What we have failed to recognize is that neither the rhetorics nor their correlative eras are universal; indeed, they are situated. At the same time, we have not fully treated the situated accounts from marginalized rhetors as applicable to Rhetoric studies generally.

As others have extensively written, universalizing and normalizing a particular standpoint or worldview erases the experience and existence of groups of people and cultures. Within our own field, we can see this as the impetus behind the revisionist historiographers that argue for a more inclusive rhetorical tradition (i.e. Jarratt and Ong; Johnson; Royster). What this results in is that some rhetorics may be inappropriately read or classified along a historical continuum that operates on a dissimilar worldview. As an example, in response to modernism, which attempts to classify and equalize even discursive practice experience, scholars in our field have adopted a postmodern perspective. Thusly, we read final conclusions that highlight contextuality, difference and fluidity of identity and correlative literacy practices. Interestingly, with this turn, inclusion of rhetoricians of color also occurred, which perhaps unintentionally lumps

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3 This may happen in special issues like the 2004 *College English* special issues devoted to rhetorics of race and class; or in journals outside of our field proper.

rhetorics of color as a response to modernism, and invites a reading that is used to justify the need for a postmodern perspective[4].

In fact, many theorists of color overtly disagree with and/or caution against seemingly libratory turn to postmodernism (Christian). For instance, Chicana theorist Chela Sandoval has astutely pointed out that the angst of postmodernism as theorized is only novel and troubling for those who can be identified as modern subjects. Postmodernism is marked by a disaffinity of subjects, whereas many rhetoric practices of marginalized groups neither operate on the model of an individual and are replete with tactics and strategies to build affinities. For third world women, the disunification of the Subject has been tactically employed as necessary for survival. And yet oddly, Rhetoric and Composition scholars have heralded the writing of noted Chicana theorist Gloria Anzaldúa as indicative of a postmodern ethos where difference and hybridity are not part of an embodied and situated experience but instead of the identity free and shifting mark of the "postmodern condition." Race and difference is therefore teachable and transgressable as we are all treated as equally hybrid subjects[5]. Further, given the typical realm of Rhetoric and Composition, race and difference is read linguistically, which obviates the embodied experiences and situatedness of rhetorical practices.

What I am hoping to make apparent here is that while marginalized rhetorics—or more specifically, rhetors—have been added as acceptable objects and subjects of study,

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4 As some Chicana theorists have argued, postmodern theorists like Judith Butler and Donna Haraway, utilize the theoretical standpoints of theorists of color to support their arguments—to the point of idealization—without actually engaging with the theory in its complexity, and minimizing the experiential claims made (see Moya "Chicana Feminism" for elucidation on this point).

5 In "Postmodern Blackness," bell hooks offers similar suggestions for postmodern theory. hooks warns that postmodernism may eliminate legitimated opportunity for people who have been colonized and/or dominated to " to gain or regain a hearing" of voice (515). Her suggestion it to "..critique essentialism while emphasizing the significance of the 'authority of experience" (516).

how we study these and the impact of this has yet to alter the foundation of Rhetoric studies itself[6]. This includes not only the rhetorical traditions of particular groups of people, but also other things—like objects, like groups, organizations, and other less studied rhetorics and rhetors. What I am not interested in per se is the argument that is satisfied by the mere inclusion (or addendum) of people of color to what we study, but instead what I am hoping to do is build different models for rhetoric research and pedagogy. Furthermore, the grand narrative of our field is not similarly treated as a theory made from experience that likewise has specificity, a groundedness. What has been marginalized in our field is not just the intellectual contribution and presence of particular groups, but discussions of methodology and pedagogy that change or at least debate what these terms encompass. Far too often we have been slighted by the assertion that if we are included it automatically alters the landscapes of rhetoric. What has resulted thus far from this trend is that those of us who study these things are deemed as special interests, or relevant only to other like-minded scholars.[7]

Chicana Rhetoric in the Field

As you can see, while we have opened up our field to a more expansive repertoire of *actors*, what we have not accomplished is developing other rhetorics. What this looks

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6 This is especially interesting when we consider the manner in which theorists like Anzaldúa have been included as individuals and theorized as such. This in actuality contradicts the community-oriented feature of Chicana rhetoric that has emerged from my data.

7 This mirrors the very treatment of the rhetorical practices associated with identity in general, and the decades long criticism of identity politics as divisive and not universally applicable. The presumed universality of particular traditions and subject positions and the divisiveness of activists and theorists employing and espousing identity based truth claims have been the stasis of "identity politics." In general, the backlash against groups of marginalized groups organizing around identity, assert that identity limits the applicability and transferability of its correlative politics and practices; therefore, "identity politics" are conceived of an outdated and ineffectual model of organizing that limits collaboration and coalition building. However, theorizing and acting from identity has been argued as necessary as both a tactic of survival and organizing (see Sandoval, *Methodology*; Emma Pérez, "Irigaray") and more recently as epistemic and a method for realizing a more objective understanding of the world (see Martín-Alcoff, *Visible* and Moya, *Learning*).

like is that Chicanas—or women rhetors from more often than not, *Mexicana* origins—are altered (or alter) through employing rhetoric. Within Rhetoric and Composition, I could find little scholarship that specifically addressed Chicana rhetoric. What I did find was work on Latino/a discourses that overwhelmingly fell under two areas: English/Spanish bilingual discourses (i.e. Kells, Balester & Villanueva) or the difficulties associated with negotiating Latino/a commitments and identities with academic discourses and communities (Barron).

Dora Ramirez Dhoore is one scholar who does employ the rhetorical strategies of Chicana writers like Gloria Anzaldúa's "borderlands" and "mestiza" to rhetorically analyze a range of creative and political works of Chicanas working with varying mediums, such children's books, literature, and new media compositions. In her article "Cyberborderland: Searching the Web for Xicanidad," Ramirez-Dhoore examines how the concept of mestiza operates in the multidimensionality of cyberspace as both a space for Xican@s to further enact and explore mestiza consciousness, while simultaneously negotiating their racialized, gendered, and "othered" discourse, which is both embodied and linguistic. To do so, Ramirez-Dhoore looks at the online work of several Xican@ web authors, artists and activists. Ramirez-Dhoore moves beyond merely labeling their work as mestiza, but instead, examines how these Xican@s *use* mestiza consciousness: "scholars must consider how the mestiza consciousness is used to explain racial experiences online for many internet subjects" (11).

Similarly in "(B)orderlands' Rhetorics and Representations: The Transformative Potential of Feminist Third-Space Scholarship and Zines, rhetoric scholar Adela Licona examines the way that mestiza consciousness and borderlands have been employed by

those of us rendered invisible by false binary thinking to theorize and give name to our experiences (104). Licona then proceeds to trace the Third-space and both/and subjectivity that can be evidenced in border-crossing of notable feminist scholars disrupting scholarly boundaries, and in zines.

Jessica Enoch is another rhetoric scholar who researches what she identifies as a Chicana rhetoric. In both of her valuable articles, Enoch engages in archival research on the activist rhetorical work of Mexican identified women. Her first article focuses on the newspaper writings of Mexican and Mexican American women at the turn of the century. In this research, Enoch's primary assertion is that these writers made "definitional claims" about what it means to be a Mexican woman in opposition to previous constructions of identity. Enoch traces the definitional back to the rhetorical strategies of Aristotle and Cicero in the use of the topics, or what can be considered the realm and scope of one's argument and the tools used. In her later article, Enoch studies a group of Mexican women's rhetorical strategies of resistance against forced sterilization during the 1970's. Overall, Enoch's primary purpose appears to be to expand the canon of a [Western] rhetorical tradition by modifying Cicero's definitional ("Para La Mujer") and the "rhetorical moment" ("Survival Stories"). With both of Enoch's articles, what makes this conducive to the field's conceptions of a classical rhetorical tradition is given primacy over what *makes* this a Chicana rhetoric to begin with. Ramirez-Dhoore's, Licona and Enoch's work have been instrumental to our field because they are some of the few scholars that both examines the rhetorical work (and moments) of Mexican identified women. More importantly, their work moves this work into the realm of

rhetorical studies rather than the usual terrain of linguistics where much of work on rhetors of color is placed.

Another place in which features of a Chicana rhetoric can be said to play out in the scholarship of our field and in other academic circles as well, is in the circulation of features of a Chicana epistemological framework such as the "borderlands," or "mestiza consciousness" (Haraway; Fleckenstein; for criticism see Bost). With the inculcation of postmodern thought into academic discourse, comes the adaptation of particularized metaphors from varying intellectual traditions that appear to "fit" the postmodern ethos[8]. However, when Chicana rhetorical metaphors that are once (and can be) productive, are disseminated and begin to stand in the place of Chicana rhetorics in its entirety, than the metaphors lose their specificity, and their situatedness within an intellectual, philosophical and imaginative trajectory by becoming an interpretive device; a hermeneutic as opposed to a productive intervention[9]. In fact, in an interview conducted with Linda Martín Alcoff, Afro-Cuban philosopher Lewis Gordon, claims that communities of color have not only been strategically separated by resources and geographies in order to divide up resources and power between groups, he also states that these divisions are furthered in the tropes that become what our communities use to signify (167). The tropes therefore become a way that unproductive difference is inscribed between colonized groups. For this reason, then, we need to redirect our

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8 See Chela Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed* for an explanation of why this might be the case—in short, Sandoval claims that third world women have already developed the "technologies" for survival within disjuncture.

9 Debra A. Castillo & María Socorro Tabuenca Córdoba (2002) offer a material rhetoric approach to write a smart critique of the American centered border writing/writers—including Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Gloria Anzaldúa. Their criticism comes from their recognition that using the border to define for example, Chicano/Chicana identity, erases the location as a physical place where border crossing and transgressions are afforded to those who remain on the "right side" of the border.

attention to Chicana rhetoric and what it is and what it *can do* instead of limiting its rhetorics to the metaphoric function[10].

A Note on the Use of the Term "Chicana"

For this dissertation, Chicana identity and identification functions as the "domain" of my data collection. Scholars have argued about who or what is included in the domain of Chicano or Latino (see for example, Grosfoguel et al). Some of these names explicitly center culture within the colonial moment—such as "Hispanic" or even "Latin American" (Mignolo). This tension in names and naming is evident throughout the textual artifacts that I examined for this dissertation that were produced by various members of the *Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional (CFMN).* For example, on speeches, resolutions and meeting minutes I read hand written notes on the documents that changed Chicana to "Latina"—or visa versa—based on the rhetorical purpose of the document, or if the author felt the term violated the concept of *la hermandad* governing the organization and its practices.

Nevertheless, all of the terms are inaccurate and exclude the lived experiences of people. For example, many of the assumed shared connections—Spanish speaking, Catholic, Native and Mexican originations, brown skin—for most represent a simulacra of the variance in Latino culture (Slabodsky; Juana Maria Rodriguez). Within our own country, we generalize the geography, the generation and the class affiliations of Latino/a people. Most people carry a simulated image of the "Latino/a," stemming from such limited depictions in the news of "the immigrant problem," in movies in which Latino/as

10 In the introduction to her PhD dissertation, Dora Ramirez-Dhoore's poses a parallel concern when she asks "Do we as Chicana writers, who have had such an antagonistic relationship with what Anzaldúa calls 'linguistic terrorism,' essentialize ourselves in our writing in order to success in a world that, as Pérez states, privileges a European model?" (3).

are either gang members or domestic help, or in educational discourse surrounding bilingual classrooms and English Only initiatives. What these simulations do is establish "the Latino/a" as an outside presence, uniform and agent-less. It also places Latino/as as only operating in the backdrop and in service of whitestream culture. This simulation, of course, has everything to do with rhetoric[11].

But "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)[12]. Chicano/a then acknowledges a mixed blood and cultural background, a reclamation in the face of a society that privileges mythic "purity." Foundational to the Chicano movement is a productive nostalgia for a pre-conquest Atzlán as a response to a literal and metaphoric displacement from our homelands[13].

Chicano also has historical and contemporary connections with the United Farm Workers (UFW) movement, with its initiation as an independent organization in 1962 often serving as origin moment of the national Chicano movement. As with any "origin" story, the Chicano movement is constellative. Interwoven with the UFW political struggles, including the well-known national boycott of grapes, other activist

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11 Simulations like these parallel the simulations described in Gerald Vizenor's "Postindian Warriors." Vizenor, specifically writing about the literary simulations of Native Americans in literary works writes: "simulations have never been uncommon in literature, as the simulations of the other are instances of the absence of the real..." (2). This is an imagined invention, which can also be used tactically (as Chicanas demonstrate with the productive use of *La Malinche* stories).

12 This is creation of Chicano/a *by* Chicanos/as is especially important to juxtapose to other ways that groups can be made. For example, the creation of the identity and group "Hispanic" which was developed in the 1970's for the U.S. Census.

13 While this is understood to be the Aztec homeland that was taken by the United States in the Treaty of Hildago in 1848, which is now the American Southwest, Atzlán functions more than just a literal translation to the geography.

organizations and actions emerge. Alongside these emergences, the Chicano movement also began within academia, with Rodolfo Acuña teaching the first Mexican American history class in 1966. Chicano therefore connotes an activist and oppositional identity (Castañeda; for criticism of this narrative see Pérez *Decolonial*).

Chicana was developed to identify the particular gendered experiences of women, which the Chicano movement was criticized for forgetting, or only admitting to service Chicanos as helpmates. For those who identify as Chicana, the degree of tangential relation to the Chicano movement varies. Likewise, the Chicana movement is treated as distinct from the predominately Anglo-centric feminist movement as being historically unable to address the particular concerns of women of color. But again, any relation to the feminist movement varies for each Chicana.

In addition to Chicana as emerging or responding tangentially to other movements, there are frequently similar origin stories for Chicana identity as a distinct identity. For example, many Chicanas point to Chicana literature as pivotal to Chicana identity and to the Chicana movement broadly. For her edited "collection," the *Chicana Cultural Studies Forum*, Angie Chabram-Dernersesian interviewed well known scholars in Chicano and Chicana studies about the relation to Chican@ studies and cultural studies, and asked them to postulate the way that these intersections could be better articulated and practiced. Many of the Chicanas in the forum at some point mention the edited collection *This Bridge Called My Back* as foundational to their own identities and to the Chicana studies in general. The writings of Ana Castillo, Cherríe Moraga, and Gloria Anzaldúa, among others, are also referenced as pivotal to what it means to be a Chicana. Other writers associated with the emergence of Chicana identity and of a

correlative movement are the editors and contributors to the Chicana newsletter *Hijas de Cuauhtemoc*. *Hijas* was begun in 1971 by Chicanas demanding an end to sexism in the Chicano movement[14].

In the year prior to the first issue of *Hijas,* Chicana identity and politics as distinct from Chicano emerged in another type of writing: the drafting of resolutions. At the 1970 National Chicano Issues Conference, a group of women present felt that that their needs or concerns were not being addressed by the Chicano leaders running the conference. In response, these women physically left and met separately. It was at this meeting they drafted the following series of resolutions, which would become the start of the *Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional* (*CFMN*). At their Annual Board Meeting in 1975, the *CFMN* began their minutes with a reminder of their organization's history:

> On October 10, 1970 the following resolution establishing CFMN, Inc. was adopted at the National Issues Conference in Sacramento, California: '…In order to terminate exclusion of female leadership in the Chicana/Mexican movement and in the community, be it RESOLVED that a Chicana/Mexicana Women's Commission be established at this Conference which will represent women, in all areas where Mexicans prevail, and: That this commission be known as the Comisión Femenil Mexicana, and; That the Comisión direct its efforts to organizing women to assume leadership positions within the Chicano Movement and in community life, and; That the Comisión disseminate news and information regarding the work and achievement of Mexican/Chicana women, and; That the Comisión concern itself in promoting programs which specifically lend

14 There are many, many newsletters, well and lesser known that have amazing articles, poetry and imagery related to the Chicana movement, that rhetoric scholars have yet to examine.

themselves to help, assist and promote solution to female type problems and problems confronting the Mexican family, and; That the Comisión spell out issues to support, and explore ways to establish relationships with other women's organizations and their movements. Viva La Causa! ("Annual Board Meeting")

Based on the above founding resolution, the *CFMN* originally located itself tenuously as working apart from yet connected with Chicano movement, and as exploring relationships with "other women's organizations and their movements." Although I am not sure the extent to which this was achieved, it is apparent that the degree and type of relationships the *CFMN* should have with both the Chicano and women's movements was a source of productive tension within the *CFMN*, and for Chicanas in general.

What I want to make evident is that while Chicana origination is a constellative and contested story, there are several shared foundational moments and commitments. I cannot imagine that any Chicana would disagree that calling oneself a Chicana is not in some way political and significant. For this reason, whenever I use the term Chicana in my dissertation, it is purposeful. First, I employ Chicana when discussing people who identify as such. Second, in regards to the *CFMN*, I use Chicana to describe the particular actions that the *CFMN* took in response to the constructions of Latina and/or Mexican women and communities.

Features of Chicana Rhetoric

Although there is variance and difference between and amongst Chicanas in terms of what it signifies and the way it is practiced and lived, there presumably are commonalities or repetitious practices enacted by Chicanas. When I say Chicana rhetoric, then, I am referring to a specific set of practices that are developed and employed within

a particular context from which Chicana emerges. Based on my research thus far, I have identified several features of a Chicana rhetoric. While I do not elucidate each of these practices in the rest of the dissertation, I want to briefly outline these practices below.

Shared Topoi and Symbols to Resist and to Use to Create

One of the most recognizable features of Chicana rhetoric is the use of shared *topoi* (both figurative and material) and symbols as materials for invention. These topoi and symbols are productively used by Chicanas and serve as the basis for much of Chicana theorizing and writing. This is evident in the numerous recanting and retelling of stories surrounding two symbolic figures in Chicana rhetoric: *La Malinche* (Calafell, "Pro(re-)claiming Loss"; Pérez, *Decolonial*; Arteaga) and *La Llorana* (i.e. Palancios; Castillo; Gaspar de Alba). Other material and figurative *topoi* include the "border" and "mestiza." For example, several Chicana rhetors have utilized the "border" to identify a tactical subject position from which they speak and work against the binaries that have attempted to write over the existence of the mestizas (Licona; Ramirez-Dhoore ,"Searching"), and for others, the border serves as very literal location from which to politicize (Castillo and Socorro Tabuenca Córdoba). Mestiza and mestiza consciousness is also invoked as a *topoi* from which Chicanas are said to invent. According to Gloria Anzaldúa: "…the new mestiza copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity. She learns to be an Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view. She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mode—nothing is thrust out, the good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned. Not only does she sustain contradictions, she turns to the ambivalence into *something else*" (*Borderlands* 80, emphasis mine). The

production of something new from alterity is a primary feature that Chicana rhetoric enacts[15]. As you may notice, many of these citations are for literary writers and works, as the poetics are employed to make sense of and alter Chicana experience.

Use of Poetics to Theorize

For Chicanas, poetics are both productive and imaginative; but, I also include in this section meaning making that stems from that which ephemeral—such as emotion, belief, stories, myths, and spirituality—all of which are utilized in the emergence of Chicana culture. For example, in her introduction to *Making Face, Making Soul: Hacienda Caras,* Anzaldúa advocates for the employment of "artistic 'languages,' spoken from the body, by the body" that are "still coded with hope," as well as the need to occupy theoretical space while at the same time, de-academicizing the theory we do write and the reader is forced to still participate (xxv-xxvi). Poetics allow for a theorization about the body and ones experiences living in it.

Recognition and Utilization of Experiential Knowledge

Chicana rhetoric most notably utilizes experiential knowledge—both told through stories and through bodily semiotics, or embodiment. A Chicana rhetoric acknowledges that the experiences of Chicanas are a source of knowledge about the world (and particular to Chicanas); and thusly, Chicanas create or adopt theories to help invent ways to account for and build upon this epistemology and ontology (see Moraga, La Güera; Moya, *Learning*). This is a valuable method for any cultural group that has experienced

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15 Another example of this is Maria Lugones' "From within Germinative Stasis: Creating Active Subjectivity, Resistant Agency," she describes her approach to Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands*. In this chapter, Lugones writes her engagement with Anzaldúa's text as "a journey that enabled me to occupy a resistant position" (85). I liken her approach to the one that Anzaldúa lays out in conocimeiento—an engagement with, and not owning or appropriating the other.

oppression because most narratives told about them adversely imbricate and mark their embodied and experiences and textual productions (see Pérez, *Decolonial*).

Invention and Intervention of Histories

It is from this adverse telling of their cultural mythos that permits Chicana rhetoric to emerge through alternate embodied and experiential stories that stand in contradistinction; indeed, the subject position of Chicana is itself created to stand in opposition, or to be more precise, operates in strategic tension with historical constructions of Mexican American and/or Latina. Chicana writers often create new narratives that interrogate and recast histories to enable activist subjectivities. Much of this theorizing works to instantiate Chicanas into history by recognizing rhetorical agency where it might otherwise be overlooked (Enoch, "Para La Mujer").

Connective and Collective

Chicana rhetoric works connectively, oftentimes forming new relationships between that which otherwise appeared disparate or polemical. In traditional Rhetoric studies, we are taught about the power of tropes such as metaphor, synecdoche, and metonymy[16]. Chicana rhetoric employs the Nahua trope of *difrasismo*[17], or coupling. The difference is that rather than operating on replacement or minimization, *difrasismo* creates relationships—sometimes spatial, or ideological. What this allows then is the production of affinities to be formed. Affinities and relations can also take place textually by placing different languages and discursive practices next and in between each other. I do not call this "multi-genre" but instead an act of textual affinities (i.e. Calafell, "Pro(re-

16 Victor Villanueva connects the power of metaphors to explicate how racism happens figuratively ("The New Racism).

17 *Difrasismo* is discussed in much of Latino/a/Chicano/a scholarship because of its grounding in Mayan cultural production. A well-known *difrasismo* is "flor y canto" (flower and song). See Arteaga (1997) for further information.

)claiming Loss"). Textual affinities may also take place by disrupting subjectivities based on *chronos*. A good example of this is Alicia Gaspar de Alba's "The Politics of Location of the Tenth Muse: An Interview with Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz", in which she creates a dialogic imaginary relationship between Sor Juana, juxtaposing her [de Alba's] Chicana lesbian narrative in relation with passages from Sor Juana's writing to recreate new narratives for both. As with the previous section, affinities are also produced in Chicana rhetoric materially. This is best realized through the types of art and aesthetics enacted by Chicana artists (see Laura Pérez for further explanation), and this blending of the otherwise polemic is also seen in methodology (see Dicochea as an example).

What I want to make evident by outlining these features is that Chicana identity operates productively: when one affiliates as and with Chicana(s), it shapes the way we see the world and the way we act in it as scholars and activists. Because the first two features of Chicana rhetoric are more frequently studied, for this dissertation project I focus on the latter four features of Chicana rhetoric. As you will see in ensuing chapters, how Chicana-ness is understood, defined, felt and experienced is actually part of a shared practice of Chicana rhetoric. To reiterate, I am looking at Chicana rhetoric because, as you can see, calling oneself a Chicana enacts an intentional chain of ideological *and* material signification. Therefore, what this dissertation does is to examine and explain the how of Chicana identity—how it operates rhetorically in the world, including the world of texts, histories, and action; and at the same time, the way it operates in the world with a particular set of outcomes and practices. To arrive at this schema, I took a methodological approach of building from the ground up to again respond to Paula

Moya's challenge to Chicana scholars to move back and explain our orientation to Chicana identity as an object of study.

Methodology and Methods

In order to research how something is made or emerges, such as an identity or an organization, the ideal approach is to listen and follow those that are part of its construction; namely the people and things involved. To do this requires a methodological flexibility. As such, my methodology is grounded in several theoretical and ethical commitments. While these theoretical frameworks imbue my research approach and choices, they did not necessarily predetermine my methods. Rather, this dissertation research is best explained as iterative and recursive; the manner in which I altered and returned to my choices was determined by the Chicanas I researched[18].

Taking such a methodological approach in Rhetoric studies can be challenging due to the nature of what we mean by rhetoric in general, and the associations of intentionality. More often than not, studies in rhetoric are grounded in interpretations of purposeful action and intention. What I am describing here then is a methodological orientation that attempts to avoid making definitional claims about what constitutes our subjects of inquiry, which requires a type of flexible recursivity in all phases of data collection and analysis. Such a methodological stance is vital in particular for the studying the rhetorics of marginalized groups for the historical legacies of the misuse and misunderstanding of their practices (Tuhiwaii Smith). In the following section, I explain the theoretical narratives that I interconnect to build my methodological heuristic. I then

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18 I am aware that my methodological approach sounds similar to grounded theory. However, I opted not to locate my research within this tradition for several reasons: grounded theory comes with it particular methods for data analysis that I did not utilize; and grounded theory is not especially grounded in the work of scholars of color, which would go against my intention to build upon the scholarship of Chicanas. As my interests lie primarily in methodology, I preferred for this discussion to happen throughout my dissertation.

move to a discussion of my data collection methods, focusing on my decision to include archival research on the *CFMN*. I end this section with an explanation for the structure of the dissertation, and of each chapter.

Methodological Underpinnings

In a discussion about methodology, Chicana scholar Rosa Linda Fregoso describes hers as a bricolage, a "mestizaje methodology," that she pieces together from Chicana and Cultural studies in order to do the type of scholarship that interrogates the intersections between race, class, and gender through the situated lens of U.S. Third World feminism (as quoted in Chabram-Dernersesian, *Chicana Cultural Studies* 21). Likewise, my methodological heuristic is constructed from multiple sources. What connects all of these frameworks is that they are all concerned with methodology to study what is not typically included in scholarly enterprises, whether it be about coalition building, cultural rhetorics, or poetics; and all are deeply concerned with the purposes and consequences of theorizing and research[19]. As you will see in my data chapters, the heuristics I employ while are not generally the focus of the chapter, nonetheless guide my interpretations.

Theorizing from/about Experience

In their short introductory essay for a section in the edited collection *This Bridge Called My Back*, Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa develop a theory of identity that stems from lived experiences from which a "politic" is built: "A theory in the flesh means one where the physical realities of our lives . . . all fuse to create a politic born out of

19 You may also note that these frameworks align with some of the features of Chicana rhetoric that I outlined earlier in the chapter. This is related to the recursive nature of this project, in which I developed my methodology while doing my research.

necessity" (22). Theory in the flesh is thusly a recognition of our lived experience, which includes the way that we are articulated given the skin and positionality we inhabit. *This Bridge Called my Back* is considered a material enunciation of this politic: The poems and essay written by women of color to theorize about their experiences, particularly in response to a felt heterosexism and racism in the women's movement, serves as catalyst for the recognition of shared alliances between women of color. Moraga describes the collection as an instantiation of theory in the flesh, as it demonstrates her "trying to recreate my own journey of struggle, growing consciousness, and subsequent politicization and vision as a woman of color" (xiii). Theory in the flesh then has been used as heuristic for a theorizing a coming to critical consciousness.

In "I Have Dreamed of a Bridge," Moraga further elucidates theory in the flesh as a coming to critical consciousness about our embodied experiences, and makes the connection between the material and writing. Moraga writes, "[t]he 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" (xviii). In this way, writing reflects a reality that is material, felt, and for many, painful.

What Moraga does that I focus on in my dissertation is her contribution to this theory in the flesh; namely a theory of existence that works in tandem and tension with a correlative action: "Our strategy is how we cope—how we measure and weigh what is to be said and when, what is to be done and how, and to whom and to whom, daily deciding/risking who it is we can call an ally, call a friend (whatever that person's skin,

sex, or sexuality)" (xix). Despite what might be the painful experiences we encounter as women of color, Moraga asks us to consider our rhetorical ability to read our experiences alongside others and to connect as a strategy for survival.

Theory in the flesh involves the recognition of our lived experiences and coming to a critical consciousness about this, coupled with our responses, or actions to alter the worlds that produce such conditions. However, aside from a modeling of responses through the writing of poetic texts, there is little written that either connects theory in the flesh to action through organizational or programmatic writing, or to research of such written materials. As a Rhetoric and Composition scholar, I am interested in a visibly marked expansion of theory in the flesh that accounts for other ways to make meaning in tandem with experience. In other words, an attenuation to the acting and doing given on our lived conditions.

Paula Moya is another scholar who focuses on Moraga's writing in *This Bridge Called my Back*, in particular her astute connections between identity and a physical reality that while subject mediated, is *real*. It is for this reason that Moya criticizes some Chicana writers for not providing concrete tools and methods for acting and surviving in, well, a concrete world. Unlike postmodern theorists, Moya and other post-positivist realists understand the material limitations and influences of the world. Therefore, they "replace a simple correspondence theory of truth with a more dialectical causal theory of reference in which linguistic terms (and identities) both shape our perceptions of and refer (in more or less partial and accurate ways) to causal features of a real world" (*Learning* 15). What this means is that Moya, like other post positivist realists, understand identity not as limitless or limiting, but rather as mediating yet grounded; and

more importantly, as epistemic. My theory of identity stems from Moya's articulation of identity as a vehicle through which we learn about the world we live in, and how to then act in the world. Moya argues that it "is precisely because identities have a referential relationship to the world that they are politically and epistemically important: indeed, identities instantiate the links between individuals and groups and central organizing principles of our society" (*Learning*, 13). In other words, as rhetoric scholars, we should be studying identity because it connects people and incites people to action. Moya thusly argues that written language about identity can be read as a realist in a way that connects language with lived realities. To demonstrate this, she turns to literary writers and argues that their texts theorize about material reality.

While both theory and the flesh and its offshoot post positivist realism understand identity to be connective and grounded in reality that can be articulated and read through writing, the emphasis has been on literary writing, or what is more common with philosophy, anecdotes. In my dissertation, I extend the reading of the reality and epistemic of identity in the programmatic writing of an organization. Furthermore, while theory in the flesh and post positivist realism has apparently been a useful heuristic for both one's own production but also how we analyze the production of writers of scholar, what is less focused on is action of the collective. It is for this reason that I intentionally opted to study an organization rather than the writing of a particular Chicana.

Theorizing on Connectedness

In interpreting the data for this dissertation, I ended up not doing a deep rhetorical analysis of the written texts, and instead opted to focus more on the connective work of the organization that the documents conveyed when read across and between texts, and

the files in which they were contained. Through some of these exchanges one can see that a purpose of the *CFMN* as an organization was *to be connected*, and to help other Chicanas in making connections as well. The importance of connectivity can be considered a requisite practice of survival in a world that attempts to construct one as disconnected. A Chicana scholar that I turn to for a theory of connectedness and for researching connective movement is Chela Sandoval and her articulation of a differential consciousness.

In *Methodology of the Oppressed*, Sandoval constructs a different methodology and epistemology of the "oppressed." Part of this methodology includes what she calls the "differential consciousness" that is employed and enacted by third world women. Sandoval relays that the differential develops as part of a condition of fragmentation that occurs as result of oppression, which allows for coalition and affinity making to occur. Sandoval thusly describes the differential consciousness "like the clutch of an automobile," as an "activity" that "enables movement 'between and among' ideological positionings…considered as variables, in order to disclose the distinctions among them" (58). Sandoval writes that the differential is an intentional act of influence and "depends on the practitioner's ability to read the current situation of power and self-consciously choosing and adopting the ideological stand best suited to push against its configurations, a survival skill well known to oppressed people" (60). This is a rhetoric that requires flexibility, reading power formations, and a tactical adaptability. The theory of the differential is necessarily grounded in issues of power and oppression, and can be both collective and individual. Although Sandoval does not show specific examples of the differential as an action in the world, I utilize this concept for understanding some of the

practices of the *CFMN* as a type of work that "marginalized" groups must enact as a tactic for survival, and as necessitating a type of connectivity through difference. This is especially useful for my analysis in Chapter 4 of the shifting strategies developed by the *CFMN* to counter an inability to determine the problems at hand given a historical erasure of Chicanas in public spaces.

Theorizing about History

Developing methodologies and practices to respond to an erasure of Chicanas in history is another facet of Chicana rhetoric, and therefore, my methodology. As scholars of color know, history matters. It matters a great deal for those of us whose histories are often constructed for us. And it matters even more for Chicanas as it is a "contemporary" identity and thusly, histories must be invented and re-remembered. Chicana scholar Emma Pérez understands the importance of history as making realizable future subjectivities and actions imaginable, but also history making as a political act in which some people's histories are silenced through the way we do historical scholarship. Therefore, in the *Decolonial Imaginary*, Pérez constructs a methodology for locating the interstitial subjectivities of Chicanas in history. According to Pérez, traditional history follows a spatio-temporal story of linear progression, where colonialism frames the story, and gender and sexuality are not considered in its construction. Pérez outlines an outline of her theoretical framework, the decolonial imaginary, to enable spaces of movement and negotiation for the decolonial subject. Pérez asserts that it is "[t]hrough the decolonial imaginary, the silent gain their agency" (33).

What I adopt from Pérez in building my methodology is her articulation of the relationship between history and change. Change, according to Pérez, "is formed

discursively, in the past, by the present" (32). We make change then in our present acts to produce histories. In this way, I also turn to Pérez as a model for challenging the uncomplicated ways that history is made. Pérez turns her critique to Chicano studies. She argues that our story of Chicano history has been constructed with colonial tools and origins, which includes focusing on the sensational and stories that writes Chicanas as silent. Like Pérez, I am concerned with the ways that we make history in rhetoric studies, in particular, our focus on the interpretation of "great" texts, and perhaps more obvious scenes of rhetorical action to conceptualize change.

In order to pay attention to perhaps small acts of rhetorical work in history, I turn to Bruno Latour. Specifically, I turn to Latour not because I want to claim that I am doing an actor-network theory in this dissertation—indeed, I am not—but rather, for his articulation of the importance of telling stories about details, what would otherwise be considered the mundane, and the way he values the materiality of the archives for telling such stories. For instance, Latour writes in regards to studying the failure of a project to come to fruition that a "transportation system is no better than its smallest link. If it is at the mercy of a vandal or a programmer or a parasitic spark, it isn't a transportation system—it's an idea for a transportation system" (*Aramis* 71). Therefore, Latour pays attention to "the smallest link," the mundane that mediates the inventional process. To do this, Latour studies archives, as they often are the place where memory of the "smallest link" is recorded. As you will see in the ensuing chapters, I pay attention to small details, including marginalia, and the stapling together of documents, to conceptualize the rhetorical action of the *CFMN*.

It is the combination of these frameworks—frameworks that denaturalize our "points of view" in research, and foreground the consequences of doing so—that I used to construct my methodological heuristic for this dissertation. Each of these frameworks enabled me to be responsive and led to a recursive approach to data collection and interpretation. In each of my data chapters, while I highlight one aspect of my methodological heuristic: in chapter 2, I foreground theory in the flesh and experiential knowledge in reading the emergence of the *CFMN* as a responsive organization; in chapter 3, I consider Chicana methodology for studying history to explore the CFMN as an organization that made (and makes) history; and in chapter 4, I invoke differential consciousness as an approach to understand the way that the Chicanas of the CFMN made change through methods that are not aligned with space but with a strategic movement. However, all of these frameworks are interconnected in each chapter so that I am always looking at connectivity, history and experience.

Data Collection

For this dissertation, I focused on moments where Chicana rhetoric happens: in scholarship, activism and history. I collected data from a variety of sources explicating the how and why of Chicana, and all data sets are treated as equal sources. My data sources were determined based on where Chicana seemed to operate—in scholarly and activist practice. I am by no means presuming that this is an exhaustive and comprehensive collection of Chicana rhetoric. As with any methodological endeavor, I hope that other scholars can build on and revise these findings through adding other moments. Nevertheless, the data collected include two interviews with Chicana identified scholars in Rhetoric and Composition (interview questions reproduced in Appendix A),

Chicana philosophical writing[20], a recorded oral history interview with one of the founders of the *Comisión Feminial Mexicana Nacional (CFMN),* Yolanda Nava, and archival research on the *CFMN*, focusing on their programmatic writing. While I utilized these different methods for data collection, the current iteration of the project is primarily historiographic. The archival collection I focus on is the one created by the *CFMN* and more specifically the programmatic writing of the organization.

The archival component is a crucial component, because as you will later read, history and historicizing both a practice and an effect of Chicana rhetoric. Many of the ideological arguments produced by this organization as well as the documents themselves serve as foundation texts for the Chicana movement that are later reproduced and used to invent what it means to be a Chicana. Although several of the documents located in the *CFMN* collection are included in edited collections (i.e. *Chicana Feminism*) I include the text as found in the *CFMN* collection because of the affordances of archival research to tell stories about the placement of these documents in the collection, and to see the drafts and revisions made. These data choices are indicative of the theory driving my work. This theory is most important because it orients my research in a way that supports one of my dissertation goals: to make visible to scholars how experience shapes rhetorical production.

Why this Organization?

This organization—the *CFMN*—knew the importance of Chicana history and history making. I chose to focus on them for several reasons. The first reason is that the

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20 My collection of philosophical writing by Chicanas is in no way exhaustive; instead I attempted to examine most of the pinnacle texts that appeared to greatly influence Chicana identity formation, and writings that explicitly discussed Chicana identity.

CFMN is frequently historicized as one of the first Chicana organizations. Many of the ideological arguments produced by this organization as well as the documents themselves serve as foundation texts for the Chicana movement that are later reproduced and used to invent what it means to be a Chicana. Their testimonies, newsletter articles and activist writings are anthologized and referenced in Chicana studies. They are well known amongst Chicanas and non-Chicanas for their participation in the cause to stop a Los Angeles county hospital from routinely performing involuntary sterilizations of Mexican women[21]. Their participation culminated as co-plaintiffs in a lawsuit in 1978. Their leaders are well known as activists, academics, government and public officials.

In the early stages of this project, it was because of their well-known orators and their involvement in such highly publicized cases that I became interested in their organization. As I began my research though, my particular interest shifted elsewhere. I redirected my attention to the very fact that they were and are an organization instead of individual people. This is an organization that accomplished, amongst other things, significant documentation of their growth as a Chicana organization and what that meant for themselves and for other Chicanas. I noticed the prolific notes and cards, nestled amongst their programmatic writing, from people wanting to know the *CFMN*'s opinions on matters—matters ranging from legislation to a recently released movie. People were inquiring—what should I think about this movie in which Paul Newman paints his face brown to play a Mexican, as and characterized as a "brute" (Alpodeca)? How should I act given this issue going on in our community—as a Chicana? In other words, they contributed to and recorded an emergence and formation *of La Chicana*.

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21 Their participation culminated in the landmark case Madrigal v. Quilligan in 1978. This case has been written about in and outside of rhetoric studies.

Data Interpretation

As I mentioned, my data interpretation was recursive. The project actually began with my readings of Chicana philosophical and literary writings. My initial question was exploratory: is there something that is shared amongst the writing and scholarship of people who identify as Chicana? In this early stage, I read these writings and began noting shared features and rhetorical tropes and commonplaces.

From the features and commonplaces I noted in the philosophical and literary writing, I devised my initial "questions" for my archival research. I also used these questions for my interviews with Chicana scholars. These questions are included in the appendices. The interviews with Chicana scholars contributed a living realization of some of the productive use of these commonplaces as well as what an articulation of what Chicana means in scholarship, specifically the way that identifying as a Chicana said and did something for their scholarship. In the initial round of archival data collection, I had focused on collecting symbols and commonplaces of Chicana identity; as a result of these interviews, I learned more about the importance of experience and history making, and thusly, I redirected my attention to this in the second round of archival data collection, and in my interpretation. I also used this to reread the literary and philosophical writing.

As might be typical of archival research, some of the interpretation happens in the moment you are collecting of data at the archives as you consciously or not decide what to take notes on, or what to copy. And much of the work happens in the moment you return to the copious archival notes. When I was collecting my notes, I was too much in the moment, operating on the level of the document and the text it contained, to see the movement between the individual documents, and the series in which they were

contained. When I was originally doing data collection, I was really focusing on the texts that were most visible to me given my orientation as a rhetoric scholar: the speeches, the newsletter articles, and the political commentary. But when I came home and opened the notes I took, I noticed that most of the collection was comprised of texts that documented a reality of making of an organization that appeared to be decidedly less rhetorical (for lack of better words). I was also able to start to read across the files in a way that the *CFMN* had intended when they designed the structure of the collection. The *CFMN* did not organize their collection chronologically, nor by document type or by person. Instead, they arranged the collection to mirror the structure of the organization (*Guide* 2). The *CFMN* intended for readers to interact with the collection in a way that embodied their actions, to read across and expansively to build any given rhetorical moment (*Guide* 2). In rereading my notes, I began to do just that, writing down the range of actions that were associated with any given issue or development that constituted the work of their organization. I also allowed the repetition in the documentation of these different types of rhetorical action to guide the focus of my analysis, which I then coupled with the methodological considerations that I built from theory and Chicana writing, working back and forth to write my methodology and my interpretation approach at the same time. To put this plainly, I wrote my methodology after my data chapters.

Structure of the Dissertation

In each of the three data chapters (2, 3 and 4) I focus on the *CFMN* organization and its practices. Each chapter highlights an implication for studying rhetoric. While I do not have a distinct chapter on methodology, each chapter has a methodological orientation.

In Chapter 2, I begin my data interpretation with a focus on Chicanas' strategic use of experience, specifically to make an organization. In this chapter I begin by asking the following question: if Chicana is an identity that is constructed, and its emergence has been traced in poetic writing (Dernersian, "The Earth Did Part"), then can it be traced in and through the formation of an organization as well? To address this, I connect a document written by the National Organization for Women (N.O.W.) that constructs "the Latina woman," as ineffectual and disconnected. I argue that being a Chicana meant productively utilizing this construction to build the *CFMN*, which is evidenced in the development of a practice of connectedness that is invoked to direct their organization's trajectory: *La Hermandad*.

Chapter 3 moves to another practice of Chicanas as evidenced by the *CFMN*: the invention and intervention of histories. In this chapter, I build on the previous chapter's exploration of the building of a Chicana organization and its practices, to examine the way that the *CFMN* instantiated Chicana organizing as part of their history. In other words, they invented a history to make possible an activist present. At the same time, the organization was intentionally building its own history of the making of an organization. I also examine then this act of making the memory of an organization as part of their rhetoric and legacy.

Chapter 4 is also about history making, namely the heuristics we utilize to study change. To do this, this chapter presents a "case story" that occurs over three scenes. The story focuses about *CFMN*'s involvement in the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) employee- training initiative. The *CFMN*'s involvement in CETA makes visible the way these Chicanas intervened in historical absences and strategically

worked both externally in public addresses and internally through connective organizational work to redress a problem at hand. To understand their work toward this end expansively requires looking away from the public acts of individuals and to the nuances of their internal organizational work.

In Chapter 5, I outline several implications for this dissertation research, which will be explored in later projects. In this chapter, I flip reading Chicana through the lens of rhetoric, to reading rhetoric through the lens of Chicana. By this I mean I discuss what research would look like in rhetoric studies broadly, including rhetoric history and professional writing theory. I end the chapter with pedagogical implications for teaching students to complicate understandings of the "public," of activism and change.

Structure of the Chapters

Each chapter has an intentional organization structure that reflects my methodological orientations. As scholar employing theory in the flesh as part of my interpretive heuristic, I incorporate my own experience in my research and theory making. I consider not only my own experience, but also the experiences of the archive's creators. In fact, similar to the structure of the edited collection *Hacienda Caras*[22], the archiving and the collection of the *CFMN* requires an active participation in the act of interpretation to understand the complexity and movement of the organization's experiences: one must actively bring oneself to the archives.

As such, each chapter begins with my own experiential narrative. In the opening narratives, I recount a story about being and doing as a Chicana scholar. These stories

22 In the introduction to the edited collection *Making Face, Making Soul*, Gloria Anzaldúa explains that the focus on the creation of theory is mirrored in the placement of the writings in the collection, which follow a poetic association. The association and connection between readings is left up to the reader, as the texts and the order they appear "reflect our fragmented and interrupted dialogue which is said to be a discontinued and incomplete discourse" so that experience is invoked and realized (xvii).

focus on the ways Chicana scholars and scholarship are articulated by a field (rhetoric and composition), by a methodology (historiography) and by activist expectations. Throughout the chapters I also account for my experience in doing this research in the following archival cases. Finally, I conclude each chapter with a return to the initial case study of being a Chicana in rhetoric and suggesting the ways that doing Chicana archival research on the *CFMN* teaches me to act similarly as a Chicana scholar.

Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, I want to reiterate that Rhetoric and Composition, and more specifically, the writing of the discipline, has not truly validated the experiences and theories of Chicana rhetors. Because we have not changed what we count as rhetoric and rhetorical action in the world we perpetuate the signification of some rhetorics while relegating the limited applicability of others. The definition of Chicana rhetoric that I offer above is one that I hope demonstrates the results from the shift the point of view on the contribution of Chicana rhetors from amendments to the stabilized disciplinary narrative to contributors to its actual construction.

Ultimately, this dissertation makes a layered and recursive arguments. One argument is methodological; another is definitional; and a third is philosophical. Methodologically, this dissertation posits a way that rhetoric research can be utilized and useful for investigating how it occurs, in particular for marginalized groups, expansively. The definitional deliverable for this dissertation is to outline what Chicana rhetoric is by collecting instances of its occurrence; in other words, to define Chicana rhetoric by looking at Chicana rhetoric. Finally, philosophically, this dissertation mirrors the argument of identity politics in general by applying it to the field of Rhetoric and

Composition. While identity politics historically have been criticized for being limiting and exclusively "subjective", identity theorists have argued otherwise; that in fact researching and understanding identity garners a more objective understanding of how the world operates. Likewise, looking at identity in relation to rhetoric is not divisive or limited to the affiliated group. Rather, such examination can expand our understanding and definitions of rhetoric in general, with the hope that rhetors and rhetoricians and color are no longer placed in the afterthoughts of our field's discourses or misread and interpreted within inappropriate frameworks, but instead change the terrain of the discipline itself.

Now, this probably all seems very simplistically recursive, analyzing what may be right in front of our eyes. And, sometimes I think that is what we need. To take a step back. Convene and collect. I think collecting can be useful, useful like an archive can be useful, not for its modernist and colonialist implications of ownership and exhaustiveness, but for its symbol of the possibilities that comes from its existence. In other words, I am hoping that folks might be able to do something with this amassing, with this cataloging of Chicana practices and performances—something that might be utilized to enact change in our work as scholars, as activists or at the very least, change how view the boundaries of both identity and rhetoric. Specifically, I hope that this contribution may be useful to other scholars as well for doing research who are interested in investigating and collecting moments of rhetorical performances and practices. Second, this dissertation can be employed practitioners and activists as a model for rhetorical action by outlining how Chicana activists have worked to be transformative agents.

I also think it is valuable in general to begin to collect experiences that build marginalized rhetorics because "those of us who address issues of liberation and transformation of oppressive social and cultural conditions can never really be certain when and under what circumstances our efforts actually have something of the effect on ourselves and the community that we hope we will" (Martinez ix). We need to be able to make definitive claims in order to incite change, even if it is within a discipline, by claiming that there is a shared and transformative rhetorical practice enacted by a particular group of people. Ultimately, I argue that there is something that connects this rhetorical identity in patterns that can be found in the discursive and material practices and experiences of people writing and acting from and with Chicana, through the texts and tropes they produce and reproduce that alternatively interact with and transform lived experiences and conditions.

Chapter 2
Chicana Rhetoric: Experience and/in Building an Organization

In the current theoretical climate within U.S. literary and cultural studies, the feminist scholar who persists in using categories such as race or gender can be presumptively charged with essentialism, while her appeals to 'experience' or 'identity' may cause her to be dismissed as either dangerously reactionary or hopelessly naïve. If, on the contrary, she accepts strictures placed on her by postmodernism, the concerned feminist scholar may well find it difficult to explain why some people experience feelings of self-hatred while others feel a sense of racial superiority, some people live in poverty while others live in comfort, and some people have to worry about getting pregnant while others do not.

Paula Moya, *Learning from Experience*

A Case Study of Chicana(s) in Rhetoric

Episode One: All Chicanas Studying Chicanas Mean the Same Thing...

Sitting in the last row at the RSA summer institute, I scan the backs of the other thirty or so participants. With the exception of myself and a couple of other attendees, none of the other participants are visibly raced—and this includes the participants in the other seminar. When it is my turn for introductions, I quietly say that I am studying Chicana rhetoric, knowing I will need to further clarify what I mean: that I am studying Chicana rhetoric expansively, that I am starting from what Chicanas say and do, and that I am not beginning with the tropes that have defined Chicana experience (although these tropes do mediate the former). This research is more than just about Chicanas, but about rhetoric. It is about how rhetoric scholars do research and how we define our work. But before these thoughts can materialize, the scholar leading the discussions interrupts: "Oh I have a student who is already doing that" and moves on. Now I know who this student is, and no, we are not studying the same thing. Our "objects" of inquiry are related—we are both studying Chicanas—but we are focusing on different types of rhetorical work. Aside from a shared desire to increase scholarship on Chicanas, our outcomes are

different. Our research methodologies are also dissimilar. Yet, these "objects" of inquiry, for some scholars, define and limit us. The underlying thoughts seem to go something like this: *They study people of color; they must all be alike. Do we need another person studying Chicana writers? I mean. . .we already have a couple.* That scholar never asks me for further explanation. I stop talking the rest of the session.

Episode Two: Chicana Identity Means We Can't Relate....

A generous senior scholar in our field, also sitting in the back of the room during these introductions, approaches me during our workshop break to ask me more about my research. I start to explain, talking about how I look at Chicana identity in different historical moments as a rhetoric. He stares off, contemplatively. I feel like I am talking in circles and therefore not being clear about what is I am hoping to accomplish with my research project. I mean. . .I must not be making myself clear because he does not said anything in response. Finally, he turns to me and explains he finds those kinds of identity markers to be limiting. He explains that he is more interested in people who move beyond this, like the people using world systems theory. It allows for alliances.

Episode Three: What Does it Mean to Live in a System?

When I return to Michigan after the institute, I revisit the world systems theory I have encountered to try to make sense of the scholar's perspective on Chicana identity. Based on his scholarly goal to explode the myths and misconceptions that construct people from "Latinidad," Walter Mignolo might not be too interested in Chicana identity either. According to Mignolo, people who have been created through categorizations like "Hispanic" have been falsely connected with other people who may have different histories ("Huntington's Fears"). I read, and I read, and I see the big picture of Mignolo's

argument. Affiliating people in reductive ways eliminates difference in a way that falsifies and erases histories: accordingly, identity markers placed on people might do just that. However, stories told on such an expansive scale as Mignolo's theories invoke also sweep away our stories of living, eradicating our ability to find a ground upon which to stand and connect. I am left senseless, not knowing what it means to occupy these world systems, which are visible, bounded, and ineffectual.

These three moments in my scholarly history allude to the rhetorical problem to which Chicana identity exists in order to respond: a reduction of complexity, a misunderstanding of what it means to claim a Chicana identity, an absence of experiential stories and the spaces to tell them, and a subject position marked by non-action. To be a Chicana in the world carries an ontology[23] of what it means—or, to be more precise—what it *feels* like to live and act in the world. To be visibly marked, to live in a skin that carries connotations, histories and stories—some told by you, and others, about you. These stories also relay the rhetoric of Chicana in Rhetoric studies. In other words, they reveal what studying Chicanas signifies in Rhetoric studies, and perhaps more importantly, what it *does not*. When one identifies as studying Chicana rhetoric, that work is more often than not, constructed as studying Chicana poetics, and operating within a limiting framework of identity. While many Chicana theorists and writers have

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23 I rely on historian Ann Laura Stoler's definition of ontology. Stoler defines ontology as "that which is about the ascribed being or essence of things, the categories of things that are thought to exist or can exist in any specific domain, and the specific attributes that are assigned to them" (4). What this means is that while there is a real essence of "things", that essence is not stabilized and shifts based on time and space. So, while I claim that we can read Chicana identity as ontological does not mean that the definition of Chicana identity—and what it responds to, and the way that it reflects and refracts a material world—does not change. When discussing what is included in the archival collection, we see shifting definitions of what it means to be a Chicana as an epistemic, responding to external political and social shifts. Shifts that shaped how activist organizations could function in general and the fluctuating "weight" of identity for activism.

exploded the way that identity has been treated reductively, what needs to be further researched in Rhetoric studies is Chicana rhetoric expansively, both in terms of the types of writing and actions we study and how we study it. More specifically, we need to direct our attention away from individual Chicanas and Chicana action to that of groups. This is important for understanding Chicana rhetoric because of its connective movement, and because it makes visible the way that Chicana means not only a coming to critical consciousness about experience, but a correlative action as well.

Expanding on the features of Chicana rhetoric as the utilization of experience as a source of knowledge about the world and at the same time as a catalyst for action, in this chapter, I demonstrate that the emergence of a resistant and connected Chicana identity is articulated and instantiated in an organization. Specifically, I focus on the way that Chicanas used experience to make an organization, the *Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional (CFMN*[24]*)*, one of the first Chicana feminist organizations, and its associative practices. To do this, I first briefly discuss Chicana theorists who have traced the emergence of Chicana identity and subjectivity in texts and actions. I extend this framework to connect the making of *La Chicana* with the building of an organization. I then present a case study of a document produced by the National Organization for Women (NOW), which the *CFMN* included in their archival collection. I argue that this document and its particular placement in the organizational files, when also read alongside other documents included in the collection, speaks to the experiential exigency from which the *CFMN* emerges. In the next case study, I focus on the action of

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24 It should be noted that when I abbreviate *Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional*, I maintain the italicization in the abbreviation (*CFMN*) to make visible the Spanish language. However, in the excerpts from the *CFMN*'s documents, they are usually not italicized. This might be due to the medium the documents were written in, an oversight, or author choice.

collectives by examining an organizing practice of the *CFMN*, *La Hermandad*, which responds connectedly to a construction of Latina women as isolated and ineffectual.

Ultimately, the NOW document represents a set of material conditions, and the creation of experiential knowledge that are strategically employed by Chicanas to build an organization. This document, along with the way Chicanas exist(ed)[25] to respond to these conditions, demonstrates the following: like Chicana scholarship, Chicana activism is born from the flesh; and a feature of Chicana rhetoric is to makes things—such as organizations, identities, and archival collections.

Making the Making of Chicana Visible

Before I begin the case studies, I want to add to the brief discussion in Chapter 1 on a feature of Chicana rhetoric, namely, the strategic use of experience to make things. In addition, I want to touch upon a couple of key Chicana scholars who not only discuss the emergence of Chicana identity as coming from experience, primarily as a critical consciousness, but also the ability to see this emergence happening in writing and actions. An intention for this chapter is to add to this scholarship by extending the unit of analysis to an organization.

Some of the writings that many Chicanas associate with Chicana writing and action, and that shape Chicana theory and scholarship, are included in the edited collection *This Bridge Called My Back.* This publication has been referred to as an origin moment for Chicana scholarship and by association, Chicana studies (see the conversations in Chabram-Dernersesian's *Chicana Cultural Studies Forum* for examples

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25 A difficulty in writing this chapter stemmed from the complexities of being a Chicana as a positionality marked in part by being actively in between presents and pasts (a facet I explore in Chapter 3), and by an interconnectedness of perspectives. I attempted to maintain that complexity at times by obfuscating the location or *chronos* of a moment, action or perspective.

of this association). Two of the notable selections from this collection that are perhaps more frequently treated as pinnacle to articulating a Chicana consciousness are Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga's introduction to the section on "Theory in the Flesh," and Moraga's "La Güera." While I discussed these selections in the previous chapter, I want to remind us of a couple of a key aspect of Chicana rhetoric these two pieces elucidate. Namely, the way that identity and a correlative theory means and does something: It means we have a semblance of a shared reality and that we then choose to associate and act in particular ways. By association then, we can consider the process of coming to an identity, or in the case of a Chicana identity, a coming to a resistant critical consciousness, to be tangible and traceable.

It is in this vein that Angie Chabram-Dernersesian studies poetry as a physical manifestation of the separation of Chicana subjectivity from Chicanos. In the essay "And, Yes... The Earth Did Part: On the Splitting of Chicana/o Subjectivity," Chabram-Dernersesian explores the ways that Chicanas challenged the Chicano subjectivity through art and writing, and then acted to create their own subjectivities of resistance. Focusing on poems written by Chicanas between the 1960's and 1980's, Chabram-Dernersesian argues that they develop new semantics, mimetic modes, and collective identities from which Chicano/a cultural production can occur through content as well as form (36). In these and other Chicana poems Chabram-Dernersesian argues we can trace the development of Chicanas from "complacency to action, from social dislocation to political groundedness, and from individual action to collective memory" (37). While a purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that the Chicanas of the *CFMN* strategically used the experience to make an organization and its practices, an

overarching question expands the premise set forth by Chabram-Dernersesian: If Chicana is an identity that is constructed, and its emergence has been traced in poetic writing, then can it be traced in and through the formation of an organization as well? In other words, I am shifting the unit of analysis of a coming to and acting as a critical, resistant subjectivity from the individual to a group. This is an important methodological move to make for the following reasons[26]: it adds organizational work and writing to the ways that Chicanas theorize about experience and act, while speaking to the connectivity of Chicana identity.

Case Study: The Problem of the "Latin" Woman for the National Organization of Women

Do all in your power to "MAKE THEM FEEL AT HOME.

National Organization for Women, Untitled Brochure

Before I started this research project, I naively thought that studying an activist organization meant that most of the documents would be politically charged. I thought the documents and the arguments in them would mirror the archetypical representation of an activist: the performances would be public, the speech acts would be punctuated by exclamation points, and to read them would most assuredly require the use of a microphone in order to truly recreate the moment. But, as anyone who has ever done any activist work with an organization knows, much of the real work is small and rarely makes the news.

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26 What is interesting to notice in tracing the emergence of Chicana subjectivity in a group is the evident tension between adaptability and memory in an organization that is based on a resistant subjectivity; and yet part of an organization that demands a memory to be sustained.

Forgetting this reality of activist work, I arrived at UC Santa Barbara where the *Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional* collection is housed and opened the first of many boxes that comprised the *CFMN* collection. Series I happened to be the one comprised of administrative documents[27]. Upon opening the initial files in this series, I was affronted by an explicitly performative document. The document was a version of the resolutions that were drafted at the Chicano National Issues Conference in 1970. This set of resolutions was one of the first written that established the organization in response to the feelings of exclusion from other movements: "...In order to terminate exclusion of female leadership in the Chicana/Mexican movement and in the community, be it RESOLVED that a Chicana/Mexicana Women's Commission be established at this Conference which will represent women, in all areas where Mexicans prevail..." ("Resolution")[28].

This resolution, as well as the series of resolutions of which it is a part, operates as a discursive origination of the *CFMN and* an instantiation of Chicana identity through a shared recognition of exclusion. Tellingly, this document appeared in the "Administrative" series in the *CFMN* archival collection. This series included documents that the *CFMN* understood as fundamental to understanding their organization. Given its placement in the collection, the document clearly contributed to a definition of a Chicana activist as it was realized in the organization. And, through the outlining of resolutions, this document created a Chicana categorization of the world.

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27 As I previously mentioned, the *CFMN* divided their archival collection into series. According to the guide to the collection, the "archives are subdivided into series according to the structure of the organization itself" ("Guide").

28 While the finalized version of the "Resolutions from a Chicana Workshop" is reprinted in multiple *CFMN* documents, it also appears in scholarly historicizing of the Chicana movement (see García, *Chicana Feminist Thought*).

When reading the document, with its repetition of "BE IT RESOLVED," written in bold, over and over, it was impossible to not be imbued with the furor and conviction with which it was written. I pictured myself at the conference with other Chicanas, coming up with strategies for how to intervene in a world from which we were excluded. This is the type of document that I had expected and hoped to find: such an explicit and inspirational declamation. I lost myself in the charged language and doing this research at that moment was exciting. I took notes and continued flipping through the files. Several drafts of the resolutions appeared. With each draft, the finding became less monumental.

After that first resolution draft, the drudgery began to set in. Following that thrilling incitation, the remainder of the vast Administrative series were, well, dull: drafts of the organization structure conveyed in narrative form through various flow charts; by-laws; edits of those by-laws; meeting agendas; and then minutes of those agendas. No longer encapsulated by the excitement of "RESOLVED," I became painfully aware of the physicality of this research, with my pregnancy induced swollen ankles from sitting too long, and my body devoid of food and water lest I spill on the documents. The worst part of it all was that in the past couple of days all I had "found" were what I would consider to be very typical of any activist organization. How in the world was I going to write a dissertation on this...

I pulled open another file, half paying attention and half wondering when it would feel right to take a break, or when my researcher duties for the day would be fulfilled, when out fell a document that seemed out of place. Amongst these mundane organizational artifacts were some odd documents. Unlike the overwhelming majority of other administrative documents, these documents were not produced by the *CFMN*, but

instead by the National Organization for Women (NOW). These two NOW documents were loosely nestled in the *CFMN* Administrative files between meeting minutes and agendas. These documents in my view were extremely charged, and I immediately reacted with knowing anger, aware of the criticisms of the feminist movement as traditionally an Anglo enterprise. What made the charged nature of these so interesting, in part, was that the documents that surrounded them were very *not* charged.

The first document, *Historia de la Organization Nacional de Mujeres* [NOW's History], was a Spanish translation of the organization's mission and history. Attached to this was another document, presumably written for NOW's leadership, that detailed how to introduce and integrate "Latin" women into their organization. While these documents might not have been produced at the same time, whoever included these documents in the collection related the two by stapling them together. The Chicana archiver asked us to read these documents as associated. Based on the documents' contents, it would appear that the Chicanas of the *CFMN* saw the translation of NOW's history in the brochure as an attempt to integrate the "Latin" woman[29].

On the attached document, several suggestions are given to achieve this integration. One recommendation made is to establish Latino American Committees in every NOW chapter. The writer(s) of this document then state that each committee should be headed by one, two or three women "who can handle both languages (English and Spanish) at the same time, in order to introduce Spanish speaking women into the topics and concerns of the National Organization for Women." Evident in this statement

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29 The way to respond to this was presumably a point of contention. In an oral history recording with Yolanda Nava, one of the *CFMN* founders, she recollects that there was disagreement about whether they should try to form alliances with Anglo feminist organizations (Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive).

is a distancing between NOW, its leadership, and its mission from "Spanish speaking women." The text sets up a relationship in which NOW speaks to the uniform "Spanish speaking women"; by which language is presumed the only difference (and commonality between them) and it is the NOW representatives who are represented as the speaking agents. What this renders is a positionality for the women who are spoken about in these documents; a positionality that categorizes people with particular linguistic and cultural heritages as monolithic and unspeaking.

A subsequent section comprised of a numbered list of mandates for NOW leaders produces a rhetorical situation by outlining steps for dealing what I imagine to be an answer to a vexing problem that NOW has identified: a lack of attention to its "Latin sisters." While these steps reveal blatant stereotypes of their "Latin sisters," they also provide an experiential account of living as visibly marked with connotations of silence and servitude. For example, #3 proclaims: "The Committee will welcome Latin sisters in the meeting of the Chapters. Don't forget that they are shy in the beginning and many have handicaps with the language. Help them to overcome the idea that language and CULTURE is a barrier" (emphasis in original). This statement composes "Latin sisters" as linguistically "handicapped" and locates the problem of noninvolvement in the feminist movement as residing with their "Latin" sisters who must not be participating in the feminist movement via this organization because they perceive themselves to be inferior or inadequate. In turn, in its time this construction presumably must have affected the actual involvement of such interpellated people from participating, thereby creating a feminist movement that proclaimed universality and sisterhood, yet was not felt.

As a result, in tenet #4 the NOW author(s) suggest that the "task of each committee will be: Raise consciousness in the Latino American communities. Public Speeches in Spanish centers, Feminist Group, PTAs in certain areas. Advertising in Spanish Magazines, Newspapers, Cable TV, Radio, etc." To achieve this, #5 states, "Each committee will get ready to form consciousness raising groups in Spanish, in the same way that has been done in English. The purpose and main goal of the C.R. Groups will be not only FEMINISM but to bring our sisters into the learning of English as a second language for better communication with their speaking English sisters" (emphasis in original). Again, this statement positions the Spanish-speaking woman as the deficit: the problem and the source of the barrier to participating in the feminist movement. Further separating themselves from their "Latin" sisters and casting themselves into a savior position, the NOW author(s) for tenet #6 write, "[t]he committee will find the way to make our Latino American sisters understand that OUR OPPRESSION is not a question of CULTURE. ALL WOMEN are SISTERS, it doesn't matter where they are coming from" (emphasis in original). This tenet demonstrates the disavowal of difference again by implicitly placing the "barrier" to sisterhood in the Latin sisters who presumably argue that culture takes precedence over sisterhood.

The next tenet (#7) gives suggestions for recruiting others to assist the NOW leadership committee, again separating out Latin women from their existing ranks:

> The committee should try to find FEMINIST SISTERS to help in their task, who also speak both languages. They can bring in women of Latin background. Find centers for them where they can learn English. Please

don't stress the LANGUAGE problem from the beginning. (emphasis in original).

Here language and more specifically, the language of Spanish speaking women, is a notable problem to which NOW leaders must be sensitive. The solution, according to NOW, in addition to "translat[ing] articles and LITERATURE of NOW," is to schedule "C.R. Groups to gather during the afternoons" as "Latino American Women have never been exposed to meeting during the evenings for women only. They are not ready yet to defy their husbands, although this is not the general rule. They are very much afraid of going at night in certain areas. Eventually they will be able to do this after a while, when they realise [sic] that we have car-pools, etc." In this tenet (#10), "Latino American Women" are depicted as possessing a childlike quality, scared and in need of reassurance from NOW women so that they can attend meetings.

The documents show that assumptions about the experiences of "Latino American Women" impacted NOW's practices, as they recommended hosting meetings during the day in order to accommodate the presumed restricted life of the "Latino woman," whom they understood to be married and to stay at home during the day[30]. Here we have a disjuncture as a problem of *stasis*. In other words, there is not a shared understanding of what the actual problem is at hand[31]. The NOW representatives indicate a problem with

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30 This difference between how NOW constructs Latin women and their actual lived reality is realized in other documents collected by in which *CFMN* members give testimony to the actual lived reality of women of Mexican descent who are working and head of households. In a speech given by Anna Nieto Gómez, she argues that the misrepresentation of women as not working has a direct material impact in the world in such ways that funding for work related programs are not targeted toward women of Mexican descent ("Labor Force"). The lack of statistics and its material consequence is part of the issue identified in the Manpower case, which I will explore in the next chapter.

31 I am not convinced that this is necessarily the correct term to encapsulate what is happening with this case. The problem I think is that stasis is correlated with invention, and more precisely an invention process whereby the actors at hand work to come to an understanding of the issue at hand and the means to address it. But, in this case, I think that *CFMN* was more interested in utilizing this experience for their purposes. In

"Latino women's" lack of involvement, or more precisely, recognition that they are indeed similarly oppressed and therefore should support their organization; and the origination of this problem resides with the "Latino American woman" who cannot speak English. Aware of this deficiency, the "Latin woman," is hesitant, and presumably too shamed, to participate: difference is reduced to language with the mission, purpose and, indeed, rhetorical practices of NOW seemingly able to transgress this language barrier through translation.

Accordingly, also included in the archival collection is a NOW brochure titled "*Viva la Diferencia.*" In this brochure, NOW provides an overview of the discrepancy between the treatment of men and women in regards to pay, education, job opportunities, and access to legislative power. While the information is conveyed in Spanish, attention is not given to the particular obstacles or specific needs of "Latino women." Instead, the message is presumed to remain constant and applicable regardless of language. There are two things happening here that are interesting to note. First, the realities of both the subject position and the issue at hand that are constructed in this document are not in fact the lived realities of those whom this presumably constructs[32]. The subject position

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addition, I am not so much interested in invention here as I am about the differing realities this conveys and how the *CFMN* includes these disparate renderings in their files as a record of how they used experience.
32 I use the term construction here to describe the phenomenon in which a subject position of the "Latin woman" is created. This creation has both material and ideological effects in the world. One effect is that Chicana identity is created in response to this construction whereby both the constructed "Latin woman" inhabits the same space. Construction though falls short in describing the productive relationship between. One term that perhaps comes close to this conception is Stuart Hall's discussion of articulation. Hall describes articulation as a connection, or linkages of elements that need not be inevitable. Specifically, Hall describes this as the process by which "ideological elements come, under certain conditions, to cohere together within a discourse, and a way of asking how they do or do not become articulated, at specific conjunctures, to certain political subjects" (53). Hall uses the example of Rastafarians who use the language of the Bible and "turn it upside down" to speak to their experience (54). However, Hall seems most interested in the relationship between ideology, discourse and subject position, and while Hall professes to be interested in the "anchored-ness" of this occurrence, he feels less grounded in the embodied inhabituations, like race, that might play into these linkages. Interestingly, the linkages of elements is

constructed is one of an ineffectual and isolated woman due to the linguistic and cultural heritages of Latinas. Yet, Chicanas produced a position (Chicana identity) that is effectual and connected; a fact that will be made evident in the next section. Second, in this construction, NOW's whiteness goes unrecognized as the norm from which feminist practice operates; any difference from that is depicted as the problem, and the associated group with the problem is the one who needs to be taught to adapt.

Likewise, in a letter to Francisca Flores, one of the *CFMN* founders, Judi Stewart, a NOW member, wrote:

> Today I saw a copy of CFM Report, for the first time, I was not until now aware of a Chicana feminist Movement and am so very pleased to know that one exists. I, am not a Chicana but am in contact daily with Chicana women and know personally how desperately they are in need of the Women's Movement. Is there a person in Orange County that I can get in touch with that is a Chicana Feminist? I would like to get someone to help me, or to take over, which would more reasonable, the chore (?) of making the Chicana women in our groups more aware of their rights as persons and their lack of rights as women. I belong to NOW in Orange County, which has only a very few Chicanas. I also belong to the El Medeana Head Start State Pre-School, which is almost all Chicana's and Chicano's and has no Feminist's except myself and my neighbor. Neither of us Chicana's. Looking forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you.

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similar to the concept of *difrasismo*, the linking together of two disparate concepts to form a new unit, that is trope utilized by Chicana rhetoricians (see Laura Pérez for an example of a Chicana who employs this methodology to do her work and as an interpretive heuristic).

For Women's Sake, Judi Stewart.

In this letter, Judi Stewart conveys a sentiment that characterized Chicana women again as needing the intervention of the Women's Movement to illuminate the oppressed lives they lead. Additionally, underlining Stewart's letter is a misinformed understanding of what being a Chicana means. In Stewart's construction a Chicana by definition, or more precisely, ontologically, *cannot* be a feminist. The two identity constructions are treated as mutually exclusive by definition. Furthermore, like the NOW documents, Stewart's letter again defines the problem at hand as with the uninformed Chicana, and not, perhaps, with what participation in an Anglo feminism might feel like for some women of color or with the particular construction of the Chicana she articulates. Ultimately, such constructions contribute to an exigency from which a Chicana feminist organization emerges, responding to the subjection of Latino women as timid and inadequate.

Admittedly, claiming that second wave feminist organizations like NOW (and mainstream feminist organizations in general) have historically ignored and marginalized women of color (amongst others) is nothing new. And my intent in including these documents is not to charge NOW with exclusivity. As a researcher utilizing theory in the flesh as a heuristic, I include these documents for two reasons: first, as a material witness to the experience of Chicanas, in particular the ones associated with the *CFMN*; and, second, as an indication that Chicanas built an organization and its practices utilizing the experience of living as marked by others. The inclusion of this document in the archival collection serves as evidence that Chicana is rhetoric in that it works in tandem with the construction of the "Latin woman" as ineffectual. Further, while this document might

result in a construction of the "Latin woman," the construction is a simulation. Being a Chicana means productively using this simulation.

There is no indication that these document were ever commented upon or directly acted upon, and the location in the archival collection can tell us whether these NOW papers were discussed or even considered. But, they are nevertheless included in the Administrative series. The inclusion of these documents in the Administrative series is telling in that the typical documents included are more visibly programmatic: for example, there are several renderings of the organizational structure charts, drafts of resolutions, by-laws and business plans for their various projects. The placement of these documents alongside the other programmatic files leads me to consider the experiences rendered through these documents as they contributed to the construction of the *CFMN* specifically, and help build a rhetorical argument about identity as experientially shaping activist practice. The subtle inclusion of what is arguably a contentious document in the Administrative files speaks loudly to how reading such material *must* produce the practices of their organization.

The *CFMN* archival creators, in turn, leave the connection building to the archival researcher. Through the slippage of the documents contents without remark enables me to recreate what it must feel like to have received the NOW brochures, to have read them and their construction of Latina women against my own experiences. By *not* explaining the relationship, by not providing a discussion in meeting minutes or in the handwritten commentaries that are present on other document, the creators of the archive expanded the response we might have to these writings. For example, in one file the *CFMN* includes a member's notes that were taken during a conference attended on sexism in the

workplace. The attendee has the notes divided, with some falling under the header: "sexism and racism: A Chicana perspective 1974." Under that heading the attendee has written, perhaps in response to the way sexism was represented at this conference: "racism 1st Then women/Mexican Revolution/feminists cant be racists" ("Note on *Conference*"). On another document entitled "The Functions and Services of the Women's Bureau" a *CFMN* member wrote, "Tokenism—does not serve the needs of women" ("Note on *The Functions*"). These represent just a few of instances of the commentary that took place on these texts that is not present on these renderings of Chicana women produced by NOW. In this way, the *CFMN* activists, through their inclusion of the NOW document written about their "Latin sisters" and their marginalia on other documents that likewise construct Latinas that are nestled in between meeting minutes and agendas, utilized their experiences for action as an organization.

Paradoxically, while Chicanas' existence as effectual actors is made invisible in the NOW documents, when our experiences and differences *are* represented they become reductive tropes used to hide the backdrop of the unmarked. Our stories then become merely metaphoric; our lives are told through simple narrative constructions depicted in archetypes. These archetypes function reductively, like the images that *CFMN* president Gloria Moreno-Wycoff protests in her letter to the *Times*:

> On behalf of Comision Femenil de Rio Hondo, we are writing to express our disappointment with the article 'Chicanas: Breaking Out is Hard.' (Los Angeles Times, Southeast Edition, Oct 7-8, 1978). As Chicanas, we feel this article did not reflect our best interest. Changing our roles and changing our image has been difficult, and this article did not recognize

> the progress we have made (nor did it enhance the Chicano male image). While Ms. Roxanne Arnold's intentions may have been positive in writing this article, a negative impression prevailed. Ms. Arnold's perception was Anglo-oriented and tended to perpetuate the stereotype of the Chicana, e.g. dark-skinned, plump, pint sized, doe-eyed, unwed mother. The president of our organization was misquoted as saying she was a 'reborn woman' when actually her reference had been made to her political and ethnic identity as a 'reborn Chicana.' Also positive pertinent quotes from other members of our organization were omitted. We are aware that Chicanas presently are the least educated and the least meaningfully employed women in the United States. However, many of us are taking positive steps to elevate our status and reflect a strong Chicana image. We value and respect our Mexican heritage and culture, and we hope future articles will acknowledge these efforts" COMISION FEDERAL DE RIO HONDO/Gloria Moreno-Wycoff, president

Moreno-Wycoff concedes that perhaps Ms. Arnold (the original article author) might have had good intentions in lending coverage to the Chicana movement, but her reliance on archetypes, even if rooted in some glimmer of reality, does not accurately depict its complexity.

How, then, does one act in a world in which you are deemed a non-actor; perhaps invisible in some cases, but very visible in others where any difference is used to explain away agency? This is the rhetorical problem that Chicana identity and an associative rhetoric emerged to redress.

Using Experience to Connect

The real power, as you and I well know, is in the collective.
Cherríe Moraga, "La Güera"

As demonstrated in the above case study, theory in the flesh as a heuristic begins with the acknowledgement of a "materialism. . .[that] lives in the flesh [of] women's lives" (xviii). Equally important is using this experience to do something. Moraga explains "[o]ur strategy is how we cope" (xviii). While there are ample discussions and examples of production from the flesh of individual writers and scholars, such heuristics similarly can be extended to groups[33]. Indeed, it can be argued that NOW's rendering of the "Latin woman" in fact incites the creation of the Chicana. As a rhetoric it operates in a world that interconnects experience and materiality; building, connecting, and responding through these aspects of Chicana-ness of shared experience and/or shared physical realities. Chicana as a rhetoric demonstrates explicitly the way that rhetoric is situated as it operates in response to knowledge of a world that is connected with visible bodies but that constructs those bodies as non-actors.

Experience is therefore important to Chicanas because it connects people. Affiliation also occurs by recognizing shared histories and shared experiences of living in similarly visible bodies. This recognition is a foundation of Chicana rhetoric. It is with this experiential knowledge, as well as the practices that are associated with it, that Chicana identity does something in the world. In this section, then, I will outline how Chicanas responded to the types of misconstructions created in the NOW documents by making an organization and producing connectivity.

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33 It am not trying to imply that these individual writers and scholars are not operating as connected; instead, I am simply hoping that we can utilize this heuristic with the specific intention to see what collectives are formed through experience and use of that experience.

While the *CFMN* as an activist organization accomplished change in public spaces, much of its work was internally focused. Part of that internal focus was establishing the definition of Chicana through its practices. Therefore, as an organization it both served as an instantiation of Chicana as a connected identity and demonstrated how Chicana should be enacted in the collective. This, in fact, established the impetus for involvement or action in the *CFMN*. According to several intake surveys of the *CFMN*'s membership, when asked what they hoped to gain from involvement in the *Comisión* and secondarily, what the *Comisión* should do for its members, many of the responses centered on establishing relationships with other Chicanas:

- "It is important to meet and interact with other Latinas,'
- "..keep me informed of Chicana issues & how to be involved in these issues and how to mentor other Chicanas..."
- "I needed to relate to other women with initiative, be an active network and support system to fall back on; wanted to become active member in such an organization for Chicanas, to provide a supportive and encouraging environment where I can be with other Latinas..."
- "..because I wanted to meet other Latinas and be able to learn from others as well as to share my knowledge; to become more involved in community activities and to be more aware of my culture.."
- "I did volunteer work at NOW and noticed one summer and I saw there was a noticeable lack of contact with the Chicana community so I looked up Chicana organizations and decided to join..."

- "..allow me to work with other like-minded women on projects, campaigns, etc which benefit the Latina and her community, seeking a means by which I can utilize my energies in constructive ways.."
- "to have an impact in my community and not be so isolated from it.." (Member Surveys)

Tellingly, many of these responses demonstrate both an expectation that a Chicana organization would serve to create and maintain relationships between Chicanas. At the same time, this expectation incited people to join and participate in this organization. As in the previous case study of the NOW document, experience, especially of isolation, is a centralizing motivation common in these responses. One particular member commented on working with NOW and noticing a "lack of contact with the Chicana community" that directly motivated her to join the *CFMN*. We can imagine that she was perhaps one of the only people like her in NOW—meaning inhabiting a particular raced body— and we can presume that perhaps no one else noticed this missing connection to her community. Working in tandem with the construction of the isolated "Latin woman" of the NOW document, this document shows how being a Chicana operates as a positionality of a connected person[34] that is instantiated in an organization.

The sentiments conveyed in this list also indicate that a primary purpose of the *CFMN* as a Chicana organization was definitional. For instance, in the quote in the second bullet point, the prospective *CFMN* member stated that she was interested in joining in order to "keep me informed of Chicana issues & how to be involved in these

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34 While the reasons outlined in this list for joining the *CFMN* may sound similar to reasons one would join any organization, they are distinct in their dual focus on its internal focus to foster relationships between members and as well as to remain connected to their communities. Further, it is also telling that the experience of feeling disconnected when working at NOW led to one member to join.

issues and how to mentor other Chicanas..." It was through affiliation with this organization that people hoped to find out what was important for Chicanas, how to act and ostensibly, and how to treat people. Affiliation to this identity then mediated even day-to-day actions. As I will later discuss, part of this mediation involved changing the methods for activist practices. The Chicana then exists then in part to define what Chicana means[35].

When the responses to these surveys are traced through the archival collection within the Administrative series, it is apparent that maintaining these feelings of connectedness became part of the organization's practice[36]. A document labeled "Board Retreat," written ostensibly as an outcome of the retreat, gives a concrete example of interconnectedness as central to the *CFMN* purpose:

> Define Values: Emergence of Latina Leadership as policy makers—to improve the quality of life for the Latina. Continue to address national and state and local issues through Latina perspective. Maintain cultural values as part of the community. Establishing and maintaining linkages (networking). Enhance Latina image. ("Board")

The very purpose or effect of the organization was seen as a mechanism through which people with a shared identity could incite change. But more importantly, the organization

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35 The definitional component is directly connected with an additional exigency for Chicana rhetoric: to build histories of not only what it means to be and act as a Chicana but to do something with that meaning.
36 This practice is visible even to people not associated with the organization. Asked to perform an audit of the organization as an outsider to give a "male perspective," in a memo to the *CFMN* board of directors, lawyer Steven J. Crosby describes the organization as such: "CFMN is the tool whereby a woman can give to her community time and effort. The organization allows women to pick their area of interest and work towards its final resolution. CFMN gives women the opportunity to improve themselves and it they want to change their personal focus-it gives them direction and a promise for a better future. The CFMN offers the woman a restructuring of her ideals or at least a way to refocus those ideals to benefit the Chicana/Latina community" (Crosby). A purpose of Chicana organizing as characterized in this audit report then is a desire to shape Chicana "ideals" to better impact the Chicana community.

envisioned its work as providing an experiential accounting of issues from a "Latina perspective." In fact, in a *CFMN* questionnaire administered to the members in each *CFMN* chapter, in response to the question "What do you think is the role of CFMN," one chapter responded with "Create and cultivate the 'Latina experience.'" ("Retreat and Questionnaires"). Again, as an organization, this seemingly benign act of addressing issues from their perspective was a performance that in turn mediated what it meant to inhabit this positionality.

For the *CFMN*, connectivity under the premise of shared identity meant more than just a matter of terminology. The *CFMN* operated on the principle of connectivity both amongst its members and within its organizational structure. This connectivity centered on a commitment to redressing and altering the experienced conditions described in the previous section. Interestingly, this commitment was shared regardless of whether or not the term Chicana was "present." Several of the organizations that were affiliated with the *CFMN* as a national Chicana organization did not identify with its name, or even with the term "Chicana." For example, the *CFMN* archived an annual report from *Las Mujeres de la Raza de San Fernando,* which is a chapter of the *CFMN.* The organization interestingly remained affiliated to the *CFMN* despite its name difference. Because it is not realized in language this affiliation must be realized through Chicana as an unspoken connectivity[37].

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37 The act of not invoking the name of the *CFMN*, or of Chicana may not seem noteworthy. Yet, it does stand out against other national organizations whose individual chapters all bear the national affiliation. For example, perusing the National Organization for Women's website and click on chapters. Each of the chapters are identified as NOW and are differentiated by its geography (i.e. Contra Costa County NOW). While some of the *CFMN* chapters do bear the *CFMN* name, some don't. And some don't even have Chicana in the name.

To explain, included in the archival collection is a newspaper clipping of an interview with a then *CFMN* president Chris Fuentes. In the interview she explicated the *CFMN*'s objective:

> Creating Chicana self-awareness and recognizing their achievements are principles on which the CFMN was founded. Fuentes says members tend to be women committed to the community, and the activity evident in even small chapters attests to a dedication and energy that seem the only common factors of the diverse membership. While the focus of the *Comisión Femenil* is political feminism, each chapter is free to involve itself in the issues pertinent to its community. (Article on *Comisión*)

And, each chapter did just this. Some acted more or less as student organizations, with concerns relevant to university settings; others appeared to be perhaps more radical, others more bureaucrat, or more philanthropic. Some focused on hosting cultural events, while others pushed for the inculcation of an activist agenda into government boards.

Arguably, the relationship between the actions and goals of each individual chapter, and with the national organization, seem tenuous. Based on the contents of the archival collection, a considerable amount of time and materials were spent determining the relationship. For example, the *CFMN* structure was outlined at multiple moments, with varying relationships established between the chapters and the national board.

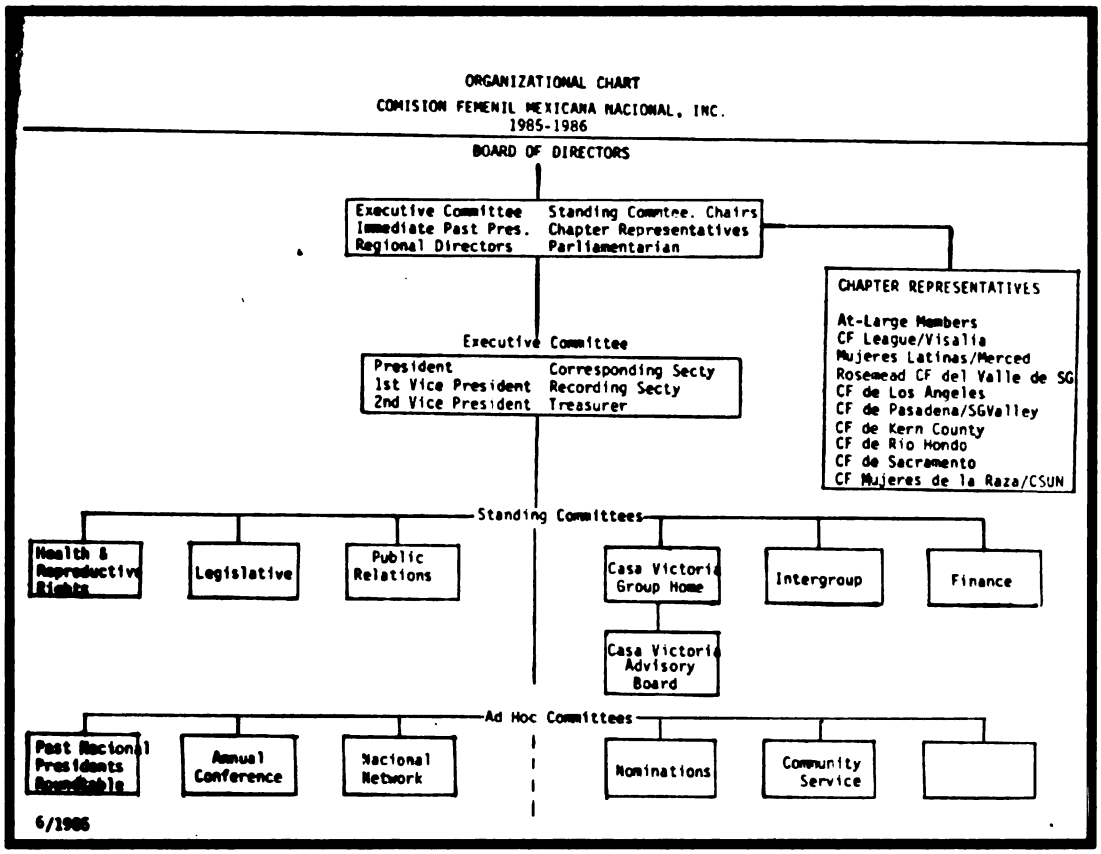

Figure 1: Copy of an Organizational Chart

As with the other organizing writing produced by the *CFMN,* creating the structure must have been considered an important practice because of the amount of documentation the *CFMN* included of the creation of this diagram in their archival collection. Further, an entire series was devoted to the chapters, as they were seen as broadly related to the organization's mission yet distinct enough to be separated from the national organization's documents. And, while the UC Santa Barbara *CFMN* collection contains folders for each organization under their chapter series, some chapters have additional collections devoted to their specific organization housed at other institutions[38].

Underlying their organization's history was a tension between the chapters and the *CFMN* (the national organization), which was partly constituted by differences in

38 For example, the *CFM* Los Angeles chapter collection is housed at UCLA.

localized goals and in the expectations for the relationship between the national board and the individual chapters[39]. Leading up to a *CFMN* retreat primarily devoted to discussing this relationship, the *CFMN* sent a questionnaire to the local chapters, inquiring about the role of *CFMN* in relation to the chapters and what the chapters wanted from the national board, among other things. The responses ranged from wanting the *CFMN* to be "a quasi dictatorship from while concentrating on developing our infrastructure" to facilitating more opportunities for the chapters to meet and giving each chapter more recognition, as well as "...mostly to be left alone" ("CFMN Questionnaire")[40]. A retreat then was organized to address these concerns and "determine accountability and commitment of chapters to CFMN and vis-versa [sic]" ("CFMN Retreat").

While admittedly distinct from the national organization in terms of practices or concerns, the chapters fell under the scope of the *CFMN* because of a recognition that their members shared a history and goal. The different chapters and their projects ranged widely but were all connected through Chicana identification, again, regardless if the label "Chicana" was present. In "Nacional Network Committee: Administrative Proposal," an established goal of the national organization to establish a Latina network under an associate organization was to "foster communication among Latina organizations and build a national CFMN network." The term "Chicana" itself was less

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39 Another point of contention expressed by the chapter organizations is geographically based. The *CFMN* collated responses to the questionnaires sent to its chapters and then used these responses to write their agenda for a board retreat. Written on the agenda under "DEFINED WHAT IS CFMN TODAY," is "Perceived as LA based" ("Retreat and Questionnaires"). This observation mirrors a general critique leveled at Chicana identity in general as it is primarily seen as affiliated with and speaking to Chicanas in California.

40 For writing researchers, it is interesting to note that several responses focused on the newsletters produced by the *CFMN* and its chapters as they equated recognition of chapters with the placement of chapter news in the national newsletter ("Retreat and Questionnaires").

important than the connection that it instantiated. While Chicana is ideological in the sense that claiming this identity means something, at the same time, there is a shared recognition of connectivity that extends beyond language.

The connective work that is built from experience as an invention material becomes more removed from "Chicana" itself when we see that it extends to other groups as well. For example, Azizah al-Hibri Cox writes in a letter to Francisca Flores[41]:

> Dear Ms. Flores, The President of the Organization of Arab students has asked me to try and obtain a copy of the questionnaire that Chicanas passed out in Houston to study the Chicano attitudes towards women and feminism[42]. We would like to modify the questionnaire and use it to tackle the same issues among Arab men. The questionnaire was first mentioned in your magazine (*Vol. I, no 10*) and I wonder whether you may not be able to send me a copy of the questionnaire or at least tell me where to find one. I would be very grateful for your help. In solidarity, Azizah Cox.

A note written at the end of the letter in red ink indicates that it was "sent." The survey developed by Chicanas to ascertain the perceived differences between Chicanas and Chicanos and white women was used as a vehicle to develop an affiliation between the experience of Chicanas as raced and gendered with other raced and gendered people. What this points to is again that the Chicana practice of connectivity is built from living in raced bodies. This practice is therefore a result of this material condition; in response, Chicanas emerge to do something—to be an instantiation of connectivity in a world

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41 Francisca Flores was the editor of *Regeneración,* and also one of the founding members of the *CFMN* and the CSAC.

42 I discuss this survey in Chapter 1. As a reminder, this was a reprint of the survey administered to Chicanas at the National Chicano Issues Conference asking about the issues that defined and impacted Chicanas.

where particular people are constructed as disenfranchised and distanced. Utilizing experience to connect is indeed a strategy shared by other groups and, in fact, is indicative of what rhetoric does in the world broadly. While other groups participate in similar acts of collective meaning making, the concept of *La Hermandad* is unique to Chicanas. Specifically, I will discuss the use of *La Hermandad* as a mediating concept that was used to incite change in activist practice in the *CFMN*[43].

Case Study: Collective Practices and La Hermandad

La Hermandad is a concept of Chicana sisterhood employed by the *CFMN*. In an article for *Encuentro Femenil*[44], the authors reflected on the production and subsequent impact of *La Hermandad* as produced at the first Chicana national conference:

> "Chicanas expressed a dire need to establish a national means of communication among women. This communication system would strengthen a new feeling of '*Hermandad*' (sisterhood) among Chicanas. This communication system and the new philosophy of *hermandad* would motivate Chicanas to identify, understand and work against the racist and sexist economic social forces adversely affecting the Chicana and her people. (Chicana Service Action Center 5)

Note that the "Philosophy of *La Hermandad*" is described as inciting change in Chicanas and Chicana activist practice. This philosophy and way of communicating is described as

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43 The development and deployment of *La Hermandad* can be places in relationship with Anzaldúa concept of *La facultdad* as both centered on the development of a critical consciousness, yet differ in the process and realizations. The shift I am arguing for then is to account for the acts of collectives.
44 *Encuentro Femenil* was a Chicana feminist journal started by Chicanas such as Anna Nieto-Gómez, Adelaida R. Del Castillo, Cindy Honesto, among others. Francisca Flores (one of *CFMN*'s founders) worked closely with Nieto-Gómez. The *CFMN* also included copies of *Encuentro Femenil* in their archival collection.

responsive to outside forces yet inwardly focused in its production and employment[45]. For the *CFMN*, this concept is used most frequently to redress and then redirect action.

One example is in a response to a series of memos amongst members regarding tension between the members of the national board and chapter leaders. The memos decried member behavior that is seen as antithetical to connectedness and as unsupportive of the *CFMN*, and by association, the Chicana movement in general. In one memo written by a past president (Christine Fuentes) and circulated amongst its members, Fuentes reminds the *CFMN* members that the organization's foundations were:

> ...built on such concepts as unity, goodwill and ***hermandad.*** Achieving these goals calls for a tremendous amount of work and dedication from all members. Obviously this cannot be accomplished if the present leadership elects instead to focus its energies on the negative...One cannot help, but question the leadership capabilities and moral judgment of a Board displaying conduct, which is divisive and alienating. At a time when unity is imperative for success, Comision members must insist on being guided by a Board sensitive and responsive to the needs of all Chicanas. Let us seek to work together in constructive and positive ways. Comision's survival is dependant on this.

This memo is included in the Administrative files, which again points to this concept as an organizing mechanism. It is useful to note here that divisiveness and alienation are precisely the conditions constructed by the NOW document in the previous chapter that former *CFMN* president Fuentes worked to redress.

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45 Similar change resultant from Chicana in the world takes place in academia as well.

Not only did *la hermandad* essentially create an organization, it was also used to redirect action. When it is used in this way, it becomes embedded into the repertoire of Chicana rhetoric. In a follow up memo to Fuentes' regarding the behavior of the *CFMN* board, the Pasadena chapter board wrote to *CFMN* president Gloria Moreno-Wycoff to convey their disappointment in the circulated memos, primarily because *La Comisión* should be dedicated to promoting Chicanas and their welfare:

> Should not such a sensitive information be dealth [sic] with by the CFMN board in a more discreet manner? 2. Are we (Comisión) not as a whole supportive of all our members and does not the letter make reference to the CFMN taking action against one of our sisters? 3. Does sending out such letter suggest that the CFMN Board cannot handled [sic] its private matters? 4. In its accusations, it not the letter somewhat slanderous to one of our members reputation? 5. Are we as Chicana women striving for all Chicana women not contradicting ourselves by attacking one of our own? (Pasadena Board).

The understanding that Chicana identification implied a shared commitment to *la hermandad* became a lens through which the activists interpreted and altered their actions. This sentiment to redirect activist efforts reflected the understanding that Chicana action should operate on the unit of the community. The invocation of their commitment to sisterhood, which was sent out via the above memo to the organization, served to shift, or perhaps remind the organization members of the way that Chicanas should be: in essence, reestablishing its ontology and epistemology. As a result then of being compelled into a position of non-action, Chicana identity emerged as a position of action; more specifically, of a particular type of action that not only builds on experience, but

was instantiated each time that *la hermandad* was invoked. Therefore, through its invocation of this concept, it can be assumed that the *CFMN* hoped that *la hermandad* would become a habituated practice of its members, and by association, of those who affiliate as Chicana. *La hermandad* becomes then part of the positionality of Chicana as built from the flesh. It serves as heuristic through which Chicanas view change or the purpose of their work[46].

Chicana rhetoric then emerges from experience and uses this experience to make change. Researching the *CFMN* as an instantiation of Chicana rhetoric makes visible how theory in the flesh as production from experience is not only applicable to the study of individual writers and scholars but to the making of groups, and group making, as well. Likewise, through examining the use of *la hermandad* to produce activist practice, we can also see these particular habituations are realized collectively.

Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, I want to revisit the episodes detailed in the first section, to the first "case study" of what it means to be a Chicana in the world. The three episodes are punctuated with an ethos of not listening, of relying on assumptions about the simplicity or limiting operations of Chicana rhetoric, or of rhetorics constituted by identities in general. Like the constructions of the Latin women in the NOW documents, these moments produce constructions of Chicana scholarship, and by association, Chicana scholars, that have real and tangible consequences. What can we as Chicana

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46 "Alicia García," a contemporary Chicana scholar, also invokes this sense of connectedness to negotiate how she produces scholarship. She states that she questions "how much do we do as educated Chicanas that are not part of community," and, to redress this sometimes forgetting of our community ties, she "tr[ies] to use language that can be used by larger audiences." For Garcia, being a Chicana means taking the knowledge she has learned as a Mexican American in the academy and sharing it with her community (Interview).

scholars do to exist in tandem with such constructions? It is necessary to turn these constructions into something else, to change the very conditions of these discussions so that studying Chicana writing is not immediately treated as a scholarly synecdoche, whereby Chicana rhetoric is reduced to particular parts of its rhetorical actions and acting, or particular concepts, or writers, stand in the place of its complex entirety.

As a Chicana scholar then, I place my experiences alongside the *CFMN* in order to add to the continuum of Chicanas who identify with and use these experiences. Learning from my archival research on the *CFMN* organization and its responsive action, I build a repertoire of similar practices, such as producing scholarship that makes visible the expansiveness of our rhetoric and seeking out scholarly spaces that would normally not be associated with Chicana theory in our field. I use these multiple experiences built from localized practices in attempt to alter the fields' constitutive epistemologies and ontologies[47]. Equally important, through the organizing concept of *la hermandad*, I learn from the CFMN what it means to inhabit and practice connectivity in a way that obviates the criticisms of theorists who treat identity as limiting alliances.

The experiences realized by my archival research point to the significance of the *CFMN* collection and the documents they contain as a material instantiation of Chicana rhetoric. If Chicana rhetoric entails a responsive action, then we must consider this act of making history. In the next two chapters, I focus on history and history making. In Chapter 3, I continue my discussion of the Chicanas of the *CFMN* employing experience to make organizational practice. I couple this with the *CFMN*'s intervention in and invention of history in order to construct Chicanas as organizing subjectivity to enable

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47 These connections are made in Chapter 5 of this dissertation project.

the work of the *CFMN*, and to effectively create a history of Chicana organizing for future Chicanas to build upon. This happens both in the rhetorical moment of the *CFMN*'s emergence as well as through the creation of the archival collection itself.

Chapter 3
Chicana Rhetoric: Making History

Coming to know the past has been a part of the critical pedagogy of decolonization. To hold alternative histories is to hold alternative knowledges. The pedagogical implication of this access to alternative knowledges is that they can form the basis of alternative ways of doing things.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*

And thank you, Bea, for typing up your notes because we all can refer to it when dark days loom large and we wonder why we are involved anyway.

Eva Couvillon, from the *CFMN's* "President's Message"

A Case Study of a Chicana Doing History

In San Antonio, Texas in 1938, Emma Tenayuca, a worker's rights advocate known as "*La Pasionaria de Tejas*," participated along side pecan shellers in a six-week strike against the pecan-shelling industry leaders. These industry leaders attempted to lower the price per pound of pecan meat earned by the shellers by 15% and refused to make needed changes to the working environment (Dublin et al)[48].

In my research on the strike[49], I stumbled upon an interview with Tenayuca in the mid 1980's about the pecan shellers strike and worker unionizing in Texas. In the interview she was asked about her involvement in leading the strikes, and the speculations that riddled the newspapers about her involvement with the Communist party. In response to this line of inquiry, Tenayuca made what seemed to be an off-

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48 To give you an extremely brief glimpse into that moment, one of the largest pecan companies started in the Civil War by Gustave Duerler, who capitalized on an exploitative cycle in which he bought pecans from indigenous peoples and hired Mexicano/as to extract the meat. In 1936, his company grossed 3 million dollars, while shellers were paid $2.00 per week in sweatshop conditions. Owners refused to extend the minimum wage standards established through the National Recovery Administration (1933-1935) and then the Fair Labor Standards Act (1938) to pecan shellers in San Antonio (Dublin et al). The poor working conditions and low wages were justified by the Anglo industry owners because they "ate pecans while working... shellers would not work the necessary hours if the shelling company paid them more...Mexicans would earn 75¢ and go home, whether it was 3 p.m. or 6 p.m... shellers had a pleasant, warm place to work and could visit with friends...if Mexicans earned more, they would just spend it on 'tequila and on worthless trinkets in the dime stores'" (Acuña 226).

49 This research was part of an archival project I conducted in a Contemporary Theory course.

handed remark: "I wish somebody, someday, from somewhere, would come in here and write the history of [the] articles..." (Poyo). What Tenayuca alluded to is the importance of making a history. But what Tenayuca indirectly pointed out in the comment is the importance of the type of histories we tell: in particular, a history that instantiates *Mexicanas* as organizing.

Likewise, the Chicanas of the *Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional (CFMN)* as part of their rhetoric as a Chicana organization also enact[ed] history and history making. Building on the previous chapter in which I argue that the Chicanas of the *CFMN* used experience to make an organization and its practice, in this chapter I focus on the intervention in, and invention of, history as a responsive action. To do this, I analyze archival data from the *CFMN* organization[50]. I first provide a brief overview of history making as it is related to invention and memory. Next, I describe the documents that Chicanas included within the archival collections that instantiates them in history, creating positionality that enables organizing and action. I argue that this strategy of Chicana rhetoric to operate at the productive nexus between past, present and future complicates our understandings of history as a linear progression. I then analyze the *CFMN*'s invention of an organizing history through the establishment of an archival collection, which creates a material instantiation of Chicanas in history as actors that incite change. The archival collection also serves as a material witness to lived conditions from which Chicanas emerge to respond. By providing the details for responsive action,

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50 I need to clarify the data that I am working with here. The documents that I cite in this chapter come from the *CFMN*'s archival collection. However, not all of the documents were written by the *CFMN* themselves. Yet, these documents are intermingled with the *CFMN* authored writings. Because of the attention that the *CFMN* gave to creating their collection, and the intentionality of the *CFMN* to include these documents in their collection, I consider as part of their work to establish a Chicana history of activism and the ability for future generations to recreate the rhetorical exigency.

which are often overlooked in our historicizing, the archival collection lays a productive "blueprint" for Chicanas on how to act in a world that constructs us as non-actors.

On Invention and Memory

While I am using the term "invention" to discuss the creation of histories, in the case of the *CFMN*, it is not only about the strategic creation of history, but about a necessary establishment of a memory: a memory of organizing, and a memory of the exigency for doing so. The statement I opened this chapter with by Eva Couvillon demonstrates the care the *CFMN* took to document not only their organizational strategies and the coming to be as an organization, but also the rhetorical moment in which Chicana emerged. The documentation of this moment is done in order to remember: to remember the way we were erased, the way we were constructed, and therefore, the purposes for Chicana identity.

While the *CFMN*'s intervention in and invention of histories is indeed strategic, it is also inwardly focused, and at the same time concerned with the sustainability of an organization and a memory of the rhetorical moment in which it was created. This sustainability of an organization is realized through the archiving of the formation of an organization. It is about creating and sustaining a shared memory of a lived experience that is realized through the inclusion of documents that are not only written by the *CFMN* itself, but ones that attempt to construct Chicanas as *not* organizing. An example of such a document is the N.O.W brochure I analyzed in the previous chapter.

I want to be explicit about why I am connecting invention and memory to discuss the *CFMN*'s history making. As others have pointed out, the classical schema ignores memory in favor of logos and invention. Memory in the classical schema is understood as

"something that could be improved by treating it as a system of visualized locations, somewhat similar to the ways the commonplaces are imagined to reside in actual mental locations that one tours during the invention process" (Bizzell and Herzberg 7). Unlike a conceptualization of invention in classical rhetoric that is future oriented, when coupled with memory, this is a particular type of invention that is not always only forward looking; instead, it is simultaneously forward, inward, and backwardly operative. In other words, it is about establishing a memory to build possibilities. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith articulates in the other opening quote for this chapter, to "hold alternative histories" is to hold "alternative knowledge's." What this means is that creating histories of doing and being is a type of teaching that we can learn from in order to become[51]. This is an invention of history then that is really about memory: a memory that is connective between people and the past, and a will not to forget.

Chicanas Intervening in Histories

The ownership over the making of a history— of cataloging experiences and the emergence of Chicana activist identity and its effects on action—is one way that history and historicizing is part of a Chicana rhetoric both in terms of what is valued and what is practiced. History is even more valuable when considering that for many people from marginalized groups, histories are made for them. While this is a salient practice for any rhetoric of people and things, this is especially true for Chicanas. Chicana is a recent and intentional identity, meaning that any history must be constructed. Moreover, Chicanas understand that their interventions in history mediate present and future positionalities and their associative rhetorical actions.

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51 One might notice that such an understanding of history complicates a linear model of *chronos*.

The importance of both creating a history and being aware of that history is a topic woven throughout the *CFMN*'s archival data, and in Chicana theory and writing broadly. Chicanas read and recreate history in a way that reflects and produces practices and intervenes in historical narratives. By intervening in narratives that either erase or minimize the active presence of Chicanas, they are able to make new moves and positionalities viable for Chicanas. This action works in relation to a construction of *Mexicanas* as neither part of history, or as constructed in particular ways that mediate their present and future subjectivities as actors, makers, or rhetors.

Chicana literary and philosophical writers, for example, have examined and reimagined the rhetorical functions of historical figures such as *Malintzin*, La *Virgen de Guadalupe*, or *La llorana*, to reposition these *Mexicanas* as positive contributors to cultural narratives (see for example Calafell; Castillo; Gaspar de Alba). In disciplinary history, Emma Pérez notably intervenes in the construction of Chicano studies grounded in a history that follows a spatio-temporal story of linear progression, in which colonialism frames the story, and gender and sexuality are not considered in its construction. Pérez invents a new methodology, what she calls a "decolonial imaginary" which enables "silent to gain their agency," thereby producing a Chicana subjectivity in history (*Decolonial Imaginary* 33).

Likewise, in activism Chicanas have had to intervene in historical narratives that have produced a subjectivity that is decidedly not organizing, or are constructed as supporters to the real actors in a movement, such as Chicanos. This experience, of being constructed as not organizing and effective, conflicted with a Chicana reality of their

activism. The confliction served as the impetus for the formation of the *CFMN* in 1971 as the first Chicana organization. The organization's formation was a literal response to this confliction as the *CFMN* began by physically splitting from activists in the Chicano movement at the National Chicano Issues Conference because of their refusal to acknowledge Chicanas as organizing leaders. In one draft of their forming resolutions[52], the *CFMN* pointed to this dissonance between the experience of being constructed as non existent as leaders, and the reality that they were numerous and active. In the document "Resolution Adopted by the Women's Workshop 10/10/70 Sacramento, California; [A]Proposal for a Comision Femenil Mexicana," the *CFMN* wrote:

> The effort and work of the Chicana/Mexicana women in the Chicano movement is generally obscured because women are not accepted as community leaders either by the Chicano movement or by the Anglo establishment.
>
> The existing myopic attitude does not, however, prove that women are not able to participate. It does not prove that women are not active, indispensable (representing over 50% of the population), experienced and knowledgeable in organizational, tactical and strategic aspects of a people's movement.
>
> THEREFORE, in order to terminate exclusion of female leadership in the Chicano/Mexican movement and in the community, be it
>
> RESOLVED, that a Chicana/Mexican Women's Commission be established at this conference which will represent women in all areas where Mexicans prevail.

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52 Although I include one version of their resolutions in Chapter 1, it behooves me to remind us of this document as it not only marks a metaphoric and literal formation of a Chicana movement as realized in an organization, but also because this version mentions a reality of a Chicana existence that is being ignored by the Chicano movement. I should also note that there are multiple versions of this resolution that the *CFMN* includes in their collection. I am not quite sure which is the "official version."

As we can see at the beginning of the resolutions, a purpose of the *CFMN* was to create an organization that mirrors the reality that Chicanas are in fact "tactical" and "organizational." As such, the *CFMN* broke away from the Chicanos at the National Conference to create their own organization.

A similar (and literal) splitting coupled with a subsequent productive response is repeated with the construction of one of the material results of the *CFMN*'s actions: the creation of a bilingual childcare center. Yolanda Nava, one of the early founders of the *CFMN*, tells a story of attending an organizing meeting with Chicano activists. According to Nava, there were three women at the meeting, including herself. The purpose of the meeting was to address issues going on in their communities, and to develop strategies for addressing these issues. At the meeting, Nava recollected, that the women in attendance "fought to get child care on the agenda" (Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive). Prior to the meeting, childcare was supposed to be agenda item #12; during the meeting, the men present "manipulated the agenda," and it became item #40. Irene Tovar, one of the other three women and a founding member of *CFMN*, asked: "what about child care?" Without getting the response they desired, they agreed to they were not going to "get anything done with these men" and therefore, they decided to "just do it ourselves" (Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive).

Accordingly, the *CFMN* members would meet everyday after work and write proposals. Nava said that they "knew nothing about child care," but they would meet and would "move things" by writing these proposals[53]. While they knew nothing about child-

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53 It is interesting to note, as Rhetoric and Composition scholars, how these formative moments are evidenced and realized through writing: the drafting of resolutions, writing grant proposals for a daycare center. As anyone who has ever worked with an organization in its emergence that much of it really

care, they enlisted the help of people who were child-care workers. Through this writing work they were able to successfully acquire the funds to start a child-care center; and because they were able to secure funding to build a center they had to figure out how to actually run the place. As Nava explained, once the funding came in, they turned to each other and said, we have "got this job now how are [we] going to work?" (VOAHA). Therefore, they had to create bylaws, and organizational charts to figure out how to run the center. What these stories demonstrate is Chicana responsive action and a correlative creation of a history of organizing and making organizations.

The Necessity of Memory

The importance of creating and remembering this history, while strategic, can be understood as born out of necessity. What the *CFMN* and its members realized was that this forgetting was having material effects on Chicanas. For example, in an article in the Chicana journal *Encuentro Femenil*[54], the authors, who were representatives of the Chicana Service Action Center[55], discuss a study they conducted on college-aged Chicanas. The purpose of the study was to find out why so many of them seemed to be dropping out of college in their third year. According to the article, many of the reasons

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happens in writing. Here I think back to my involvement with the formation of a community media center. In its early stages, we were a group of people talking about a community media center and why it should exist. In order to become, we had to move an idea of organization into action through textual production: we made flyers, we created a website, we wrote a 501c3 and funding proposals; in other words, we were an organization because we made writing. Although it of course cannot be fully encapsulated in documents, it is nonetheless an interesting to point to consider if one is interested in studying emergence.

54 Francisca Flores was the publisher, editor and frequent contributor to *Encuentro*. Flores was also one of the founders of the *CFMN* and the Chicana Service Action Center (CSAC). The CSAC, along with *El Centro de Niños* and Casa Victoria, was an organization that originally operated under the umbrella of the *CFMN*, and in its beginning, shared many of the same leadership. The CSAC, along with Flores, eventually splits and becomes its own entity. But, because of Flores's deep (and ongoing) personal ties with the *CFMN*, the *CFMN* includes copies of the journal as part of their Publications series. I think they also include the journal because one can trace a Chicana activist history in Flores' editorials.

cited were not about low grades, but instead, the primary reasons were marriage, pregnancy and motherhood (4). In response, the CSAC representatives assert that at their center they decided to incorporate looking at Mexican history books as part of their practice—which many of these Chicanas were not encountering as part of their education—to show these young women that women's suffrage was not unique to Anglos. Rather, there was a history of Mexican feminist organizing. In realizing this history, the article claims, these Chicanas were "[i]nspired and reassured that 'speaking out' was not alien to the Chicana's [sic] culture" ("Chicanas in the Labor Force" 4).

The CSAC knew that they had to redress a material reality that young college aged Chicana women were dropping out of school because of presumably gendered expectations for women. Understanding that many Chicanas did not see tenets of feminism as applicable to their lives, the CSAC members decided to show these Chicanas that it was indeed part of their history as Mexican women to be active. This was done in the hopes that it might enable Chicanas to understand their subjectivity as one who "speaks out." This type of tactical work by the CSAC can be considered an action of survival, created out of a need to connect ideology with a material reality. A Chicana rhetoric then emerges from the experience of realizing a "forgotten" history and at the same time, involves the action of responding to this historical absence[56].

This action of survival can also be characterized as a response to being constructed as non-actors in a social movement. Such renderings of Chicanas non-actors, and a correlative production of Chicanas as oppositional to these constructions, are found

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56 While explaining about the emergence of her Chicana identity and activism, one of the *CFMN*'s founding members Yolanda Nava recounted visiting the pyramids and museums in Mexico. She experienced a disjuncture between this construction of Mexicans as contributors to culture and the way that Mexicans were portrayed in the United States as "maids or prostitutes" (Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive).

throughout the *CFMN*'s archival documents. For instance, the *CFMN* included in their collection a non-dated letter addressed to "Mexican-American women," or "Chicanas if you wish." According to the letter, Chicanas:

> are tired of being pushed around and made the butt of jokes regarding Women's liberation; but, what are we going to do about it? We continue to work and to support the established organizations and activist males because we realize that without us la CAUSA would collapse and "La Raza" would become people without fuerza". The times ahead, especially during an election year, will see many demands made upon our strength and commitment. This, by organizations which are for the most part male oriented and dominated, and whose policies have been developed by male chauvinists. The role which we play can no longer be that of the subservient female preparing 'cenas' and 'banquetes' so that 'los macho' can preen themselves in their male finery, throw out their chests and say "nosotro hacemos por la causa" (1 of 3).

This excerpt demonstrates the historical construction of Mexican-American women in *La Causa* as only beneficial to support to the "real" actors in the movement. In response then, Chicanas operate in tandem with the experience of living with such constructions yet acting in a way that troubles these historical subjectivities.

One way this is achieved is through creating and telling histories that instantiate Chicanas as organizing. While this may seem perhaps simplistic, it is nonetheless revolutionary. Whereas in the previous chapter we saw the way that the *CFMN* emerged as an organization in response to constructions of Latinas as ineffectual, here we see

CFMN as an instantiation of Chicanas as leaders and actors. However, Chicanas had (and have) to invent histories of organizing as part of their subjectivity; in this way we see that the contemporary identity of Chicana is an epistemic for the creation of histories.

Invention of a History of Organizing

Returning to the introduction of the *CFMN*'s founding resolutions, the organization emerged as a response to not being treated as "experienced and knowledgeable in organizational, tactical and strategic" ("A Proposal"). Therefore, the *CFMN* understood that part of their role as an organization was to be just that. But, we must note that they were not saying in the resolutions they drafted that they have to *become* these things. Rather, they indicated that they were *already* knowledgeable about organizing. The problem they identity is that this history and their current activism were not being recognized. What the *CFMN* did was to remind their members that Chicanas were always *already* organizing.

While part of Chicana identity is to be responsive and to incite change, this happens in dialogue with a past that has either been forgotten or misread. Therefore, the Chicanas of the *CFMN* incorporated history to legitimize activism and its purposes. More often than not what this looked like was using histories of Mexican American women as precedents for activism. The purpose was to demonstrate to other Chicanas that their concerns and involvement were both warranted and, in fact, part of what it means to be a Chicana.

Several examples of the strategic use of history can be found in the documents contained in the *CFMN* archival collection that demonstrate Chicanas turning to a forgotten history of active women to create a productive lineage with contemporary

Chicanas. Some of this remembering took place in the rhetorical moment; others took place in the recounting of these events as an interpretive framework. For instance, in "The Woman of La Raza[57]," Enriqueta Longauex y Vásquez reads a Raza conference through a history of women who have been active, but were often overlooked when recounting the history of revolutionizing:

> While attending a Raza conference in Colorado this year, I went to one of the workshops that were held to discuss the role of the Chicana woman. When the time came for the woman to make the presentation to the full conference, the only thing that the workshop representative said was this: 'It was the consensus of the group that the Chicana woman does not want to be liberated."
>
> As a woman who has been faced with having to live as a member of the 'Mexican-American' minority as a bread winner and a mother raising children, living in housing projects and having much concern for other humans leading to much community involvement, this was a blow. I could have cried. Surely we could have at least come up with something to add to that statement. I sat back and thought, why? Why? I understood why the statement had been made and I realized that going along with the feelings of the men at the convention was perhaps the best thing to do at the time. Looking at our history, I can see why this would be true. The role of the Chicana woman has been a very strong one, although a silent one. When the woman has seen the suffering of her people she has always responded

57 This document was a column written by Vásquez for one of her columns in the Chicano newspaper, *El Grito Del Norte*. A typed copy of this without the article references was included in the *CFMN* collection.

> bravely and as a totally committed and equal human. My mother told me of how, during the time of Pancho Villa and the revolution in Mexico, she saw the men march through the village continually for three days and then she saw the battalion of woman [sic] marching for a whole day. The woman [sic] carried food and supplies; also, they were fully armed wearing loaded 'carrilleras.' In battle they fought alongside the men. Out of the Mexican Revolution came the revolutionary personage 'Adelita,' who wore rebozo crossed at the bosom as a symbol of revolutionary woman [sic] in Mexico. (1)

In this recollection of Raza conference, Longauex y Vásquez uses history both as a way to understand the experiences at the conference in Colorado, as well as to subtly support yet question the actions taken given the history of Chicana women in the revolution in Mexico.

The construction of Chicanas as always a part of revolutionary action is also made evident in the use of revolutionary symbols and images. For example, the below figure found in *CFMN*'s archives is a very familiar image of the Chicano movement.

Figure 2: Copy of a Drawing of a Chicana Revolutionary

The face is a skull, reflective of reclamation of death as a productive trope in Mexican culture and associated with *El Dia de Los Muertos*. The horse is a symbol associated with the Mexican Revolution. But, this particular rendering includes a skirt on the figure, thereby instantiating Chicanas a part of the Mexican Revolution, and as reclaimed symbol of the contemporary Chicano movement. The implications are that women have always fought "alongside men" and perhaps this is the reason why Chicana women do "not need to be liberated"; we have always been equals, and the problem is that we have forgotten our history. The purpose then was to remember this lineage.

Likewise, in an article about the *CFMN*, "La Chicana Organizes: The *Comisión Femenil Mexicana* in Perspective," Gema Matsuda narrates a lineage of Mexican women as active contributors in and to histories. This lineage is used not only as a heuristic to

interpret the *CFMN* as an organization Matsuda also then locates the *CFMN*'s leaders as part of this history of women who make change:

> Recorded history of the Mexican woman goes as far back as the Indians who first populated our continent. In Chichén-Itzá Mayan gods were appeased with the lives of young maidens. And many scholars agree that the conquest of México City by Cortéz was possible only because of the invaluable help of La Malinche. At first glance, one may not see the connection between the above named incidents because the lesson learned is a philosophic rather than historical one...The importance of the women in both of these cases was of a crucial, if not indispensable, nature. Their contribution to history extends beyond their recognized role as child bearers" (25).

In this opening Matsuda begins by demonstrating that Mexican women have played an instrumental role in shaping history, but this role "at first glance" may not be recognized or recognizable. Matsuda then traced the involvement of Mexican women/Chicana women, noting names of leaders in historical struggles, leading to "a few women who have risen above the type-casting to which we are all subjected and have become valuable leaders of the [Chicano] movement" (26). A pivotal move in this recounting happens next.

After demonstrating that Mexican women contributed to change in history that has not been recognized, Matsuda uses this illuminated history as a way to both establish the exigency for the *CFMN*, and to place the leaders of the *CFMN* as part of this history as agents of change. As such, Matsuda's narrative turns to an introduction of Francisca

Flores, one of the founders of the *CFMN*. Matsuda specifically describes Flores as an interventionist, responding to and altering the cultural frameworks that were preventing Chicanas from seeing themselves as effectual:

> Francisca Flores saw this problem and recognized the cultural trends which perpetuate it—maternal overprotection, male chauvinism, lack of incentive for female higher education, and, by extension, lack of Chicanas in the professional fields. With the purpose of combating these very problems, she and other women who, like her, had learned the art of organizing got together in order to discuss the feasibility of forming an organization which would promote Chicanas in all professions. (*Regeneración,* 25)

In this case, Matsuda narrated the historical involvement of Mexican and Chicana women that serves to establish a legacy to the *CFMN*'s endeavors; Flores in turn becomes part of that historical legacy.

The strategy to remind audiences of a historical legacy that the *CFMN*'s leaders were building upon garnered a type of legitimacy for the leaders, and for the Chicana movement more broadly. It normalized activist practices as a way to compose Chicana subjectivity as always already effectual, or rhetorical. While in the above case this strategy is employed for establishing the *CFMN* leaders within a legacy of activist women, a similar strategy is extended and used in order to make available a particular practice on the organizational level. In the previous chapter I discussed the use of *la hermandad* as a concept that mediates and redresses Chicana action. The Chicanas of the *CFMN* invoked *la hermandad* as a method to incite change in their organization when

practices were seen as incongruent with a subjectivity grounded in a connectedness that was respectful.

Similarly, in response to constructions of Chicanas as not capable or organizing that we saw in the *CFMN*'s resolutions, the *CFMN* had to productively invent—or rather, remember— their legacy of organizing. This legacy of being organized and organizing had to also coalesce with an activist and resistant subjectivity. As Chicana theorist Gloria Anzaldúa writes: "...the new mestiza copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity. She learns to be an Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view. She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mode" (*Borderlands*, 80). Mestiza, and by association, Chicana then is grounded in the ability to operate at a contradictory nexus. This framework can also be applied to the *CFMN* organization. When one considers that an organization exists through stability and often "rules" or routine procedures, as an organization that was based on an identity of resistance, it presumably operated as a contradiction. In order to conceptualize Chicana activism as legitimately achieved through organizational practice, some members of the *CFMN* instantiated organizing into a pre-colonial history.

Throughout the *CFMN*'s history, there was contention. One source of contention was the extent to which the *CFMN* should adopt rules and regulations as an organization without going against the premises of Chicana identity. To respond to a need for organizing, some members of *CFMN*, called upon particular organizational practices as historically *already* part of their rhetoric:

> A number of women present have seen and have experienced previous meetings where the group has been split and the sessions 'busted' so there was natural concern, that some present were there to break rather than build. On the part of the Comisión there was over reaction and on the part of the challengers, they still have not learned the history of the movements or of their own people...They claim that rules and parliamentary procedure is the 'man' bag. This claim, although used very successfully to divide meetings of Mexican Americans and Chicanos, time and again, is false, because Mexicans and Mexican organizations have their 'reglas' and know how to use them when someone does not observe them. So, rules and procedures, by-laws and constitutions are not the exclusive property of the 'white man'...The Aztecs had their judicial system and their order to their society. They had a system of laws. And the Spanish came along with theirs, so the Mexicans have a longer history of parliamentary procedures than do the Anglos of the United States. As a matter of fact, from the Spain, whose law dates back to Roman law, we have a longer history in this respect than does the 'melted pot American.' Young people, and some of the older folks should learn their history and quit falling for the wrong 'cliché' such as the 'white man's bag' because we have a longer history or can compare our history with anyone else's on any aspect of social organization, etc. ("The Experience" 1)

As evidenced in the above excerpt about a tense *Comisión* meeting, problems arose when Chicanas forgot a pre-colonial history of "reglas." Having such rules is what enables the

continuity of organization, and the ability to act. As the above article notes, such divisiveness within the organization planning sessions "busted" up planning meetings; it appeared that people were intent on breaking rather than building. In response then, seemingly to "build," the article reminds the readers (presumably the *CFMN* members, who may in fact have been the people mentioned in this article) that the Aztecs, and the Spanish, had rules before the colonizers ever came. Remembering a history of rules and regulations here is used by the *CFMN* to redress divisive actions. The *CFMN* leaders intervened in an idea of history that some Chicanas held that reglas were only part of the "white man's bag" which rendered themselves as not part of a legacy of rule makers in order produce a construction of Mexicans as organizing.

In these instances, the Chicanas of the *CFMN* demonstrated a rhetorical use of history that is productive and connective: the result is that both the history and the present circumstance is recast and therefore becomes something new. The particular relationship to history of Chicanas challenges a construction of history as chronological and in the past. This invention of histories as a strategy of Chicana rhetoric in order to alter the present and futures for Chicanas can be seen in the weight given to this practice for the *CFMN*, as well as materially through the creation of objects like their archival collections.

Chicanas Inventing Histories in the Archives

> *People like organizations, rivers, mountains and valleys, all have their beginnings, their turns, their ups and their downs. However, one characteristic common to all things physical, is that they leave their mark in spite of the changes which occur over the years.*
>
> Francisca Flores, "Chicana Service Action Center"

Based on the attention given to the establishment of the archival collection as well as evidence of discussions contained within the collection on the topic of history, it can be surmised that inventing histories is a valuable strategy of Chicana rhetoric. As Eva Couvillion wrote to Bea Stozer[58], "And thank you, Bea, for typing up your notes because we all can refer to it when dark days loom large and we wonder why we are involved anyway" (1). The invention of history, and the documentation of it—namely, the history of Chicana feminism broadly and of the *CFMN* more specifically—is treated as pinnacle for future generations to understand the rhetorical purposes and exigencies for *La Chicana*.

As an organization, the *CFMN* was in part responsible for an invention of Chicana history; in fact, creating that history was a primary and visible role of the *CFMN*. Throughout the collection they have included several requests from a wide range of people and organizations for the *CFMN* to contribute to histories. For example, in a letter to Francisca Flores, Martha Cortera[59] wrote:

> Estimada Sra. Flores: Although I have yet to receive an answer from you on any of the letters I have written to you since 1968, here I am an unfaltering fan, writing to you again. We are at the University of Texas trying to develop Chicano archives which will serve to document the history and contribution of men and women who have been active participants in the development of our people. We are extremely interested in gathering from your personal files any materials, letters, manuscripts,

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58 Stozer was one of *CFMN*'s presidents and the person who appeared to spearhead the establishment of the *CFMN* archival collection.
59 Cortera was the librarian and special consultant of the Mexican American library Project at the University of Texas at Austin.

> photographs, publications, which will serve for us to begin a Francisca Flores Collection as part of the Mexican American Library Project archive collection. (1)

This letter represents one of many requests to help establish histories that the *CFMN*, and individual leaders in the *CFMN,* received. While it is interesting to note the status afforded to the organization to partake in such endeavors, it is also noteworthy that the organization elected to include such requests in their collection. This implies that the *CFMN* saw their organization as fundamentally responsible for participating in the production of the physical history of the Chicana movement.

Creating archives then became an integral part of the work of the organization. The establishment of the archival collection was included in multiple meeting minutes as an agenda item. One set of meeting minutes specifically notes "Acting president Yolanda Nava, was given two boxes of CFMN documents and papers from files of Anita Ramos" ("National Board" 5). The sharing and handling of the files between generations of leadership was not without contestation, which is also included in the files. In fact, one of the biggest sources of contention in the early years centered on determining the relationship between the *CFMN* and the other organizational entities that many of the *CFMN* leaders also founded, like the Chicana Service Action Center, and the bilingual child care centers. This contention can be seen materially in the multiple drafts of the organizational structure, such as in the below figure, through which the leaders attempted to visualize the relationship between the organizations.

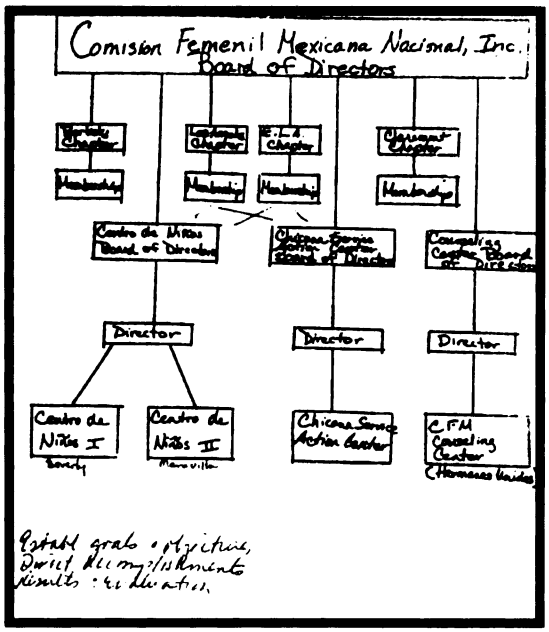

Figure 3: Copy of a Board of Directors Flow Chart (Handwritten)

Because the organizations were started by the same Chicanas, they originally appeared to fall under the *CFMN* as the umbrella organization with the CSAC and *El Centro de Niños* treated as the materialization of the *CFMN*'s Chicana activist theories. Yet, some of the leaders appeared to affiliate with one of the particular organizations. While they were all understood to be equal in their leadership abilities, there was not a clear understanding about how to govern the organizations. For example, it was contended by the CSAC that the *CFMN* leaders were undermining their ability to run the Service Center effectively, and indeed, undermining their roles as leaders in general[60]. A consensus could not be

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60 In 1975, the CSAC board of directors ended up hiring a lawyer to enable them to become a separate entity. The lawyer, Ilbert Phillips, wrote a report for the *CFMN* of his experience attending a tense meeting between the CSAC and the *CFMN*. In the letter, Phillips wrote: There is virtually no 'goodwill' between the center and the commission because of this whole mess" (6). This letter is stapled with another letter from the CSAC stating their disagreements with the *CFMN* and Yolanda Nava, the *CFMN* president: "Yolanda moved without consultation with the center in regards to checking letter of transmittal or any business with the county and city concerning chicana center business. She merely informed the center of her unilateral decisions after the fact, thereby undermined the status and six months of work put into establishing funding for the center and retarded the development of the program" (2). The *CFMN* stapled both of these documents to a board of director meeting minutes during which they attempted clarify their role to their chapters and other organizations.

reached between the organizations, and therefore, the CSAC took the necessary steps to become an independent entity[61] in 1975.

While organizations that grow out of an affiliation is pretty typical, what is noteworthy about this split is the subsequent consideration spent to determine the appropriate archiving practices given the CSAC's separation from the *CFMN*. After the CSAC officially split from the *CFMN*, there ensued a lengthy discussion and exchange between the leaders about what should happen to the files related to the CSAC. For example, in a letter to Yolanda Nava, Amelia Camacho wrote:

> If you have any suggestions about these boxes you left with me, I would be most appreciative to receive them. What I have begun is to separate all and anything relating to CSAC.; It's beginning and transfer. It will be in a separate box. I plan to cut off the files at 1974. Otherwise, all else will be in our archives. Please indicate to me if there is something I should truly be concerned with relating to the files. (1)

In this letter, Camacho relayed that the treatment of the archives in regards to the organizations' splits is an issue that warrants consideration as the creation of the archival collection is treated as a physical manifestation of the *CFMN*'s history. This letter is also significant in that it demonstrates that maintaining the organization's files, and by association its history, is a charged and rhetorical act. As such, it also illuminates a

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61 It is interesting to note that the actual leaders still strategically communicated and worked together after the split. Looking at the records, it seems to be that part of the split was not just differences in opinion and leadership personalities, but were rather more pragmatically about the CSAC not able to access funding because of decisions made by the *CFMN*.

contentious history[62]. These historical contestations are productive though as they are utilized for invention. In the following letter to Rosemary Quesada-Weiner, Gloria Moreno-Wycoff reflected on the usefulness of such histories:

> Hi Companera, Just sent Hope Corenjo a short, terse note asking her for any and all copy and photos from "La Mujer" for this year's Annual Report./In dredging through my boxes of CFMN papers, I came across the enclosed which I had been requested to draft for Maryanne Montenegro, (that is, we were asked to submit our thoughts to her relative to the vulnerable, shaky ground CFMN was treading on at that time). She used our perspectives as a basis for her presentation at the 1977 Annual Business Meeting which she centered around communication and all the good things we need as a diverse group....It's also such a trip to look at the 1978 Report! Anyway, enough sentimentality. I have umpteen reports to prepare for Fresno, June 13...where you won't be! But, Rosemary, have you had an opportunity to gather photos for this year which we can use for the annual report?....Cariño, Gloria Moreno-Wycoff, President Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional

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62 Inventing a contentious history as part of Chicana rhetoric can also be read in the handwritten notes that are included in the archival documents. For example, included in the folder for board meeting minutes for August 19, 1979 is a document titled "Sandra Serrano Sewell: what she has done for women and minorities." Included were actions that the unidentified author felt Sewell had taken against Chicanas. On the back of the document it was handwritten: "This sheet was sent to National Women's Political Caucus California Members. Sandy was a candidate for National Vice Chair in that Organization." Although Sewell was a leader in the *CFMN*, they still elected to include this inflammatory document in their archival collection thereby demonstrating that the Chicana movement was not without contention. Other ways this is made visible in the archival collection are the documents, such as article drafts, speeches, meeting minutes, and so forth, that include an author crossing out Chicana and replacing it with Latina or visa versa.

The organization did indeed tread on "shaky ground" throughout its history—between its leadership, particularly that of the CSAC before it became an independent entity, and between the national board and its chapter members. However, what is interesting to note is how they shared with Maryanne Montengero the record of this tension between its members to be used as material for her presentation.

In this case, Chicanas invented history in order to do something with it, which includes creating new possibilities for the future in hopes of inciting change. For the *CFMN*, this knowledge was fundamental for their organization. By looking at the care taken to create a history of the organization by including hundreds of pages of writing materials they complied that document their organization building and the exigency for doing so, it can be surmised that the *CFMN* leaders must have known that inventing this history mattered to enable future Chicanas. Indeed, this was the impetus for establishing the archival collection.

In a letter to the past national presidents, Beatrice Olvera Stotzer wrote of establishing the archival collection: "This will in effect give historians a legitimate research mechanism which can be added to the data on the Chicana feminist movement. We can only speculate on the immense value of the information that Comision will contribute" (1). This immense value is recognized as Bea recruited past and present members to serve on a committee to decide the location and organization of the archival collection, and created and distributed a survey for its membership to weigh in on the matter. The intentional and deliberate cataloging of not only their internal workings but also of other organizations at the time, signifies that the organization saw value in a particular way of

making history that demonstrated the intentionality of this act, the steps taken to establish an organization, and the rhetorical context for doing so.

The attention given to the creation of their archival collection and the level of documentation the *CFMN* included in their archival files demonstrates that history for Chicanas matters a great deal. History of course matters for everyone, but as we see, part of claiming a Chicana identity means that you are aware of a history, claim an affiliation to it, and commit to sharing and teaching histories—or at the very least the mechanism through which to question and intervene in histories that forget our presence.

While many Chicanas point to a history of archetypal figures, symbols, and writers as influencing their practices and self-conceptualization, I argue that knowing the histories of everyday practices of organizational work is an equally important part of Chicana rhetoric: It is not just about a recounting of fantastic trials and tribulations, of public struggles and defeats, but of the oft times everyday details of making as a Chicana and the making of Chicana through very real and tangible things like archival collections, like memos, handwritten edits, and meeting minutes. By establishing an archive of an organization and its becoming, what the *CFMN* also effectively establishes is a history of an organizing Chicana in the collective, as well as the oft forgotten details of change that occur internally in an organization and externally as a result of their endeavors.

Conclusion

To return to the opening scene for this chapter, as a person making history, by studying activist practices of *Mexicanas*, my methodological heuristic is punctuated by the remark made by Tenayuca. That remark decentered the construction I made of this rhetorical moment, one that placed Tenayuca in center stage, the active rhetor persuading

workers to unionize. I took a closer look at this moment, the moment, which I as a researcher had made. I looked back at those photographs. And I looked at those newspaper clippings. Instead of scanning for references of Tenayuca as I had before, I began to listen to the other narratives comprising this moment.

What was most striking were the constructions of group subjectivties in these newspapers. Anglo identified or upper class *Mexicano/as*—an affiliation, which Tenaycua noted, had a lot to do with claims to Spanish lineage and/or a denial of indigenous heritages—were written as speaking, as having commentary on the events, however far away they may have been from the actual action of the moment. The voices of the Spanish-speaking workers were only allowed to give witness to bodily injuries, or what was done *to* them, and not permitted to give witness to ideologies, beliefs, or their narratives. If I had focused on Tenayuca as the locus of rhetorical action, I would have missed these very subtle narrative moves that constituted the way this particular moment was historicized. This moment in my experience of doing history illuminates the shift I made from doing history on a Chicana rhetor to doing history in a way informed by Chicana rhetoric, which I will demonstrate redirects attention away from individual acts and toward the nuanced details of collective action.

I listen again, then, to what Emma Tenayuca called for researchers to do, as she redirected her interviewer from questions about her to questions about that moment. I think that she asked us not only to pay attention to the construction of the event, but more importantly, to not pay attention *to her*. What I mean is that researchers like myself, historians, and the newspapers writers at the time of the strike often myopically focused on her and her actions as *the* history so that the complexity of the situation and the

continuance of the conditions that ignited the actions were reductively contained in the interchanges between the Anglo owners and her fiery public speeches, and thereby constructed in a static past[63].

The *CFMN* also made change as a collective following a type of strategic timing—not like a *kairotic* or even tactical timing that is understood as timeliness and disruptive, but as a slow and eventual undoing that takes place in a *chronos* that is always in a productive flux between history, present and future. I therefore write in a way where chronos is blurred, in which my engagement with positionalities in histories is treated as present. I also pay attention to the little things—to the boring—knowing that these mundane details will probably never be included in an anthology that chronicles the history of our field. This is how change often happens, must happen, especially for groups whose rhetoric emerges to enact positionalities of connectiveness and action in response to conditions that articulate them as otherwise. Those of us who study rhetoric can learn from how Chicana rhetoric as born from experience, works connectively, intervenes in and creates history, and is positioned in less visible spaces. Paying attention to these features might broaden our understanding of rhetoric and, by association, how we research it. In the following chapter, then, I will take this rendering of Chicana rhetoric as also happening in ways and spaces we might not normally consider to constitute this rhetoric: namely, by the strategic intervention into institutions as realized through connective work that is made visible in what might be considered the internal, mundane work of an activist organization.

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63 In an interview, Tenayuca several times refuses to locate the pecan shellers strike as solely relevant as a historical matter, but rather, makes connections to contemporary lived conditions.

Chapter 4
Chicana Rhetoric: Strategic Acts of Connectivity

[T]he differential depends on a form of agency that is self-consciously mobilized in order to enlist and secure influence; the differential is thus performative.
Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*

[G]ive me something functional, give me a goal and we can get it done. . .
Yolanda Nava, founding member of the *Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional*

A Case Study of a Chicana Presenting on Chicana Rhetoric

Nervous as all get out, I am presenting a version of this chapter from my dissertation project as part of my job talk. I scan the room of people present, most are graduate students, smiling encouragingly, or in anticipation of a performance they know they will to have to endure themselves during their job market year. I am more nervous, I think, not because of the audience per se, but because of the content of my presentation. As someone doing a job talk for a Rhetoric and Composition position on a Chicana activist organization, I perhaps overly anticipate the audience expectations. I assume that they will be expecting to hear about in your face activist practices, stories, in other words, of Chicanas kicking ass. And, as I have written elsewhere, when I originally started this research project, I had also expected to tell these same stories. But, alas, here I am, telling a story that is decidedly not at all that exciting: however, this is the type of story that my archival research on the *Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional (*CFMN*)* compels me to tell. I begin my talk by introducing my research, and explaining the importance and infamy of the organization. I then state that what I am going to talk about is not the fiery speeches that the women of the *CFMN* were known to give, and are more well known for, but instead, I was going to make a perhaps less common move in Rhetoric studies: to pay attention to the internal work of the organization.

I anticipated the Rhetoric and Composition crowd would be less than enthusiastic of this account of the organization and its practices. Indeed, at my previous talks it has really only been oddly the medieval scholars who seem most interested in the research project. During the presentation, I am getting encouraging nods, and people taking notes. I think to myself, this is going better than I had expected. No rolled eyes. That's good. I finish the presentation with an overview of future research projects and say that I would be happy to answer questions. One hand shoots immediately up. The hand belonged to a visibly Latino man. Older than me, long hair pulled back. Not a part of the Rhetoric program, because I did not recognize him from the faculty website. I say, yes, looking at him. He does not look happy.

He begins. "I just have to say that I am very disappointed in your presentation." I am stunned and don't know how to respond. "Oh, how so?" I ask. "Well, I don't see what is Chicana about this. What you are talking about is working in the institution. You said that they delivered fiery speeches. But you did not analyze those. That is what you should have done." I stumble out a response, saying that I wanted to focus on their organizational work and not the rhetorical acts of the individual women, or of these speeches that are normally examined. He crosses his arms and shakes his head. "Well, I just want to say that I am very disappointed."

This audience member's comment reminds me of a primary purpose for my research project: while the *CFMN* is most known for their activist work protesting the forced sterilization of women, based on the composition of their archival collection, much of their work was actually about documentation, and what might be considered policy work. This work included the internal strategizing to become part of government

boards. Interestingly, this is rarely studied, nor as in the case study in the opening scene, is this considered part of Chicana rhetoric because it *appears* institutional. I include the above case study not as an attempt to be critical of the commenter. Rather, I include it because it taught me the rhetoric of doing Chicana rhetoric. In other words, how it is read, and conceived of, and what "counts" as rhetoric, or in this case, as Chicana. What the comments insinuates is that Chicana rhetoric happens in a certain place, and not others, such as institutions.

A primary consideration of this chapter is the way that the Chicanas of the *CFMN* accomplished change through strategic acts of connectivity. These acts were not defined by a particular space, but instead were learned as a type of knowing that was adaptive to the current situation at hand. While not seeming activist or to constitute the rhetoric of an oppositional identity, these acts were nonetheless effectual and should be included in this account of Chicana rhetoric. Therefore, in this chapter, I provide a descriptive account of the *CFMN* making change through a rhetorical savvy learned from experience. In particular, the experience of one's lived reality as historically absent in policy making and amongst policy makers.

To make this argument, I first ground the account in Chela Sandoval's articulation of differential consciousness as part of the repertoire of Chicana rhetorical action. Sandoval's differential consciousness provides a lens through which we can read and interpret rhetorical activity as born from particular conditions from which one learns an adaptable knowing to alter power configurations. While Sandoval's description of the differential has been criticized as not grounded in a material reality, I attest that this type of movement is visible in the *CFMN*. Specifically, this is evidenced in the *CFMN* as a

strategic "pragmatism" that involved the *CFMN* taking action to instantiate problems affecting Latinas into public matters. The *CFMN* accomplished this in a way was responsive to the construction of these problems, and of Chicana presence in general, in public matters.

To illuminate these strategies for making change, in the remaining half of the chapter I focus on a story told through the archival collection. The story centers on the *CFMN* and their affiliate organization, the Chicana Service Action Center's (CSAC), involvement with accessing and developing employment training for Chicanas, specifically with the California Employment and Training Act (CETA). I examine this case in two ways: first, in the moment as indicative of the ways that Chicanas responded to a historical absence of their experiences in employment training discourse; and second, as indicative of a strategy of action which demonstrates the movement of collective change as working slowly, in the nuanced internal work of an organization and in less public acts of connectivity. I argue that this type of rhetorical work is less frequently theorized in Rhetoric or Chicana studies, but nevertheless, is part of the rhetoric of Chicanas as they work/ed to make change in spaces in which *Mexicanas* or Latinas were (and are) not normally constructed as constituting—namely institutional and public spaces. I demonstrate that this type of rhetorical work can be evidenced in programmatic writing and marginalia, both of which are realizable through the affordances of archival research. I conclude this chapter with a return to the opening "case study" of my experiences sharing my research on Chicana rhetoric. Ultimately, this chapter demonstrates that to study the rhetoric of Chicanas making change, we must shift the heuristics we employ for studying such histories of rhetorical action.

Strategic Acts of Connectivity, or the "Pragmatics" of Chicana Rhetoric

Differential Consciousness and Technē

As I outlined in Chapter 1 of the dissertation, Chicana rhetoric operates on connectivity. This happens both through the metaphors employed, like the concept of *difrasismo*, and through the movement enacted. The theorization of this movement contributes to the basis of Chela Sandoval's groundbreaking philosophical writing, *Methodology of the Oppressed.* In *Methodology*, Sandoval, among other accomplishments, articulates what she calls "differential consciousness." As Sandoval explains, differential consciousness is a developed ability to "read the current situation of power" and to choose how to respond in a way to push at, or transform the situation. This tactical ability, according to Sandoval, is "a survival skill well known to oppressed people" (60). In other words, it is a know-how that is born out of necessity and from conditions of disempowerment. What is also important to consider is that while differential consciousness is a survival skill, it is also a productive ability: what the differential enables is coalition between and within fragmentation and disjuncture.

Based on Sandoval's articulation of the differential, those of you in Rhetoric might be scratching your head, thinking that it sounds similar to our field's conception of *technē*, a know how defined by contingency on time and situation. A perhaps analogous sounding adaptability of responding to exigencies, *technē* is a process, a way of making and using, that is not a codified "body of knowledge" (Atwill 2). Because *technē* is not an immutable knowledge, it likewise "resists identification with a static, normative subject" (Atwill 2). While there are shared characteristics in these ways of knowing, namely in the

contextual contingency and its shifting nature, there are some very important distinctions between the types of knowing (and acting).

The distinctions between differential consciousness and *technē* lie in the following: the origins, purposes, subjects, and ends. Perhaps the most apparent difference is where this knowing comes from, or how it is developed. Differential consciousness, as Sandoval writes, is a survival skill that is about reading and responding in a situation, or world, in which one is oppressed. It thusly emerges out of "crisis and breakages" (60). *Technē* on the other hand, does not necessarily emerge from necessity nor does it have a similar urgency. *Technē,* as it is articulated with its contingency on time and situation, assumes perhaps a transformative potential. However, differential consciousness is predicated on resistance and opposition. Analogous to *technē*, differential consciousness does not assume a "static subject"; however, unlike *technē*, the development and deployment of differential consciousness depends on a *grounded* subject. Finally, *technē* does not necessarily operate beyond the individual, nor does it enable connection between people. As Sandoval theorizes, differential consciousness is precisely a knowing that enables coalition building despite disjuncture.

It is important to distinguish the two ways of knowing because in this chapter, I want to build on the idea of a type of knowing that the *CFMN* produces in their efforts to acquire funding for employment training for Chicanas, and as a Chicana organization in general. This is also less overtly a disciplinary argument about the way we conceive of a knowing ability, especially as it applies to the power structures that form spaces that Rhetoric holds dear to its heart (or mind if you are Plato): publics and institutions. What I also want to make clear though is that while I am building on Sandoval's theory, I am

adding to her theory in two ways: I am providing a tangible example of this theory in action, and an example of it in action in the collective.

Being Pragmatic and Organizational Change

What is interesting to note is that the *CFMN* leaders in subtle ways do name this way of knowing, but I think they called it simply being "pragmatic." From the experiences the *CFMN* leaders had trying to get their experiences included as part of public policy discourse, or accessing material things like federal funding to support their programs, they had to learn to act given the power situation. At the same time, they were working with and against the construction of a Latina that was decidedly not about organizing and action. As Yolanda Nava aptly put it: "Francisca Flores [a founder of *CFMN* and CSAC] could have been radical but she was damn pragmatic . . . she knew how to network and how to get things done" (VOAHA).

Again, this is a knowing and acting that emerges from an awareness of power situations. As an example, in 1970 and 1972, members of the *CFMN* and CSAC testified before the Commission on the Status of Women, primarily about employment issues facing the Latina community. They noticed that while they saw a problem facing their community, the commission did not seem to agree. What the *CFMN* and CSAC learned then was that they needed to get statistics in hopes that showing numbers would demonstrate their experiences (Nava,). What they also realized was that the Commission was made up entirely of white women who were also older than most of the women the CSAC assisted (Nava, VOAHA).

It is no wonder then, that part of the founding resolutions for the *CFMN* drafted in 1970 at the National Mexican American Issues Conference included a resolution to acquire representation on decision-making boards[64]:

Resolution No. 1

Whereas: The problem unique to the Mexican-American woman/Chicana have to be articulated in a meaningful way. and

Whereas: The Federal and State governments have set up the Commission on the Status of Women as a vehicle for the upgrading of the status of women in general. and

Whereas: Positions on these commissions are filled by appointment.

Therefore Be It Resolved: That the general assembly of the National Mexican-American Issues Conference go on record as supporting the demand made by the Women's Caucus that proportionate and representative appointments be made to the Commission on the Status of Women at the State and Federal levels; and that such names be selected from a list of names submitted by the Steering Committee de la Comision Femenil (Resolutions-Women's Workshop)

Not only did the *CFMN* come to a critical recognition that there needed to be representation of Chicanas on boards like the Commission on the Status of Women, they also acted on this recognition. The strategies invoked to achieve this are purposeful, pragmatic, and enacted. Even on this resolution draft we see that action was taken toward this end, as someone handwrote in the margin next to the second "Whereas": "Call for

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64 In other documents I identified the Conference that the *CFMN* emerged at as the National Chicano Issues Conference. I do this because the *CFMN* labeled this conference differently in various writings. Also, as I have previously written, there were multiple versions of the resolutions drafted. I draw on these different versions throughout the dissertation.

nominations for March meeting." While it may seem institutional and commonplace, it does nonetheless exhibit a tactical knowing and understanding of power formations, along with the best way to "push against those configurations" (Sandoval 60). Interestingly, a handwritten note in the margin is often the place where I saw evidence of the political and tactical. For example, on an article, "Hispanic Women's Council Celebrates fifth year," someone from the *CFMN* wrote to a Katherine (presumably also from the *CFMN*): "write to them on shelter + ask for donation." Such a note is an indicator of rhetorical activity, much like the commentary that *CFMN* members wrote on documents they included in their files—such as writing "Tokenism—Does not serve the need of women" on the government publication "The Functions and Services of the Women's Bureau," and "B.S." on a policy publication detailing approaches to sex education to address teen pregnancy rates. However, such rhetorical activity, while it may lead to change, is not typically theorized about in scholarship on activist organizations.

Yet, in doing this archival research, I began to hear stories of the everyday, mundane details that constitute the rhetoric of organizations. Although the archival collection is comprised of much of these details, they are frequently omitted in our historicizing on the *CFMN*, or historicizing in general. I imagine that part of this omission stems from Chicanas' heuristics for production that account for experience, which may focus on a coming to critical consciousness. I imagine that many of us in the humanities employ heuristics that similarly historicize the rhetorical production of individuals as the progenitor of action and change—a very romantic notion of the rhetor and author. This individualized account may be coupled with an incomplete or perhaps biased notion of rhetorical change as happening in exciting performances, what I can only

call "obvious rhetoric happening." It is through these heuristics that we set the stage for certain stories to be told, while others are not.

But, change is often achieved through subtle shifts in behind the scenes practices that in order to be recognized require adopting different heuristics. I believe this is especially true for groups like Chicanas who, in enacting a differential consciousness, utilize our experience as constructed as non-actors in the world of this "obvious rhetoric," or what we might label as "public rhetorics," as if to denote that there is something inherently accessible about such spaces. In other words, being a Chicana means strategically responding to constructions of Latina/Mexican women as arhetorical in these public and institutional spaces. As many scholars have demonstrated, the ability to participate in these spaces, or to determining the problems at hand that are solved or debated in these spaces, are historically not realizable for everyone. The inaccessibility of such spaces has very real and material consequences. This speaks to the necessity that prompted the *CFMN* to act for employment training, and to act in a way that demonstrated a tactical rhetoric of connectivity.

Case Study: "Spanish origin persons are included in the white population!": CETA/Manpower and Employee Training Programs

..just recently, in looking, for example, at publications that the Employment Development of the State of California puts out, over 150 publications for this past year, only three or four had any kind of statistics relating to minorities period. And some of those didn't even have statistics for minority females. I ask you, how can a job training program such as CETA, such as the Job Training Partnership Act be developed around the needs of these women when we don't even know what they are. What are their characteristics?

--Maria Rodriguez, MALDEF attorney and collaborator with the *CFMN*, Testimony before the California Legislature Senate Committee on Health and Welfare and Assembly Human Services Committee, "In the matter of: The feminization of poverty"

In the above epigraph, taken from a document in the *CFMN* files, Maria Rodriguez[65] alluded to another vexing rhetorical problem that Chicana existed to address: a historical erasure of the experiences of minority women in employment data as manifested in a lack of statistical data. In turn, this altered the ontology of what "minority women" can be and do. To be more specific, as you will see in the following case study of the *CFMN*'s involvement with employment training programs, this absence of statistical evidence of the experience of "minority women" resulted in a lack federal funding for employee training programs for "minority women" because an exigency had yet to be established. The *CFMN* and their partner organizations existed to redress such absence.

As with the rhetoric of the NOW document in Chapter 3, in the following case study of the *CFMN*'s involvement with employment training programs, we see that Chicana rhetoric builds on experience from living in the world and works connectively. The *CFMN* members made visible the physical reality of their lives, which thereby shaped the public discourse on employment. These interventions took place though the invention of public issues, in debates about defining the problems at hand, and through strategic behind the scenes work that slowly redressed the physical absence of Chicanas in public spaces. Their strategic complexities are made visible when we follow the less public rhetorical acts and redirect our attention to the connective work that happened internally.

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65 The Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) worked with the *CFMN* on several issues, including filing the lawsuit against the forced sterilization of poor women of color during the 1970's in *Madrigal v Quilligan.*

To tell the story about the *CFMN*'s involvement in employment training initiatives, I am going to set up three scenes for you[66]. To construct each scene, I did not adhere to a strict linear chronology; instead I drew upon documents that were included in the collection and connected them thematically. Scene one provides some context, exigency if you will, for pursuing employment training as a Chicana organization. This scene relays the way that being such an organization meant inventing the issue to begin with. Scene two also provides some context and it relays the "crisis" of this moment for the *CFMN*. In scene two I focus on a representative sample of texts and actions that are more public and involve what would normally be considered typical for a rhetoric scholar to study. In other words, I examine the activist performances that are externally focused and attempt to respond to misconstructions of Chicana identity. Several of the documents I draw upon in this scene have been written about and historicized in Chicana studies. Scene three follows a different story that happens as the time as the first two scenes. While the *CFMN* continued a more public strategy to address an issue, at the same time they enacted a rhetorical knowing of how to work strategically to address the source of the contention itself. This is the scene in which I see evidence of differential consciousness in action.

Scene One:
Chicanas Need Employment Training: Creating a Problem at Hand

During the 1970's, Chicana identity becomes more widely circulated; its emergence and circulation is a response to the realization that there is a lack of experiential stories told that have *real* consequences. At the same time, there was a

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66 It should be noted that I have constructed this story based on the archival research only. Therefore, as with any story of history, this is constructed by the documents the *CFMN* included; in other words, this is a historiography, with an emphasis on the "ography."

growing need for employment training programs to be created in the country, with a push to train workers in the skilled trades. Prior to the inception of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) the Department of Labor begins collecting and distributing statistics on the employment needs of their populace. In their needs assessment, the Department of Labor noted in fine print in their report, that "Hispanic populations are included in the white population" (as cited in Flores, "Speech"). As Maria Rodriguez pointed out in her testimony that I used to introduce this case study, the experiences of Hispanic populations, and more particularly of Latina women, were not being specified in the data collection and reporting on employment training programs. According to the *CFMN*, having their lives collapsed within a category of people who are not visibly or linguistically marked in the same way meant that their concerns were not seen *as* issues. As a result, a need, or a problem, of the availability of jobs or barriers to securing jobs was not seen as a problem for Latinas because their experiences were not accounted for in data collection. Materially, without these statistics the *CFMN* was unable to obtain federal funding without an identified need.

Chicanas affiliated with the newly formed *CFMN* recognized a need to tell stories about accessing employment for their own communities. They knew they had to respond to a historical absence of numerical accounting, with the hopes to be able to later redress the issues that they would reveal with their own data collection specific to their communities. In other words they needed to invent a problem that seemingly did not exist. The *CFMN* made the invention of this problem part of their organization's mission, which in turn built a trajectory for the organization.

As such, the *CFMN* decided to conduct their own needs assessment that targeted Latina women. Included in the *CFMN* files is this lengthy questionnaire dated April 11, 1972. The questionnaire included, amongst others, questions about children (when born and how many); about marital and employment status; formal education received; current childcare arrangement; if the respondent had dropped out of school and the reasons for this; past participation in a job training program and the success of this participation; interests in receiving training and in what field (Mexican/Chicana women's survey). Now these questions were very strategic—they asked about their experiences accessing employment and being employed. They asked about their lives holistically—as women, as mothers, and as wage earners. From their needs assessment, they created two related physical centers that were affiliated with the *CFMN*: the Chicana Service Action Center (CSAC) and El Centro de Niños, a bilingual and bicultural childcare center.

As I explained in previous chapters, The Chicana Service Action Center[67], founded in 1972, is an organization with a physical location in Lost Angeles. In its earliest iteration, on paper the CSAC was a project of the *CFMN*, but in its operation was presumably, the *CFMN* until it later split into a separate entity due to disagreements between staff and board members, and the realization that the center would best exist on its own. Although it became a separate entity, a relationship persisted due to shared people, and historically because the CSAC files are part of the *CFMN* archival collection[68].

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67 The CSAC still operates in Los Angeles. Researching this entity as a physical manifestation or product of Chicana rhetoric, and its practices that are developed to provide culturally appropriate employment and education services, would be an interesting project on its own right, especially as part of and responsive to a particular geographic place.

68 Because there is such a significant overlap and sharing of resources (including people) between the CSAC and the *CFMN* during this time period, it is difficult to distinguish boundaries between the

As a result of building these two centers, the *CFMN* were able to talk to the clients these two centers served. They listened to women relay stories about prevalent assumptions that were effecting members of their communities to obtain employment: one was that the model utilized by the employment training services that were available which were presumably accessible to all, were really geared toward Anglos and more frequently, Anglo men. For example, when accessing employee training, women in their community were being referred to secretarial and office work—which posed a problem for some monolingual and/or bilingual women as it relied on particular language use and on unspoken cultural norms about office behavior.

Further, the only apprenticeship training programs that paid apprentices were in the skilled trades—carpentry, plumbing and so forth. As former CSAC director Francisca Flores pointed out in a later letter to an Edna Olivia, a research associate at the University of Texas, that the clients they worked with at the CSAC were unable to access the apprenticeship programs that were federally or state funded. Flores wrote, "these programs are restrictive and 'controlled' by the employers hiring the persons (men or women) that are eligible to be trained by the unions in the various industries. It cannot honestly be said that the unions are waiting breathlessly to receive women into the various crafts" (1). In this same letter, she shared some startling statistics on women in the Department of Labor sponsored programs: "Total number of women in California Apprenticeship Program as of January 1980 is 4.1%. Hispanic and Black women, each

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organizations, and therefore, the locus of rhetorical action. In addition, the leaders appeared to intentionally elect to speak on behalf of one of organizations based on an awareness of ethos and audience. Whenever these boundaries are made clear, I will use the appropriate organizational attribution; however, when the boundaries are not made clear I will use CSAC as the identifier when it is clear that the physical employment-training center is being discussed; everything else will be identified as the *CFMN*.

group, constitute .004%. Total number of minority women in this program are .008+%! (2 of 3)[69].

Accessing these apprenticeships were proving to be impossible for women in general. This was compounded by the very fact that Latina women needed paid employment training was not even considered an issue because of the stereotypical construction of Latina women. As *CFMN* representatives pointed out in their publication "Chicanas and the Labor Force," that unlike the construction of Latina women as the submissive housewife being supported (and controlled) by her Machismo husband, that many of the women they saw were single heads of household. In a subsequent lawsuit filed by *MALDEF*, government intake forms used for tracking labor statistics did not even permit women to list themselves as heads of households (as cited in "CETA: An Economic Tool for Chicanas"). As was the case with the Department of Labor data collection that enveloped the Hispanic population into the White population, intake forms used in employment training programs prevented a reality to be told that women, and more precisely, minority women, faced as they sought employment.

For example, in a later given testimony at a Department of Industrial Relations Fair Employment Practice Commission hearing, Francisca Flores responded to guidelines the Department intended to implement to remedy sex discrimination. Flores argued that the guidelines did not address the institutional myopia on employment as only about labor: "I stand before you to contend that the employment discrimination which exists toward women, particularly Mexican and Chicana, will not necessarily be affected solely

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69 Although almost a decade after the *CFMN* and the CSAC began working to address employment issues, I think the numbers are telling. Flores also must find the statistics to be shocking, as evidenced by the exclamation mark. We can only surmise how much lower the numbers would have been in the early 1970's.

by these guidelines because discrimination affecting employment practices begins at the institutional level which discriminate against our women when they fail to prepare and train the bicultural child equally. This inequality has been systematically practiced, as shown, year after year, by the low reading ability of children living in East Los Angeles and the high rate of high school dropouts" (1). Attached to this presentation were various newspaper clippings that discussed high drop out rates in East Los Angeles schools.

What the CSAC and the *CFMN* did then was to shift an invisible issue in institutional discourse on employment into existence due to a lack of statistics. These findings were also presented by Yolanda Nava to the California Commission on the Status of Women, "The Chicana and Employment: Needs Analysis and Recommendation for Legislation." In this document, the *CFMN* identified a disjuncture between a reductive stereotype and construction of Latina women and the reality that many Latina women were working outside of the home. The *CFMN* and the CSAC as organizations were being built around the contention that employment statistics did not even include information on women and minorities (let alone minority women); secondly, that training programs did not make available "non traditional" jobs to women in general that would allow for large number of Latina women who were heads of household to support themselves on one wage; and thirdly, that training programs geared toward women did not factor in language or cultural differences or expectations in workplace settings[70]. In

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70 It is important to note that the *CFMN*/CSAC also explained the difference between an Anglo feminist approach to employment counseling, and that developed by and for Chicanas. In "Employment Counseling and the Chicana," *CFMN* leader Yolanda Nava outlined this difference. She explained that the CSAC built transitional steps for employment training (i.e. place in small offices where Spanish is spoken), and addressed other issues like family planning. One example was mothers of some of the young women they worked with indicated to the CSAC staff that they were not comfortable talking about family planning but said they were fine with the CSAC employment counselors discussing it with their daughters as long as

response then the *CFMN* created a public problem through their data collection, and by writing about these research findings in various reports. As a result, they garnered the ability to argue for federal funding.

Scene Two:
Enter the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA): Or, Now we have a Different Problem

The *CFMN* then, effectively created a public problem at hand: that Latinas were employed outside of the home and needed to access employee training programs. Alas, the problem at hand shifted. In 1973, the Federal government passed the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act to provide funds for employment training programs as well as job opportunities in the public sector. The implementation of the CETA Act opened up the ability to have a discussion about employment training, as well as available funding to start to collect statistics more broadly. The *CFMN* acted on this exigency by submitting a request for funding for a special survey of female, Spanish speaking participants in programs authorized under CETA. On the back of a letter in response to their request, a *CFMN* member left a record of their research and action plan: "1. get L.A. statistics on monolingual women who work in L.A./on welfare/heads of households 2. on some groups who have limited English who need ESL 3. U.S. school young women—poor language skills/to identify/outreach/recruit/refer/and/or/train—one year/place on job" (Note on back of letter to Pierce Quinlan).

Using this research and action plan, the CSAC secured Department of Labor contract #4047-06. One purpose of the contract was to collect statistics on female-Spanish speaking participants in CETA funded programs, specifically ones administered by the

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they were able to "use discretion." In other words, employment training for Chicanas was much more expansively addressed by the CSAC (*Encuentro Femenil)*

Manpower project[71]. The CSAC and *CFMN* shared these statistics in multiple texts—such as presentations making legislative recommendations at legislative hearings, and booklets, as well as in the well known and reprinted presentation: "The Needs of the Spanish Speaking Mujer in Woman-Manpower Training Programs." Anna Nieto Gomez delivered a version of this report as a presentation at a Manpower symposium. Gomez began her presentation of this report by stating that the initiative was brought by women attending the Manpower seminar in response to the fact that the "federal programs are only sensitive to minority groups or to women, it was felt that the needs and issues of Spanish speaking women have not been addressed" (1). If women are addressed, Gomez claimed, it was only along a white/black breakdown, without considerations for other minority women. Accordingly, Gomez called for further research to study the "socioeconomic factors related to the Spanish Speaking women in the labor market" and to develop effective policy that included utilizing community resources (1). Gomez pointed out that many of the training programs developed by Manpower required little English speaking abilities, such as in the skilled trades. As such, Gomez posited that it would make sense to create bilingual and bicultural curriculum to train women in traditional and non traditional jobs for women, since, given their statistics, there was a "heavy concentration of Spanish speaking women" in "low-paying traditional jobs" that require little or no English speaking language abilities (2).

What Gomez subtly made apparent was the interesting "logic" of the Manpower training programs. If most of the programs did not require English-speaking abilities, then why don't they use bilingual trainers? Also, the jobs that these women were able to

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71 The Manpower project was an employment staffing and job training provider that received federal CETA funding in the 1970's.

access were interestingly paid a lot less than the traditionally male jobs that required the similar level of English speaking abilities. Thusly, Gomez argued, it would behoove the Manpower project—a project dedicated to providing employment training for everyone to improve their lives—" to train and/or upgrade monolingual women into both traditional and non-traditional jobs for women" (2).

In addition to distributing statistics and recommendation to government agencies, another purpose of the *CFMN*'s Department of Labor contract was to recruit women "through personal contacts, clients who came in [and] referred neighbors" as well as using their connections with other community organizations and Spanish oriented media, to participate in a pilot program (Department of Labor Contract). As described in her presentation to the Manpower project, the pilot program would create "bilingual/bicultural Spanish speaking, self-development program designed to increase positive attitudes towards women in the labor force and to also expose myths of working women as well as identify the socio-economic importance of women's roles in society" (Gomez 3). This program would approach employment training for Chicanas holistically, meaning that they would include, among other things, a staff of bilingual trainers, access to bicultural child care, vocational training in the trades, communication skills development, and counseling for families and co-workers to facilitate their understanding of the "cultural and economic work patterns of the Spanish Speaking woman" (Gomez 6).

Using the data from their own research and the recommendations they made to the Manpower project, the CSAC ran a pilot program in which they provided culturally appropriate training to meet the needs of Chicanas. The results of their pilot program was that 46% of the women they worked with were placed; 18% were pending placement in

jobs or training programs; 9% were referred to agencies; 19% of the cases were closed, and 8% were still pending (MAPC proposal). The CSAC sent the evaluation of their pilot program and the statistics that established the success rates of their program to the local Manpower Area Planning Council along with a request for funding through the CETA ACT to have culturally appropriate trainers given the identified need. In the proposal, the CSAC/*CFMN* identified to the planning council that current Manpower employment training programs did not meet the needs of Chicana women in terms of employment training: "Skills training and supportive manpower services tailored to the needs of Chicanas are almost non-existent. A lack of skills, age, testing, stereotypes, racial and sex discrimination, all contribute to the plight of the Mexican American woman/women" (MAPC Proposal, "Statement of Problem" iv). The *CFMN* further contended that the trainers that CETA funded through the Manpower project that the Chicana Service Action Center could access for their clients were all Anglo men. Therefore, they applied for CETA funding from the Los Angeles Manpower Planning Council to work with Manpower to design employment-training program geared toward Chicanas, using trainers who could deliver culturally appropriate training.

The result? The *CFMN*/CSAC were denied further funding[72]. The reason? Not lack of success, and not inability to establish a need (what used to be the problem). Rather, the Manpower Council denied them funding because the term Chicana was deemed "discriminatory." The Council argued that because the CSAC identified Chicanas as the community they would be serving, and that they were operating as a *Chicana* Service

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72 The *CFMN* were welcomed to access to use the job trainers provided by the Manpower program—these trainers, *CFMN* charged, were all white men. Further, access to job trainers alone would not comprehensively address all the web of conditions that mediated access to employment for Chicanas.

Action Center, that they could not give them funding because they were discriminating against other groups.

A flurry of rhetorical activity ensued. Testimonies at various government committees, and a general public outcry by the *CFMN* and CSAC took place: much of this in public hearings, and others in the front-page editorials of their newsletters[73]. In one newsletter column titled "A Rose by any other Name...[74]" CSAC director Francisca Flores shared with her reading audience that the Manpower board felt the use of the term Chicana was discriminatory. She wrote that at a later meeting with Manpower's appeals committee they expounded on their decision stating that their proposal only "singles out Mexican women to be served...They said, furthermore, the CSAC proposal was feminist!" (emphasis in the original, 1). What is interesting here is that according to the article, the CSAC and *CFMN* explained to the commission that 80% of the people in their geographic neighborhood were Mexican American or Chicano so they were reflecting the background of people who live in the area. In rebuttal, the Manpower Council committee pointed out that Anglos also lived in the surrounding area and were thusly being discriminated against. Therefore, Flores wrote, "With that little stroke of statistical genius the CSAC contention was dismissed" (1).

Whereas before the Anglo population was previously deemed the universal norm to collect statistics on their employment needs—and it was statistically sound to subsume Hispanic populations in the white population, the Anglo population were pulled out as the

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73 See Flores' testimonies "Joint Committee on Legal Equality" and "Regarding Proposed Guidelines for the California Fair Employment Practices Commission on Sex Discrimination," as well as CSAC published booklet titled "Chicana Status and Concerns," as just a couple of moments where these issues were explicitly or implicitly discussed.

74 I must comment on the title of this article. There is a double meaning: first, that the naming of Chicana should matter less than the realities of the community they are working with; but, Flores knew that the naming had everything to do with it.

population being excluded. We can assume based on histories of controlling access in public spaces through details like the definition of who receives federal funding and based on what criteria—oftentimes found in the small typeface of government forms and other professional writing documents—that the implicit issue was about not wanting to give money specifically to the organization *because* of the people they served. While the training programs funded by the government up until that point were in fact exclusionary and catered to English speaking Anglo males as the *CFMN* had proven, they appeared to be inclusive, unmarked and cohered to the government's guidelines.

In response, the CSAC and *CFMN* wrote appeals to representatives in Sacramento with the claim that traditional Manpower training programs were not prepared to effectively train bilingual women, particularly in the skilled trades, that Chicana was not discriminatory, and the naming was not as relevant as the actual services provided. At some point, it is noted that the CSAC employed the ACLU to work on their behalf. Included in the archives are various letters written by the ACLU and publicly presented to government officials, in which they argued that the Manpower committee had a "mistaken notion of discrimination." In one letter they wrote that if "if such legally erroneous and uninformed view were prevalent among the members of your council, serious damage could be done to the Los Angeles County participation in the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act" (Ripston, 1 of 2).

Further, the CSAC asked the *CFMN* members and supporters to attend CETA related meetings whenever possible (Letter to Comision Femenil Members[75]). In another newsletter column titled "Sequel" Francisca Flores details one such meeting with the city

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75 Sent internally December 2, 1974.

of Los Angeles to discuss their denial of funding from the city Manpower Advisory Board. According to Flores, the majority of this meeting was spent discussing "terminology" and not the reasons why they were denied funding. At these meetings then the definition—or perhaps more accurately, the signification— of Chicana, and of discrimination, continued to be a source of contention. In other words, consensus over the meaning of Chicana, or what constituted the actual problem at hand, could not be reached.

Scene Three:
A Different Strategy to the Problem at Hand

Now, it is not clear to me, based on my archival research, if the aforementioned lawsuits filed were successful, or if the public debates were resolved about the meaning of Chicana and if it was discriminatory, or what constitutes a discriminatory term to begin with. To be honest, I am not interested in following their outcomes. Because what we do know is that something shifts—we see it in the fact that the *CFMN* have in their records receipt of CETA funding received after having been denied it because of the usage of "Chicana." To see this though, as a researcher, I had to adopt a different methodological heuristic. What I did was turn away from following the actions of the individual and the exciting rhetorical performances to notice the behind the scenes connective work of the *CFMN* that eventually un-does the public problem at hand. This connective work, I argue, displays a type of knowing that Sandoval articulates as the differential: a knowing of how one is read as a Chicana and an ability to respond in a way to undermine power configurations.

Betwixt the rhetorical activity mentioned that is documented in the public arena, it becomes apparent in the collection that the *CFMN* employed a different type of strategy:

to circumvent the issue of the term Chicana to begin with. This work happened less publicly and more in the nuances of their organizational work. In a 1972 press release from the Women's Bureau of Labor about the secretary of labor working to open up jobs to women, names of representatives are listed. The list includes the name of one woman with a perhaps visibly Latina name. The name is underlined—Carmen Maymi—with a phone number written next to it ("Brennan Pledges"). A few months later, a letter is sent from Yolanda Nava of the CSAC and *CFMN* to Carmen Maymi. The letter appears to be a follow up to a conversation they have had. In the letter, Nava inquired again whether the *CFMN* can have input on the "above matter" (presumably the Bureau of Labor working to increase employment opportunities for women). She also asked about the chances for getting a Chicana appointed to one of their boards.

At the end of the letter Nava includes a "CC"—to the Secretary of the Department of Labor along with a note (for Maymi to also read) which states that she just wanted to make sure that their office had statistics with the numbers of Mexican and Latina women to demonstrate why they should have representatives on their board (November 2 Letter). A very tactical way I think of pointing out the absence of Mexican and Latina women on the board, and then alluding that this absence must be an ill informed decision due to a lack of research on their part. Because, surely if they knew the numbers, someone would have been appointed.

We can infer the effectiveness of such a not-so-subtle hint by a later letter from Yolanda Nava to Alan Cranston, forwarding resumes of women to appoint to the Women's Advisory Committee to the Department of Labor, and an additional letter sent the following week to a Pamela Faust of the Commission on the Status of Women with

the resumes of 17 qualified Chicanas to recommend for appointment (August 30 and September 1 Letters). There are several other examples of such work in the archival collection—of newspaper clippings reporting on various government happenings or issues related to employment[76] to reports from US Department of Labor. Many of these documents include some kind of notation of rhetorical activity—names underlined in newspaper articles, stars next to names, someone has written, "call."

Some of these connections are visibly recorded in memos and letters sent that were copied and included in the *CFMN* archival collection; others were not. We can however surmise their effectiveness. After being denied funding from Manpower, an internal memo was sent between the CSAC and *CFMN* board members. In the memo, the board members raised questions about the members of the Manpower Area Planning Council Board of Directors[77]. In this memo, the board asked about the composite of the Manpower Council, specifically in regards to the selection process and who made the selections. The purpose of this memo was to begin to strategize within their organization. Publicly they were continuing their outcries in response to being deemed discriminatory; inwardly they were developing a plan that worked at the foundations of the Manpower Council.

Following this internal strategizing, the *CFMN* sent a letter to Carlotta Mellon of the California State Governor's office. Mellon was apparently in a position to recommend people for appointment to government boards, including the boards that

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76 One such example was a newspaper article that the *CFMN* had cut out from the *Minneapolis Tribune*. The article, "Women's Rebellion Against 'Dick and Jane'" described a research study conducted by the Women's Equity Action League (WEAL) of WACO Texas. The results of the study showed that minority women were being trained to be maids and waitresses in their high school home economics. The names of the WEAL members that are mentioned in the article are underlined.

77 Nov. 1974, "Memorandum re: Refunding of the Chicana Service Action Service a project of the Comision Femenil Mexicana Nacional."

neglected to include statistics of Mexican/Latinos in their accounting, and including those that determined funding requirements for employment issues. In response, Mellon sent a memo to the *CFMN*. In it, Mellon summarized a discussion she had with the Governor's office on behalf of the *CFMN*. She stated that there was "a commitment to bring many Chicanas into government" and to do this they "wanted to receive resumes so that we could consider Chicanas for appointment." Furthermore, Mellon wrote that she also "had receive[d] loud and clear their [the *CFMN*'s] message of retaining Chicanas in their existing positions and that if any were to be replaced it would be with other Chicanas" (3).

It should be noted that the people the *CFMN* contact are not the actual elected official, or the chairs of these committees; rather they are more often than not the assistants or secretaries to the officials. The assistants were the people responsible for previewing the mail and forwarding necessary mail—including resumes—up the chain of command. What the *CFMN* and CSAC leaders did was to develop relationships with these people who then would work as allies on their behalf. Through this relationship they were able to get government officials to agree to not only appoint Chicanas to boards, but if any current Chicanas were already on government boards, should they need to be replaced, it would only be with other Chicanas which ensured Chicana representation.

With this strategy in play, there is evidence of later notes sent from Mellon to then *CFMN* president Chris Fuentes thanking her for recommendations for appointments to a range of government boards. One board mentioned is the California Employment Training Act Council, the very group who funded the Manpower Planning Area Council,

and the same Council that denied funding to the *CFMN* for being discriminatory. We then see in an editorial for the Chicana Service Action Center newsletter a congratulations to Corinne Sanchez, Administrative Assistant to the CSAC, for being appointed to the board—and she will not be the last Chicana from the CSAC or the *CFMN* to gain access to the CETA council[78]. In other words, these Chicanas strategically gained access to the board governing the allotment of CETA funds. Tellingly, CETA funding is later reinstated to the *CFMN*. In a Sept/Oct newsletter column, it is noted, "[o]n October 15, 1975, the Chicana Service Action Center, Inc. met with the State Manpower Council to officially sign the state CETA contract which has been awarded them" ("Chicana Center Signs State Contract"). This funding reinstatement happened even without them changing their name from a Chicana Action Center. The members of the *CFMN* must have known that an agreement over the definition of Chicana could not be reached because of a historical absence of Chicana women on these government boards. Instead of arguing about whether "Chicana" is exclusionary, these Chicanas worked connectively get appointed to the boards, thereby ascertaining power to actually change the terrain of the discussion. The result is that they effectively made an issue (exclusionary terminology) a non-issue.

Their strategies for accomplishing this happened within their organization and between people and can be realized through paying attention to the marginalia—a type of rhetorical activity that is made evident through the affordances of archival work. During these less public moves, moves that are not visible in any other recounting of this issue

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78 In fact, in May 1975, Francisca Flores was appointed as a chairperson for the newly formed Chicana Coalition's Manpower Committee (CSAC Newsletter).

other than through the archives, these Chicanas operated with government officials, to imbue spaces with Chicana ideology and Chicana presence so that Chicana became an active part of the policy making and makers. What is clear is that, while they may have lost the public battles of employment training programs, Chicana as a point of contention has less of a rhetorical impact in regards to access to CETA funding. This was achieved from a different approach to activism, through practices that are perhaps equally explicit but operated in less public spaces. The Chicanas of the CSAC and the *CFMN* began to focus on leadership development, and by doing so, placed other Chicanas or like-minded people on the boards and commissions that made decisions that had real impacts on whether or not the CSAC and *CFMN* could provide the services the knew were vital to their community.

Conclusion

Such strategizing evidenced in the *CFMN*'s work to address employment training for Chicanas can be understood as a way of knowing and acting that emerged from a positionality that was configured as disempowered in institutions. But, the *CFMN* and CSAC were also aware that they *had* to be able to access government funding for their services. Knowing that a shared understanding of what the actual problem was that needed to be addressed could not be reached, the *CFMN* had to enact what Sandoval might identify as differential consciousness, by adopting a movement to respond to the situation at hand. To do this, the *CFMN* must have had an astute awareness of the way that Chicana, and their Chicana selves, were being read in the eyes of those on government boards; they then must have also had an awareness of what would be an impossible and a more probable approach to this disjuncture between definitions of

Chicana. To respond in a way that would allow them to access the funding they needed, out of necessity the *CFMN* had to be adaptable and work internally in their organization and connectively between people in institutions.

This is not to say that the *CFMN* and CSAC stopped their public protestations against the discrimination claims, or that their testimonies and fiery speeches did not continue to be part of their Chicana activist repertoire. Rather, they developed a rhetoric that was at once responsive and effectual; public and internal; activist and institutional. And they effectively made these seeming contradictions productive as it worked toward an end of garnering federal funding to redress an absence of employment training programs for Chicanas, as well as an absence of Chicanas on federal and state labor boards. In other words, to quote Yolanda Nava of the *CFMN* again, they were indeed "damn pragmatic." Similar then to the way that we saw particular practices of the *CFMN* emerging from experiences of being constructed as non actors in a movement (Chapter 2), and as historically not organizing (Chapter 3), we see a Chicana rhetoric emerging in an organization through a recognition that their realities were not included in public discourse on employment. In sum, these practices are evident of a Chicana subjectivity as instantiated in an organization: they are built from experience, responsive, tactical and they incite change.

Further, for rhetoric researchers, what this chapter demonstrated is that the *CFMN* altered practices marked by the individual as the locus of rhetorical action who seeks to persuade an audience, to a connective movement between people. While the testimonies they gave at various hearings were presumably given on behalf of a community, as a rhetorical scene they are enacted as an individual performance act of persuasion. In fact,

many of the testimonies I cited in this chapter are circulated and reprinted in collections under the name of the individual and not under the name of the organization (Alma García). Thusly, while included in the description that these individuals were part of an organization, it is still the individual who is essentially historicized. By contrast, these letters and other acts of connectivity and strategizing, which also include *CFMN* members doing things like stapling together newspaper articles with speeches, are a type of rhetorical activity that also warrants attention when studying rhetoric and organizations: despite the fact that it not seem exciting or all that revolutionary, this strategic activity reflects a rhetorical ability to "read the current situation of power" and respond in a way that "pushes" these configurations (Sandoval 60).

To return to the opening scene of this chapter, this rhetorical activity is not considered to be Chicana, or I would imagine, to be considered rhetoric—or rhetoric enough to study. The sentiment of the faculty member in the opening scene I believe indicates that to be Chicana, and more precisely, to be revolutionary, it must look a certain way, and operate in particular spaces. In a way, this creates a reductive binary between institutions and activist organization that is based on a static subject and space, which precisely counters a notion of tactical know how. Therefore, I argue that this view is limiting and limits the expansiveness of what it has meant to be and act as a Chicana. Further, as a scholar, it would be irresponsible of me to not pay attention to the care the *CFMN* took to construct Chicana rhetoric as it is realized in their organization as including a savvy awareness of the way that institutions work and how change can be achieved when working as an organization. Had I only sought out the performances of Chicana rhetoric that seemed Chicana, or activist, I would have overlooked a significant

portion of what the *CFMN* archived, and what they considered to be an important part of what it meant for them to become and act as a Chicana organization, which included making connections, often within institutions.

Tellingly, then, these less visible practices of connective work are not included in discussions of what it means to be a Chicana, or to do rhetoric from a particular positionality. Yet, these acts of connecting with people whom they assume, or hope, to share an understanding of their experiences—who share at the very least an appreciation of the consequences of lives represented—are integral to Chicana rhetoric. What we learn from this is that what has perhaps been naturalized methodologically in our field produces certain landscapes where some peoples rhetorics, like Chicanas, may not be visible in all of its complexities; or other stories, perhaps less exciting, less romantic, remain part of the invisible backdrop to the more recognizable action. Building on this argument about our methodological heuristics we employ in Rhetoric and Composition, in the next chapter I outline the implications for my dissertation research, primarily in terms of methodology. In other words, what Chicana rhetoric teaches us about rhetoric—and how we study it—in the world.

Chapter 5
Chicana Rhetoric: Implications for Rhetoric and Composition

Our strategy is how we cope—how we measure and weigh what is to be said and when, what is to be done and how, and to whom and to whom and to whom...
Cherríe Moraga, "I Have Dreamed of a Bridge"

A Case Study of a Rhetoric Scholar Studying Chicanas

I am in the hotel room for one of my interviews. I described this dissertation project, and for the most part, as with my other interviews, I focused on the methodological heuristic. I explained that I was looking at a Chicana feminist organization. Rather than only closely examine the writing of the Chicanas in individual documents, I was looking at movement between documents and people, focusing instead on actions. One of the interviewers turned to me, moving her arm dismissively, as if to try to wave away her disappointment for my research. Now, she says, I don't understand how this is a dissertation about rhetoric. She continued, I mean, you are not examining language, the language used by the Chicana women[79]. I respond with my definition of rhetoric, as being more than just about language. She appeared to have already made up her mind as her eyes shifted away to look out at the view of the city from the hotel window. For that matter, she continued, I do not see how this rhetoric is different than any other rhetoric from other oppressed groups. How is this unique to Chicanas?

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79 Another comment I received was that because I was not being "critical" of the organization that it was not a rhetoric dissertation. For example, I was asked why I did not talk about the making of the collection as a political act, with the *CFMN* making decisions about what to include—or not include. Therefore, I should have been talking about what they left out of their collection, as well as being "critical" of the decisions and actions they made. As a researcher, I never felt that it was my job to be critical of the organization. I am also more interested in what is there, what the *CFMN* decided was important to include in the making of their organizational memory. I would never say it is "comprehensive," but rather, tells a story worth listening to.

This final "case study" of Chicana and the signification of Chicana in Rhetoric studies, leads me to the implications for this research in the field broadly. As the comments above indicate, Rhetoric studies can be perceived as inextricably bound up with linguistic analysis of writing. Even though studies have extended the realm of rhetoric to look at other types of meaning making, the expectations for close textual analysis still persist. Arguments about the realm and scope of rhetoric as including meaning making outside of language is becoming commonplace and has been well articulated by Rhetoric and Composition scholars (see Driskill 2008, Hawhee 2005, Villanueva 1996, and countless scholars in Computers and Composition such as Kress 2005, Hocks 2003, Hawisher and Sullivan 1999, to name just a few).

What I want to focus on in these comments to this research project is the expectation for Chicana rhetoric to be unique, or to distinguish it as a rhetorical practice as separate from others. What this opening scene also demonstrates is that while Chicana rhetoric is assumedly unique, that its characteristics, or the manner in which we study it, is narrowly presumed. In other words, when we identify as a scholar who studies Chicana rhetoric, we (and our research) are constructed with pre-determined significations that locate this research within a "proper" space or sphere of study. One such articulation is that studying Chicanas, or Chicana rhetoric, means one studies language. This may stem from an unspoken expectation that language rights and politics is the space that has been demarcated for scholars of color as "legitimate"[80].

In response, what I have demonstrated in this dissertation is that there are some aspects of Chicana rhetoric that are perhaps distinguishable from other rhetorics. As a

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80 It is not my intention to minimize the importance and value of scholarship and teaching that scholars by color on language rights and politics that have been groundbreaking and foundational.

rhetoric, it is born from exigencies, among other things, of being constructed as ineffectual or invisible that is particular to a Chicana lived experience. Because it is a self-selected identity, it is epistemic in a way that shapes its rhetoric. Further, as it is a fairly recently emergent identity, there is a particular compulsion to create a history and memory of Chicana subjectivity. I cannot say that this makes Chicana rhetoric unique, as much as it is, distinguishable.

The comments the interviewer made in the opening scene also brings me back to Chapter 1. In Chapter 1, I argued that some rhetorics are interestingly treated as universally applicable. With this in mind, I want to argue that indeed, Chicana rhetoric may not be "unique" as it is indicative of a rhetoric that is born from a necessity for survival. If then, this is a rhetoric shared by other groups, it begs the question of why we rely on foundational theories to conceptualize the way rhetoric is practiced in the world that are only applicable to the few. Along with the presumed universality of certain rhetorics comes the minimization of the applicability of the relevance of Chicana rhetoric.

In response to these assumptions and articulations, in this final chapter of my dissertation, I will discuss the implications from this dissertation research investigating Chicana rhetoric. I will talk about these implications in terms of the heuristics or terminology we employ for studying rhetoric that did not hold up as applicable or achievable when studying Chicana rhetoric: namely, stasis theory, history making on the unit of the individual and identity in professional writing. Although this dissertation did not have a pedagogical focus, this does not mean that I have not made pedagogical revisions based on what I have learned from doing this research. Therefore, I include a

section in which I discuss pedagogical implications, specifically the way that I have altered my heuristics for course design and practice for the way that students learn about rhetoric, change and culture. Throughout I will also postulate future research projects that stem from this disconnect between our theories, and studying the *CFMN* as a Chicana organization and an instantiation of Chicana subjectivity.

Implications

Stasis Theory

When I first started writing this dissertation, I tried to employ terminology we invoke in our field to study rhetoric, and particularly, rhetorics that constitute organizations working toward change, to understand the *CFMN*'s practices. What I found was that many of our commonplaces did not hold up when studying the rhetoric employed by the *CFMN*. One such commonplace is stasis as a realizable and desirable result of public engagement. Stasis is described as "the basic issues in dispute resulting from the positions taken by adversaries in a debate" (Conley 1994). Stasis then is an invention strategy with an expectation that consensus can be reached about the definition of the issue at hand. However, as theories of invention often go, stasis theory is often not grounded in a material reality. In other words, there are material and historical conditions that impact the ability to come to an understanding of the actual problem at hand.

For example, as I detailed in Chapter 2, Chicanas conceived of an absence of Chicanas in the Anglo dominated feminist movement differently than the way that the National Organization for Women (N.O.W.) identified and located "the problem." The disjuncture in their definition of the problem at hand stemmed from the differently held constructions of Latina women, with N.O.W. describing Latina women as in need of

assistance of the N.O.W. organization, and as decidedly in-active rather than conceiving of the feminist movement itself as accessible to Latina women. In Chapter 4, we saw an inability to arrive at the actual terms of the debate surrounding the *CFMN*'s attempt to secure funding for their employment training services. To the members of the Manpower Planning Council, the issue was defined by their seemingly objective funding guidelines that compelled them to deny the *CFMN* funding because they identified as a cultural group and thusly provided services that were being defined as discriminatory. The Manpower Area Planning Council articulated the issue at hand as a violation of funding guidelines due to discriminatory practices resultant from the use of Chicana to identify their organization. The *CFMN* though understood that engaging with the Council to come to a consensus about the meaning of Chicana would not achieve the result they needed and thusly took a different approach that led to an eventual undoing of the points of contention.

By examining the practices of the *CFMN* as a Chicana organization as they addressed historical absences and redressed debilitating articulations of Latina/Mexicana subjectivity, we see that unlike the way Rhetoric and Composition theory might conceive of stasis as a problem of invention, or how to respond to the problem at hand, that for some, perhaps coming to a consensus is not only not desirable but is not possible because of our histories and experiences that create conditions that make stasis an unrealizable goal. What the *CFMN* does demonstrate is an ability to use this disjuncture productively to make an identity, an organization and practices. While consensus may not be desirable or achievable, this does not mean that it is not productive. In fact, it is this disjuncture from which Chicana identity is said to emerge: to put it plainly, it is useful. Perhaps then

what we need are different vocabulary for imagining the rhetoric of groups that does not rely on the assumptions that public rhetorics are grounded in; namely consensus building and access to the processes for doing so. In this way then, we could alter our association of the rhetoric of groups as necessarily grounded in public rhetorics or Community Literacy studies.

Heuristics for History and Change

As a result of this dissertation being written as primarily a historiography, much of what I learned has been about history and history making. Arguably, change is enacted in the way that history is made, or at least produced by Chicanas. Chicana historiographers have made tremendous accomplishments in changing history as a discipline and its reliance on official documents and constructed accounts that make invisible the acts of particular interpellated subjects (see Emma Pérez 1999). Historiographers like Pérez redirect our attention to examine the interstices in history in order to make history about subjectivities either not included or are made silent in traditional historiography. As I demonstrated in Chapter 3, much of what the *CFMN* accomplished was making histories, or memories of the conditions from which Chicana identity and their organization emerged. The *CFMN* also productively instantiated Chicanas into history to enable an organizing subjectivity. This attention to and use of history as vital to Chicana rhetoric behooves us to consider history (and memory) as both a method and purpose of affiliation.

In addition, I have implicitly argued in this dissertation, that one of the subjectivities that are frequently not included in history—at least in Rhetoric and

Composition—are groups[81]. There persists in the methods for historical research and the way that we do rhetoric history (or at least, how it is chronicled) that compels us researchers to historicize in a way that we trace rhetoric through the actions of a particular person.

When researching the *CFMN,* I could not overlook the way that the emergence of and survival of this organization depended on the determination, savvy, public presence, and will of certain individuals in their leadership[82]. For that matter, I do not think anyone who has ever been a part of a community organization can deny the role of personality, and at times celebrity, of certain individuals in impacting the effectiveness of an organization. And, of course, several of the *CFMN* leaders were (and are) well known as activists, academics and public officials. These individuals assumedly had great influence over the organization and its direction. This is evidenced in the fact that the names of some of the members were frequently referenced in documents that historicized the *CFMN.* Many of the documents that the *CFMN* ended up including in the archival collection were written by or about this group of women that played a pivotal role in the organization. This explains why a lot of the documents I cite seem to be written by some of the same Chicanas. This also explains why the documents written by these well known rhetors are the ones that are historicized. The recurrent presence of the names of certain of the *CFMN* leaders in the archival collection stemmed from a combination of their

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81 I want to also touch upon the attention to the mundane as evidenced in marginalia and "small" acts of rhetoric, like stapling together documents that appear unrelated, as also infrequently attended to in history making in Rhetoric. My reliance on studying marginalia has made me wonder about digital archival research, and where we notice this type of work when the affordances of material texts are not available.
82 I should add to this list the visual signification of *CFMN* members. As Yolanda Nava recounted, she was often asked to attend certain meetings or to serve as a representative of the *CFMN* and CSAC because she did not look radical. On the flip side, some members who more "looked the part" (as Nava put it) would serve as the representative for other functions (VOAHA).

leadership personality (both negatively and positively), if they were involved during a volatile or particularly effectual moment in the *CFMN*'s history or history of the Chicana movement broadly, or their notoriety as Chicana leaders associated with or apart from the *CFMN* as an organization [83].

Following one of these prolific and accomplished writers and orators and performing a rhetorical analysis of the textual stream left in their activist and political wakes would have been an appropriate and interesting research endeavor, and one that I could imagine myself also doing. Such a research project would have coalesced with a tradition of Rhetoric to historicize around individual people as the progenitor of rhetorical thought and action. Such a dissertation would also make visible writing by Chicanas that are in general lesser studied in a field in which scholarship on (and by) Chicanas is statistically few and far between. However, as I have alluded to throughout this dissertation, it is important to study groups and collectives in Rhetoric studies to understand how change happens, and to redirect our attention from a conceptualization of the rhetor as a disconnected individual. The latter would bring a type of groundedness back to rhetorical theory when we remember the exigencies for the development and deployment of rhetoric.

For Chicanas, studying groups also allows us to see the creation of a Chicana subjectivity in the collective, and through the articulation of it in practice. We can add to our understanding of the development of a critical consciousness that we normally see articulated by the individual and through poetic writing, through descriptive accounts of

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83 For example, many of the founding leaders, like Yolanda Nava and Francisca Flores, figure prominently in the collection. This is also because they appear as some of the early producers and contributors to the Chicana movement broadly. Other members like Gloria Moreno-Wycoff and Gloria Molina both became well known as public officials.

Chicana subjectivity as it is enacted and modeled in collectives. In this instance, I chose to focus on the making of an organization as an important memory to maintain for understanding Chicana rhetoric, and more specifically, an important memory to learn from about how to make change in and through collectives.

Wanting to continue to pay attention to collectives has left me with an interesting methodological conundrum as I plan my next stages to continue this dissertation research. A suggestion I have received by audience members when I have shared versions of this research is to collect oral histories of some of the *CFMN* members. This makes sense as I draw upon experiential stories to build a conceptualization of Chicana rhetoric. It also makes sense given that the *CFMN* is a relatively recent organization that is still in existence. There are many questions to ask about the connections that the members saw between Chicana identity as an epistemic for making the organization and determining the way it would operate. More importantly, oral history as a methodology has been discussed as vital as an act of memory making for communities, particularly in response to traditional academic, disciplinary research methodologies that marginalize story telling and everyday ways of knowing and acting (see Cruikshank 2002). Oral history methodology though is not frequently employed by feminist scholars, particularly in rhetoric studies, which may "stem from implicit assumptions that history lives in the past, in archival documents, and not in memories and communities" (Monberg 90).

While I intend to follow up with my archival research with oral histories for these reasons, this leads me to a question about the "unit of analysis" for this methodology. As there are recorded oral histories of some of the leaders in the *CFMN*, these oral histories focus on their coming to a critical consciousness and to a lesser extent with a

reflection on their personal involvement with the *CFMN*. The oral histories follow a trajectory of a life history, where the *CFMN* is one step in that history. However, I think these histories are valuable to hear. Oral histories tell us stories about experience that are "embedded in social life" and also "provid[e] guidelines for understanding" and enacting change (Cruikshank 13). According to Terese Monberg, "Oral histories also give us a view into the arena of lived experiences where subjects actively make rhetorical choices, where categories are created, refused, and negotiated—if we are willing to really listen" (90). Similar, then, to the way the *CFMN* archival collection functions as a story to turn to in order to understand the exigency for Chicana subjectivity and methods for associative action, oral histories are reflective of shared experiences and they are at the same time collectively epistemic.

One way to maintain the emphasis on the collective is in the writing and framing of such narratives. One scholar I plan to turn to in this additional phase of my research as a model for how to do oral history of a group is Terese Monberg. In her essay "Listening for Legacies," Monberg examines the rhetoric of Filipina American Dorothy Cordova, more specifically her of times behind the scenes work with the Filipino American National Historical Society (FAHNS). More broadly, Monberg's research challenges the methods for recuperating and revisionist work done of feminist historiographers in Rhetoric and Composition, methods that according to Monberg employ paradigms that make invisible Asian Pacific women in their accounts (85).

Toward this end, Monberg argues "that while most feminist historiographers in rhetoric use the term *listening*, most forms of listening have largely rested in seeing—seeing women at the podium, seeing women's texts, seeing women's words in print

before they can be heard. But seeing is only one part of the dynamic equation when listening for/to women's voices that have been institutionally marginalized in multiple, intersecting ways" (87). Monberg asserts that our privileging of "sight" leads us to also privilege "historically significant documents" which renders invisible other activities—or people for that matter—that perhaps might not be included in archival collections (87). As a response then, Monberg turns to oral history as methodology that enables one to make sense of "social memory" and to actively negotiate one's location within and understanding of histories. While Monberg focuses on Dorothy Cordova though, her intent is to demonstrate is to demonstrate the way that methodologies enable—or disable—" an entire legacy of Asian American women rhetoricians from being heard" (85).

Building on Monberg's study and its implications for oral history as a methodology for doing research on the rhetoric of groups, in another phase of this study I intend to do an oral history project of the *CFMN.* The purpose of this oral history project will be to hear stories of experience, with an attention to the experience of making an organization in tandem with the making of an identity. It would also be interesting to hear stories of the organization as an entity. While I will begin talking with the perhaps more well known former members, I am especially interested in hearing stories from people who were not the prolific writers and documenters of the organization. As Monberg discusses in her oral history project, my interpretation and framing of the histories would similarly be written so the focus is not on the individual person per se but read within the systems of belief that constitute Chicana consciousness coupled with beliefs about organizations. Although this would be a project of history, I understand this project to

also be about organization building with implications for the way we study these in our field.

Research on Organizations and Cultural Identity

At the beginning of this research project, I had not anticipated aligning my work or its implications with professional writing, or with studies of community organizations. I saw my work as residing within cultural rhetorics and historiography. Yet, as I progressed farther along with the data collection and interpretation, it became apparent that the primary focus of this dissertation was on writing that perhaps we would not normally associate with cultural rhetoric and identity—organizational writing. What I find useful in regards to professional writing scholarship is the attention to programmatic writing, and writing that otherwise be considered "boring" by rhetoric scholars broadly. Further, professional writing scholars are also obviously studying the rhetoric of groups and organizations. For these reasons, I have become increasingly interested in further exploring the implications for this research for professional writing theory in Rhetoric and Composition.

A trajectory for other iterations of this project is to explore the possible intersections between studying organizations like the *CFMN* as part of professional writing. To study the emergence of organizations often requires that we pay attention to mundane, programmatic writing. For example, in a note to Francisca Flores, Yolanda Nava of the *CFMN*/CSAC wrote:

> I think we should pass on this information in the CSAC newsletter. Somehow we will have to set the men straight on the structure of CFM* (i.e. your intro yesterday by Frank). No wonder we get into 'trouble' when we speak as

individuals! Thought Saturdays meeting went well and your points about structure will do alot [sic] to make the by-laws more useful and clear.

In this brief message to Flores, Nava relayed both the tension between acting as a Chicana (singular) and speaking as an organization, as well as the attention to structures and other organizational writing as part of the process of becoming as an organization.

While this process can be investigated in organizations broadly, I am interested in understanding the way that Chicana—as it was expressed, constructed, and signified—plays a part in this process. For example, in Nava's remarks about getting into "trouble for speaking as an individual," in what ways does this have to do with the use of collective experience and politic to make their organization? Therefore, a question I have held and will continue to explore is whether we can trace that being a Chicana shaped their organizational practices; and simultaneously, the way that being an organization shaped their Chicana practices and performances. This is a question that can be adapted to studying any organization that is built upon what could be considered a strategic essentialism (Pérez 1998), or a tactical and epistemic use of identity to make that organization. Looking to professional writing theory though, little discussion (if at all) examines cultural identity as produced through, and producing, organizational writing.

In other words, when identity is discussed in professional writing, it is normally made manifest in the "worker" or the community member. This focus then is on the individual as part of a system learning to become as it relates to one's professional identity, with frequently a linear trajectory of development (see for example, Schryer et al 2003 and Spoel 2008). Or when cultural identity is discussed, it focuses on intercultural communication on a global scale (for example, Hunsinger 2006). With this framing, these

studies place the individual along a projected path of development and assimilation that often disregards an active production of identity in relation to organizational making. Frequently, the organization is constructed as predetermining the identity that one fits into. Culture becomes broadly defined as something to consider when writing for audiences or when working in and with communities—it is not something we produce from. On the flip side though, when we talk about cultural identity and tracing its emergence in writing, we focus on the production of individuals or on the poetic. So, what I am calling for then is attention to the way cultural identity—or organizations—reciprocally shape each other. With this mind, I am also interested in studying organizations that center on identity as their epistemic with a particular attention to effectiveness and ineffectiveness.

To do this, I want to return to the use of oral history as a possible methodology for doing such a study, coupled with archival research, for studying professional "writing," or rhetoric. Coupling to these approaches I believe could tell complex stories about being in and becoming through an organization, as well as creating narratives about change and adaptation—and the reasons for this—in strategizing as an organization grounded in cultural identity as an epistemic for their practices. Both oral history and studying the programmatic writing would also relay different tensions inherent in building an organization around identity, in particular an identity that historically has been realized through poetics and the coming to critical consciousness as a Chicana[84].

Pedagogy

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84 In this study, I would also like to trace shifts in organizational practice and structure in relation to the changing beliefs about the usefulness (or not) for identity as an epistemic for an organization.

When I first imagined my chapter outlines, I did not anticipate including a discussion of pedagogical implications. As you may have noticed by now, I don't talk about teaching anywhere else in this dissertation. But, I want to talk about pedagogy because I realized, after sharing this project in different moments, that what I learned from researching this organization not only changes the way I do research, but my teaching as well. Now, it would probably be expected for me here to talk about the way I would design a course in terms of content, namely, a course on Chicana rhetoric and writing. Thinking about the implications for this research in terms of content only though would belie the very point I hope I have made in this dissertation.

Instead, I want to talk about the impact on this course in terms of the way it changed my theory of a course I have always imagined I would teach, and also in terms of a learning objective for any courses focused on rhetoric, or organizations.
Before writing this dissertation, I knew I would someday teach a course on Community Literacy. It was part of my concentration, and in many ways, this dissertation ended up arguably feeling like it fit squarely in Community Literacy as a sub discipline. After all, I am looking at the writing of a community-based organization.

However, literacy does not encapsulate the many reasons and ways that people (and things) affiliate. As I discussed in Chapter 1, and made visible in Chapters 2-4, that Chicanas of the *CFMN* affiliated through writing, such as the writing of resolutions, newsletter writing, and meeting minutes. But they also affiliated through a shared lived experiences, a similar consciousness about these experiences, and an understanding about what it means (or at least should mean) to act as Chicana. The affiliation then also includes memory of experience. This memory, as I have demonstrated in this dissertation,

is a memory that is in part recorded through written texts, both poetic and programmatic, and assembled in archival collections. This memory, though, is also felt and embodied. As Moraga explains this material connection as it is evidenced in the writing of the women who contribute to *This Bridge Called my Back*: "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 longed to be touched" ("I Have Dreamed of a Bridge, xviii). It is through this shared memory, a feeling that extends beyond literacy, through which Chicanas affiliate and act.

My original solution to get outside of the bounds of literacy then was to call such a course and type of research as community rhetoric. Community rhetoric was a discursive way to account for the felt, embodied, or actions. Community rhetoric though still does not encapsulate the type of rhetoric I described in this dissertation. I see two limitations with the term "community." First, when the label community is applied it is usually used to describe an activity, person or space that is decidedly disconnected from institutions (see Cushman 1998; Grabill 2001 for criticism on this binary). Yet, as we saw in Chapter 4, Chicana rhetoric operated not through particular spatial boundaries but instead with movement that intersected and connected these spaces. This movement was necessary to alter the conditions, oftentimes created by institutional policies that resulted in the shared lived experiences. Further, community also presumes disconnect from others who perhaps do not share the similar lived experiences. While there were boundaries that demarcate who can identify as Chicana, the articulation of this identity as

an epistemic of responsive to lived conditions and a subjectivity of acting, enabled connections with other people.

It is for the above reasons that I want to build a course on coalition rhetorics. Coalition rhetorics I believe would open up discussion and learning to examine internal strategic use of identity, and at the same time, identity as a way to connect and act with difference. There are several scholars who have theorized coalition building whose writings would be useful to begin such a course (i.e. Sandoval, Pérez, Alcoff, Lugones). Coalition building as a way to make change is necessary as Moraga cites Goldman at the beginning of her essay "La Güera": "It requires more than personal experience to gain a philosophy or point of view from any specific event. It is the quality of our response to the event and our capacity to enter into the lives of others that help us to make their lives and experiences our own" (27). Coalition building then would be treated in this class as rhetoric[85].

What I am interested, then, is helping students to read and build studies in which we pay attention to the intersections between these movements in their emergences and development of organizational practices, and traces these practices over space and time in order to demonstrate that our issues continue as do the communities involved—a living movement. Likewise, asking students to work to develop frameworks for studying the in between or the work that happens both internally within the organization and then the work that builds relationships between organizations and communities—in other words, how, in tangible and ephemeral ways, are coalitions built between organizations grounded in a strategic use of cultural identity? So, looking to affinity and coalition

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85 Jolivette Mecenas is one scholar who has argued for such an approach to studying global movements and change in our field (2008).

building is both a debilitation and a transformative potential of a type of rhetorical essentialism[86]. Students could examine case studies of coalition rhetorics as well as partake in their own investigations into the ways that people work across and with difference. These case studies could include examining similar exigencies from which identities, organizations and movements are formed.

Let me give you a tangible example. One of the pressing issues that the *CFMN* built its trajectory around was the routine sterilization performed on Mexican and Mexican American women in Los Angeles county hospitals. These women would for example, go to the hospital to deliver a baby and then would be sterilized then without consent. If consent was given, it may have been in English, obviously an issue for monolingual Spanish speaking women. Or perhaps more deceptively and, well just plain evil, doctors would tell the women that it was reversible, that they were doing a different type of surgery, or that their husbands had told them to do it. This was a practice of eugenics, of systematically killing a culture, a people. So, to point out the obvious, there was a need then for activists to stop this abuse. Out of necessity, this material need became then one focus of the *CFMN*. As Jessica Enoch has written about, the *CFMN*'s participation culminated as co-plaintiffs in a well-known lawsuit in 1978 against a Los Angeles County hospital[87].

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86 I recognize that identity is just one epistemic that has been used for coalition building and thusly other epistemics like land and space would also be useful to explore.
87 See Enoch's "Survival Stories: Feminist Historiographic Approaches to Chicana Rhetorics of Sterilization Abuse."

I quote at length from the statement of interest section of the amicus curiae of the *CFMN* and of The Women for Equal Health Care, written in support of plaintiffs-appellants in the sterilization abuse case #78-3187:

> The Comisión Femenil Mexicana (Comisión) is a non-profit association duly incorporated under and existing by virtue of the laws of California with offices located in a number of cities throughout California. Its membership is comprised primarily of Spanish Speaking Chicanas. A major goal of the organization has been to focus on issues of important to Mexican American women. Thus the Comisión, whose purposes include protecting the right of its members to quality health care, is especially concerned about the problem of sterilization abuse. One of the most significant problems faced by Mexican American and *other minority women* is that of sterilization abuse. As part of the Coalition for the Medical Rights of Women, the participated in the drafting, issuance and implementation of the informed consent regulations governing sterilization in California. The Comisión was a successful intervener in California Medical Association v. Lackner, wherein CMA sought to enjoin the state informed consent regulations regarding sterilization. The Comisión also as a named plaintiff in the case at bar until the district court failed to certify the class, at which point Comisión withdrew. The instant case raises the issue of whether the plaintiff-appellant Chicanas, surgically sterilized at the USC-Los Angeles Medical Center, were sterilized in a manner which contravened their rights secured by the United States Constitution and applicable federal statutes and regulations. The resolution of this

important issue will have significant impact on the issue of informed consent and sterilization of *minority women*. (1, italics added)

Their participation in this cause and legal battle created notoriety for their organization and in part built a strong foundation for their organization. This was a tangible and pressing issue around which people could become involved and incited activity. What I want to draw your attention to are the two parts that I italicized in the above statement. While this particular case was about the sterilization of specifically Mexican women in Los Angeles County, there is a subtle allusion and connection to other minority women who were also being sterilized.

What is interesting to note, then, is that similar groups were also forming around the same time that had similar exigencies. For example, in the mid 1970's, the Women of All Red Nations (WARN) group was formed. Many of the women involved were part of the American Indian movement. While *CFMN* was formed more as a direct response to not being constructed or treated as leaders in the Chicano or Anglo women's movements, WARN was also formed to allow Native women to take on leadership roles, as well as a result of a strategic understanding of what they could accomplish perhaps less conspicuously as women in a movement (Wittstock and Salinas)[88]. Similar to the *CFMN*, one of the stated strategies of their Women of All Red Nations was to make relationships with other women's organizations, and to also connect with indigenous women in other countries. Finally, like the *CFMN*, one of the pressing issues they were facing was sterilization abuse.

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88 Their mission statement also reads similarly to the *CFMN*'s as they stated their purpose was to address issues relevant to Native women and their families.

There is arguably a rhetorical moment[89] of sterilization abuse against minority and indigenous women—and rhetorical in the sense that is it both ideological and material. As WARN and their supporters recognized rampant sterilization abuse of native women in tribal and public hospitals. For example, one story that was told is young native girls would go to the tribal hospitals and were told that they were having their tonsils removed, but they were in reality being sterilized without their consent (LibertadLatina). It has been estimated that "of the Native population of 800,000 (in the US), as many as 42% of the women of childbearing age and 10% of the men...have been sterilized... The first official inquiry into the sterilization of Native women...by Dr. Connie Uri...reported that 25,000 Indian women had been permanently sterilized within Indian Health Services facilities alone through 1975... "(LibertadLatina).

What I am interested in is that that these two organizations—WARN and *CFMN*—are formed roughly around the same time and around cultural identity—and the strategic use of this to organize. They are also in part formed through a shared experience—the pressing and real need to address sterilization abuse. Both organizations also indicated that one of their strategies and purposes was to connect with other similar organizations[90]. Given these similarities, in a class in coalition rhetorics, I would ask students the following: can we see these connections (between organizations), either through shared practices, beliefs, or actual tangible connections made? And in what ways

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89 I intentionally call this a rhetorical moment to make apparent the expansiveness of sterilization as a colonial method of eugenics that spans space, times and cultures. For example, indigenous women in other countries are still routinely sterilized against their will and/or consent. Also, while some of these lawsuits filed about this abuse in the 1970's may have been effective and "successful," the conditions that made sterilization abuse possible remain.

90 I want to also note that the Combahee River Collective, a Black feminist lesbian organization, which began in 1974, also had similarities with the WARN and CFMN, in regards to their stated objectives of working with other groups and addressing sterilization of black women. One of their collective writings, the "A Black Feminist Statement," is included in *This Bridge Called my Back.*

can these similarities or connections be used to teach us more about the way rhetoric and change happens and is experienced? Such a course could also open up discussions about coalition building between sub disciplines or ways of doing rhetoric research.

In general though, this dissertation has challenged the way that I talk about organizational rhetorics and change. I feel compelled now to talk with my students about the work of making change that perhaps might be less exciting, or less documented, or documentable. In my experience, it is often the ability to maintain and teach the smaller acts of making an organization that lead to sustainability. When we see the more public acts, comes the expectation that activism happens only in these moments[91]. As a teacher, I would focus less on asking my students to rhetorically analyze these public acts. Instead, I would ask what leads to these moments, to these group formations—what are the exigencies and what were the strategies employed to make such moments possible? Moreover, what is "change"? How would one determine the "effectiveness" of an organization like the *CFMN*? In what ways does experiential knowledge serve as the invention material and outcome of movements?

Using Experience in Research

The thread that binds each of the implications I have described in this chapter is the relevance of studying experience. In doing so, it disrupts the heuristics we use when we study and theorize rhetoric, history, professional writing, and the perhaps narrowly perceived usefulness of theory in the flesh as a heuristic for production. As I stated in my introduction, experience matters. It matters not just to tell descriptive stories of what it

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91 I am thinking of scholarship like Kevin DeLuca's work on the bodily rhetorics of Earth First and other organizations that rhetorically employ their bodies in public argument. I find this work to be extremely valuable and intriguing, but as a scholar I would be more drawn to studying the internal strategizing than these public arguments.

feels like to be and act in a world in which we are constructed as perhaps arhetorical. The problem, then, resides when our theories of rhetoric that come from situated experience are treated as applicable to the many when in reality our theories do not presume our lived conditions that may mitigate our abilities to access that which our field is built upon. A primary purpose of this then dissertation has been to argue that experience matters for telling stories that while are subjective, are nonetheless real, defensible and therefore rhetorics that are clearly identified as situated should not be treated as auxiliary to our field.

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. As I have demonstrated, Chicana rhetoric emerged as a set of situated practices that developed as a productive use of the articulation of Latinas, Mexicanas, or other similarly constructed peoples as not visible. Chicana identity is an embodiment of a rhetoric of action and effectiveness and at the same time it has served as a mediating topoi from which those who affiliate as such draw upon when negotiating their place in the world and how to act given these conditions. In other words, it is rhetorically effectual. The result of its effectiveness has been that lived conditions have changed—perhaps not to the extent that we would hope, but to the extent that being a Chicana means, by definition and construction, being

rhetorical[92]. Reflecting on the epigraph that I opened this chapter with, in this passage Moraga compels us to not only be rhetorical through our identifications, and to also consider what we then do with our identities, with our consciousness, and with our politic as we strategize connectedly and connectively.

Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, and consequently, this dissertation, I want to reflect again on the case study that I used to open the chapter. I see this scholar's questioning as representative of a field that treats the rhetoric of some groups as necessarily distinct, unique and thereby only relevant to the few of us who study those particular groups. Were I to respond to her line of inquiry now, I would have to say, as I have previously contended, that the answer is both yes and no. Chicana rhetoric is distinct and yet relational, unique in the cultural *topoi* employed, but connected by lived conditions that we *all* share. I think that we should care about and strive for is not uniqueness and distinctions—which I think leads to reductive thinking—but building a more complex and relational understanding of rhetoric.

Toward this end, some scholars may not read this dissertation as being grounded in Rhetoric and Composition, especially as you may have noted, throughout my

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92 My thinking here is that perhaps the epistemic of Chicana has altered, or its associative practices. Perhaps the usefulness of building action centered purely on identity is not as effective for coalition building as issue based movements that seem relevant and necessarily to Chicanas, and are built again on lived conditions. In an organizational assessment of the *CFMN*, Steven J. Crosby indicated that the organization while worked on issues, needed to have a clearer, "project" based focus in order to get funding from corporations or other entities who might be scared off from a "position" based organization (Memo, "re: Organizational Structure"). It is also worth noting that Crosby indicates that he switches between Chicana and Latina in his report as the most appropriate term to use is debated within the organization. As I have mentioned, the *CFMN* does still operate as an organization, but in a different, perhaps more philanthropic manner. I am speculating about the relationship between identity as an epistemic built from experience and issues that are raised that perhaps more clearly relate to lived experience, and the sustainability of an organization. For pragmatic reasons, I know that funding is often earmarked for "new projects" which result in organizations altering their focus to access funds. For philosophical and rhetorical reasons, I wonder if identified issues enable coalition building.

dissertation I rely less on Rhetoric and Composition theory to form the basis of my methodology. Sometimes though I think it requires that we put one foot outside of disciplinary boundaries to see what we might be missing. This is why I have maintained as a question throughout this dissertation: what am I not hearing in the story that this archival collection is telling me? Asking this question allowed me to see Chicana rhetoric as it is expansively realized in action. Not only an identity that operates as rhetoric to others in its signification, but also as an identity that is a rhetoric in that it is born from experience, theorizes our lived realities, and compels action in the world.

In this way, I want to return to the epigraph that I used to begin this dissertation and Chapter 1. To remind you, in the epigraph Paula Moya challenges scholars to articulate their conception of their "object of study," or how we define Chicana when we say we are studying Chicanas. While I have attempted to locate Chicana from the ground up by beginning with people who identify as Chicana and following what that means as an epistemic, what resulted was a redefining of the way that I conceived of rhetoric as grounded and the same time conditional. From studying this organization and the rhetoric of Chicanas, I have learned to make use of disjuncture, and to make productive associations between that which has been treated as normally disconnected.

As rhetoric and writing scholars and teachers, we can learn a great deal from this "small" glimpse into the expansiveness of the *CFMN*'s work as an activist organization. This glimpse alters the way we understand and look for rhetorical activity, or locate the progenitors of rhetorical action. Tangential to the way that Angie Chabram Dernersesian demonstrates the visibility of the emergence of a critical, resistant Chicana subjectivity the content and form of Chicana poetry, we likewise see the ways that identity operates in

the collective of the *CFMN* as a physical instantiation of the emergent Chicana subjectivity in an organization, and its beliefs and practices as they are articulated in relation to being and acting as a Chicana.

APPENDIX A
Interview Questions with Chicana Scholars

1. What does "Chicana" mean to you?

2. In what ways does Chicana theory inform your work?

3. In what ways does Chicana identity inform your work?

4. What are the purposes or goals of your work?

5. What do you think your writing, or Chicana scholarship in general, does in the world?

6. What kind of cultural symbols do you rely on or figure into your work? Into your identity?

7. What kind of histories, or historical symbols, do you rely on or figure into your work? Into your identity?

8. One idea I am working with is the idea of grounded theory built from experience, akin to the Anzaldúa and Moraga's "theory in the flesh': "A theory in the flesh means one where the physical realities of our lives . . . all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity" (22). If you can, talk with me about how your experience and the realities of your life impacts your politics and scholarship.

9. Given my research topic and purpose, who would you recommend that I read? (texts or authors)

10. Given my research topic and purpose, who else would you recommend interview?

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