MAKING CHICANX FOODWAYS:
RHETORIC, MEXICAN COOKING, AND CULTURAL CONTINUATION

By

Santos Felipe Ramos

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Rhetoric and Writing—Doctor of Philosophy

2018

ABSTRACT

MAKING CHICANX FOODWAYS:
RHETORIC, MEXICAN COOKING, AND CULTURAL CONTINUATION

By

Santos Felipe Ramos

Making Chicanx Foodways: Rhetoric, Mexican Cooking & Cultural Continuation is an oral history-based research project that engages with Chicanx rhetorics by examining the foodways of Mexican communities in Michigan. Central to this project is its development of *community-making* as a methodology for how cooking practices in particular are used to perform cultural continuation. Through a series of cooking and discussion sessions with community members, the study delineates how food is used to sustain connections between Chicanxs and their home communities, as well as to create new cultural networks amidst the experiences Chicanxs have with migration. By drawing from traditional and contemporary approaches to Mexican cooking, this research also uses *community-making* to reframe scholarly conversations about pedagogy, technology, and community-based research in Writing & Rhetoric around the practice of relationality, a way of viewing oneself in relationship with the world.

Copyright by
SANTOS FELIPE RAMOS
2018

This dissertation is dedicated to Maximillian Monroy-Miller.
Returning forward like you showed us how, homie. Rest in power.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Miigwetch to the People of the Three Fires—the Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and the Odawa—whose land I have lived on while carrying out this research. Mil gracias to Connie Rojas, Elba Mandujano, and Everardo Junior Cuevas for sharing and creating so many stories with me. We were always gente, but MICCA made us homies. Thank you to all those who helped build and sustain MICCA: Nerli Paredes Ruvalcaba, Erin Alvarez, Bernadette Castillo, Victor Del Hierro, Angélica De Jesús, Tomás Díaz, Osvaldo Sandoval-Léon, José Badillo Carlos, Patrick Dunne, Christian Ramirez, Maximillian Monroy-Miller, Eddie Bonilla, Les Hutchinson, & José Guadalupe Villagrán.

To Dr. Malea Powell, thank you for paving the way for me and so many others to do this work in academia. I would not be where I am today without all of your help, guidance, and *making*.

To Dr. Estrella Torrez, thank you for surrounding me with famila from the second I stepped foot on campus, and for showing me the importance of sustaining communities in academia.

To Dr. Dylan A.T. Miner, thank you for reminding me how to be human amidst all of the chaos of coloniality—that our humor and creativity are also tools we can use.

To Dr. Jeff Grabill, thank you for being one of the first voices that helped me to navigate life as an academic. I still carry with me so much of the advice you gave me early on.

To my family, everything I do is for you. I hope I can make you proud.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1: CHICANX FOOD RHETORIC

FOODWAYS & MIGRATION STORIES

Foodways are often a pivotal element of migration stories. This is because food practices reflect a relationship to place and can help to sustain a sense of cultural belonging amidst the many geographical, economic, and social changes that people experience when they migrate. In these ways, food holds importance far beyond nutritional value alone. Food is also a pathway toward a better understanding of environment, history, and of the rhetorical formation of community. In considering food and migration together, it is further highlighted how foodways are shaped through the sense of place that people feel in the world.

This dissertation project has largely taken place within Three Fires territory in Nkwejong,[1] an area that has been a crucial place for Indigenous people in terms of working, hunting, traveling, and gathering (Haviland, 2014). Anishinaabe migration stories explain that Anishinaabe people moved westward into the Great Lakes Region long before the arrival of Europeans to Turtle Island, seeking "a place where food grows on water" (Keenan, 2007, p. 354). This food was wild rice—*manoomin* in Ansihinaabemowin—and is still harvested by Indigenous people in the region today. More than just a food staple, *manoomin* is used in a variety of cultural practices and for many is tied directly to their identities as Anishinaabe and Indigenous people. *Manoomin* is one example, then, of how foodways reflect the relationships between people and land, and how cultural identities are grown out of an understanding of place. As a researcher living and working in this area, it is also a reminder that I am in relationship with

[1]This is the term I use throughout the dissertation to refer to the areas of Lansing and East Lansing. In Anishinaabemowin, it means "where the rivers meet," in reference to the convergence of the Grand River and the Red Cedar River.

this place as well. This dissertation is an attempt at articulating an understanding of how Chicanx communities in particular relate to this place.

It might go without saying that foodways are significant in the migration stories of Michicanxs[2] as well. Throughout the 20th century, there was a great influx of Mexican people into the Great Lakes Region due to do companies in want of seasonal farmworkers. Facing violence and poverty at home, many Mexicans joined the stream of workers from Texas to Michigan—my family among them. While many came to the area to work on the railroads and in stockyards, automobile plants, and steel factories, the sugar beet industry alone hired more people of Mexican and Puerto Rican birth and descent than any other employer in the region (Valdés, 1991, p. vii). As catalysts for these waves of migration, agricultural companies have enacted an industrialized system of land management that relies upon the exploitation of migrant labor in order to yield profits within several different food industries. Not coincidentally, many of these migratory people have also joined the migrant stream as a result of being displaced by companies in Mexico that have worked tirelessly to privatize the land and natural resources in a similiar manner. While these colonial-capitalist relations do not define Mexican foodways, they have had a dramatic impact upon them, and they are a significant part of the exigence for Chicanx migration into the Great Lakes Region.

This study, however, is not focused on the history of Michicanx migration itself. Rather, it is focused on how contemporary Michicanx communities use food to create cultural spaces of belonging, to maintain cultural knowledge, and to continue relationships with the people and places from which they have become separated. While all of the Chicanxs who participated in

[2] I use the term "Michicanxs" throughout this dissertation to refer to Chicanx people in Michigan, or Chicanxs who maintain some sort of affiliation with Michigan. To my knowledge, Dennis Chapa Valdés (1991) was the first to develop the term "Michicano."

this dissertation project come from migrant farmworking families, their migration into the region is different in the sense that most came to Michigan in order to pursue graduate education. For my three primary collaborators— Connie Rojas, Elba Mandujano, and Everardo Junior Cuevas—foodways play a large role in tying together their relationships with communities in Mexico, California, and Michigan.

Connie's work with food is often driven by her desire and sense of responsibility to continue the recipes of her family and her Oaxacan pueblo of Rojas de Cuauhtémoc. Moving to Los Angeles at age 11, and then to the east coast shortly after high school, food has been a major way in which she has remained connected to her community in Oaxaca, a region that is renowned for its cuisine in general and its mole in particular. Connie's eagerness to share her family recipes with me—first as friends and later as collaborators on this project—has had a profound impact on the trajectory of my research.

Cooking as an act of making stories is central to the way in which Elba relates with her family in Los Angeles and in the pueblo of La Presa de Santa Ines in Guanajuato. The stories she told me as part of this project highlight the connection between food and community by focusing on how cultural memories are embodied through cooking processes. This has helped me to see recipes not only as a way of remembering, but also as a way of creating new stories as well.

The stories shared with me by Eve provide much insight into how food reflects varying perspectives on Chicanx identity from Los Angeles to Nkwejong, as well as the pedagogical aspects involved with cooking as a form of stewardship of cultural knowledge. Through his work with food, Eve has brought brings the attention of this project at many points to the relationship between our cultural selves and our professional selves as Chicanxs in academia.

For all three of these research participants, their foodways have been a way of both

remembering and creating. Foodties them to their sense of "home" while it has also become a central method of *community-making* in Michigan that they have enacted as members of a graduate student organization at Michigan State University—the Michigan Indígena/Chicanx Community Alliance (MICCA).

MICCA

MICCA is an organization that I co-founded with a number of other Chicanx and Latinx graduate students in the fall of 2015, including Connie, Elba, and Eve. It is important to take some space here to describe the organization and its formation because this is the community that created much of the context in which my research takes place. Andrea Riley-Mukavetz argues that "[t]o do cultural rhetorics work is to value the efforts and practices used to make and sustain something and use that understanding to build a theoretical and methodological framework that reflects the cultural community a researcher works with" (2014, p. 110). Throughout this dissertation, I want to value MICCA because of their efforts and practices in working to create community where it has been needed. It is from and through the work I describe in this section that *community-making* emerges as a methodology of building relationships and continuing cultural knowledge, a subject I address more explicitly in chapter 2.

Most MICCA members have moved to Michigan from places where Chicanxs/Latinxs are the majority population, especially California, Texas, and Mexico. For this reason, many experienced a culture shock coming to Michigan and to MSU, a predominantly white institution. There was a great need for a group like MICCA to be centered around creating opportunities for cultural events and the formation of social relationships. The group collaboratively maintains a

blog called *Dímelo!*[3], where Elba explains more about the group's creation:

> There is more to academic success than being able to read a long list of textbooks. For many of us, there is a need for community healing, a supportive network, cultural education, acknowledgement of our triggers, and a familía away from home. This is why MICCA was created. We gathered to build a much needed space with and for Xicanx/Latinx graduate students and community members. A comunidad that heals each other, that organizes, that cooks together, that creates spaces that uplift our spirit and cultura, that builds bridges with other oppressed communities; a FAMILIA.
>
> Our backs carry the weight of generations of our gente's untold stories and our education carries familias, communities, and cultura, but sometimes academia fails to recognize our narratives. So when the colorful fall leaves and the harsh winter kicks in, there is a tazíta de té and a loving familía reminding you that you are not alone y que SI SE PUEDE!"

While it was our intention to make something new with MICCA, we also saw ourselves in relation to groups like MEChA[4] who have a history of community organizing both nationally as well as locally on our campus. When we were choosing our name, we were cognizant that our acronym is similar to MEChA's but still different enough to be doing its own thing. This dynamic reflects pretty accurately how we saw ourselves as a group and how we wanted to relate to legacies of Chicanx activism.

We also liked "MICCA" as an acronym because we knew that one of our big tasks was going to be organizing every year around El Día de los Muertos. In Nahutal, *micca* is a word

[3] The blog can be found on the group's website at repMICCA.com.

[4] Movimiento Estudiantil Chicanx de Aztlán, or MEChA, is a student organization promoting political and cultural education. It emerged in the 1960s as an important part of the Chicano Movement and remains active today.

meaning “dead” or “death” and some use *miccahuitl* to refer to the holiday itself, a time of year centered around nourishing community between the living and the dead. Nerli Paredes Ruvalcaba, who served as a MICCA’s third President, wrote a reflection for *Dímelo!* leading up to one of the events for El Día de los Muertos that explains a bit more about why MICCA was working to create community in these ways:

> As we prepare for this event I reflect on the links between creating spaces to celebrate cultural traditions, building community, and self-knowledge. There is an immense amount of knowledge within us that has been passed down through generations, yet because of the constant pressure to assimilate we become unaware of our internal knowledge and power. Thankfully, there are bridges between and within generations that have served to pass down stories of survival, resilience, and success. I hope that through events like DDM we can uncover some of the knowledge and power within us and share them as we build stronger communities.

While it may seem easy to some to downplay the significance of the group’s focus on what are perceived to merely be “social” events, there is a deeper significance to these kinds of organizing efforts. There are important elements of spirituality and political education wrapped up in many of these kinds of events, for example, that make them more than spaces of relaxation or leisure (though these elements are also important in and of themselves). Furthermore, as Nerli highlights in her blog post, these events are about nourishing relationships that help to continue cultural knowledge that has been passed on for many generations.

This kind of *community-making* is not new, but very old. Early Spanish colonizers were befuddled by the seemingly endless “frivolity” of Natives, who were extremely poor yet would consistently use what little economic resources they had to organize festival after festival. What

it seems European settlers did not comprehend was that these festivals are a means of survival in which specific cultural knowledge is passed on. The *community-making* of MICCA's organizing is a continuation of these practices, couched in an understanding that the production of cultural knowledge is, at its core, a community-based process. MICCA's work is grounded in the creation of community. It is the goal of and method by which cultural spaces like Queerceañera[5] and Honoring Our Loved Ones[6] are made.

Food was a central element at virtually all of MICCA's events, whether a large public gathering or a small internal meeting.[7] While I could have chosen to focus on other aspects of the group's work, I have elected to focus on their foodways because they have played such a central role in helping the group to create a sense of identity and belonging. At the same time, MICCA itself is not the primary focus of my study. My focus is on several individuals who have been active members in the group and who helped to create it. I give the most attention to their experiences as migrant Chicanx peoples, and how they use food in particular to simultaneously maintain relationships with their communities in California and Mexico and to build community together in Michigan. I further contextualize their respective migration stories in the chapters that follow.

[5] Gender roles and socioeconomic status often keep Queer and Trans youth from being able to have a Quinecañera. Whereas MICCA's efforts have revolved around The Day of the Dead in the fall semester, the spring semester's major event has been Queerceañera, a celebration for local Queer and Trans youth and an opportunity for them to participate in a Quinceañera.

[6] This is often used as the name for our main event for Day of the Dead on November 2nd of every year.

[7] For example, food plays an important role in offerings made for the dead, as it is common to cook a deceased relative's favorite meal and place it on their altar/grave. This typically serves as an invitation for the dead to come back into the realm of the living, which requires a long journey. The food serves as an offering that you may give to any guest, dead or living, who has made a long journey to meet you.

Situating Chicanx Rhetoric

In this dissertation, I make Chicanx rhetorics a focal point of the construction of rhetoric. The foodways of the communities I work with reflect the continuation of practices and knowledges that have existed on this continent for thousands of years. Yet Chicanx rhetorics such as this, along with other ethnically "marginalized" rhetorics, are not typically viewed as central to the formation of Writing & Rhetoric as a disciplinary community. As Kendall Leon[8] has written, "in most scholarship on Chicana rhetoric in Rhetoric and Composition, 'Chicana' works to specify the actors performing the otherwise stabilized 'rhetoric'" (2010, p. 2). The most common telling of the disciplinary history of Rhetoric and Composition, the "stabilized rhetoric" that Leon references, draws predominantly from Western cultures and produces exclusive practices that "include a focus on men as rhetorical subjects; a focus geographically on the Europeanized/Western world; attention centered on power elites, by class, race, and gender, that is, rich, famous or infamous, white males" (Royster and Kirsch, 2012, p. 30). These ideas have come to be naturalized and constitute "the" epistemology of Writing and Rhetoric, the cultural prototype to which those within the discipline are expected to assimilate, or at least see themselves in relation to.

In her 2012 CCCC Chair's Address, Malea Powell explains further:

> Our discipline…founds itself at the heart of the narrative of modernity, and it is deeply mired in the muck of the logic of coloniality. We mark our origins in precisely the same way—and in the same moment—as the colonial matrix of power—in the Renaissance's

[8] In studying the organizational rhetoric of the Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional, Leon builds a theory of Chicana rhetoric that decenters Western cultures from the historical imagination of Writing & Rhetoric as a discipline and centers the programmatic writing and the building of a Chicana feminist organization. Leon also argues that simply classifying the work of scholars of color along with postmodernism reflects a lack of serious engagement with their scholarship, which should be more fully contextualized within their respective, localized environments, practices, and knowledge systems.

> reinvention of classical Greece and its own middle ages, a reinvention necessary for empire. We are part of it, we are part of maintaining it, and now, I believe, we must be part of de-linking and de-chaining those discourses from their imperial designs (p. 393-394).

While it does confront disciplinary traditions that are linked to imperial designs, Powell's address is not a rejection of Western epistemologies outright, but points towards the colonial deployment of Western ideas and the refashioning of Eurocentric practices for decolonial purposes. As we have been confronted with Western cultural norms that exert great pressure to assimilate out of our non-Western cultures, this kind of refashioning is something that Indigenous scholars in Writing & Rhetoric have been doing for some time, and which Indigenous people throughout this continent have been doing for much longer.

While the goals of this dissertation are not purely historical, my discussions on cultural memory and Mexican food rhetorics do have historical implications for Writing & Rhetoric in terms of who and what we look to in order to ground our work. Underpinning my research are questions concerning the genealogy and exigence of the discipline. *Who do we claim as our disciplinary ancestors? What practices do we claim as rhetoricians, and what rhetorical practices claim us?* I am not attempting to make an argument that says other scholars in the discipline should take up Chicanx rhetorics and/or food rhetorics as explicitly as I have. I *am* making an argument that, in order to diversify the discipline, space must continue to be made for a wider range of practices and knowledge systems to exist.

I focus on Chicanx and Indigenous rhetorics in particular not because I think they are more important or urgent than other rhetorics, but because they offer me a pathway toward a sense of belonging in the discipline. I am fortunate to have entered a program in which the

graduate student body is culturally diverse, but the discipline as a whole has a long way to go in terms of diversity. As has been cited by many scholars, women and minorities in academia are burdened with an extra amount of work that results from our institutions' shortcomings in providing the kinds of cultural sustain us as human beings and which are necessary for us in order to perform our work. The way we remember the history of our discipline, as not only being traced through ancient Greece, matters greatly. Food rhetorics and Chicanx rhetorics are pathways toward a fuller understanding of our own disciplinary memory that hold immediate implications for the lived experiences of scholars, teachers, and students in the discipline.

Situating Food Rhetoric

Food Studies is a multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary field that includes scholars from across the humanities, social sciences, arts, and hard sciences. My attention to the embodiment of cultural memory through foodways is also a focus that food scholars from a multitude of disciplines have taken up with great interest. Anthropologist David Sutton has asked "what would it mean for our studies of food if we took memory itself as a sense?" and uses the concept of polytemporality to highlight how "people use their memories to call upon the past to interpret, contextualize, or simply link the present with the comfort of the known past (2010, p. 470 & 473). In turn, Lisa Heldke draws upon these ideas to catalogue and archive memory experiences that link particular foods with the passing of her parents. She says these instances might be called "extreme remembering" and that she wants "to notice what it feels like at those moments when memory demands my attention the way an inescapable smell or a piercing sound or a bright flash of light does" (2016, p. 87). My work with Michicanx communities also reflects what Meredith Abarca and Pascua Soler describe as "food consciousness," or an understanding

that "speaks to a theory of pragmatic, embodied epistemology, wherein knowledge is acquired through the sensations and emotions that food awakens in the body" (qtd. in Abarca & Salas 2015, p. 187-188).

As an area of study, food is highly useful for the way it is capable of making space both for similarities and differences between cultures, disciplines, and individuals. Food rhetoric is important because it expands the cultural memory of Writing & Rhetoric as a discipline to include cultures that place an extreme value on foodways, orality and relationships with the land. But food rhetoric is also way of envisioning the discipline itself as a constellation (I discuss this in more detail in chapter 2). The small body of food-related scholarship produced within English and Rhetoric & Composition over the past several decades often focuses on written texts, but this appears to be changing with more recent work that is surfacing. In addition to Casie Cobos' (2012) methodology of "embodied storying" and Gabriela Rios' (2015) "land-based literacies and rhetorics," we also have Jaquetta Shade's (2018) oral history work with Cherokee wishi foraging practices, Consuelo Carr Salas' (2015) research on food advertising that links the fields of Technical Communication, Visual Rhetoric, and Food Studies, the American Indian Caucus' theorizing of the Three Sisters Methodology,[9] and Steven Alvarez's (2016) pedagogical work with taco literacies —to name only some of the recent work that intersects with Indigenous rhetorics, Latinx rhetorics, and food rhetoric.

To date, much of the other scholarship published at the intersections of foodways, writing, and rhetoric have maintained a focus on pedagogy and/or written text (about food).[10]

[9] In chapter 4, I describe in more detail a related panel sponsored by the caucus at the 2017 Conference on College Composition and Communication.

[10] Melissa A Goldwaite has recently edited an important anthology entitled, *Food, Feminisms, Rhetoric*. Due to the close proximity of its publication with the publication of this dissertation, I was unable to give it as much attention as it deserves in this overview of scholarship in food rhetoric.

One of the major works of food scholarship to be produced is *College English*'s 2008 special issue on food. Two of the essays emphasize food as a pedagogical device, though they are probably more focused on literature than is typical for most Rhet/Comp scholarship. For example, Cognard-Black and Goldwaite's essay, "Books That Cook: Teaching Food and Food Literature in the English Classroom," depicts their approach to teaching food writing. In the essay they argue that food tends to increase students' investment in coursework and that focusing on food encourages students to interrogate their own habits of consumption. Barbara Waxman also shows in her essay the usefulness of food as a pedagogical device by arguing for the place of food memoir in the literature classroom, explaining "how these narratives trace the evolution of identity through food experiences" (p. 365). I agree with these scholars that there is a lot of potential in food as subject area for teaching things like literacy, writing, and critical inquiry, and with the growth of fields like Cultural Rhetorics I anticipate more work in Writing & Rhetoric that includes food studies within disciplinary conversations around pedagogy.

The other articles in *College English*'s (2008) special issue are not as focused on pedagogy so much as they are focused on treating food-related entities (foods, food industries, food movements, etc.) as objects for rhetorical analysis in and of themselves. Lynn Z. Bloom's article "Consuming Prose: The Delectable Rhetoric of Food Writing," breaks down essential elements of the rhetoric of food writing; Stephen Schneider outlines the origins of the Slow Food movement within the context of globalization, showing how food and speed intersect within capitalism to impact foodways in a multitude of problematic ways. Finally, David and Rebecca Nowacek's essay provides a concise history of the organic food system, highlighting especially the positive aspects of the system as a response to mass-produced and fast foods. In sum, these essays unpack some of the power dynamics involved with the production and consumption of

food by looking both at the way food is written about and by analyzing how certain food systems function rhetorically.

Rhetoricians also apply this kind of analysis of "food industries" to food movements as well. Adrian Peace (2006) shows through a case study in her essay "Barossa Slow: The Representation and Rhetoric of Slow Food's Regional Cooking" how elite events within the slow food movement can exclude people of lower classes, refuse to contextualize themselves within the context of global capitalism, and erase the cultural knowledge of Aboriginal peoples. In order to build truly critical projects, food scholarship must enact a decolonial class analysis that recognizes the deep knowledge systems Indigenous peoples have maintained. While I am not arguing that food scholars need completely shift the focus of their work toward Indigenous food studies, I do believe it is a mistake to fail to acknowledge these knowledge systems altogether.

Much of the scholarship along the lines of Chicana/o Studies and Indigenous Studies, whether within or outside of Writing & Rhetoric, have tended to prioritize a focus on the relationship between humans, culture, and the natural environment. However, this is not to suggest that land-based studies are the overall norm in each of these disciplines. Devon G. Peña (1999; 2010), for example, argues that environmental studies has not been given enough attention within Chicana/o Studies, which has instead focused much more often on the postmodern deconstruction of texts. Teresa M. Mares (2011), along with Peña, provides a model for how to connect environmental studies and Chicana/o Studies in their co-authored essay, "Environmental and Food Justice: Toward Local, Slow, and Deep Food Systems." Each author offers an ethnographic case study working with Indigenous diasporic communities in the US, paying particular attention to the ways in which these communities are able to continue plant-based traditions even amidst the stark contrast between their homelands in Mexico and their new

urban environments in the US. The authors advocate for a framework of food sovereignty based on the idea that food is a right, not a commodity, and that implies a radical ethics that moves us from conversations about access to conversations about self-determination (p. 202).

Through the chapters that follow, I draw further from scholarship in these disciplines in order to better understand the colonization of Indigenous foodways and to begin building upon decolonial approaches to food scholarship to offer my perspective on Michicanx food practices. In doing so, I will highlight how the food practices of these communities inform their identities and communities as Chicanxs. Therefore, it is worthwhile to first discuss the term "Chicanx" itself, as its fluidity in terms of both spelling and pronunciation call for some clarification.

Spelling and Pronouncing "Chicanx"

The term "Chicano" was strategically popularized through the Chicano Movement of the 1960s and 1970s to reflect particular cultural and political positionalities. As Kendall Leon (2010) has described, "'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)" (p. 11). Politically, the term signifies resistance to the assimilation or integration of Mexican Americans into mainstream "American" society (García 1997, p. 25). I will not attempt to provide an etymology here that makes an argument about the origins of the word. But understanding these basic dynamics of "Chicano" are a necessary precursor for making sense of some of the spellings/pronunciations that have come into use more recently. These include (but are not limited to) Chican@, Chicana/o, Chican@/x, Chicanx, and Xicanx. While I do point to some scholarly conversations that analyze this word and its many spellings and pronunciations,

much of what I have to say in this section draws from personal experiences with family members, friends, and among community organizing circles.

"Chicanx" is spelled and pronounced a number of different ways depending on the context in which the term is used, the identity of the person using it, and the political/cultural issues they may wish to highlight or express. When referring to "Chicano" people in general, many feminists pushed to change the spelling of the end of the word from "o" to "@" or "a/o." In Spanish, most nouns are gendered—with "o" demarcating masculinity, "a" demarcating femininity, and "o" acting as the default for most words that refer to more than one person, regardless of the genders of people being referred to. In using "Chican@s" or Chicana/os," both letters are present thus creating a more inclusive spelling of the word that represents both male and female genders. These variations on the word have more recently been criticized, however, for perpetuating a gender binary that ignores people's right to gender fluidity and identity outside of the traditional male and female categories.

With the "x" indicating support of gender fluidity, "Chicanx" has become popular in recent years, especially among activists and academics, when referring to Chicanx people in general. Some choose to use the term when referring to themselves as well, even if they do have a particular gender identity that they would otherwise make clear. Many of the criticisms made against this use of "x" (as well as other variations of the word) are grounded in claims that it is a form of linguistic imperialism, an example of Americanized language imposing itself upon "real" Mexican Spanish. While this argument is worthy of further exploration, to date I have mostly seen it used in ways that depend on dangerous notions of authenticity and to delegitimize "social justice warriors" who are attempting to change Mexican Spanish. Another primary criticism against "x" is that it impedes the free expression of those who have a specific gender

identity that they *do* want to make visible with "Chicano," "Chicana," etc. I want to emphasize that my adoption of "Chicanxs" is not an indirect way of suggesting that people should refrain from referring to themselves using whatever spelling they feel is more appropriate.

In this dissertation, I try to honor the spellings with which people most closely identify as individuals. When speaking broadly, I have chosen to use "Chicanxs" to refer to Chicanx people in general because this to me seems to be the most gender inclusive variation. At the same time, I do not believe there is one correct way that the word should be spelled, as there are legitimate reasons for choosing other spellings as well. One of these reasons is a concern about accessibility on behalf of the reader/listener. Outside of Chicano/Latino communities, even the traditional spelling of the word—"Chicano"—is still misunderstood. Speaking primarily from my experiences in multi-racial community organizing spaces, variations on the term do often become difficult to use in certain situations for basic reasons of clarity and rhetorical effectiveness. Furthermore, I recognize that the variations in these spellings are often intended to do precisely what I've described—to disrupt business as usual in order to make an important political point. Miscommunication, in this sense, can create opportunities for meaningful dialogue about gender that may not have otherwise happened.

When referring to myself, I find it important to use "Xicano." Especially as a writer, I want to make visible the critical elements of my social positionality and privilege. Using the "o" when referring to myself is important, then, so that readers may know I am speaking as a cis-gendered[11] man. As Dylan A.T. Miner writes, the employment of "X" at the *beginning* of the word "signifies a lost or colonized history. By using this spelling, I allude to the political and

[11] To clarify, the "o" at the end of the word does not specifically refer to cis people, but in my case, it does.

indigenist orientation of my scholarship" (Miner, 2014, p. 221). For me, replacing the "Ch" with "X"[12] expresses with emphasis my commitment to honoring my Indigenous ancestors as well as my own Indigeneity. Because my research in *Making Chicanx Foodways* thoroughly deals with the continuation of Indigenous cultural practices, and because it does not as directly address gendered aspects of these practices, I found it important to use "Chicanxs" in the title as opposed to "Xicanos." Furthermore, Miner's point that gender is constructed by and through culture is also worthy of note in considering which variations of the word one chooses to use.

Adapting to their shifting circumstances, most people use a variety of spellings and pronunciations throughout their lives. While MICCA chose to use "Chicanx" in the spelling of its name, for example, group members were also intentional about using a variety of different spellings when writing position statements, creating flyers and social media events, etc. This fluidity in language reflects the rhetorical realities we experience as complex people in communication with one another across a variety of experiences that are gendered, generational, racial, and ethnic. As I discuss further in chapter 4, many of these same issues are also at play within our food and foodways. "Michicanxs" is not a term that is often used in spoken conversation, but I use it extensively throughout this dissertation because of the convenience it provides in referring to Chicanx communities in (or connected in some way) to Michigan.

Chapter Layout

In Chapter 2, I delineate my methodology of *community-making* to describe the approaches to knowledge-seeking carried out by my research participants, my family members,

[12] "X" is the Nahuatl spelling of the "ch" sound in English.

and myself. Drawing from some of the everyday rhetorical practices of these communities, especially cooking, I show how my research project works to answer the question, *how do Chicanx communities in Michigan use food to create community and practice cultural continuation?* This chapter dedicates much attention to situating my own relationship to the research by explaining how my own family's food and migration stories have shaped my worldview and research methodology.

In Chapter 3, I draw from a series of cooking and discussion sessions to examine the cooking practices shared with me by Connie and Eve. Building upon an examination of the rhetorical use of Mexican cooking traditions, I use my methodology of *community-making* to engage scholarly conversations about pedagogy and collaborative learning. I argue that Chicanx applications of Mexican cooking use the concept of relationality to make community, and that teachers can make similar moves in building community and critical analysis in their classrooms.

In Chapter 4, I discuss concepts of cultural mixing in relation to my methodology of *community*-making. From here, I point to examples of sustainable Indigenous food rhetorics, such as las tres hermanas/the three sisters approach to intercropping, or growing diverse crops within a single plot of land in a regenerating manner. Through an examination of these food practices, I consider also how they reflect the formation of Chicanx identities.

In Chapter 5, my focus shifts toward the relationship between Mexican foodways and digital rhetorics. I reflect upon my experiences building digital storytelling platforms centered around Mexican food culture in Michigan to deliver an analysis of digital scholarship, the genre of the cookbook, and the potential for digital forms of storytelling to be of use to communities in continuing cultural knowledge about their ancestral foodways.

In Chapter 6, I conclude my dissertation by discussing the implications of my research

into Chicanx foodways. In particular, attention is paid to detailing how *community-making* interacts with theories and histories of rhetoric, Chicanx/Latinx rhetorics, building community in the classroom, service-learning, and frameworks of food sovereignty.

CHAPTER 2: *COMMUNITY-MAKING* METHODOLOGY

"Remember you live in a community. You have a responsibility to be accountable to your family and your community as well as yourself."[13] -Cherríe Moraga

"*Does one create memory from food, or does food create memory? Both are the case for me. I am indistinguishable from family, food, and culture*." -Denise Chávez

A Theory of Knowledge-Building

Methodology refers to the process of building knowledge through research. It is one of the more complex aspects of academic research in that explaining how this "building" actually works requires an ability to articulate the intricate relationships between theories and practices that are couched in complicated and often conflicting epistemologies and worldviews. From this perspective, the writing of methodology requires more than an explanation or justification of the methods that have been used in a given study. It also requires situating methods within their appropriate historical contexts, making visible the relationship between the researcher and the research, and identifying some of the barriers that create limitations for a project. The primary research question I have attempted to answer in this project is the following: *how do Chicanx communities in Michigan use food to create community and practice cultural continuation?* Because my research focuses on the rhetorical construction of cultural communities, it is necessary for me to enact a methodology that prioritizes engaging and collaborating with community members.

[13] This quote is from a personal communication shared by Julia Alvarez in *Once Upon a Quinceañera: Coming of Age in the USA*.

Moreover, methodologies for community-based research can be particularly complicated because there are not models of research that researchers can (or should) simply take and apply to their local communities. Because community-based research is so deeply dependent upon the communities who participate in a given project, a researcher's methods and theories need not only be adjusted to a local context, but should ideally be grown out of that local context. This dynamic makes generalizing about community-based methodologies difficult: "[t]o build a cultural rhetorics methodology is to resist the notion that community-based research should be replicable. Relationships are not replicable" (Riley-Mukavetz, 2014, p. 121). From this perspective, "relationships do not merely shape reality, they *are* reality," as Shawn Wilson (2009) has written (p. 7). Because it is literally comprised of relationships—between people, places, institutions, and practices—community-based work is messy and non-linear when compared to scientific methods that are constructed in ways that demand replicability.

This kind of relational perspective is key to the work of many cultural rhetoricians. As a The Cultural Rhetorics Theory Lab (Powell et al., 2014) has written, cultural rhetorics scholars "investigate and understand meaning-making as it is situated in specific cultural communities. And when we say 'cultural communities,' we mean any place/space where groups organize under a set of shared beliefs and practices." Importantly, Phil Bratta and Malea Powell (2016) extend "[e]ngagement with decolonization and decolonial practices is central to the work of most cultural rhetorics scholars" and that what they want to emphasize and practice is standing "as allies with cultural communities who are working to delink from the destructive behaviors brought on by colonization." One of the reasons *Making Chicanx Foodways* uses a cultural rhetorics framework, then, is because it primarily engages with diasporic Mexican people whose lives and cultures have been drastically shaped by coloniality, and it investigates some of the

ways in which these communities maintain meaning and knowledge through food practices in particular.

Throughout this project, I work to develop a methodology of *community-making*. As shown to me by community members, c*ommunity-making* is a fluid set of practices that are utilized to create a sense of belonging and kinship. It is grounded in a relational perspective that understands the world as web of relationships, referring as much to the concrete methods I have used to gain knowledge for this research as it reflects the everyday cultural practices of the communities with which I have worked. The primary community that has collaborated with me on *Making Chicanx Foodways* are members of MICCA. Through my own participation in this group, I developed relationships with the participants in my study over the course of two years before the formation of this dissertation project.

Therefore, my research comes from a very personal place. It engages with many of the familial, cultural, and academic communities that have made me into the person I am today, and I therefore recognize the responsibility I have to be accountable to these communities. In developing methodological principles for this work, I have drawn influence from Roberto Cintli Rodríguez's (2014) research in *Our Sacred Maíz is Our Mother: Indigeneity and Belonging in the Americas*. These principles include 1) transparency concerning the communities I come from and my relationship to the research 2) reasons for research, 3) relationships with research participants 4) reception of knowledge and dissemination of research. I address each of these principles at various points throughout this chapter as well as the rest of the dissertation.

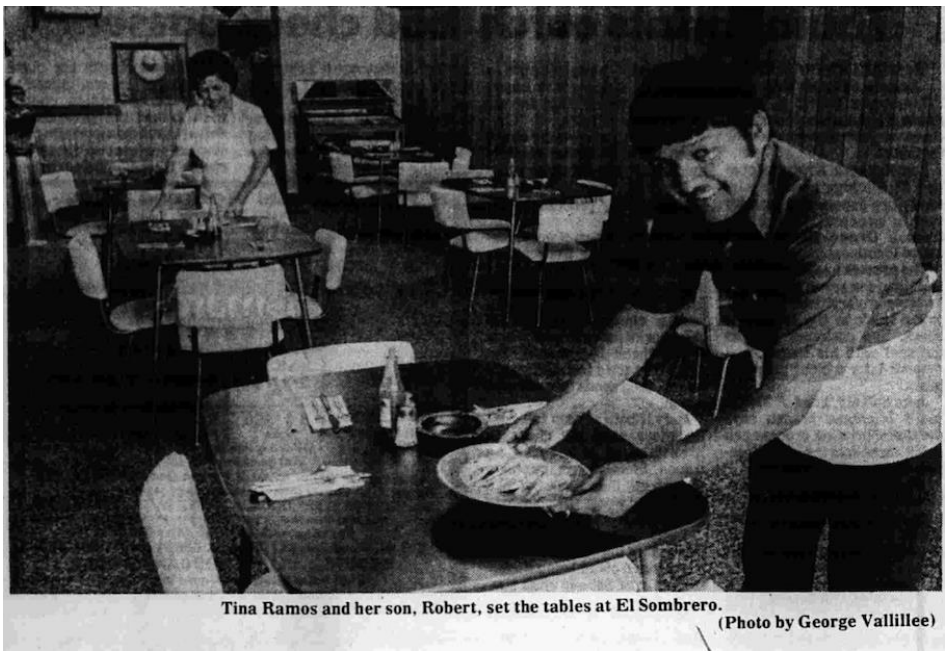
Situating Myself

One side of my family comes from rural villages in the Mexican states of Michoacán (P'urhépecha territory) and Nuevo León (Coahuiltecan[14] territory). My great grandparents, Porfiria and Blas Antonio Ramos, left their pueblo Panindícuaro a few years into the revolution, around 1913. There are stories in my family of my tío who had left the pueblo to ride with Pancho Villa. It was the last time anyone in the family ever heard from him. There are surely a multitude of reasons related to the revolution that my family left the pueblo, and while I cannot speak to the exact reasoning my grandparents felt at that time, a broader analysis of the region's colonial history would see it as being a result of the introduction of capitalist forms of land management into the region. As a pre-Columbian pueblo, Panindícuaro[15] has undergone a multitude of changes since the Spanish conquest. To generalize, lands that had been communally owned and managed by Indigenous people since time immemorial became occupied and privatized—first by the Catholic Church and later by private companies. These changes also yielded great competition among Indigenous communities of the area, resulting in the displacement of many people. I count my family among these displaced migrants.

From there, my great grandparents migrated northward to Laredo, Texas and became migrant farmworkers who would travel seasonally from Texas to Michigan picking crops. My grandparents—Augustina "Tina" Gámez Ramos and Domingo Ramos—met in the fields chopping onions. Eventually, they moved permanently to Michigan and opened up one of the first Mexican restaurants in downtown Battle Creek, Michigan, which is where I was born and raised. Below is an image published by Battle Creek's local newspaper. It was part of a feature

[14] This is a term sometimes used to describe the confluence of Indigenous cultures and tribes in the area of Nuevo León where my great grandmother was born.
[15] Contemporarily, Panindícuaro is largely seen as a "mestizo" pueblo, though it is located in the outer regions of an area known as the Meseta P'urhépecha.

the paper ran called “The Ramos Restaurant.”



Tina Ramos and her son, Robert, set the tables at El Sombrero. (Photo by George Vallillee)

Figure 1, retrieved from the digital archives at Willard Library

While most Mexican restaurants promote themselves as having truly “authentic” food (the business cards for our family’s restaurant in Figure 2 also does this), in the newspaper article my grandma speaks to the *inauthenticity* of her restaurant’s food: “I use some spices on our food here, but I don’t make it really hot. I don’t fix the restaurant’s food the same way I’d fix what we eat at home. If it’s too hot, Americans just can’t eat it. They’re not used to it.” Many Mexicans are surprised by the food in Michigan’s Mexican restaurants, which they often find to be inadequate. From a business standpoint, however, it makes sense that restaurant owners in predominantly white areas would feel the need to adapt to their recipes to the palates of their primary clientele. While there are many excellent Mexican restaurants in Michigan, especially in southwest Detroit, this dilemma is common throughout much of the state.

Figure 2, a business card from my family's restaurant

My experience growing up in small Michigan city was colored in many ways by this tension between authentic/inauthentic Mexican culture, yet it was always clear to me that food played a central role in telling my family's migration story and in explaining who we are and where we come from. This is why, when it came time for me to choose a dissertation topic, food made a great deal of sense. Food rhetoric is one effective way into better understanding the relationships between people, places, and migration. Further, in addition to being a primary topic of this research, my family's foodways also shape how I come to this work as a researcher, a theme I will explore further in the following section.

My Grandmother's Molcajete

Much of my knowledge about Mexican cooking comes from my grandma Tina. I have many memories of being at her house as a child and eating delicious tamales, rice, beans, carne

guisada, and other dishes. By the time my interest in learning how to cook materialized, however, she was hospitalized due to several health complications. It was in these years that I grew closest with her, visiting as often as I could and recording conversations in which she would tell me about our family history. I remember being very nervous to ask her for the first time if it was ok to record our conversations, but it was immediately clear how happy she was that I was taking such an interest in her stories. While the stories she shared with me during those visits are not the focus of my analysis throughout this dissertation, they greatly shape my methodology. I do this work to honor her.

While I was never really able to cook with grandma Tina, she told me stories about how she liked to cook and of memories she had of cooking with her mother. She also shared a number of her recipes with my mother. Of Irish ancestry, my mom says she wanted to learn to cook like my grandma Tina so that she could pass the traditions down to us—her children. To me, this transfer of knowledge greatly underscores conversations among Chicanx activists and scholars about mestizaje, which is often deployed as a biological interpretation of cultural mixing (I discuss this topic further later in the chapter). Despite not being Mexican, my mother was able to steward knowledge about many of our Mexican family's foodways. These recipes contain many lessons that shape my worldview and that therefore also construct my approach to teaching as well. (In chapter 3, I further explore the relationships between cooking and pedagogy).

Some of my earliest childhood memories involve my grandmother's molcajete, a stone tool used for grinding ingredients down into a salsa, sauce, or powder. Many Indigenous cultures around the world have similar mortar and pestle tools used for grinding ingredients, but this one has its roots in the cultures of Mesoamerica. "Molcajete" is a Mexican Spanish word derived from the Náhuatl *molcaxitl*—from *molli* meaning "seasoning" or "sauce" and *caxitl* meaning

"box." These tools continue to be put to use every day in many rural pueblos and homes in Mexico, and molcajetes have increased in popularity in the US in recent years as well (metates have not, presumably due to their massive size and weight that make them difficult to move). With the invention of the electric blender, many have begun to use grinding stones much less often, as they are extremely labor intensive. Yet, despite the labor, many people still choose to use their stones. In part, this has to with keeping up tradition, yet it is also understood by many that there is a drastic difference in taste.

The first time I remember seeing our molcajete, I was small enough to be looking up at it as it sat on the kitchen counter of the home where I was raised in Michigan. The molcajete had recently been washed, and I recall paying particular attention to the look of the dark, wet stone. It was different from most of the other utensils in the kitchen; there was a stark contrast between the molcajete and everything else. The contrast resonated with me at the time as more of an abstract feeling, but now I would name that feeling as a reflection of my experience growing up in a mixed family.

Fast-forward some 25 years later, and that same molcajete, which had been gifted to my mother by my grandma Tina, is now in my kitchen. Inheriting the molcajete is really what ignited my interest in learning to cook our family recipes. It feels indestructible in my hands, full of experience and flavor from decades and decades of grinding chiles, cebolla, and other ingredients. My grandmother's molcajete greatly informs my research methodology not only because of my personal connection to it, but because of the processes associated with the tool and the kinds of lessons that it teaches. I have used the molcajete as a way of thinking about how to mix together the various aspects of my research. Below, I describe in more detail the following characteristics of the molcajete and how they take shape within the context of my

research: the molcajete as structure; slow methods, the power to destroy and the power to create; embodying memory; making medicine.

Molcajete as Structure

One of the influences that helped me to understand the molcajete from a research perspective is the metaphor of constellations that is used by many cultural rhetoricians. The practice of constellating, write Bratta & Powell (2016), "emphasizes the degree to which knowledge is never built by individuals but is, instead, accumulated through collective practices within specific communities. These collective practices, then, are what create the community; they hold the community together over time…" I view the molcajete as a kind of constellation, then, because it holds within it all of the necessary ingredients, and provides a way for thinking about how those ingredients relate to one another, mix together, separate out, and collaborate to make something new.

The molcajete is the structure that provides stability and foundation for a recipe to take place. Salsas can be made with blenders or other tools, but in addition to holding the ingredients, the molcajete also absorbs some of the flavors and influences new recipes with the flavorful remnants collected over time. As a structure, the molcajete is the foundation upon which I draw from Writing & Rhetoric, Chicana/o Studies, and Indigenous Studies scholarship to build my own research. It also helps me to understand how the different elements of my research exist in relationship with one another, like how drawing from decolonial scholarship is necessary to building food rhetoric projects, and how these elements inform the specific methods I choose to use as a researcher.

Slow Methods

In *Creating Aztlán: Chicano Art, Indigenous Sovereignty, and Lowriding Across Turtle Island,* Dylan A.T. Miner (2014) uses lowriding as a theoretical device to describe the manner in which his research migrates across land, culture, and temporality. He describes lowriding as an anti-capitalist practice because "instead of hastening from one place to another, lowriding… actively engages the process of slow-movement. Through this intentional slowness, lowriding seamlessly repositions us between various temporalities, moving among multiple spaces and in and out of disparate social structures" (p. 3).

In a similar manner, grinding ingredients with the molcajete also emphasizes slow-movement. While the act of grinding itself might not appear to be slow, it is a time-consuming practice that makes the overall process of cooking much longer, especially when compared to the use of a blender or a food processor. When I use my grandmother's grinding stone, I connect myself to my family's history and diaspora. As a researcher, the molcajete as metaphor represents a resistance to destructive notions of speed, which would prioritize the quick production of scholarship over the needs and desires of the research participants with whom I work. By enacting what I consider to be a slow methodology, I make space for the framework of my research to be built collaboratively by research participants, as opposed to viewing them as exclusively transmitters of information, which I then simply plug into certain sections of my research. Community-based research is comprised of relationships, and relationships take time to develop in order for these kinds of collaboration to happen. A slow methodology places an emphasis on the process of creation in addition to the verifiable products or results that are made through research. Within the context of my work, this means that much of the labor I engaged was not simply geared towards achieving my own academic goals—such as publications—but

also towards the goals of the communities with which I am working. This has often included helping to maintain organizational structures for groups such as MICCA, the kind of infrastructural work that academia often fails to acknowledge as scholarship.

Finally, there is a somewhat common argument in food studies scholarship that says women were liberated from the oppression of the kitchen by the introduction of modernized technologies that allowed them to save time from laborious tasks that involved making meals from scratch. In Mexican and Chicanx contexts, this argument highlights how tools like the blender saved women from having to spend long hours grinding ingredients with molcajetes and metates. Additionally, the industrialization of Mexican food staples, such as masa, allowed women to bypass large parts of the tortilla-making process in order to save time as well. So there is a gendered dynamic here wherein it should be acknowledged that I am a cisgender man choosing to do work with food. Unlike many women, I was never pressured to learn how to cook.

I emphasize that one need not use traditional tools like the molcajete in order to make "real" or "authentic" Mexican or Indigenous food. Within a decolonial framework, it is necessary to avoid destructive notions of authenticity, which are often founded upon romanticized notions of an Indigenous past that leave little room for Indigenous people to exist in present and future contexts. And such notions, in this particular context, would also contribute specifically to the subjugation of women via the perpetuation of heteronormative gender roles associated with food and cooking. I would simultaneously caution, however, against notions of technological determinism that falsely credit the advancement of capitalist technologies with "liberating women," rather than acknowledging the liberatory actions of women themselves. In continuing to work with my grandmother's molcajete, I hope to honor the labor that she has

given to me and my family through cooking.

The Power to Destroy and the Power to Create

The act of grinding ingredients in a molcajete is simultaneously destructive and creative. When peppers are ground in the molcajete, they become undone, crushed to the point that they no longer resemble peppers at all. If you were to then add other ingredients they too would become undone as you continue to grind, yet all of this unmaking eventually results in the making of a new food item. It is in this way that I approach the role of criticism within my research: that criticism of existing systems of power is necessary, yet that critique must be geared toward the larger goal of shifting power and making something new to replace that which is being criticized.

I again draw from cultural rhetorics as a sub-field focused both on the undoing of oppressive ideologies and the creation or continuation of decolonial ideologies:

> although we do believe critique of our current disciplinary practices is important and necessary, we want to make sure that critique leads to something even more important—making. Critique is not the end of the process of decolonization—it's the beginning. We want to make something that people will use, rather than to take things apart only to show that they can be taken apart. (Powell et al., 2014)

One of my purposes for studying food, then, is not simply to study it, but to deepen my knowledge about relationships between people and the land and to make something that may help others to do the same. This will require an un-doing of oppressive ideologies that uplifts Indigenous knowledge systems about landscapes and cooking.

MICCA also functions as a tool of destruction/creation, utilizing Chicanx cultural

practices to re-create academic spaces that were not designed for them. The regulations and spacial design of university facilities, for example, were consistent impediments for the group. Certain regulations made it impossible for the group to be able to include heritage foods at its events, and the design of buildings made it difficult for the group to engage in certain practices, such as the lighting of candles. Even when there may have been ways to circumvent these kinds of issues, doing so often required more labor than the group had capacity for. Like a molcajete, then, which is powerful for its ability to re-create, MICCA has been able both to repurpose its surroundings and to adapt its cultural practices as needed.

Embodying Memory

Memory is often equated with thought—simply thinking about something that has happened in the past, or thinking about who our relatives or ancestors have been. However, using my grandmother's molcajete is the physical embodiment of our familial memories, one of the material connections held between past, present and future. Chicanx cultural memories are often embodied by Mexican cooking practices, a dynamic discussed by Casie Cobos (2012) in her methodology of "embodied storying." Cobos theorizes this

> as a three-pronged heuristic that epistemologically situates Chican@ rhetoric, centers physical bodies as always present and necessary in the practices of rhetoric, and emphasizes narrative-making as central to influencing Chican@ rhetorical practices. Embodied storying, then, is the *active* and *continual*, flesh-and-bone *practicing* of stories—as both tellings and theorizing—that shows the production of cultures, identities, histories, and rhetorics. (p. 23)

Within the context of foodways, Cobos uses embodied storying to imagine the ways that Mexican Americans use food for purposeful identity and rhetorical constructions (p. 107). Rather than only seeing Mexican food as a product to analyze, she suggests "that the making and spaces of the food—through alphabetically written recipes or through memory, through group cooking or through solo cooking, through 'traditional' means or through shortcuts—act as rhetorical practices that involve both the physical body and the collective (though ever-changing) cultural body" (p. 108). In my study, I am engaging with the purposeful rhetorical work of my participants as their foodways have worked to construct collective and individual identities in rural Mexican pueblos, urban spaces in Los Angeles, and as graduate students in Michigan. Similar to Archibald's (2008) work in *Indigenous Storying: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit*, these kinds of embodied stories are not simply meant to be passed on, but are also intended to be tools for teaching.

In conducting cooking sessions with Connie and Eve for this project, I was keenly reminded of the great amount of physical labor it takes to create many traditional Mexican dishes. This experience showed me the importance of listening as a researcher not only to the words and spoken stories being shared with me, but also to the material processes themselves. In this sense, it is not only particular foods that embody memory, but also the processes of *making*.

Making Medicine

Key to the colonization of the Americas were the re-arrangement, re-presentation and re-distribution of plants, including food, in order to exert dominance over Indigenous lifeways.[16]

[16] For example, Linda Tuhiwai Smith writes in *Decolonizing Methodologies* that "plant species were taken by Joseph Banks for the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew – a collection point where they could be 'grown, studied, and disbursed to the colonial stations, a centre of plant transfers on the scientific level, and of the generation and publication of knowledge about plants'. The British Empire became a global

Because Indigenous epistemologies are intricately tied to local landscapes, these kinds of ecological colonization are not just physical acts violence; they are also emotional, psychological, spiritual, social and cultural violence. The colonization of foodways has also often been carried out through displacement, whether that displacement is enacted through legislation, literal acts of warfare, or the displacement of Indigenous epistemologies through projects meant to civilize or assimilate Indigenous people into Western lifestyles. Understanding the molcajete as a tool for making medicine acknowledges the myriad ways in which Indigenous peoples have been and continue to be impacted by colonialism, as well as the ways in which cooking and eating traditional foods can serve as methods of healing.

As the container and the structure for my work, as my way of both unmaking and of making, my grandmother's molcajete holds within it pieces of our history as well as a way to move forward. As an organization that was formed in order to create spaces for people who have been impacted by these kinds of experiences, MICCA's work has largely come from a place of healing as well. The molcajete connects my personal experiences with the work of MICCA as an organization that has relied on food as a way of making community and of engaging in acts of cultural continuation. This work could be considered an example of *autotopography*, described by Teresa Mares and Devo Peña (2011) as "the grounding of self and communal identities through place making" that sees "food as more than a mere commodity, instead envisioning it as a relationship that forces us to stretch our understanding of what it means to grow and eat food justly" (p. 199). In these ways, the molcajete stands as a symbol of how traditional foodways may function as decolonial practice from the standpoint of healing on individual and collective

laboratory for research and development. New species of plants and animals were introduced to the colonies to facilitate development and to 'strengthen' indigenous species" (location 118).

levels from the impact of colonization.

The Rhetoric of Mestizaje

Mestizaje is a concept of racial mixing that has been taken up by many Chicanxs in order to better understand their cultural identity, and essentially, their relationship to Indigeneity. While it has been a dominant framework within Chicanx Studies, mestizaje has also been sharply criticized for its failure to suture together the heterogeneous positionalities of 'Mexican,' 'Indian,' and 'Chicanx' that coexist within the identities of many Chicanxs in the US (Saldaña-Portillo, 2003, p. 279). By examining some of these criticisms, it can be better understood not only the specific colonial tactics that have been deployed through the use of mestizaje, but also a broader sense of how communities come to be formed and ruptured through the enactment and erasure of cultural practices such cooking, eating, and farming.

In his book, *Aztecas Del Norte: The Chicanos of Aztlan*, Jack Forbes (1973) argues that terms such as "half breed" and "mestizo" are concepts that were created and proliferated by Spanish colonizers as part of a racist system used to control Native populations (p. 188-189). In using this divide and conquer tactic, the Spanish turned Natives against one another by creating a racial hierarchy that quantifies people's race and ethnicity through blood quantum, therein incentivizing competition over the privileges granted to those who assimilate with white, Western, or specifically Spanish cultural and social ways of being. Regardless, many have used mestizaje as a way of situating their cultural identity within a Chicanx context. Saldaña-Portillo (2003) maintains that Anzaldúa's "mestizaje is once again deployed to produce a biological tie with pre-Aztec Indians rather than a political tie with contemporary U.S. Native Americans or Mexican Indians" (p. 282).

Within Writing & Rhetoric, mestizaje has also frequently been used as a way of articulating Chicanx and Latinx positionalities. In her chapter within the anthology *Decolonizing Rhetoric and Composition Studies*, Gabriela Ríos (2016) shows how the use of mestizaje has led to the following recurring set of problematics in the discipline:

1. The romanticizing and fetishizing of indigenous cultural practices (like writing)
2. The erasure of indigenous futurity
3. The pure/mixed fallacy

She reminds us that "[t]hese tendencies become important to resist when we discuss rhetorical practices because mestizaje often renders the Indigenous subject in particular arhetorical and fixed in time." In addition to understanding Indigenous and colonial histories then, avoiding these problematics requires an ongoing acknowledgment of the ways in which Indigenous practices are continued today, and this acknowledgement is dependent upon frameworks of analysis that allow for fluidity, migration, and change when it comes to culture—as it is formed through identity, relationships, practices, and belief systems.

Within the context of foodways, mestizaje in some ways suggests a rupture between cultural practice and cultural identity among many Mexicans and Chicanxs. As Patrisia Gonzalez (2012) notes in her book *Red Medicine*, "Mesoamericanists generally acknowledge that Mesoamerican philosophy and knowledge remain in the agricultural and medicinal practices of Middle America's descendants," of which many Chicanxs are included (p. 7). While these philosophies and knowledges live within many agricultural and medicinal practices, there is still often a disconnect between them and the Indigenous identities of those carrying the practices forward. In other words, as scholars such as Guillermo Bonfil Batalla (1996) have argued, many Indigenous people who have descended from Mesoamerica do not necessarily identify today as

Indigenous. Batalla names the process of this disjuncture as "de-Indianization," explaining that it does not refer to biological processes of mixing, but to the strategic rupture of Indian identity among populations of Indigenous people. "Mestizos," from this perspective, "are a contingent of "de-Indianized Indians" and "the change from Indian community to traditional peasant community is not to be understood as a transformation that implies the abandonment of Mesoamerican way of life. Rather, it is a process that occurs within the realm of ideology" (p. 17 & 46).

It is important, however, to remember that Batalla's work was not focused on Chicanx positionalities, but on the positionalities of predominantly rural people living in Mexico. Therefore, when using Batalla's work in relation to Xicanidad, we must also account for the diasporic experiences of Chicanxs, the implications of crossing the border not only in terms of civil rights, but also in terms of the sovereignty of the Indigenous peoples whose lands are being inhabited in the US. Moreover, this is why I have elected to situate Chicanxs as Indigenous/migrant people, and why I think it necessary to incorporate an understanding of settler colonialism within my analysis of mestizaje.

Eve Tuck and K Wayne Yang (2012) clarify a key distinction when they write that "[s]ettler colonialism is different from other forms of colonialism in that settlers come with the intention of making a new home on the land, a homemaking that insists on settler sovereignty over all things in their new domain" (p. 5). Internal and external forms of colonization are not enough to fully explain the Indigenous/migrant positionalities of Chicanxs, and they do not require us to interrogate how Chicanxs are positioned within settler colonialism. Ríos (2016) helps us to understand why scholars in Indigenous Studies tend to use settler colonialism as opposed to coloniality: "While these categories are certainly understood as discursively defined,

scholars of Indigenous studies nevertheless recognize that settler nations continue to rob the resources (land-based, cultural, knowledge, and otherwise) of peoples who are marked as Indigenous by the state." If Chicanxs choose simply to assimilate with the American populace while also attempting to retain their cultural foodways—the "browning" of America not rooted in decolonial politics—we are then culpable of the ongoing erasure and theft of American Indian culture and resources by the nation-states of both the US and Mexico. The reclamation and continuation of ancestral foodways by migrant communities must be rooted in respect for the bioregions and Indigenous peoples of the areas that are being inhabited.

In turn, because Writing & Rhetoric is a discipline enacted by academics at institutions that are settled upon American Indian territories, attempts to decolonize—theoretically, or otherwise—the discipline as a whole must include a serious consideration of American Indian scholarship in the discipline. Problematizing *mestizaje*, in this context, means avoiding the erasure of American Indian scholarship by taking it into account throughout the research process. As Qwo-Li Driskill (2012) as written that "[c]onstructions of 'blackness' and 'whiteness' cannot be meaningfully considered without a consideration of 'Indianness,'" (p. 28) and I extend that 'decolonizing' Rhetoric and Composition cannot be meaningfully considered without meaningfully considering American Indian scholarship in Writing and Rhetoric.

Furthermore, the study of food rhetoric in particular must be cognizant of the land in a material sense. Matthew Ortoleva (2013) observes in his essay "Let's Not Forget About Ecological Literacy," that "ecological thought devoid of a material, natural dimension is potentially problematic, and scholars and teachers need to be exceedingly cautious when using ecology metaphorically without its connection to real, natural places" (p. 68). This is not to disparage scholars from drawing upon ecology for conceptual purposes; rather, it is only to

highlight that we should simultaneously consider the material implications for our concrete ecological realities. Within the context of food studies, this would mean putting the theoretical and social aspects of food/cooking in relationship with the natural environments from which the food derives. It would also mean considering the industries responsible for the production of ingredients, as well as how culturally oriented relationships with the environment impact industries, movements, and institutions.

Ríos' (2015) work on land-based literacies serves as one good model for how to do this: "In short, land-based rhetorics recognize the ways in which nature can produce relations. Therefore, when I refer to land-based literacies, I am invoking a relationship between land and bodies that produces knowledge" (p. 65). Arguing that "ecology" maintains inherent presuppositions that produce a false dichotomy between people and our natural environment, Ríos relies on "land" to shift her ontology toward Indigenous understandings about the relationship between people and our environment. For the Indigenous migrant farmworkers with whom she works, this means that their labor and activism are driven by the knowledge (literacy) produced from their relationship to the land that they work. Whether or not one chooses to adopt mestizaje as a way of navigating cultural identity, it will be of benefit to become familiar with scholarly conversations about settler colonialism, as well as considering the kinds of land-based literacies and rhetorics about Ríos has written. While scholars can and often should maintain a focus on their more specialized topics at hand, these issues must be made more central to the frameworks of decolonial research along the lines of Chicanx/Latinx rhetorics.

Methods

Data Collection

My approach to collecting data for this project was to collaboratively develop cooking workshops with my research participants. In these workshops, we cooked and ate together, and participants spoke with me about their relationship to the various ingredients and processes that we had used. I chose to work with a small number of participants in order to provide more space for telling and contextualizing their viewpoints and food work. As stated previously there were three primary participants—Connie, Elba, and Eve. Each of them were, at the time of my data collection phase, either current or recent graduate students at Michigan State University, which is where all of us originally met and where we developed relationships with one another through the founding of MICCA.

At the time of my data collection phase, Elba had already moved back to Los Angeles and we were unable to arrange a time for her to travel to Michigan to participate in the cooking sessions I had planned. In lieu of cooking together, we had conversations via video conferencing. Because Elba and I had cooked together on several occasions in the past, we were also able to reflect on some of those experiences as well.

For my cooking sessions with Connie and Eve, I provided a broad prompt ahead of time, asking them each to select a dish we could cook together. I asked that the dish carry some connection to their home or community that they would also be able to talk about. For each of our two cooking sessions, they conversed with each other and decided for us to cook three different versions of the same dish. In our first session we cooked three versions of chiles rellenos, and in our second session we cooked three versions of chilaquiles. Connie and Eve each provided a recipe that they associated with their home community and together they chose a third

recipe that neither of them had made before. Ahead of the cooking sessions, they provided me with a list of ingredients so that I could buy what we needed to cook with in advance. Chapters 3 and 4 employ draw from this work be employing the oral history methods I have described. In a different way, Chapter 5 includes writing for an oral history project I carried out with several of my family members as a Fellow in the Cultural Heritage Informatics Fellowship Program. My method of data collection in these instances was to audio record conversations with them in which we discussed our experiences as Mexican people living in Michigan.

I audio recorded our cooking sessions in their entirety, both while we were cooking and while we visiting and eating. I prepared a set of questions for our sessions, and I wrote them in a way that provided a lot of flexibility for our conversations to take shape organically. Several weeks after our cooking sessions, I recorded one-on-one follow up interviews with Connie and Eve. I then transcribed all of these conversations, organized them in ways that made them easier to read, and sent them to Connie, Elba, and Eve. To me, this was a key element of gaining their consent, as it provided an opportunity for them to revise and/or omit things they had decided to share in the moment.

Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis overlapped greatly in doing my typed transcriptions of the cooking sessions and interviews. I treated transcriptions as an opportunity "to form relationships with the stories," as Riley-Mukavetz (2014, p. 116) has described it. While I did not write out my transcriptions by hand, I was intentional about recalling the slow method of grinding with the molcajete. I did not want to rush through the recordings, but to listen deeply and to hear the words being shared with me in new ways. Part of this process entailed breaking transcriptions up

into shorter pieces, and taking time to do my own reflective writing after transcribing each piece. I took 20-30 minutes to write reflectively in this journal after completely any major task—a cooking session, a follow-up interview, a transcription, etc. My reflective writings came to form the basis for much of my writing in this dissertation.

Many ethical issues arise in doing community-based research. Because this research project was grown out of communities that are very personal to me, it has been at times difficult to discern what should and should not be considered "data" and what should or should not be written about. The ethical issues revolve primarily around consent, and the ability (or lack thereof) to negotiate ongoing consent particularly about events or experiences that happened prior to the official beginning of my data collection phase. In writing about my family, I have mostly only provided general information about our migration story because this is all that was necessary in order to delineate my own relationship to this research and to being in the Mexican diaspora. In writing about MICCA, I incorporate quotes and paraphrases from members of the group whenever possible in order to provide a more nuanced perception of the group.

Conclusion

Community-making methodology relies on building as a way of knowing, a concept I discuss further in chapter 6. I employ it in order to better understand how foodways in particular are used to create cultural affiliations amongst Chicanxs and Mexicanxs with ties to Michigan. Drawing from relationships I developed through the graduate student group MICCA, I employ oral history methods with members of the group to examine the role of food in the formation of community and the construction of identity. As a project engaging heavily in food rhetoric, I offer it as one example of how the ties between food, culture, and rhetoric can be approached

through community-based research. Much like food itself, community-based work should reflect the worldviews of the communities being engaged. While it can require a great deal of time and energy to develop the relationships necessary for this kind of work, it can ultimately be to the benefit of both the research and the research participants if it is done in way that honors the communities involved.

CHAPTER 3: MEXICAN COOKING, PEDAGOGY, & RELATIONALITY

Creating Community Rhetoric

In this chapter, I build upon my methodology of *community-making* that draws from rhetorical practices of traditional Mexican cooking to incorporate a community-based perspective on teaching. Leon (2013) has argued that Writing and Rhetoric's "popular conceptualization of community rhetoric—that is, the theory and practice of being in and making communities—has operated on a notion that what has been treated as canonical is both universal and comprehensive," and that the discipline is in need of actual accounts of *how* communities form affiliations through things like geographic proximity, language systems, "visible" difference, histories and memories (p. 1). Relatedly, in a 2011 special issue of *Reflections*, editor David Green points toward the long tradition of African American community literacy in arguing that "community-based organizations deserve more attention for the type of pedagogical training they provide" (p. 6). Along these lines, I contend that scholarly conversations about pedagogy benefit from a proliferation of localized accounts detailing the formation of cultural affiliations. Such accounts, I argue, can help us to see our classrooms as communal spaces, improving the likelihood of cultivating them as sustained and collaborative learning communities.

From Indigenous and decolonial perspectives, the relationship between cooking, foodways, and cultural identity represents a rigorous site of inquiry for rhetorical practice and its impact on the formation of community. The following sections employ a cultural rhetorics methodology of *community-making* offering a localized account of research that examines the relationship between Mexican cooking and Chicanx cultural identity. Through a series of cooking workshops and in-depth interviews, I worked with Connie and Eve to investigate the role cooking plays in building the cultural affiliations that tie the community together. During

each workshop, we would identify recipes, compare variations, and then collectively prepare a meal. This process of making created a rich data set including collectively shared stories and practices that have shaped my understanding of Chicanx diaspora, cultural foodways, and pedagogy. By placing Connie and Eve's experiences in historical context, I show how the continuation of Mexican cooking traditions tie Chicanxs to a shared set of experiences with migration and (de)colonization, and highlight how these traditions are rooted within Indigenous histories of the continent. In turn, I identify how these cultural practices and processes reflect an inherently community-based understanding of teaching and learning that can help to shift pedagogical discussions about community rhetoric toward a more relational framework.

Cooking as Community

In *Eating the Landscape: American Indian Stories of Food, Identity, and Resilience,* ethnobotanist Enrique Salmón (2012) observes that eating is both a political and a cultural act that reaffirms our place in the world, and he goes so far as to argue that when we eat old family recipes, we are literally eating our family and our culture[17] (p. 9). My relationship with Connie and Eve was initially grown (and continues to grow) through cooking. We met while attending graduate school and became friends by getting together regularly to cook. When we share and eat our family recipes together, it is a sensory experience that connects us across time and geography to our communities in Michigan, Mexico, and Los Angeles. As we cook, we share stories about life in other pueblos and neighborhoods, descriptions of the landscapes, and reflections on

[17] And some epigenetics research would agree. Studies have found that our health is determined not only by what we eat, but also by what our parents and grandparents ate. See Mcgowan, Meaney and Szyf's "Diet and the epigenetic (re)programming of phenotypic difference in behavior," as well as Kaati, Bygren, Pembrey, and Sjostrom's "Transgenerational response to nutrion, early life circumstance and longevity."

cooking techniques used by our mothers, grandmothers, and neighbors. When we cook we create a space of familiarity and belonging that allows us to connect over our cultural similarities. Eating each other's cultural memories in this way is an act of empathy, love and union. At the same time, the space we create with our cooking is also one of cultural exchange because while we are all Chicanxs, we also acknowledge that we come from communities in distinct cultural regions. It is through these kinds of informal experiences with cooking and conversing that we came to develop the oral history project upon which this chapter is based.

In what follows, I focus particularly on the parts of our conversations where Connie and Eve explain how they came to be stewards of cultural knowledge about cooking. The process of learning to cook heritage Mexican foods is one which is inseparable from being in and making communities. For Connie and Eve, learning to cook has been a process that reflects the diverse communities from which they come in Mexico and California, as well as their shifting experiences with Mexican foodways in moving to Michigan to attend graduate school. In the following sections, I address each of their stories separately, before moving on to have a larger discussion about the pedagogies of Mexican cooking that emerge from these stories and how they can be useful to teachers in higher education—Writing and Rhetoric in particular, but with relevance for teachers in related disciplines across the Social Sciences and Humanities.

Connie's Story

Connie grew up in a small pueblo in Oaxaca called Rojas de Cuauhtémoc.[18] As she

[18] The pueblo is presumably named after the emperor Cuauhtémoc, widely recognized as the last leader of the Mexica Empire, though the area is predominantly inhabited by Zapotec people. Connie describes Rojas as a "mestizo pueblo," largely because of the fact that most people in the village do not speak an Indigenous language. In many pueblos across Mexico, the distinction between "mestizo" and "Indigenous" is often determined by whether or not the majority of people in a given community speak an Indigenous language.

describes it, “Rojas is smaller than any US city I've been in. There's a church, a downtown plaza, all the people that sell food. Then it radiates. You have all the borders with the farms and people with a lot of land. Mostly everybody owns animals. There are no food chains. It's all just people selling what they're making.” Using ingredients mostly grown and produced in their region of Oaxaca, Connie’s mother and grandmother did the majority of cooking at home with their anafre—a wood-fire stove. They have grown a variety of foods at home as well, such as alfalfa, papaya, granada, agaucates, oregano, various greens, and when they used to own cows, the family also specialized in making and selling cheese.

After living in Oaxaca for nearly 10 years, Connie moved with her family to Los Angeles. She later moved by herself to the Massachusetts to attend an elite women’s college, and eventually to Michigan to work on her PhD in Biological Sciences. She began learning to cook after college, when she noticed that many younger people in her family seemed uninterested in learning recipes from her family and pueblo, particularly those who had moved to the United States. She explains how hers was not the typical process for learning recipes:

> Over there in Rojas, a lot of the recipe-learning happens when you get married. My sister learned how to make a bunch of stuff when she was married. So when she got married she learned from my mom and my grandma. The tradition is that right now if I'm not married I would still be living with my grandpa or my mom. And they cook. It's very hierarchical. That's why they're so surprised I know how to make this stuff. They tell me I’m still a kid.

Worried that family knowledge about cooking would be lost, Connie worked with her mom to begin learning to cook and has compiled more than 30 recipes for dishes such as tamales, tinga, enchiladas, and sopa into a cookbook she made using a three-ring binder. These recipes are

unique to her family and community in Rojas de Cuauhtémoc, and to the best of her knowledge, Connie is the first person in her family to ever write one of them down. As in many rural Mexican communities, it is traditional for recipes to be taught orally, through direct instruction from elder women in the family to younger women who have recently been married. However, because Connie has had to move around so frequently in order to pursue a career as a research scientist, she has adapted this learning process to fit her situation.

While her cookbook does put knowledge about cooking into written form, from an outside perspective, the writing on its own does not tell the whole story of how she came to cooking, or how the recipes reflect the landscapes and communities she is connected to in Oaxaca. Writing & Rhetoric scholars have warned against academia's over-reliance on written text to understand cultural knowledge systems. Malea Powell (1999) has argued that "[w]e need to theorize, and that theory can't engage in textual fetishism—neither by relying on alphabetic print texts nor by textualizing non-alphabetic objects (p. 11). Xicano scholar Marcos Del Hierro (2010) writes that the "over-privileging of textual-based knowledges…makes us ignorant of how other knowledges and conversations, such as those provided by food, create different and important pathways to greater understanding and agency" (p. 158). Approaches to the study of culture that over-privilege textual-based knowledge often enact what Salmón (2012) refers to as 'memory banking,' where knowledge is simply perceived to be stored for later retrieval through writing:

> Most Native people aren't comfortable with the idea of memory banking or preserving indigenous knowledge…This is because they consider that the knowledge itself has being-ness. The knowledge is a life force stewarded by those that maintain it while they speak the language. When it is transferred from person to person, a bond develops between the people, strengthened by the life of the information and by the shared

> linguistic meanings. In this manner, the memories remain alive as long as the people maintain them in situ. When, however, the knowledge is transferred to the static, literal, documented state, its life force dissipates. Separated from the contextual language, the cultural meanings are missing. (p. 56)

On its own, Connie's cookbook would be able to convey certain aspects of her pueblo's cultural knowledge, like the literal ingredients that are called for. However, the cookbook is simply one tool used by Connie as she works to steward the cultural knowledge of her pueblo's foodways. As this knowledge is shared between people, it creates cultural bonds within and amongst her family and pueblo. And as Connie has articulated it for me on several occasions, cooking helped to "cement our bonds" as friends and as Chicanxs in Michigan.

Knowledge, within the context of Indigenous Mexican cultures, is not understood as an inanimate object one comes to possess. It has a being-ness that is maintained through the bonds created between people when it is shared. Mexican recipes, therefore, are not simply transmissions of information that tell which ingredients to put together in order to make a particular dish. They are teachings that connect people across generations and geographies, oral histories that build knowledge through the continuation of embodied acts, such as grinding, roasting, frying, eating, and communing. For Connie, this involves an act of collaboration with her mother and grandmother to maintain food knowledge that feeds their sense of place in the world—as Mexicans, as Oaxaqueños, and as residents of the pueblo of Rojas de Cuauhtémoc. "Community" manifests as a sense of social responsibility each of them has to continue the cultural practices that connect them to this shared history and sense of belonging. Josie Méndez-Negrete (2016) writes that "the common assumption about food is that its preparation is often associated with oppression rather than power and creativity" (p. 7). While it is absolutely critical

to challenge gender roles that exploit the labor of women, those working with food should simultaneously be honored for the important cultural and political work that they perform. The act of cultural continuation is deeply embedded in the foundation of community, then, and is dependent upon individuals collaborating to contribute to the continuation of that community.

Community Inside/Outside of Academia

As teachers in higher education, creating a sense of community in our classrooms can be a major challenge, yet it is an essential aspect of effective teaching. Of course, community-based pedagogies in and of themselves are not a new concept to teachers in Writing and Rhetoric. Within Composition Studies, discussions about peer tutoring, group work, collaborative learning and other student-centered approaches to teaching have been discussed for decades. [19] Further, some digital rhetoricians have described a sense of connection to community as a central aspect of their digital rhetoric pedagogies (DigiRhet.org, 2006) and have complicated the role inclusion plays in communal phenomena (Colton, 2014). Many of these ideas are now widely accepted by writing instructors, and the conversations have become more focused on how best to orient students to the kinds of classrooms that are dependent on their active participation and willingness to invest time and energy into making the classroom a space which is not only dependent upon student learning, but also upon student's ability to teach one another.

Often times, when we say in academia that we do work "in the community," what we tend to mean is that our work stretches beyond the context of higher education and into local (usually non-academic) communities and/or into secondary educational settings. There is utility

[19] Among other important pieces are Kenneth A. Bruffee's "Collaborative Learning and the 'Conversation of Mankind,'" as well as John Trimbur's "Consensus and Difference in Collaborative Learning."

in distinguishing scholarship and teaching that are community-engaged from other kinds of academic work, because community-engaged projects come with their own unique challenges worthy of distinction and deserving of scholarly specificity. However, aside from making these practical distinctions, the binary framing between academia on the one hand and "the community" on the other, implies that academic communities do not count as "real" communities. In this framework, our classrooms are not counted as real communities, but are considered to be spaces in which we simply carry out exercises and prepare for students for their eventual encounter with the "real" world.

Moving beyond the inside/outside binary of academia is necessary in order to really see and treat our classrooms as real communities of people. Terese Guinsatao Monberg's (2004) work shows how theorizing recursive spatial movement within service-learning contexts can be helpful here. Monberg describes this approach as "writing *as* the community":

> Service-learning paradigms often assume, for example, that students must move across borders to encounter difference. I propose, instead, a different kind of movement: a recursive spatial movement that asks students to move within their own borders or communities, so they might listen for the deeper textures present in the place(s) they might call "home." (p. 22)

Monberg's complication of the idea that students must move across borders to encounter difference is a necessary intervention within and beyond the context of service-learning. Writing *as* the community breaks the oft-held assumption that "the community" is the place where students encounter difference, rather than helping students work to encounter something different within themselves or within their own communities. Students should be engaging with new ideas and with difference, yes, but writing *as* the community helps us to check the assumption that

students must cross borders in order to encounter difference. As a methodology enacted by Connie and Eve, *community-making* allows them to use Chicanx foodways as a way of performing the kind of recursive spatial movement about which Monberg is speaking. Allowing them to center their own cultural experiences, family recipes teach them the landscape of their familial history within the context of Mexican food traditions and Chicanx diaspora.

Eve's Story

Eve has roots in Sinaloa, Tijuana, and Jalisco in Mexico, and was born and raised in the Southgate neighborhood of Los Angeles. As a young adult he moved to northern California to go to college, and later to Michigan to do his graduate work in Writing & Rhetoric. On one of his first days in Nkwejong, we went to get take-out from La Estrellita, one of the few Mexican mercados in town, which is situated in a historically Chicanx section of the city, and ate together on the picnic tables outside. Over the next several years Estrellita became a cultural hub for us within a predominantly white city, a place of refuge we could visit while attending a predominantly white institution for grad school.

More recently, we returned to the picnic tables at Estrellita to have a conversation for this oral history project. We talked about his family, the local Mexican and Queer communities, and he told me a bit about how he learning to cook has come with its obstacles:

> Similar to how Connie's not really allowed to start learning how to cook until she's married, I just wasn't allowed period. This isn't a skill I was necessarily supposed to pick up. There's things men are allowed to do, like make meat. I actually didn't get recipes from my mom at first. That's more recent. I'd get recipes from my friends' moms, because asking my mom was laden with other things.

Gendered dynamics of cooking labor in many Mexican and Chicanx communities tend to place the burden of cooking upon women.[20] Men are often only expected to take initiative with cooking when it comes to making chivo, making an entire goat or cow, but are often relieved from (or sometimes even scolded for) doing other kinds of cooking. As a way of circumventing such conflict at home, Eve explains how he initially went elsewhere to learn some of his first recipes. In turn, this tactic helped gain Eve credibility with elders in his family.

While parents and grandparents are often the ones who pass down recipes and cooking practices, they are also protectors of the cultural knowledge rooted within these foodways and can therefore be skeptical of those who wish to learn:

> Sometimes they [elders] doubt your skill, but there are some ways I've been able to impress them. I had learned this enchilada recipe from my best friend's mom that involves 3 different types of chiles. And so I had made enchiladas for them and they were like, "what?" (laughs) And they were like, "what's this chili?" And I was like "Oh, I just made it..." And since then I got some, you know...credibility I guess because I impressed them. There's definitely been a game of winning credibility in the kitchen.

The "game of winning credibility" reflects what could be understood as a process of authentication, or a rite of passage, through which Eve becomes a steward of cultural knowledge about cooking. In doubting the skills of those who wish to become stewards, elders emphasize traditions that are important to be carried forward, and as exemplified by Eve's story, skillful cooking with chiles is seen as being particularly significant. Because chiles tie together the

[20] The scholarship of Meredith E. Abarca is important work on the gendered cultural dynamics of Mexican cooking. See *Voices in the Kitchen: Views of Food and the World from Working-Class Mexican and Mexican American Women*.

distinct regional identities within Mexico as well as a larger shared Mexican cultural identity, knowledge about chiles is central to understanding Mexican cooking.

In many Western educational frameworks, access to knowledge is often positioned as a universal right held by all people. This is contradictory, given the many barriers that still exist between working class communities and access to affordable education, yet the open-access mentality toward the acquisition of knowledge is widespread in many facets of academia regardless. From Indigenous perspectives, however, a totalizing application of the idea of open-access comes with a connotation of manifest destiny that was historically used to expand the boundaries of the Western frontier and destruction of many Indigenous knowledge systems. In turn, Indigenous communities are justifiably skeptical when the right to education, broadly conceived, is equated with access to any and all forms of cultural knowledge, which are created and maintained locally. Within Mexican communities, access to cultural knowledge is in some ways seen as a privilege that must be earned by an individual through their commitment to learning and upholding traditions. Emphasis is placed on the collective aspects of making by continuing the traditions of ancestors and community members and using cultural practices to create spaces that nourish and strengthen community bonds. Similar to how Mexican anthropologist Guillermo Bonfil Batalla (1996) explains that "[a]uthority in Indian villages accompanies social prestige, which is acquired throughout life by demonstrating the capacity for community service" (p. 35), games of winning credibility within the realm of Mexican cooking are a way of gauging one's level of commitment to cultural continuation and one's willingness to use their individual gifts to contribute to the community.

Teaching as *Community-Making*

Looking to Mexican cooking practices with a pedagogical lens turns our attention toward the culturally situated production of knowledge. Connie's story has shown how knowledge maintains a life force that is passed on as it strengthens relationships between people. Eve's story has shown how knowledge is structured through social processes of credibility and authentication to acknowledge those who have demonstrated commitment to traditional cultural practices. Underpinning these stories is a deeply embedded sense of community that drives both Connie and Eve to become stewards of cultural knowledge about cooking, and the rhetorical process of *community-making* they engage works to build the cultural affiliations that tie their communities together. "The making and spaces of food," as Casie Cobos (2012) suggests, "act as rhetorical practices that involve both the physical body and the collective (though ever-changing) cultural body" (p. 108). In this way, the continuation of these physical cooking acts connects Connie and Eve not only to their immediate familial and social surroundings, but to a shared cultural body of Chicanx traditions rooted in the knowledge of ancestral Mesoamerican communities.[21]

It is important to understand that the techniques involved with Mexican cooking, as well as the processes by which these techniques are taught and learned amongst Mexican community members, were originally created in contexts vastly different than we are living in today—socially, politically, and economically. Pre-Hispanic societies in the Americas were highly oriented toward communal ways of thinking and doing, and this orientation was reflected in the pedagogies they employed (and that many still continue to employ) in engaging acts of cultural

[21] While not all Chicanxs are descendants of Mesoamerica, Connie and Eve do situate themselves within the Mesoamerican diasporic experience.

continuation. Pedagogies of Mexican cooking are therefore aligned with a different set of values and are designed to serve different purposes than is typically the case within educational contexts modeled on Western paradigms. Our context within higher education is often laden with extreme capitalist values of efficiency and individualism, for example. The cooking that Connie and Eve have shared with me, conversely, are more centered around the relationship between the individual and the collective. Efficiency is acknowledged in certain ways—as when we choose to save time by using a blender instead of molcajete—yet long, drawn out cooking processes are often unavoidable and can even serve as a source of cultural pride.[22]

Our first cooking workshop was highly labor intensive and lasted more than five hours, and as a result, we were not left with much time for the discussion I had planned. As a researcher, I panicked a bit at the thought of not being left with as much data as I had anticipated, or least not the *kind* of data I had anticipated. After some reflection, it became clearer that I needed to change *how* I was listening to what Connie and Eve were showing me. Rather than simply focusing on what they had to say about the cooking processes, I realized that I needed to include a focus on the embodied experience of the cooking processes themselves. This focus on labor and embodiment conveys that traditional Mexican cooking is a process focused on physically engaging with peers toward the emergence of some kind of knowledge. Learning to cook Mexican food is very much about the act of making and the act of making *together*.

In discussing her use of the Mesoamerican philosophy *in ixtli in yollotl* in her first-year writing class, Ríos (2016) explains that it asks teachers to "provide guidance and resources a student can use as they embark on their own journey, setting *their own* limits for what and how

[22] The three of us don't mind boasting, for example, about how we once spent two whole days making more than 700 tamales as part of a fundraiser.

much they will learn with the only stipulation being that they understand knowledge is community based and embodied" (p. 91). Ríos also observes that students are not often accustomed to learning in this way, tending to perceive teachers as "not doing anything" when pedagogy is not heavy-handed (p. 88). *In ixtli in yollotl* is a student-centered philosophy in the sense that it is focused on making space for students to enact their own educational autonomy, yet it is built upon a cultural understanding of knowledge, teaching, and learning that is foundationally based in community. From this perspective, individual students are seen within the context of the group, not in isolation.[23]

In higher education, this kind of *community-making* is often not among the expectations students bring with them into class. Practically speaking, there are many ways teachers can help orient students to this kind of classroom: through activities that build affiliations among students, group work in which students craft collective goals and self-assign individual roles, and attention to the embodied aspects of the classroom and to the topics being explored. Yet, while facilitation of collaborative activities is an essential part of fostering a sense of community in the classroom, it seems not to go far enough without a more fundamental shift in pedagogical thinking that centers community as its foundation and the making of community as the primary action through which knowledge is built. It is not only that Connie, Eve and I have worked to create new Chicanx community in Michigan, but that there is a connection we share that actually precedes who we are as a group and who we are as individuals. It is a driving force that calls us to fulfill the social responsibilities we have to engage in our communities of ancestors, relatives, friends, and family members. Drawing upon these kinds of already existing affiliations make the process

[23] This is not dissimilar to what Marilyn Cooper (1986) has influentially called "the ecology of writing," re-envisioning writing communities as ecosystems and focusing on how individual writers operate within systems or ecosystems.

of *community-making* much easier, because we are not starting from scratch, but continuing old traditions and adapting them to our unique and present situation.

As teachers, then, it may help us to search for that which helps us call community into the classroom. Shifting our thinking toward classrooms as communities can help us to teach from a place of empathy and engrain classrooms with mutual respect. Approaching classrooms in this way can bring teachers closer to the "rhetorical sovereignty" and "rhetorical alliance"—concepts respectively developed by Scott Richard Lyons and Malea Powell—that Lisa King (2012) suggests as a pedagogical approach. While King calls upon these concepts within the context of teaching Native texts, her advice is applicable in broader contexts as well. She argues that what teachers need "is a way to refigure the classroom as meeting place, but one not cast in the vocabulary of domination and subordination or colonizer and colonized, of only clashing and grappling…we can choose different terms by which to address each other now, to begin seeking ways to speak to the common project we share and respect the projects in our respective communities" (p. 216). This is an approach to teaching that does not simply introduce the idea of community to students, but that models community founded on concepts of respect, reciprocity and relationality. Making these concepts visible within the course would allow students to make connections between how community is formed in the classroom, extending out to the formation of and relationships between communities across and beyond the university setting. In order to expand my discussion on the development of community-based pedagogies, in the following sections I offer a concrete example of how relational concepts are taught and learned in the context of Chicanx foodways.

A Constellation of Chiles

During this project, I held cooking sessions with Connie and Eve in which we shared family recipes and discussed our relationships to them. Ahead of our first session, I asked Connie and Eve each to choose a dish we could cook together, something that carried significance to their family or community. I had intentionally left the prompt vague so as not to lead them in the direction of a particular food and to give them space to be creative. Their plan for our session was that we would make *chiles rellenos* (stuffed chili peppers) three different ways: one recipe from Connie's family, one from Eve's, and a third recipe neither of them had made before. They explained to me that they chose this format because on one hand chiles rellenos is a definitively "Mexican" dish, yet there are countless recipes for it depending on where you're from in Mexico. In this constellation of recipes, chiles rellenos represent broadly shared "Mexican" and "Chicanx" identities while also making space for the existence of various regional identities within Mexico and the US as well.

Indigenous to the Americas, chiles are deeply rooted within the cultures of Mesoamerica and knowledge about them is carried forward by many Chicanxs who continue traditions of Mexican cooking. While they have made their way across the Americas and around the world, chiles remain uniquely interwoven with cuisines and identities from across Mexico, as well as with American Indian communities in the southwestern United States. The varieties and combinations of chili peppers that you use might reveal what region you are from, yet chiles in general are an essential part of virtually every Mexican cuisine, hence the popular Mexican saying "un día sin chile es como un día sin sol" (a day without chili is like a day without sunshine). Cultural knowledge about chiles, then, is a central element of *community-making* for Chicanx and Mexican people because it ties together our shared histories on this continent

despite the geographical displacement that has resulted from colonization and globalization. One's knowledge about cooking is dependent upon many things, but as exemplified by Eve's story, cooking skillfully with chiles carries a lot of weight in particular. It may be true that there's a strand of machismo associated with one's ability to withstand the heat of a chili, but there is much deeper cultural significance engrained within the relationship between Chicanxs and chiles as well. Chiles can be a rite of passage, both in terms of eating and cooking. Being able to eat them can show one's maturity as an individual, and being able to cook with them shows that one has achieved a certain level of literacy with cooking Mexican food. I will now speak briefly to each of the three recipes for chiles rellenos we made, before putting them in conversation with academic pedagogy.

Eve's Chiles Rellenos

Eve's chiles rellenos consists of his mom's recipe for red salsa and poblano peppers stuffed only with queso fresco. We began by charring the peppers on a comal (along with the ingredients for the salsa). As they were nearing completion, Eve and I have a brief exchange:

> Eve: We're gonna need a plastic bag to put these chiles in. Do you have paper towel? I'm like, something else must have been done before we were putting them in plastic bags. Leaves? Banana leaves? Or husks? My mom swears by plastic bags…they kinda get mad if you don't use plastic bags.
>
> Santos: Is that just so you have somewhere to put them?
>
> E: No, they steam. The thing about using poblano or pasilla peppers is they're thick-skinned, so you have to do this.

The steaming process is meant to soften the chiles, making them easier to clean. As Eve contemplates in this excerpt, the use of plastic bags must be a relatively recent adaptation of an older process. Leaves and husks are used during the steaming process for other dishes, like tamales, so it's a good estimation for how else chiles could be steamed.

After steaming the peppers for a few minutes, they are cleaned, stuffed with long slices of queso fresco and sautéed in red salsa for a few minutes before being served. Poblano peppers themselves are not spicy, and the red salsa can be adjusted depending on how many chiles are used. While we used chiles de arbol in this version of the recipe—the dried kind from one of our local mercados in Nkwejong—his family in LA would often use chiles from the plants they had growing in their yard.

Chiles Rellenos Oaxaqueños (Connie's Recipe)

Connie's filling for chiles rellenos is a complex mixture of savory and sweet that includes pork leg, cinnamon, raisins, almonds, tomatoes, olives and oregano—among many other ingredients. These are sautéed together in a pan while the chiles are being prepared: roasted on a comal, steamed in a plastic bag, and then cleaned with a knife or fork. If she were cooking with her grandma in Rojas de Cuauhtémoc, the chiles would have been tossed into the ashes leftover from the fire used to heat the comal before being placed in a plastic bag. Because we were cooking in my home kitchen and not on the kind of wood-fire stove common in many Mexican villages, this step was skipped. When the filling is done, the chiles are stuffed, wrapped and coated in flour. Finally, the chiles are dipped in an egg mixture immediately before being fried in oil and set aside.

> "This is how my grandma makes it. This is how my mom makes it. The story goes that my grandma didn't know how to cook, so my grandpa's mom, who had like 15 children, she taught her how to cook...this recipe and actually a lot of the things my grandma knows how to make are actually from my dad's mom."

While the written recipe for chiles rellenos in her cookbook calls for jalapeño peppers, people in her pueblo actually make them differently. She explains to me that "…in Oaxaca they make it with the really spicy chili. They don't use jalapeñoes. They use *chile de agua*, which is kind of like a poblano, but it's really light and green, bright green, and it's really spicy. So kids don't eat the chiles. They just eat the relleno."

Chile de agua is rare in the US because it has not been commercialized in the way that jalapeñeos or serranos have been, for example, so the only place outside of Oaxaca that Connie has been able to find them is in a Oaxacan neighborhood in LA. In turn, after moving to the US, Connie's mom began using jalapeños instead of chiles de agua. While the substitution of one chile for another might not seem (to some) like a dramatic shift, it is significant in that it reflects a common struggle among Chicanxs who must adapt recipes from Mexico to their changing circumstances in the US. Whereas the chile de agua is predominantly a regional chile in and around Oaxaca, and therefore contributes to the formation of a regional Oaxcan identity, the jalapeño is so ubiquitous that it connotes a much more general Mexican (or perhaps specifically Chicanx) identity.

Chiles en Nogada

This version of chiles rellenos was new to all of us, given to us by Connie's primo who is studying in Puebla to become a chef. This dish included green poblanos, covered in a white

walnut sauce and sprinkled with bright red pomegranate seeds. The people of Puebla created *chiles en nogada* shortly after Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821 (chiles rellenos, as a broader category, is centuries older). The colors of green, white, and red were meant to honor the tricolor flag of Agustín de Iturbide, the first emperor of Mexico (Pilcher, 1998, p. 139). The Puebloan *chiles en nogada*, then, carry with them a very different historical context—one rooted in Mexican nationalism and Puebloan regionalism—than do the chiles rellenos that reflect Connie's unique experiences growing up in the village of Rojas (which use chiles de agua) and in Los Angeles (which use jalapeños), or of Eve's experiences using home-grown chiles in Los Angeles. At the same time, because none of us have strong ties to this region of Mexico, our understanding of the recipe and its cultural context is limited to the written form of the recipe and that which I have read about the history of the dish.

Process & Embodiment

While each of these 3 recipes have been discussed separately, they were cooked simultaneously over the course of roughly 5 hours. The cooking session was a chaotic process that required a great deal of attention and multi-tasking. It was difficult for me to know which bits of chopping, frying, etc. I was doing were contributing to which recipe of chiles rellenos. The session also left the small kitchen in my house a beautiful mess: dishes stacked high in the sink; Connie's large bag of spices over-flowing across the counter; onion halves and quarters spread out randomly; pomegranate juice staining parts of the countertops, which were also sprinkled with powder from the batter we had made. It felt good to have made something, and to have evidence of it through smell and sight and touch and taste.

After we were finally done cooking and eating, we were all exhausted. I had originally planned on saving some more time for conversation, but seeing the tired look on Connie and Eve's faces, it was clearly time to be done for the day. As we finished up, we talked about how much work it has been for our mother's and grandmother's to keep their kitchens.

Eve mentioned that when you eat food someone has made for you, in a way, "you are literally eating their labor." Connie described how for many women, the vast majority of the day is dedicated to preparing food. There is always more to do, if not chopping or frying or grinding, then there is cleaning or planning or prepping. In this way, cooking our family recipes is not only about being able to eat particular foods. Cooking is also about re-producing an embodied form of empathy by engaging with the processes that recipes call for. Engaging in this process helps us to remember both the foods that have tied our families and cultures together, as well as the labor that has been required to make all of this possible.

Teaching Relationality

Relationality is a fundamentally Indigenous concept, a way of seeing one's self in relation to the surrounding world. Ultimately, relationality is also an essential aspect of being in and making community because it is a frame of mind that allows one to exist in nuanced relationship with the collective. In having us make chiles rellenos three ways, Connie and Eve make evident our relationships as friends and as participants in this research project. Coming from distinct cultural communities, we have communed through related cultural practices that draw from Indigenous knowledge about chiles, cooking, and *community-making*. Through this cooking session, Connie and Eve offer a relational way of thinking that makes space for cultural distinction as well as shared cultural attributes. Each recipe for chiles rellenos in our session

reveals significant affiliations that tie people to particular local identities and regional histories. The alteration of recipes, such as Connie's use of jalapeños instead of chiles de agua, reflect the impact of migration upon cultural practices and the resourcefulness of people to respond to shifting circumstances in keeping their traditions alive. This reflects the general truism that cultures are always mixing and changing, and it speaks most specifically to migratory experiences of Chicanx people. Envisioning Chicanx and Mexican identities as a constellation allows for movement within these identity markers, and for similar reasons, it is a useful way to also envision our work in the discipline.

Similarly, this sort of relational understanding has been offered by cultural rhetoricians through the metaphor of constellating:

> A constellation…allows for all the meaning-making practices and their relationships to matter. It allows for multiply-situated subjects to connect to multiple discourses at the same time, as well as for those relationships (among subjects, among discourses, among kinds of connections) to shift and change without holding a subject captive. (Powell et al., 2014)

Imagining research in the discipline as a constellation of cultural communities helps to make space for a diversity of rhetorical practices and knowledge systems to co-exist. Further, in discussing cultural rhetorics research methodology, Riley-Mukavetz explains that "respect, reciprocity, and accountability are not just things to do to be ethical, but a way to cultivate and maintain the relationships we form with people, spaces, land, and the universe" (p. 113). Attention to the relational aspects of both research and teaching are key to *community-making*. The question, again, becomes one of approach: how do we go about teaching relationality in our classroom, not only as a subject, but as a framework of analysis and understanding? How might

it look differently across a variety of courses, such as first-year writing, to professional writing, and in graduate seminars?

In terms of teaching, constellating and relationality are concepts that can be utilized as frameworks for students to do critical thinking, and this can be practiced in any number of ways, such as mapping exercises in which students visualize relationships with and between communities (Anderson 2015; Haas 2012). This draws attention both to the nuances of how particular communities are tied together (like through cooking practices) and to the relationship between distinct communities, as well as the relationship between institutions, systems of oppression, identity, and culture. Relational forms of critical analysis, such as these, lend themselves very well to community-minded pedagogies because they make space for all of our students to exist simultaneously, in relationship to one another, and to their varying experiences and privileges with discrimination.

Conclusion: Community-Making & Relational Thinking

We often ground our teaching within bodies of scholarly knowledge, but who we are as teachers is often framed as being distinct from who we are as keepers of culture. As this chapter has shown through the rhetorical use of Mexican cooking and through critical scholarship on pedagogy, *community-making* and relational thinking are central to Indigenous pedagogies inside and outside of the college classroom, and these pedagogies often center culture: the cultures students bring with them into our classrooms as well as the culture of the classroom that we collaborate with students to make. By grounding ourselves in a relational understanding of the community rhetoric that our classrooms enact, we can make space to bring a fuller version of ourselves into our work, and to allow students to do the same.

CHAPTER 4: SUSTAINABLE FOOD RHETORICS

Rhetorics That Sustain

Race and ethnicity are often discussed in isolation from environmental concerns. In this chapter, I want to show some of the ways in which cultural identity and the formation of community are intertwined with issues of sustainability, with hopes that disparate conversations about social justice rhetorics, rhetorics of race, and environmental rhetorics can be further shifted towards a model of interdependence. As a primary example, I will draw from my work with MICCA members to examine how some of these links are formed specifically through Mexican food practices in Michigan. I distinguish MICCA's approach from Chicanx cultural reclamation projects that are grounded in a framework of mestizaje, offering alternative ways of understanding cultural mixing grounded in ongoing acts of cultural continuation through cooking and small-scale agriculture.

My thinking in this chapter is also influenced by a session sponsored by the American Indian Caucus at the 2017 Conference on College Composition and Communication, where a group of scholars used the concept of Three Sisters companion planting to cultivate a vision of Indigenous rhetorics.[24] This metaphor helps us to think about the work of the discipline in deep and holistic ways, encouraging scholars to envision their work as part of a system in which all of the various parts are connected and participating reciprocally. I build upon these ideas to offer a decolonial perspective on negotiations between Indigeneity, migration, and foodways. Whereas

[24] The session included work by Malea Powell, Andrea Riley-Mukavetz, Catheryn Jennings, Joyce Rain Anderson, Jaquetta Shade, Cindy Tekobbe, Luhui Whitebear-Cupp, Lisa King, and Qwo-Li Driskill.

previous chapters have drawn heavily from my cooking sessions with Connie and Eve, the following sections also build up Elba's experiences to highlight some of the intersections between foodways, *community-making*, and Chicanx identity.

Elba's story

Elba Mandujano grew up in south central Los Angeles and has roots in rural pueblos in Guanajuato and Michoacán. In the following excerpt, she explains a bit about her interests in learning how to cook when she was younger and living at home:

> My mom always said she wasn't really the best cook, so she never really taught me how, but I would always try to figure it out...just putting things together. There was something about putting things together that just felt good for me, with food and trying to figure it out and make it taste good. The other thing too was that we come from a low income family, so everything for my mom was about...it wasn't always about traditional dishes, it was just like what could she make work with the little that we had? And a lot of it was the only thing she knew coming from Mexico.

Elba's description reflects an intersection between class and culture wherein foodways are greatly influenced by one's economic conditions. While certain foods can be much more expensive in the US than they are in Mexico, such as avocados, others remain relatively inexpensive while also being extremely filling—rice and beans, for example. This speaks to the resourcefulness required of migrant Mexican communities in being able to adapt their cooking practices to these kinds of common financial constraints.

While Elba has always identified as Mexican, it wasn't until her junior year of high school that she began identifying as Chicana.

> "American" identity was not something that I had. It was always "Mexican." But when my maestro in high school started explaining what "Chicana" was, I was like, "this is something I can relate to...these experiences of being in the middle and not feeling fully one thing or fully the other thing.' And it was from there that I started learning the term, and then in undergrad having that experience of being able to create those spaces, create a community and bring awareness and I guess put a name to what a lot of the students talk about or feel, but they don't really know how to identify, was something I knew that I wanted to continue doing, which led me to applying to grad school so I could continue creating these spaces in academia. And create a community and a space of belonging.

Elba came to Michigan to get her Master's degree in Student Affairs Administration, and we became close through our work together in MICCA—she served as the group's first President. In doing this organizational work, food and cooking were central to our approach to building community. We organized a retreat for the group, for example, that included cooking workshops and plenty of time dedicated to eating and visiting with one another. These parts of the retreat were not intended to be breaks from the other, "real" work we had intended to do—envisioning, strategizing, and crafting mission and vision statements. Rather, we considered cooking and eating to be an important opportunity for members of the group both to build relationships with one another and for us to share skills and knowledge about cooking.

One of the primary goals of MICCA as an organization has been to create the kinds of cultural spaces on campus that would help to sustain Chicanx graduate students during their programs. Here, Elba explains why food was such an important part of her time in Michigan and as a member of MICCA:

> food was so important to me was because food I felt was one of the very few things that engaged all my senses to create a memory, or to create a space where I felt connected. So I can smell the food. I can touch whatever I'm making. I can taste it. I can hear if something's boiling. Something's in the licuadora. Especially when it was that people were together making food, it was like all those stories that you make while making food is so essential and important and a part of me.

Elba describes the creation of memory as the engagement between food and senses. Smelling, touching, tasting, seeing, and hearing food being made is what creates a space in which she can feel connected. Yet this experience is not simply about remembering the past. It's also about creating something new. Cooking, in this sense, has a social dynamic that facilitates the collaborative creation of, as Elba puts it, "all those stories that you make while making food."

This dynamic of creating new community through food is reminiscent of Lidia Marte's (2008) foodmapping work with Dominican migrant communities in New York City. Martes writes that a "focus on food in spatial and historical movements, and in the lived experiences of immigrants, helps us research the formation of immigrant communities as they emerge within complex domestic/public negotiations in the new society, not as preexisting groups" (p. 62). This focus on the emergence of new immigrant communities does not exclude from consideration the communities from which migrants come. Rather, these communities are central to the formation of new migrant communities, such as Chicanx communities in Michigan. Furthermore, it is difficult to neatly separate out one's "home" community from the "new" community in total isolation from one another. Relationships are continued simultaneously with both (or multiple) places, as ongoing interactions between the landscapes, traditions, and beliefs that are enacted by the people who are members of each of these communities.

While Elba grew up in Los Angeles, she has maintained relationships with family in La Presa, Guanajuato throughout her life. In our conversations, she explained the importance of visiting the pueblo:

> going to Guanajuato for me was important because (La Presa) is a really small pueblo and I felt like I needed to be in a space where I just reconnected with people. One of the big things is that the cooking style is different. The cooking happens outside with the logs and they have to make the fire outside and everybody gets together. It brings community together.

Similar to cooking with MICCA, cooking in the pueblo is an act of *community-making* focused on nourishing relationships and creating a sense of belonging and shared identity. Cooking, in these contexts, is embodied and works to create stories and memories that link together members of a community through social interactions. As Elba observes, however, there are also key distinctions in the spacial contexts of these two places. The spacial context of MICCA is one of being connected to a predominantly white institution in which Chicanx communities are a small minority. In La Presa, Elba is more immediately surrounded by the community from which her sense of identity and culture is grown. For this reason, the work of MICCA was often centered around creating spaces in which people could experience a greater sense of belonging, which included a great deal of logistical planning—fundraising, event planning, etc.

In maintaining relationships with these communities, Elba shows how foodways are a common thread that connect her experiences across these regions. In his work with taco literacies, Steven Alvarez (2016) explains how food can sustain affective connections across borders and languages, and that such connections hold a great deal of pedagogical value.

Borrowing from Ben Highmore's concept of "sensual pedagogy," Alvarez discusses how food can serve as a way into teaching at the intersections of writing, race, identity, and language.

> Food can sustain affective connections and build publics across borders and languages. These important, emotional networks should not be overlooked. Rather, composition classes can access them by engaging students in a sensorial literacy that includes embodied, emotional experiences—like eating and thinking about eating—experiences that activate students' imaginations and fire their will to act.

Importantly, Alvarez draws our attention toward the emotional networks people create through food, which can sustain communities across cultural difference, language barriers, and the imposition of colonial borders. Elba's migration story is reflected in the varied experiences of people who migrate across the US-Mexico border and are faced with the reality of trying to maintain connections to their home communities while living abroad. Furthermore, this discussion of migration and identity brings attention to the broader phenomenon of cultural mixing itself. In the following sections, I will show further how these changes take place through shared, intentional acts of creation among community members.

Community-Making **the Pueblo**

Because Chicanxs must adapt their foodways to the new communities, networks and bioregions to which they've migrated, the result is a mixing together of cultural practices that reflect both new and old communities at once. As I detail in chapter 2, I do not find mestizaje on its own to be an adequate framework of analysis for Chicanx diaspora because of how it places such an emphasis on biological elements of culture. Foodways often have much more to do with people's lived social experiences and their relationship to land/place than they do with creating a

biological link between generations—though this, too, can be important. The way Michicanx communities suture together new and old food practices is akin to Maylei Blackwell's *retrofitted memory*[25] that uses "fragments of older histories that have been disjunctured by colonial practices of organizing historical knowledge or by masculinist renderings of history that disappear women's political involvement in order to create space for women in historical traditions that erase them" (p. 1). Cooking is a particularly gendered cultural practice in Mexican communities that places immense labor upon women at the same time that masculinist activist perspectives often strip it of its political importance.

> As Blackwell explains, *retrofitted memory*
>
> draws from other Chicano cultural practices, such as the *rasquache* aesthetic, or customizing of cars, that use older parts…to refine existing bodies or frameworks. By drawing from both discarded and suppressed forms of knowledge, retrofitted memory creates new forms of consciousness customized to embodied material realities, political visions, and creative desires for societal transformation. (p.2)

For Elba, as well as for Connie and Eve, this includes suturing together memories and practices from communities in Los Angeles and Mexico as they engage in *community-making* in Michigan. These networks often revolve around maintaining relationships specifically between rural Mexican pueblos and urban spaces in the US.

While MICCA members are often able to create cultural spaces with the heritage foods they cook and share, the process by which these foods are processed and accessed is drastically

[25] Blackwell explains that retrofitted memory is a form of countermemory. She writes that George "Lipsitz suggests another mode of remembrance, that of countermemory, which, unlike myth, does not detach itself from a larger historical context. As Lipsitz defines it, "Countermemory forces revision of existing histories by supplying new perspectives about the past. Countermemory focuses on localized experiences with oppression, using them to reframe and refocus dominant narratives purporting to represent universal experience." (p. 101)

different in Michigan[26] than in Los Angeles or Mexico. Discussing some of the differences between foodways in La Presa vs. US, Elba observes, "…it is different in terms of food here (Michigan)...food out there is more often than not fresh because it's things that they're growing, things they have right there, whereas right here a lot of it is processed or it's in the markets or is Americanized." Whereas in rural Mexican villages foods are often grown and animals raised and slaughtered locally, this has been much less common in the experiences of MICCA members in LA and Michigan. In order to be able to cook our heritage foods in Michigan, we often rely on ingredients that we can find in sparse local mercados, where products are by-and-large imported from other parts of the country. Even in these specialized mercados, the only varieties of fresh chiles that can consistently be found, for example, are serranos, jalapeños, and poblanos. Most supermarket chains do not carry dried chiles, but the Mexican markets in Nkwejong tend to carry a large selection of these, which are predominantly grown and shipped to Michigan from the Southwestern US.

As explained in the previous chapter, this dynamic often causes Michicanxs to adapt recipes depending on which ingredients they have access to. As a result, tensions often surface concerning the "authenticity" of recipes that have been adapted, as well as the authenticity of people whose cultural identities become tied to these allegedly "inauthentic" versions of traditional recipes. Here, Eve explains a bit about how the word and identity "Chicano" itself can be perceived by those who identify more strictly as "Mexican":

> if I tell my parents or people back home I'm Chicano, they might see it as kind of white-washy. They're like, no you're a Mexican. I'm like, no, that's what that means. And that's

[26] As an agriculturally focused institution, MSU does a better than many universities at using locally produced crops. The issue of access here, however, is wrapped up in a lack of access to foods with cultural foods specific to places in California and Mexico. Many of these foods can only be found local in mercados.

> where I've come at it from now, like no, it *means* that. I'm not trying to erase that. But I think sometimes people see it as trying to erase that. But for me...I've never lived in Mexico, so it's also right. It made me think of that in food today, too. How we kind deal with that, but have learned to make shit.

While there exist many origin stories about the term, many point toward the Chicano Movement as a moment when the term "Chicano" was at least popularized to denote a "new" Mexican-American positionality that embraced its Indigenous roots and shunned assimilation or integration into mainstream, white American society (García, 1997, p. 25). The disconnect between "Mexican" and "Chicanx" is often due to the fact that Chicanxs are accounting for a migratory experience that many Mexicans never experience when we use this term to refer to ourselves.

In terms of food practices, living in the US can often require a level of resourcefulness in order to adapt Mexican recipes. This is why Meredith Abarca (2004, p. 4 & 10) has argued that claims of authenticity eliminate the creative energy of future generations, preferring to use "originality" in its place. In the following excerpt, Eve further reflects on the relationship between this kind of creativity and Chicanx identity:

> I feel like the word "Chicano" is fraught with notions of authenticity, which is one of the reasons I wanted to cook with canned salsa...because I think that's a really contentious food item. With chilaquiles me and Connie were talking about resourcefulness...like chilaquiles it's a really resourceful dish. It's cheap. You can put in whatever you have. I found a way to make it with cans. I also like making it with cans because it's consistent. I know I can control the flavor. Whereas if I make a salsa sometimes I might not be exactly right. It's always a little funny because I shit on canned things, but I love Pato sauce.

For Eve, changes in how he makes dishes like chilaquiles inform his identity as a Chicanx. This negotiation shows how "[t]he entanglements of food, memory and home are shaped by particular sociocultural and historical locations that condition the boundaries of our daily survival" (Marte, 2008, p. 47-48). Avoiding a conception of authenticity as being fixed in time, this fluidity with cooking makes space for his positionality within Chicanx diaspora, noting also that he thinks "it's weird to say that a cuisine won't change. It's changed in Mexico, too...today." The adaptation of these recipes, then, are acts daily survival that help people to make sense of the tension between traditional recipes and the shifting circumstances that alter them.

Whereas Eve's sense of being Chicanx is tied to the fact that he has never had the experience of living in Mexico—and as Elba explained earlier, of "being in between"—Connie identifies as Chicana despite being raised in a rural pueblo in Oaxaca for the first 11 years of her life:

> Before I knew what the word meant, I thought it was for people who grew up in the US that at some point their families had heritage in Mexico, but they themselves had never been there. And I actually lived there, so when I first came I actually resisted it. There was a long time when I felt like the US is not my home. Mexico is my home. And then over time it became my home. And that's when I embraced 'Chicana.' Things fundamentally changed. My thinking has changed, my identity, what I like has changed. Things I eat, my diet, it's different. That's when I was like, 'you're right. I'm Chicana.'

While people in Connie's pueblo grow many of their own ingredients and raise their own animals for meat and dairy products, in the US the majority of these products have needed to be purchased in supermarkets, and in Michigan, supermarkets ship many of these ingredients in from other parts of the country. Connie has been intentional about learning the recipes of her

pueblo and family, but she is often unable to do so (or has to drastically adapt them) because of a lack of access to Mexican/Oaxacan ingredients. On several occasions, for example, Connie's mom would send us mole (made by one of her friends, using more than 50 ingredients) through the mail because we were not able to find the ingredients we needed anywhere in Michigan. We would take the mole and add it to chicken we had prepared to make tamales de mole for different events we were organizing as MICCA.

Connie and Elba both express the extreme importance of their pueblos in Mexico in the formation of their ongoing cultural identities and sense of belonging in the world. In rural Mexico, one's identity is often rooted first and foremost in the pueblo. The pueblo is the community you are surrounded by most immediately, and many are also geographically isolated, separated by dense forests and connected by a limited amount of winding roadways. While deforestation and urban development have changed this somewhat in recent years, this spacial dynamic further reinforces people's identification *with* and *as* the pueblo. When I asked Elba about the different identities that people in her family carry, she told me the following story:

> People in my family identify as Mexicanos for sure. They also use a term called *tejónes*. It's really an identity that people from that small pueblo picked up. Where we're from in La Presa, Michoacán, there's these really kind of ugly animals called *tejónes* and people from the pueblos from the surrounding areas would make from of the people in La Presa and say "oh, you're a *tejón*..." just to make fun of them. But then there's people in La Presa who began they calling themselves *tejónes* in a prideful way, so even people who are from there who have gone to different areas, across Mexico and the US, call themselves *tejónes*.

All of the participants in my study identify as Chicanxs, but they also hold other ethnic identities like Mexicanx, Oaxcaña, Indigenous, as well more regional/local identities that are tied to specific pueblos. While some Chicanxs have come to be further removed from the rural pueblos of Mexico over time, identification with the pueblo does not necessarily disappear. It adapts and changes, but, if nourished, there still exists a relationship.

Both "Chicanx" and "MICCA" have served as identities that create a sense of belonging and that name a specific set of experiences for people in this Michicanx community. "Chicanx" ties them to a legacy of Mexican-American activism and of cultural continuation. "MICCA" names even more specifically their experiences as Chicanxs in Michigan, and serves as a pueblo-like community. Foodways are integral throughout the layering of these identities and positionalities, providing a means by which members sustain connections to home communities and traditions while also engaging in cultural exchange to make new community locally in Nkwejong. Without conflating this community with the pueblo structures of rural Mexico, it can be noted how MICCA has at least served as a replacement for the sense of community that, in Mexico, was provided by the pueblo.

> For me the biggest component of MICCA was getting folks together, bringing people from different fields and different areas and community members to create a genuine community that created the programs that, for some of us, reminded us of home or family, and connected to something that in a way made us feel at home. And for me MICCA was home when I was there and part of it.

Here Elba highlights the space created by MICCA that allowed people to gather and feel a sense of belonging. While heritage foods are often capable of creating feelings of home and belonging all on their own, the social aspects of MICCA's foodways also play a major role as well. It is

through these social dynamics that kinship is formed, that identities can be nourished, and that people can begin to work together toward shared goals—for MICCA, these goals were primarily cultural, political, and educational. Through its *community-making*, MICCA members use cooking as a method of tying together cultural practices from various parts of Mexico and Los Angeles with the formation of new cultural communities in Michigan.

Conclusion: Sustaining Food Rhetorics

Being in the diaspora means that there is tension between one's sense of culture and one's sense of place. Along these lines, Enrique Salmón (2012) has argued that "[c]ultural survival can be measured by the degree to which cultures maintain a relationship with their bioregions" (p. 29). I have shown in chapter 3, for example, how the use of certain verities of chile peppers help Chicanxs to maintain relationships with the specific communities and bioregions in Mexico. Gaining access to heritage chiles can be difficult in Michigan, and recipes are therefore often adapted. The longer migrant communities spend away from their "home" bioregions, the more that new formations of cultural identity begin to emerge as amalgamations of new and old cultural practices and relationships. "Chicanx" and "Michicanx" have been grown out of this kind of diasporic situation, as terms that frame the experiences of Mexican people who have migrated northward. While these cultural affiliations and formations are new in the sense that they name current and recent cultural relationships to place and identity, they are rooted in food practices that are extremely old. In turn, I would like to conclude this chapter by discussing some of the sustaining food practices that tie together Indigenous communities from various parts of the continent. These sustaining food rhetorics offer scholars a pathway toward thinking about the relationships between environment, culture and social justice.

For thousands of years, Indigenous people across North America have participated in what many scientists and farmers know today as *intercropping*—growing two or more crops together within the same space in a beneficial manner. In *Original Local: Indigenous Foods, Stories, and Recipes from the Upper Midwest*, Lise Erdrich (2013) tells a version of the story of the 3 sisters—perhaps the most widely known example of intercropping. The story explains how the plants of corn, beams, and squash are grown together in a symbiotic fashion[27]. Beyond simply showing how these plants can be grown for consumption, the story highlights the important lessons of interdependence and reciprocity—each plant's well-being is dependent on the other plants, and each has its role to play in order to make the system both efficient and beneficial for all of the plants.

Further south, the Three Sisters are known as Las Tres Hermanas and to others as Los Tres Amigos del Pobre (The Three Friends of the Poor). Chile sometimes replaces squash, or is considered a fourth sister, and makes it easier to digest the proteins in beans and corn[28]. Guillermo Bonfil Batalla (1997) identifies the growing of corn, beans, squash, and chile together as the classic *milpa* of Indian agriculture[29]. Together, these plants work not only to produce crops, but to regenerate the soil so that the process can be replicated. Even in terms of nutrition, the plants together comprise the foundation of a diet that has sustained Indigenous peoples for thousands of years. Indigenous communities have long understood the benefits of the regenerating Three Sisters approach, but recent scientific studies have also shown it to yield more energy (12.25 x 106 kcal/ha) and more protein (349 kg/ha) than when the individual crops

[27] This version of the story actually also involves the sunflower, which some add to their 3 sisters' plot.
[28] In a related way, nxtilmization, an Indigenous technique for processing corn, adds nutrients and also makes the corn more easily digestible.
[29] La milpa, however, is not confined to these crops specifically. The Huastec of northern Veracruz, for example, grow a diversity of crops together, including varieties of root crops, tubers, cereal grains, agaves, vegetables, and fruits (Batalla 25).

of corn, beans, and pumpkin/squash are grown separately, among other nutritional benefits (Mishra 2017; Mt. Pleasant 2015). Still today, la milpa stands as a model of self-sustainable agriculture—both a symbol and a practice of cultural sustainability. Like the agricultural practice of the milpa, traditional diets such as this are complete, self-sustaining, and regenerative.

I offer this description of the 3 Sisters because it is a link between Indigenous communities from across the continent capable of helping those in diaspora to feel a sense of familiarity where they may often feel hostility and isolation as displaced migrant people. Simultaneously, it brings attention back to our environment, reminding us to respect the land and the people who belong to it. Furthermore, the 3 Sisters are resistance to the capitalist forms of land management, diet, and economy that are responsible for displacing Indigenous people from their ancestral homelands. Intercropping as a concept really only makes sense today in contrast to the proliferation of monocropping and the broader industrialization of agricultural practices that are also associated with capitalism. Before industrialization, intercropping was common practice.

In a cultural sense, I have argued throughout this dissertation that notions of the authenticity of Mexican foodways work both to protect cultural knowledge while also reflecting a disconnect between Mexican and Chicanx experiences with diaspora. However, as complicated practices that reflect the relationship between humans, landscapes, and their systems, foodways also broach many other areas that are also spiritual, economic, environmental, and more. Indigenous worldviews do not treat these categories are being disparate, but as being deeply intertwined with one another. In weaving together both old and new foodways, then, it is not enough to enact food practices that nurture cultural identities that maintain this kind of

separationg from the bioregions that surround. This relationship itself should be made central to the formation of cultural identity.

If "Chicanx" as a cultural identity and political positionality is meant to resist uncritical Americanization, I contend that greater strides must be made to recognize how Chicanx culture—even or especially when it comes to cultural foodways—is intertwined with environmental concerns, including sustainable agriculture. Because Chicanxs understandably want to retain a connection to "home" and a sense of belonging with our communities in Mexico, we often come to rely on processed foods, many of which are produced unsustainably and unethically. Additionally, many studies have shown that the health of Latinxs drastically deteriorates once migrating to the United States (Calvo & Esquibel, 2015, p. 27). While there are a multitude of reasons for this, it would be appropriate to again see this as being at least partially connected to the fact that in order to continue cooking and eating heritage foods in the US, Chicanxs and Latinxs are often forced to rely on highly processed food items.

Given this context, are Chicanx foodways, then, tied specifically to processed foods and foods that are produced unethically? Because of globalization and industrialization, it must be acknowledged that the proliferation of processed foods is something that communities around the world are experiencing. At the same time, "Chicanx" as an identity makes space for this particular positionality within Mexican and Mesoamerican diaspora—northward migration across the border—yet it does not inherently address the impact of cooking with processed foods on the health of Chicanxs, environmental impact, or the unethical treatment of animals in meat industries. These issues, I argue, should become a more central concern for scholars of Chicanx Studies moving forward. Environmentalist Devon Peña (2010) sees some reason for optimism in this regard, noting how many young scholars are starting to focus on issues of food justice. He

writes that “[o]ur traditional focus on cultivating interdisciplinary collaboration across the social sciences and humanities is the hallmark of the Chicana/o studies trajectory. Given the challenges posed by the environmental justice struggle, it may also be time for us to build an extended bridge that links us to environmental scientists" (p. 156). This shift is not about challenging the “authenticity” of Mexican recipes that are cooked with processed foods. It is a recognition of the idea that decolonial projects must not only work to attain symbolic goals that serve one community in particular, but to build sustainable communities that exist in collaboration with adjacent communities.

In this chapter, I have put into conversation sustainable Indigenous and Chicanx *community-making* practices that highlight the intersection between community and environmental rhetorics. Whereas mestizaje is often taken up by scholars in ways that over-emphasize biological links between Chicanxs and Pre-Columbian people, I have enacted a framework that shows how MICCA members use their foodways to maintain relationships with their communities in Mexico and to simultaneously create Chicanx cultural spaces in Nkwejong. Building upon the work of MICCA, I have proposed that scholars of Chicanx Studies pay greater attention to environmental issues and the relationship between cultural and environmental sustainability. Because foodways are so deeply intertwined with both cultural identity and the environment, food rhetoric is a useful approach to studying the relationship between them. While I have not attempted to define a cuisine that is distinctly Michicanx, I hope my descriptions here provide some insight into the unique diasporic experiences of Michicanx communities in Michigan through a consideration of this community’s foodways.

CHAPTER 5: THE (DIGITAL) STORYING OF CHICANX FOODWAYS

"I offer the spirits food for what they speak to us in these pages. I cannot make whole the stories. This is part of the soul wound, the susto, of that which was disappeared or was usurped by oppressors. But I can leave these offerings because, over the hundreds of years since these books were created, enough knowledge of the old ways remained to arrive to me."

-Patrisia Gonzalez, *Red Medicine*

Cultural Technologies

In previous chapters, I have examined the function of particular tools in cooking and in research. In chapter 2, for example, I consider the molcajete as a metaphor for the relationship I have with this research, and as an anti-capitalist tool that emphasizes slow methods and healing from the trauma of colonization. In chapter 3, tools such as the comal play a prominent role in the cooking scenarios with research participants that I describe. These ancient technologies were developed to make easier the processing of foods such as maize and chiles, and much like food itself, have become a significant part of the cultural identities of the communities that created and continue to use them.

In related, yet distinct way, this chapter analyzes how digital tools are used to tell stories about food, arguing for a cultural analysis of digital technologies that understands them both as products of the underlying economic and political systems that have produced them, as well as makers of those underlying systems. By putting decolonial food studies in conversation with media theory and the digital humanities, this chapter emphasizes the importance of studying the ideology and epistemology reflected within both digital and non-digital technologies. Finally, in order to speak across these subject areas, the chapter focuses on story as a theoretical device that works to explain and contextualize Michicanx foodways.

Food Stories

Entering my grandma Tina's house on Christmas Eve as a child, I remember the warm aroma of rice, beans, and tamales rolling over my entire body. I remember a tingle in my stomach, my eyes welling up slightly, and a rush of adrenaline. The smell of her cooking brought with it an awareness that seemed overwhelming—a strong feeling of emotional and physical connection. I have come to learn in different ways throughout my life that this connection is rooted in my family's foodways, and that our foodways help to explain a lot about who we are and where we come from. They reflect our history in rural pueblos of Michoacán and Nuevo León, our struggle as migrant farmworkers, and our experiences as Mexican people living in small towns across southwestern Michigan. When I cook my grandma's recipes, I am experiencing their life force and nurturing a connection to my family and ancestors, as well as to a broader set of diasporic experiences shared among migratory Mexican peoples.

I wanted to begin the chapter with this small story because it helps to explain my connection to the research I will discuss in this chapter on Mexican foodways and (digital) storying—that is, the making of stories in both digital and non-digital formats. Like the foods I describe, this story connects me to specific communities of people, and it situates me within a larger historical narrative layered by colonization. Mexican oral cooking traditions rely on storytelling, or pláticas, (Méndez-Negrete, 2016, p. 4). Recipes, as Enrique Salmón (2012) has written, "act like stories that are told and retold in different ways depending on the storyteller or, in this case, the cook" (p. 9). A major concern among Mexican-American communities revolves around younger generations who are raised in the US not being interested in learning about traditional Mexican cultures, and the foodways of their traditional cultures in particular.

Simultaneously, when youth do have an interest in these things, it can be hard for them to access particularly if they live in regions of the country where Mexican people are an extreme minority, such as the Midwest.

In turn, this chapter examines the potential for digital forms of storytelling to help aid communities in being able to continue cultural knowledge about ancestral foodways. "Indigenous digital storytelling and research are as much about the process of community relationships as they are about the development of digital products and research outcomes" (Iseke and Moore, 2011, p. 20). This passage helps to explain the relationship between what I call in this chapter "digital storying" and the methodology of *community-making* that I develop throughout my dissertation. The digital storying[30] of Chicanx foodways centers the process of community-building as much as (or perhaps even more than) it centers the creation of digital products. Beyond acknowledging the potential/limitations of doing DH as decolonial research with cultural foodways, I am interested in theorizing the ways in which food and technology reflect ideological and epistemological worldviews.

To further explore these topics, I will discuss two digital projects that I have been building to engage in storytelling about Mexican foodways in Michigan. I began this work as a Fellow in the Cultural Heritage Informatics (CHI) Program within the Matrix Digital Humanities Research Lab at Michigan State University, and I have continued to develop them alongside my dissertation research. Building upon these projects, I discuss the role of cultural and theoretical frameworks in digital scholarship as well. Finally, I draw specific connections between the fields

[30] I'm using this term because my work doesn't seem to exactly fit with what people call "digital storytelling," which is often used specifically to refer to the approach of creating videos primarily with still images and narrative audio laid over the top.

of Writing and Rhetoric and DH, arguing for a Cultural Rhetorics approach to digital scholarship that prioritizes the critical theorization of digital technologies and their political—economic, cultural, and social—apparatuses.

Project 1: Michicanxs of Aztlán

As a CHI fellow, I began building *Michicanxs of Aztlán: Stories of Chicanx Culture in Michigan*, a website that presents a collection of memoirs about my experiences with Mexican culture in Michigan. The website uses a combination of written text, photography, and embedded songs to reflect some of the tensions experienced by Michicanx communities as they relate to identity, cultural practice, and the formation of community across geographical and temporal distance. In this context, "Aztlán"[31] is meant to refer to the connective cultural body that binds many Chicanx, Mexican, and Mexican-American communities together, aligned also with Miner's (2014) description of Aztlán as an artistic and cultural "utopian and revolutionary gesture toward Indigenous (Xicano) sovereignty" (p. 12). As "Michicanxs" combines "Michigan" and "Chicanx," the project's title acknowledges both the distinctness of and the connection between Michicanx culture and other Mexican cultures in the US.

"Tamale Power," one of the memoirs from the website, is a longer version of the story that began this dissertation chapter. The story pulls from holidays spent at my grandma's house as a child to show how embodied cultural memory lives through the smell, feel, and taste of Mexican food. I use the personal example of my family to point toward a larger story that

[31] I must also distinguish between my artistic and cultural utilization of Aztlán here with historical understandings of Aztlán as a physical place and/or as a conceptual tool of colonization. Miner (2014) identifies two factions of Pre-Columbian scholars and intellectuals in this regard. One believes Aztlán to be a physical place from which the Mexica people historically migrated. The other understands Aztlán as a discursive tool used by the Mexican to legitimize political rule in Central America (p. 25-31).

Chicanxs often experience, sustaining historical connections to Mexican cultures. For many Chicanxs, the act of remembering cultural practices is one of decolonization, as highlighted by Cherríe Moraga in the following passage:

> I am in daily search of these acts of remembering of who we once were, because I believe they will save our pueblos from extinction. Our preconquest imaginations offer strategies for building self-sustaining societies today, societies that can disrupt the mass suicide of global consumption, engineered by the empire of the United States. I believe the United States intends to disappear its indigenous inhabitants and our non-Western ways of knowing. So, I write. (p. 81)

While making tamales in and of itself will not "disrupt the mass suicide of global consumption" that Moraga refers to, it does serve as an important strand connecting Chicanxs and Michicanxs to both to our preconquest imaginations and to the continuation of the "collective (though ever-changing) cultural body" about which Casie C. Cobos (2012) has written. Tamales, a food with thousands of years of history,[32] provide a useful way of understanding more about the relationship between Chicanx people, land, migration, and identity.

In order to understand why tamales serve such an important purpose for Michicanxs in particular, one must have a sense of the unique, often isolating, position Michicanxs can be in in a cultural sense. In "Tamale Power" I wanted to include other perspectives on the familial events I was describing, so I incorporated an audio clip from an interview I did with my brother, Chris. Also of mixed Chicanx heritage, Chris speaks in the clip about his experience growing up in Michigan. He describes primarily being around white people before deciding to move to Los

[32] One need only talk with Mexican elders to learn that tamales have a very long cultural history. From a different perspective, we also know this to be true because of depictions of tamales in ancient iconography from the Maya and other Indigenous peoples. See, for example, Karl A. Taube's "The Maize Tamale in Classic Maya Diet, Epigraphy, and Art."

Angeles in his 20s for “reasons related to ethnicity.” Being surrounded by so many other Chicanxs and Latinxs, Chris felt at home in certain ways in Los Angeles, yet he also describes issues with assimilation faced by communities there as well. Pointing toward a seemingly ubiquitous pressure for Chicanxs to become Americanized, Chris concludes by reflecting that "assimilation really has no boundaries." Chris’ story speaks to the importance of food as a method by which people are able to retain a connection to their heritage—for him, this was also relayed through his shared memories of making and eating tamales at our grandmother’s house—while also reflecting the tension of assimilation that he noticed both in Michigan in California.

As I have shown through food work with Mexican communities in Michigan in previous chapters, traditional Mexican cooking teaches culturally situated, relational worldviews that emphasize the interconnectedness and relationships between all things. The digital storying of Chicanx food experiences are capable of helping communities to adapt their foodways within new places, and it can help individuals to better understand their relationship within the Mexican and/or Mesoamerican diaspora. The process of making *Michicanxs of Aztlán* itself was one that not only allowed me to learn more deeply about these issues, but also opened up dialogue amongst family and community members about these issues that had, for the vast majority of my life, been met with silence. Race was not a topic that was openly talked about. Through conversations like the one I had with Chris, I learned that these issues have had a very real impact on the psyche of many family members. This dialogue, if opened in a respectful way that is guided by a commitment to consent, has the potential to help individuals and communities to engage in collective acts of healing.

Through these acts of storying myself, in *Michicanxs of Atzlán* I am pointing toward what Jackie Rhodes and Jonathon Alexander (2015) describe as "the interplay of orientations" that explore "how our situated pasts and their mediation might orient us" and "how we also reorient them ourselves in the pursuit of livable lives." Digital storying, which I describe as the rhetorical process of making stories through digital mediums, allows me to situate myself within a larger set of diasporic or migratory experiences of Mexican communities in Michigan. Through *Michicanxs of Aztlán*, I am oriented by histories of colonization and decolonization that are told through interactions with Chicanx food and music. My focus is not on exploring or discovering new knowledge, but on re-orienting myself to everyday food practices that I've grown up with and that carry with them knowledge and worldviews that have been passed down for many generations. My project explores the ways in which foodways are situated within histories of colonization and decolonization and how these histories orient me, as a researcher, to the research, and how they orient Mexican-American communities to their position within the Mesoamerican diaspora.

Furthermore, Indigenous scholars have done heavy work in showing how stories work to literally construct reality, Thomas King (2005) writing that "the truth about stories is, that's all we are." We could point toward stories as creating a kind of network that connect people through information sharing. Here, too, it would be a mistake to assume that stories are immaterial. "Stories take place," as Malea Powell (2012) has phrased it. They intertwine with physical spaces and carry with them the contexts from which they have come.

On Digital Scholarship

It was clear to me from the beginning of the semester that I was coming into the CHI program with less technical background than the vast majority of my cohort mates. During our weekly open work hours, I often found myself struggling to ask/not ask questions of my colleagues for fear of sounding ignorant. *What's an FTP? What's the difference between working on GitHub and making changes to my actual website? Is it ok for me to borrow a piece of code from someone else's repository, or is that stealing?* I also remember feeling increasingly frustrated throughout the program by how much of my time with the project was being spent trying to (re)learn some of the basics of coding languages like HTML and CSS, how to connect my code to the server space, and other problems that had nothing to do with the subject of my actual project—cultural food sovereignty.

My experience in the program was largely positive, but I have taken the time here to reflect on these tensions because they raise some fundamental questions that are important for fields like CHI and DH to consider. Especially at a time when DH is attempting to diversify itself in terms of race and gender, it is important to consider what it is we are attempting to diversity exactly. Today more than ever, it's hardly even worth stating that virtually all scholars engage with digital technologies on a daily basis for professional and academic purposes, regardless of discipline and whether or not scholars conceive of their work as "digital." All this is to say I consider myself to be a digital humanist not only because of my work with digital storytelling, but also because of the great need I see for scholars to theorize digital projects and fields. I would like to consider DH scholarship, in other words, to be scholarship that uses digital tools for work grounded in the humanities, but also theoretical work that addresses the ideological and epistemological elements of the digital as well.

To draw again from their work in *Techne: Queer Meditations on Writing the Self*, Rhodes and Alexander note how citizens of the Global North are urged with smart devices to "optimize" their lives, asking critically, "But optimize for what?" This is a simple, yet important question, one which (digital humanities) scholars must ask consistently and thoroughly as we build our projects and articulate our perceptions of the field. As a project that takes a multimodal approach to memoir, *Michicanxs of Aztlán* makes use of a diversity of mediums that, in turn, make the stories accessible to a wider audience, catering also to a wider range of senses. While I utilize these tools, it remains important to treat them as critically and rhetorically as I do with the cultural histories of the foodways I discuss. In this sense, I am interested not only in reflecting up the function of particular technologies, but also in interrogating the broader ecologies in which these technologies are situated.

Media scholars have shown the extreme importance of expanding analyses to include these ubiquitous, yet often clandestine, technological systems and structures. Leo Marx (1997), for example, warned several decades ago of the dangers in teaching human history simply as a series of technological inventions: "By consigning technologies to the realm of things, this well-established iconography distracts attention from the human—socio-economic and political—relations which largely determine who uses them and for what purposes." Furthermore, consigning technologies to the realm of things makes invisible how underlying economic, political, and cultural systems imagine and create technology—and for what ends. Regardless of how much DH may be able to diversify itself in terms of race in the coming years, an emphasis on these systems remains as crucial as ever.

Tung-Hui Hu's (2015) *A Prehistory of the Cloud* provides one example of what this type of analysis can look like, investigating cloud technologies and what they reflect about cultural

imagination within the context of neoliberal globalization. In describing his approach to studying the cloud, he writes that scholars claim that an "awareness of a medium's materiality will lead to a more effective understanding of its ideological content. Yet the cloud, I am arguing, inevitably frustrates this approach, because by design, it is not based on any single medium or technology" (location 147). He explains that "analyzing the cloud requires standing at a middle distance from it, mindful of but not wholly immersed in either its virtuality or its materiality" (location 167). Marx and Hu are not making abstract arguments that downplay the importance of technological materiality. Rather, they are pointing us toward a kind of ideological materiality wherein we are better able to understand the larger cultural and political networks created through our use of technologies.

It is common for technological networks to be talked about in terms of their capacity for opening up lines of communication between humans across the world, but because of the rapid rate at which these technologies have proliferated, many of the political dimensions of digital rhetoric is still undertheorized. It must be recognized that "although the proliferation of new technologies creates space for new forms of solidarity and collaboration, they are at the same time susceptible to new and evolving notions of 'control'" (Hunt and Stevenson, 2017 p. 382). In "Indigenously-Determined Games of the Future," Elizabeth LaPensée (2014) notes that "While many commercial games still rely on flattened space that is mapped and claimed by players in ways that reinforce colonial values, I hope to offer experiences rooted in the gifts of sky, land, water, plants, animals, insects, our people, stars, and manidoo" (p. 20). Herein lies a key dilemma for those who wish to repurpose Western technologies—in what ways do the technologies we use reproduce colonial relations in particular and how can this be subverted to root our (use of) technologies in our own self-determination?

Many of the visible parts of *Michicanxs of Aztlán* are under my control as the creator of the project. My design choices, such as the incorporation of Chicanx visual aesthetics and my inclusion of Indigenous and Spanish words and phrases, serve as examples of this. However, the true "languages" governing the structure of the website are the underlying computer codes used to build it, which are not visible to visitors of the website. Furthermore, in order to even visit the website, your computer must first translate the name "michicanxsofaztlan.matrix.msu.edu" into a specific address on the physical network. "These addresses are called 'IP addresses' and are written as a series of four numbers like so: 206.252.131.211." The Chicanx aesthetics of my project are, in a sense, then, rendered as itinerant placeholders for numbers (Hunt and Stevenson). These aesthetics can convey particular messages that can be recognized as Chicanx, but in a structural sense, it can be argued that the function of the site is something that is largely foreign to Chicanx culture. Like the rhetorical analysis of networks themselves, these technological aspects are also undertheorized, especially from decolonial and Indigenous perspectives.

A primary purpose of the two projects I present in this chapter is to (re)establish connections between the material food practices of Mexican and Chicanx people with the epistemologies that comprise their worldviews and knowledge systems. In turn, as a project that works specifically within the memoir genre, *Michicanxs of Aztlán* stories the self because of the importance of allowing oneself space to better understand their relationship to the world, to a culture, to a practice. Definitions of technology often include an element of convenience or optimization, tools that are intended to make some aspect of our lives easier. As I conceive of it, digital storying *is* intended to optimize, and this optimization is for the continuation of traditional Mexican foodways in the midst of a diasporic experience that drastically attempts to dilute,

diminish, and extinguish the ties of Mexican communities in Michigan to their Indigenous practices and identities. While criticism of the specific power dynamics subjectifying Michicanxs are important to understand, the primary focus of the digital storying engaged in this project is to make space for stories. This requires, I think, not only the critical analysis of individual technologies, but reflection upon and research into the ways in which these technologies are oriented by their ideological contexts.

Project 2: A Xicano Cookbook

A Xicano Cookbook is a project that engages in multimodal forms of storytelling about Mexican foodways in order to re-imagine the genre of the cookbook. While it is called a cookbook, it is not a collection of recipes. That is, it doesn't provide a list of ingredients and instructions for how to cook different dishes. What it does provide are stories from community members about the ways in which food has impacted their lives, how foodways reflect their relationships with people and with landscapes, and how foodways work to shape their identities and cultures. Along with pieces of writing that provide theoretical and historical context, I incorporate audio clips from the interviews and cooking sessions I conducted as part of my research, and I use artwork in the design of the site that comes from artists in in the community as well.

The project is a response to what some scholars, such as Jeffery Pilcher (1998), have called "cultural imperialism," or the imposition of standardization by convincing people of the superiority of European civilization, and by causing them to abandon their own traditions. Pilcher, who is a historian of Mexican foodways, writes that "The prestige associated with European vegetables has already driven many native *quelites* out of use, as part of a campaign

begun more than four hundred years ago by priests and planters who tried to make New Spain an ecological replica of the old." And one of the ways in which this idea of food superiority was reinforced in the 19th century, for example, was through the spread of Spanish cookbooks in Mexico that portrayed corn-based foods widely associated with Indigenous cultures as uncivilized and uncleanly. Often the Native foods that were incorporated into cookbooks were either erased of their connection to Indigenous cultures, and/or they portrayed the conquest of Mexico not as a brutal war of cultural genocide, but as a 'happy encounter' and mixture of two culinary traditions" (p. 140).

This is part of the historical context I delineate in *A Xicano Cookbook* in order to situate the oral history recordings included in the project. These oral history interviews function as a space for community members to share stories about how their foodways connect them to their home communities in Mexico and help them to build new cultural spaces in Michigan. These stories, then, draw from what Ríos (2015) calls "land-based literacies and rhetorics" that recognize the ways in which land can produce relations and recognizes the value of embodied ways of knowing. In turn, the project also engages with, as Erin R. Anderson (2011) has written, "complex questions of memory, mediation, and 'author-ity' in order to navigate the sticky incongruities between personal and professional composing." In putting these oral histories in conversation with Indigenous and decolonial scholarship, the project centers the stories of community members, thus blurring orthodox conceptions of the personal and professional.

This project is but one example of the ways in which migrant peoples have used technology to engage in acts of cultural continuation. The development of recent technologies has allowed for the circumvention of economic and political barriers that keep migrants from being able to physically return home to visit with their families and communities. For

undocumented people, the risk of crossing the US-Mexico border is life-threatening, especially within the current political climate, where we are seeing an increased militarization of the border by the government and also by vigilante groups of citizen militias. Furthermore, the financial burden of traveling from Michigan to Mexico itself is too much for many Michicanxs to overcome. So while digital storytelling certainly isn't a pure substitute for more direct interactions between those in Michigan and those in Mexico, it does open up opportunities for communication and community-making across some of these barriers that would not otherwise be possible.

Appropriating the Cookbook

While the circulation of manuscripts preceded collections of written and printed recipes, the earliest recipe collections in the Western world appeared in the late fifteenth century in Italy, England, and France (Applebaum, 2003, p. 4). These collections were integral to the civilizing process that taught not only how to make particular dishes, but also "called out to readers to adopt a set of expectations…they enjoined them to assimilate a certain language of foodstuffs and food preparation and a set of values appropriate to that language" (p. 10). By and large, the Indigenous peoples of North America did not begin authoring cookbooks, as they are known in the West, until much more recently. To a great extent, Indigenous Mexican recipes are still often never written down. Instead, they are enacted through memory and shared through direct interaction between family or community members.

With this in mind, we are in a unique cultural moment, perhaps, given the current interest amongst Mexican and Native American communities in authoring cookbooks of their own. Luz Calvo and Catriona Rueda Esquibel's (2015) *Decolonize Your Diet*, for example, argues that the

current state of "Mexican food" is the direct result of colonization, offering plant-based recipes that push back against what the authors see as unhealthy cooking practices, such as an overreliance on frying and meat consumption. As the authors explain, "*Decolonize Your Diet* is part of a larger movement utilizing ancestral knowledge to help communities of color respond to the public health crises and the decimation of our food system's foundation, brought upon us by the industrialized, Western diet" (9)." Importantly, Calvo and Esquibel also acknowledge the limitations of individual acts of cultural continuance with food: "The project of decolonizing our diets cannot be accomplished through individual acts of food preparation. Instead, we hope that our project will inspire our readers to think critically about the effects of colonization on the food we eat and motivate them to get involved in their communities" (p. 15).

Relatedly, Adán Medrano's (2014) *Truly Texas Mexican: a Native Culinary Heritage in Recipes* takes an even more specific place-based approach to offering a set of recipes contextualized within colonial/decolonial history of Texas. Throughout the book, Medrano develops what he calls "cuisine as a strategy for community" by presenting a collection of 100 recipes that serve as a history of Texas Indians. Medrano situates cuisine, then, as a decolonial strategy that both historically and contemporarily is used to maintain connections to pre-conquest cultures: "Having lost our land and language along with economic and political standing, we continued to adapt…food was the cultural activity that held us together. Cooking nurtured our remembering and through it we invented new identities rooted in that remembering" (p. 12). Importantly, Medrano highlights how enacting cultural memory through foodways has been performed throughout history by Texas and Mexican Indians.

There are two characteristics that each of these cookbook projects maintain that are key to how they distinguish themselves from other kinds of cookbooks. First, there is a concerted

effort to make more visible the relationship between the authors and the cookbook itself. *Decolonize Your Diet* opens with stories explaining the impetus for their book, rooted in the couple's encounter with cancer that caused them to closely re-examine their own food practices and adopt a more traditional Mexican diet. Throughout *Truly Texas Mexican*, Medrano relays stories of how cooking processes were passed on to him by elders in his family. The practice of making oneself visible in the text allows for more transparency and accountability on behalf of the authors as well.

The second characteristic is the vision that these cookbooks maintain beyond that of the individual's relationship to culture. Acknowledging the impact of cultural imperialism, the authors politicize their cookbooks as part of larger community-based movements for food justice and cultural self-determination. Because the authors position themselves within the cultures from which their recipes come, the recipes do not merely reflect a fascination with traditional Mexican foodways. Rather, the cookbooks have larger, more specific political and cultural aspirations. Namely, their goal is to carry forward the cultural knowledge engrained within these recipes and to resist the power structures that have sought for centuries to disrupt the cultural affiliations that keep these groups of people bound together as communities.

Whereas *Decolonize Your Diet* and *Truly Texas Mexican* offer collections of recipes, the approach of *A Xicano Cookbook* is to utilize digital tools to tells stories about the relationships people maintain with their heritage foodways. Each of the projects are contextualized within specific land-based histories and connect themselves to the social justice struggles of Mexican-American communities as well a broader constellation of decolonial struggles that center as their primary tactic cultural continuation through cooking. Another characteristic that each of these 3 projects share is in their balancing of decolonial theory and everyday rhetorical practice. This is a

dynamic that is further explored in the following section, which revisits disciplinary conversations about how the fields of cultural rhetorics and the digital humanities approach 'building as a way of knowing.'

Cultural Rhetorics and the Digital Humanities

While many scholars observe that DH has its early roots in the field of humanities computing, Jim Ridolofo and William Hart-Davidson (2014) note in the introduction to their edited collection *Rhetoric and the Digital Humanities* that "there are historical reasons why the term *digital humanities* is less prevalent in a field that has itself come to maturity and developed specializations with significant intellectual investments in digital technology over the last thirty years. One of these is the subfield of C&W (Computer & Writing)" (p. 2). In analyzing DH as a still-emerging field, however, the authors argue that Writing and Rhetoric scholars may want to selectively redefine their projects as DH in order to leverage funding, calling also for scholarship that examines the DH job market and how rhetoric studies could better leverage DH for additional hires (p. 3). This is common academic practice—to analyze the state of academic markets (job markets, grant opportunities, etc.) and make adjustments accordingly that put one in a better position to receive funding. It is an oft repeated sentiment that being able to label one's work as "DH" grants scholars a heightened level of marketability, and that scholars of color doing cultural work that intersects with DH are especially marketable. In fact, this is a fundamental aspect of being an academic. If one is to survive as an academic, a rhetorically powerful approach to academic markets is essential, and because of the momentum behind DH as a label, it can have an impact as Ridolfo and Hart-Davidson explain.

While participating in these markets, we must also be sure that we are making a priority out of understanding the impact of them upon the integrity and impact of our work as teachers, researchers, and administrators. While it is worthwhile to discuss the impact that the concept and pressure of marketability have upon individual scholars and their scholarship, it is equally important to consider the attention and influence solicited by DH as it has spread across so many fields and disciplines in recent years. In particular, I echo several concerns articulated by David Golumbia (2014) regarding DH, especially in relation to the treatment of theory in DH scholarship. In this line of thinking, theory is often over-simplified as an unnecessary practice that isolates academics from the "real world" and confines academics to our "ivory towers."

As a community-engaged scholar, much of my career has been centered around building projects that attempt create access to institutional resources for marginalized communities outside of academia. I take seriously conversations about methods and methodology within community-based research, and find it absolutely necessary to demonstrate the ways in which my political analysis is incorporated into my research for reasons of ethics and accountability as a researcher. While it is clear that digital tools can provide many affordances for academic research, it is also clear that there is great utility and need in examining technologies in relation to dominant frameworks of power, such as (settler) colonialism and neoliberal globalization. In turn, I contend that new pathways should be made for theory in DH and that DH itself must be more thoroughly theorized.

In this regard, it would be helpful for scholars in Writing and Rhetoric (as well as in other disciplines) to consider the relationship between DH and cultural rhetorics. In her chapter "Cultural Rhetorics and the Digital Humanities: Toward Cultural Reflexivity in Digital Making," Jennifer Sano-Franchini (2014) argues that the sub-field of cultural rhetorics provides a

framework for interrogating and analyzing structures and practices "in ways that effectively attend to cultural difference and the situatedness of meaning as it is being produced" (p. 51-52). Sano-Franchini goes on to site similarities between DH and Cultural Rhetorics, highlighting "building as a way of knowing" as one similarity in particular. She writes that "[b]oth cultural rhetoricians and many DH scholars believe that making and knowing go hand in hand and that both are interested in everyday practices of knowledge production, beyond traditional forms of alphabetic textual production. (p. 60-61). I agree with Sano-Franchini's observation on this shared characteristic between DH and Cultural Rhetorics, and I think it's worthwhile to explore some of the differences in how these fields enact it as well.

Cultural rhetoricians tend to make their commitment to theory explicit. In the introduction to the Cultural Rhetorics special edition of the journal *Enculturation*, Phil Bratta and Malea Powell (2016) explain that "Engagement with decolonization and decolonial practices is central to the work of most cultural rhetorics scholars" and that what they want to emphasize and practice is standing "as allies with cultural communities who are working to delink from the destructive behaviors brought on by colonization." It is within this theoretical context that the Cultural Rhetorics Theory Lab (Powell et al., 2014) also articulates a key viewpoint on criticism:

> And although we do believe critique of our current disciplinary practices is important and necessary, we want to make sure that critique leads to something even more important—making. Critique is not the end of the process of decolonization—it's the beginning. We want to make something that people will use, rather than to take things apart only to show that they can be taken apart.

Furthermore, each of these pieces is strategic scholarship in how it theorizes the role of Cultural Rhetorics, situating the field within a colonial context and working to delink from colonial

practices. At the same time, cultural rhetorics scholars also argue that researchers must be willing to build meaningful theoretical frames from inside the particular culture or community with which they are working, moving beyond simply "applying frames derived from one culture/tradition to another culture's rhetorical practices" (Powell et al., 2014). From a Cultural Rhetorics perspective, then, criticism and theory are important scholarly practices so long as they also lead toward the practice of making, and it is through a balance of localized theory and a broader political analysis of power that theoretical frameworks should be constructed.

The political commitments of DH as a field are not as easy to identify. Part of the reason for this is that DH spans so many disciplines that making generalizations can be difficult. It is not that the onus to define the theoretical and political commitments of DH is placed upon any single scholar, but DH scholars do have the responsibility to make clear the way our own research projects are positioned in this regard. DH needs a proliferation of theory, and in addition to Cultural Rhetorics, there is an abundance of theoretical work that can be drawn from in fields such as Indigenous Studies, Media Studies (including those mentioned earlier in this chapter), Queer Theory and others that have long been using criticism and theory as essential elements of the making that they perform.

Conclusion

Through storytelling with digital and non-digital platforms, the projects I have offered for discussion in this chapter create opportunities for Chicanx people in Michigan to story themselves in unique relationship to the region and within Mexican and Mesoamerican diasporas. At the same time that a growing number of Chicanxs are becoming involved with environmental movements and practices displayed in these projects, so too are Chicanx

communities increasingly impacted by the proliferation of digital technologies. I have suggested that connections need to be drawn between these two trends, avoiding the temptation to isolate from one another our concepts of what constitutes "the environment," "technology," and "culture." Technologies must be examined rhetorically and put into conversation with theoretical frameworks concerning colonialism and neoliberal globalization that consider both their virtuality and materiality, as Tung-Hui Hu and other have articulated. DH as a field is in need of a proliferation of theory that examines both the widespread phenomena of DH itself, as well as the work of individual scholars to articulate and integrate politicized theoretical models. Through my work in this chapter, I have offered a Cultural Rhetorics approach to doing work in these areas and have identified areas in which more work is needed in order bridge the gaps between some of these seemingly disparate methods, communities, and disciplines.

CHAPTER 6: TAMALES FROM MICHIGAN TO MESOAMERICA

Allow me to share one final story with you.

MICCA Tamalada – January 27th, 2017

Over the past few weeks, Connie has been organizing a tamalada fundraiser to raise money for a sick relative in Oaxaca. 700 tamales have been ordered, so we there's a lot of work to do. Last night we got with Eve to boil a 20-pound pork leg and prepare the fillings for 4 different kinds of tamales: pork, dulce, rajas, and mole de pollo. Today we need to assemble, steam and package.

When I arrived back again at Connie's around 10am this morning, there were several others there helping out. Ingredients were strewn across the entire kitchen floor: bags of masa, a giant box of hojas, countless tomatoes, onions and peppers. The air was thick and warm with the smell of corn and cafe.

Throughout the day, shifts of people come in-and-out of Connie's to help for however long they can. We pass the time by talking and listening to music. As usual, we spend a lot of time talking about memories we associate with certain foods, asking each other questions about recipes and different words (mostly in Nahuatl/Spanish/English) used to refer to certain ingredients.

Toward the end of the day, new waves of people come by Connie's house to help us finish, to pick up their orders, or just to hang out. They bring stories with them from the news, and I realize that I haven't checked social media at all in the past 24 hours. Donald Trump was

inaugurated a week ago, so I had basically been glued to Facebook and Twitter, navigating the chaos and uncertainty of what would come next.

After the crowd thins out a bit, we collapse onto the couches in Connie's living room, noticing together that we hadn't really discussed Trump or politics in general while cooking over the past couple of days. Despite the physical fatigue, there is a feeling of fulfillment that we all acknowledge. The tamalada was a space of reprieve. It made us feel connected, re-energized.

Implications

Jeff Grabill (2007) has argued in regard to writing about community-based research that "it is not enough to say that people should participate in public deliberations or that they are capable of knowing things. In order to persuasively argue for change, the knowledge produced in communities must be shown to be expert in some way, to be capable of contesting the rhetoric of expert institutions" (p. 59). What kinds of expertise has this project shown, then, and in what ways might this expertise be capable of challenging institutional rhetoric? What change does it argue for? I will use this conclusion chapter to explore these questions in greater depth.

While I have talked about foodways in a variety of contexts throughout this dissertation—within my own family's migration, through MICCA, in cookbooks, and through digital forms of storytelling—the central focus of these discussions has revolved around the rhetorical formation of communities. I have been interested in examining how people collaborate to intentionally create spaces of belonging, to strengthen relationships, and to form a shared sense of identity. Foodways are a useful way into this examination because they reveal much about *how* people are able to form ties that connect them across generations, across geographies, and across digital and non-digital spaces. To a great extent, Michicanx communities rely on cooking in order to build

these relationships,[33] a process or methodology of knowledge-building across these various contexts that I have referred to as *community-making*.

I have highlighted the ways in which Michicanx communities, such as MICCA, have used food to perform cultural continuation. The project's title, "Making Chicanx Foodways," acknowledges that a primary struggle for these communities has been adapting their foodways to the context of Michigan, where access to foods, food systems, and other factors present great challenges to re-creating heritage foodways associated with their cultural identities. These stories work rhetorically to comprise a unique Michicanx positionality, and in turn, Michicanx rhetoric helps to expand our understanding of broader Chicanx rhetorics, which are often centered around the southwestern United States. While Michicanx rhetoric speaks to a specific positionality, it engages with a multitude of practices that tie Michicanxs to Mexican and Mesoamerican histories and acts of cultural continuation as well. This work has a number of different implications for those interested in food studies, writing studies, liberal arts education, and community organizing more broadly. In the following sections, I will specifically draw connections between my methodology of *community-making* with theories and histories of rhetoric, Chicanx/Latinx rhetorics, building community in the classroom, service-learning, and frameworks of food sovereignty.

***Community-Making*, Theories & Histories of Rhetoric**

One of the most significant implications of *community-making* is in its management of difference. Through this dissertation, I hope to have shown some of the diversity of Mexican

[33] Of course, language is another element tying parts of this community together. Estrella Torrez (2013) has written on intergenerational linguistic and cultural transmission for farmworker families in rural Michigan. See her article entitled, "Somos Mexicanos y Hablamos Mexicano Aquí: Rural Farmworker Families Struggle to Maintain Cultural and Linguistic Identity in Michigan."

cultures at the same time that I have highlighted unity among Michicanx communities. Along these lines, *community-making* is actually a methodology of knowledge building across and between cultures. MICCA's work, for example, is almost as much about cultural exchange between diverse Mexican cultures as it is about creating a shared sense of community and identity. Many outsiders have a generalized view of Mexico that subsumes it into a singular cultural category, yet Mexico is a country of more than 128 million people and is geographically nearly three times the size of Texas. This is not to mention the bloody history behind the Treaty of Guadalupe through which the US claimed the American southwest from Mexico, nor the tens of millions of Mexican people now living in the United States. As Casie Cobos (2012) writes of her own methodology of embodied storying, *community-making* offers a framework of rhetorical analysis that "can help us read across rhetorical practices and engage with multiple rhetorical histories" (p. 131).

This work has material consequences for people in Writing & Rhetoric (and beyond) that can ultimately help the field to diversify and to make it into a community that more scholars of color feel welcomed to join. Doing so will require, I argue, a theoretical shift that creates pathways for scholars of color in the future. This is a topic addressed by Malea Powell in her Chair's Address at the 2012 Conference on College Composition and Communication:

> When I'm talking about decolonizing our discipline, our scholarship, and our teaching, I *am* talking about the actual students in our classrooms—their bodies, how their bodies are marked and mobilized in dominant culture… I'm talking about making space for them to create tools that will make it possible for them to see the real options open to them—to understand the press of Western fixations with print literacy as not personal, not about each of them at all, but as forces, discourses, they can negotiate, as decisions

> they can make, and giving them the opportunity to practice that decision-making in our writing classrooms and in our discipline as future valued colleagues. (p. 401)

The framework for critical thinking that I discuss in chapter 3 offers an example of how relational worldviews offer pathways for sustainable approaches to diversity in academia. By using food rhetoric as its way into this discussion, *community-making* draws connections between rhetorics that are largely non-textual with writing pedagogy and community-based research. This relationship is worthy of further study as it can help the discipline to continue developing approaches to intercultural communication. In turn, this influences the diversity of the discipline as well as the opportunities students have in our classrooms to draw from a wider range of rhetorical practices in doing work with writing and rhetoric.

Community-Making & Chicanx/Latinx Rhetorics

Many Latinx scholars in Writing and Rhetoric have come to the discipline through the study of writing and writing pedagogy. It is still important that fields such as composition become more ethnically and culturally diversified, as this would more accurately reflect the diversity of students to whom we teach writing courses. At the same time, there has been a mostly implicit argument throughout this dissertation that the reach and purpose of Writing and Rhetoric extends far beyond the written word. One of the primary goals of writing courses, such as first-year composition, is to engage students in processes of inquiry, and to establish foundations of critical thought and action. I have offered relationality as a malleable framework of critical inquiry in this regard.

Further, I have grounded this study in oral histories that are embodied through acts of cooking and making community. While it is certainly cognizant of its historical positionality, *community-*

making brings our attention to the present moment and works toward a more sustainable and equitable future. Doing work with cultural memory is important, and it is also important that we not get too bogged down by trying to re-create the past, or to connect dots that cannot be connected. Kathleen Absolon (2012) speaks to this sentiment when she writes that

> "...colonization has attempted to eradicate every aspect of who we are. Colonizing knowledge dominates, ignorance prevails, and we internalize how and who the colonizers want us to be. Seeking my own truth meant opening up all aspects of my being to seeing what I missed and acknowledging that 'I don't know what I don't know" (p. 19).

While we can never piece back together all that colonization has done to our cultures, there are pathways forward that lay in the development of loving and reciprocal relationships with all of our relations—that is, in the making of community. In struggling for self-determination through cultural foodways, I believe that *community-making* exemplifies what my dear late friend Maximillian Monroy-Miller called "returning forward," a continuous community-based process of honoring, healing, and vision. I hope that those interested in Chicanx/Latinx rhetorics find utility in this approach, and that scholars feel encouraged in grounding their research in many of the things that we are told too often to be unprofessional or lacking in rigor: personal experience, healing, embodiment, and emotion.

Community-Making **the Classroom**

Writing & Rhetoric is a discipline that has been shaped to a great extent by neosophistic rhetoric, cultural studies, feminism, and postcolonial studies. While research and teaching related to composition is a focus for many scholars, the discipline is not simply focused on teaching

writing as a mechanical skill for students to develop. Writing on the mission of the discipline, Andrea Greenbaum (2002) argues that

> "We must instruct students how to think critically, directing them in their ability to discern and recognize the dominant ideological forces in place which naturalize their (and our) understanding of the world. The goal is to make them conscious, if they are not already, that class, race, and gender *do* matter…" (p. 84)

This seems to be a fair generalization of the underlying purpose felt by many instructors of rhetoric and composition, yet it is a difficult task to accomplish given the deep commitment on behalf of many students to the mythos of America, as it has been articulated by Victor Villanueva (1993). It is important to recognize the temporal limitations that come with teaching in this context, and in this regard Villanueva (1997) has argued the following: "[h]ere, in the American college composition classroom, where our interchanges with students are relatively short—four or five hours a week, ten to fifteen week, perhaps as long as a year or two; here, counterhegemony cannot be easily sold (p. 626).

These trends are, I think, easy to verify. But another impediment to accomplishing the goals articulated by Greenbaum is what I would call an "issue-based" approach to teaching critical inquiry. This approach places an undue amount of faith into the incorporation of radical texts/media into coursework, underemphasizing the process of inquiry itself. Especially in a course such as first-year composition, where many students may have previously had very little experience engaging with issues of activism, gender and race directly, this can be a counterproductive approach to establishing a context in which students will be open to the possibility of being transformed by their work in a course.

I have not spent much time in this dissertation discussing the radical potential of food as an *area of study* in Writing & Rhetoric courses. This is because the findings of my food-based research, at least in relation to pedagogy, have had less to do with the content that I decide to assign students and more to do with the process of making that I engage with students throughout the course of a semester—the relationships we develop, the environments we create, the frameworks of analysis that we collaborate to build. Within a teaching context, *community-making* brings attention back to the ways in which knowledge is produced by the relations held in our classes.

The struggle of teaching against the mythos of America is real, but *community-making* reminds us that our students exist on a spectrum. Many students who have developed a deep sense of nationalistic pride in America are also capable of developing a nuanced and critical understanding of this mythos. Searching for common ground in our classrooms, acknowledging the humanity that we share, is, in my experience, an effective way of approaching first-year composition. I have experienced much less success in courses where I immediately jump into discussions about activism without doing the significant work of establishing relationships first.

In this way, food has served as an effective subject area in my courses. Whereas many students may have virtually no experience discussing activism, students generally feel like they have some things to say about food. Early in the semester, the rhetorical study of food serves as a common ground where we can talk about the ways in which cooking and eating tie families and communities together. As the semester or unit unfolds, it becomes easier to introduce and unpack the myriad political issues engrained within our food systems—anything from identity, to the proliferation of technology, to animal rights, to colonialism. *Community-making*, in this sense, places an emphasis on the process of development that a class undergoes over time. The content

can be and *is* vitally important, but on its own it is not enough to challenge the rhetoric of uncritical Americanism that students are taught from a very young age and bring with them into our classrooms.

Community-Making & Service-Learning

As I have argued in chapter 3, *community-making* pedagogy requires breaking down the binary of communities inside/outside of academia. This binary framework discourages us from being able to more fully situate classrooms as communities in and of themselves, and it tends to overlook the needs of marginalized communities that exist within university settings. Writing on this topic as it relates to first-generation students, Estrella Torrez (2015) states that

> Whereas, a majority of civic engagement courses focus on taking students off-campus to the outside community, I choose to centralize the engagement within the university community. The notion was inspired by a common experience among first generation university students, who do not possess the navigational capital to transition smoothly into higher education and therefore struggle to acclimate to university culture.

Community-making employs a perspective that recognizes the limitations of teachers as individuals to provide the specialized guidance and mentorship that students need in order to successfully navigate academic institutions. Especially among first-generation students, it is often the support of peers that will serve as the most vital network in this regard. Therefore, it is helpful for teachers to balance direct instruction with mentorship that encourages and helps students to create these support networks amongst themselves.

Within the context of service-learning, the importance of creating partnerships between universities and local communities should not be downplayed. However, it is important to also

utilize the approach that Torrez has laid out in terms of thinking about how to create and connect communities within our institutions as well. What is at stake is the infrastructure necessary not only to recruit but to retain non-traditional students, students of color, working class students, and first-generation students. MICCA, for example, is a group that graduate students created to meet this need in particular. More than a few members of the group expressed to me personally that before MICCA was created, they had seriously considered dropping out of their graduate programs because of the isolation they had been experiencing. It would be worthwhile to pursue further the potential of service-learning initiatives to engage in the kind of work that MICCA has performed for their university, which involved a targeted approach to creating networks of cultural and professional support for graduate and undergraduate students through the creation of partnerships within and beyond the campus setting.

Community-Making & Food Sovereignty

In this dissertation, I have taken a relational approach to food rhetoric that is aligned with Teresa Mares and Devon Peña's (2011) articulation of food sovereignty, which is based on the idea that food is not just about nutrition, but is also about culture and implies a radical ethics that moves us from conversations about access to conversations about self-determination (p. 202). Engaging with specific elements of the food sovereignty of Michicanx people has required a hemispheric consideration of how settler colonialism has worked to disrupt the collective continuance[34] of Indigenous peoples across the Americas. Within this context, food sovereignty calls for holistic approaches that, as Enrique Salmón (2012) has written, include "everything in

[34] In "Food Sovereignty, Justice, and Indigenous Peoples," Kyle Powys Whyte (2017) develops the concept of *collective continuance* to describe "a society's overall adaptive capacity to maintain its members' cultural integrity, health, economic vitality, and political order into the future."

how we approach environmental justice, social justice, ecological protection, economic concerns, and all the rest of the human and natural world issue that are being attached, threatened, and oppressed" (p. 155).

It has been difficult to employ an approach that considers so many different facets of food rhetoric (from the technological, to the environmental, etc.) at the same time, but I believe that wading through this difficulty is an important part of decolonial praxis. In arguing for relationality as important and critical worldview, I hope to have shown the potential of exploring relationships between seemingly disparate institutions, subject areas, and fields of study. In detailing the foodways of Michicanx communities in particular, I hope to have offered insight into how culture and place-making take shape through foodways, and to have opened up useful points of consideration for researchers who are interested in (or already engaged with) community-based research. At its core, *community-making* is concerned with advocating for cultural self-determination. It has been with and through community that I have come to understand my place as a researcher and the role food systems play in helping communities to work towards their own cultural self-determination.

WORKS CITED

WORKS CITED

Abarca, M. E. (2004). Authentic or Not, It's Original. *Food and Foodways*, (12), 1–25.

Abarca, M. E. (2006). *Voices in the Kitchen: Views of Food and the World from Working-Class Mexican and Mexican American Women*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press.

Abarca, M. E., & Salas, C. C. (Eds.). (2015). *Latin@s' Presence in the Food Industry: Changing How We Think about Food* (1 edition). University of Arkansas Press.

Absolon, K. E. (2012). *Kaandossiwin: How We Come to Know* (First Edition edition). Halifax: Fernwood Publishing Co., Ltd.

Alvarez, J. (2008). *Once Upon a Quinceanera: Coming of Age in the USA*. Plume.

Alvarez, S. (2016). Taco Literacies: Ethnography, Foodways, and Emotions through Mexican Food Writing. *Composition Forum*, *34*.

Anderson, E. (2011). The Olive Project: An Oral History Project in Multiple Modes. *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy*, *15*(2).

Anderson, J. R. (2015). Remapping Settler Colonial Territoriese: Bringing Local Native Knowledge into the Classroom. In L. King, R. Gubele, & J. R. Anderson (Eds.), *Survivance, Sovereignty, and Story: Teaching American Indian Rhetorics* (pp. 160–169). Logan: Utah State University Press.

Appelbaum, R. (2003). Rhetoric and Epistemology in Early Printed Recipe Collections. *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, *3*(2), 1–35.

Archibald, J.-A. (2014). *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the heart, mind, body and spirit*. Vancouver, CA: UBC Press.

Batalla, G. B. (1996). *Mexico Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Blackwell, M. (2011). *¡Chicana Power!: Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement* (Chicana Matters edition). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Bloom, L. Z. (2008). Consuming Prose: The Delectable Rhetoric of Food Writing. *College English*, *70*(4), 346–362.

Bratta, P., & Powell, M. (2016). Introduction to the Special Issue: Entering the Cultural Rhetorics Conversation. *Enculturation: A Journal of Rhetoric, Writing and Culture*, (21).

Bruffee, K. A. (1984). Collaborative Learning and the "Conversation of Mankind." *College English*, *46*(7), 635–652.

Calvo, L., & Esquibel, C. R. (2015). *Decolonize Your Diet: Plant-Based Mexican-American Recipes for Health and Healing*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press.

Chávez, D. (2006). *A Taco Testimony: Mediations on Family, Food and Culture*. Tucson: Rio Nuevo Publishers.

Cobos, C. C. (2012). *Embodied Storying, A Methodology for Chican@ Rhetorics: (Re)Making Stories, (Un)Mapping the Lines, and Re-membering Bodies.* Texas A&M University.

Cognard-Black, J., & Goldwaite, M. A. (2008). Books That Cook: Teaching Food and Food Literature in the English Classroom. *College English*, *70*(4), 421–436.

Colton, J. S. (2014, May). *The Contagion of Sharing: Rhetoric of Community in an Age of Digital Media*. Clemson University. Retrieved from ProQuest.

Cooper, M. M. (1986). The Ecology of Writing. *College English*, *48*(4), 364–375.

Del Hierro, M. (2012). Challenging the Academy One Nopal at a Time. In *El Mundo Zurdo 2: Selected Works From the Meeting of the Society for the Study of Gloria Anzaldúa, 2010* (pp. 155–164). San Franciso: Aunt Lute Books.

DigiRhet.org. (2006). Teaching Digital Rhetoric: Community, Critical Engagement, and Application. *Pedagogy*, *6*(2), 231–259.

Driskill, Q.-L. (2012). Doubleweaving Two-Spirit Critiques Building Alliances between Native and Queer Studies. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, *16*(1–2), 69–92.

Erdrich, H. E. (2013). *Original Local: Indigenous Foods, Stories and Recipes From the Upper Midwest*. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press.

Forbes, J. (1973). *Aztecas Del Norte; the Chicanos of Aztlan* (First Edition edition). Fawcett Publications.

García, I. M. (1997). *Chicanismo: The Forging of a Militant Ethos among Mexican Americans*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Goldwaite, M. A. (Ed.). (2017). *Food, Feminisms, Rhetorics*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Golumbia, D. (2014). Death of a Discipline. *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, *25*(1), 156–176.

Gonzales, P. (2012). *Red Medicine: Traditional Indigenous Rites of Birthing and Healing*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Grabill, J. T. (2007). *Writing Community Change: Designing Technologies for Citizen Action*. New Jersey: Hampton Press.

Green, D. (2011). Editor's Introduction: The Community Classroom and African American Contributions to Community Literacy: Moving Forward while Looking Back. *Reflections*, *11*(1), 1–14.

Greenbaum, A. (2002). *Emancipatory Movements in Composition: The Rhetoric of Possibility*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Haas, A. M. (2012). Race, Rhetoric, and Technology: A Case Study of Decolonial Technical Communication Theory, Methodology, and Pedagogy. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, *26*(3), 277–310.

Haviland, A. (2014). Nkwejong: Oral Histories and Stories of the Lansing Anishinaabek Community. Retrieved from http://nkwejong.matrix.msu.edu/

Heldke, L. (2016). My Dead Father's Raspberry Patch, My Dead Mother's Piecrust: Understanding Memory as Sense. *Gastronomica*, 87–91.

Hu, T.-H. (2015). *A Prehistory of the Cloud*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Iseke, J., & Moore, S. (2011). Community-based Indigenous Digital Storytelling with Elders and Youth. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, *35*(4), 20–38.

Kaati, G., Bygren, L., Pembrey, M., & Sjostrom, M. (2007). Transgenerational Response to Nutrition, Early Life Circumstances and Longevity. *European Journal of Human Genetics*, *15*(7), 784–790.

Keenan, D. (2007). Stories of Migration: The Anishinaabeg and Irish Immigrants in the Great Lakes Region. *History Workshop Journal*, *64*, 354–370.

King, L. (2012). Rhetorical Sovereignty and Rhetorical Alliance in the Writing Classroom: Using American Indian Texts. *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture*, *12*(2), 209–233.

King, T. (2005). *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P.

Leon, K. (2010). *Building a Chicana Rhetoric for Rhetoric and Composition: Methodology, Practice, and Performance*.

Leon, K. (2013). Chicanas Making Change: Institutional Rhetoric and the Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional. *Reflections: Public Rhetoric, Civic Writing and Service Learning*, *13*(1), 165–194.

Mares, T. M., & Peña, D. G. (2011). Environmental and Food Justice: Toward Local, Slow, and Deep Food Systems. In A. Alkon & J. Agyeman (Eds.), *The Food Justice Reader: Cultivating a Just Sustainability*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Marte, L. (2008). *Migrant Seasonings: Food Practices, Cultural Memory, and Narratives of home among Dominican Communities in New York City*.

Marx, L. (1997). Technology: The Emergence of a Hazardous Concept. *Social Research*, *64*(3), 956–988.

McGowan, P. O., Meaney, M. J., & Szyf, M. (2008). Diet and the Epigenetic (Re)Programming of Phenotypic Differences in Behavior. *Brain Research*, *1237*, 12–24.

Medrano, A. (2014). *Truly Texas Mexican: A Native Culinary Heritage In Recipes*. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press.

Méndez-Negrete, J. (2016). Desde El Corazón: Nourishing Bodies, Feeding Souls. In M. E. Abarca & C. C. Salas (Eds.), *Latino@s' Presence in the Food Industry: Changing How We Think About Food* (pp. 23–40). The University of Arkansas Press.

Miner, D. (2014). *Creating Aztlán: Chicano Art, Indigenous Sovereignty, and Lowriding Across Turtle Island* (3 edition). Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Mishra, L. K., Walker-Swaney, J., Sarkar, D., & Kalidas, S. (2017). Bioactive vegetables integrated into ethnic "Three Sisters Crops" garden targeting foods for type 2 diabetes-associated health disparities of American Indian communities. *Journal of Ethnic Foods*, *4*, 163–171.

Monberg, T. G. (n.d.). Reclaiming Hybridity: How One Filipino American Counterpublic Hybridizes Academic Discourse. In P. Bizzell (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 11th biennial Conference of the Rhetoric Society of America, held May 28-31 2004, Austin, Texas.*

Moraga, C. L. (2011). *A Xicana Codex of Changing Consciousness: Writings, 2000–2010*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books.

Mt. Pleasant, J. (2015). Food Yields and Nutrient Analyses of the Three Sisters: A Haudenosaunee Cropping System. *Ethnobotany Letters*, *7*(1), 87–98.

Nowacek, D. M., & Nowacek, R. S. (2008). The Organic Foods System: Its Discursive Achievements and Prospects. *College English*, *70*(4), 403–420.

Ortoleva, M. (2013). Let's Not Forget Ecological Literacy. *Literacy in Composition Studies*, *1*(2), 66–73.

Peace, A. (2006). Barossa Slow: The Representation and Rhetoric of Slow Food's Regional Cooking. *Gastronomica*, *6*(1), 51–59.

Peña, D. G. (Ed.). (1999). *Chicano Culture, Ecology, Politics: Subversive Kin*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Peña, D. G. (2010). Environmental Justice and the Future of Chicana/o Studies. *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies*, *35*(2), 149–158.

Pilcher, J. M. (1998). *Que vivan los tamales!: Food and the Making of Mexican Identity* (1st edition). Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Powell, M. (1999). Blood and Scholarship: One Mixed-Blood's Story. In K. Gilyard (Ed.), *Race, Rhetoric and Composition* (pp. 1–16). Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers.

Powell, M. (2012). 2012 CCCC Chair's Address: Stories Take Place: A Performance in One Act. *College Composition and Communication*, *64*(2), 383–406.

Powell, M., Levy, D., Riley-Mukavetz, A., Brooks-Gillies, M., Novotny, M., & Fisch-Ferguson, J. (2014). Our Story Begins Here: Constellating Cultural Rhetorics. *Enculturation: A Journal of Rhetoric, Writing and Culture*.

Rhodes, J., & Alexander, J. (2015). *Techne: Queer Meditations on Writing the Self*. Computers & Composition Digital Press/Utah State UP. Retrieved from http://ccdigitalpress.org/techne/

Ridolfo, J., & Hart-Davidson, W. (Eds.). (2014). *Rhetoric and the Digital Humanities*. The University of Chicago Press.

Riley-Mukavetz, A. (2014). Towards a cultural rhetorics methodology: Making research matter with multi-generational women from the Little Traverse Bay Band. *Rhetoric, Professional Communication, and Globalization*, *5*(1), 108–125.

Ríos, G. R. (2015). Cultivating Land-Based Literacies and Rhetorics. *Literacy In Composition Studies*, *3*(1), 60–70.

Ríos, G. R., Ruiz, I. D., & Sánchez, R. (2016). Mestizaje. In *Decolonizing Rhetoric and Composition Studies: New Latinx Keywords for Theory and Pedagogy* (pp. 109–124). New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.

Rodríguez, R. C. (2014). *Our Sacred Maíz Is Our Mother: Indigeneity and Belonging in the Americas* (4th Edition edition). Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Royster, J. J., & Kirsch, G. E. (2012). *Feminist Rhetorical Practices: New Horizons for Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy Studies*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Saldaña-Portillo, M. J. (2003). *The Revolutionary Imagination in Latin America and the Age of Development*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Salmón, E. (2012). *Eating the Landscape: American Indian Stories of Food, Identity, and Resilience* (2 edition). Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Sano-Franchini, J. (2015). Cultural Rhetorics and the Digital Humanities: Toward Cultural Reflexivity in Digital Making. In J. Ridolfo & W. Hart-Davidson (Eds.), *Rhetoric and the Digital Humanities*. Chicago,: The University of Chicago Press.

Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (2 edition). London: Zed Books.

Sutton, D. (2010). Food and the Senses. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *39*, 209–223.
Taube, K. A. (1989). The Maize Tamale in Classic Maya Diet, Epigraphy, and Art. *American Antiquity*, *54*(1), 31–51.

Torrez, J. E. (2013b). *Somos Mexicanos y Hablamos Mexicano Aquí* : Rural Farmworker Families Struggle to Maintain Cultural and Linguistic Identity in Michigan. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, *12*(4), 277–294.

Torrez, J. E. (2015). Construyendo Comunidad: Developing a bilingual/bicultural framework for community building. In *Service-learning and civic engagement: A sourcebook*. London: Sage Publications.

Trimbur, J. (1989). Consensus and Difference in Collaborative Learning. *College English*, *51*(6), 602–616.

Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is Not a Metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, *1*(1), 1–40.

Valdés, D. N. (1991). *Al Norte: Agricultural Workers in the Great Lakes Region, 1917-1970* (1st edition). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Villanueva, V. J. (1993). *Bootstraps: From an American Academic of Color*. National Council of Teachers of English.

Villanueva, V. J. (1997). Considerations for American Freireistas. In V. J. Villanueva (Ed.), *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.

Waxman, B. F. (2008). Food Memoirs: What They Are, Why They Are Popular, and Why They Belong in the Literature Classroom. *College English*, *70*(4), 363–383.

Whyte, K. P. (2017). Food Sovereignty, Justice, and Indigenous Peoples: An Essay on Settler Colonialism and Collective Continuance. In A. Barhill, T. Doggett, & A. Egan (Eds.), *Oxford Handbook on food Ethics*.

Wilson, S. (2009). *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods.* Black Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing.