QUEREMOS UN MUNDO DONDE QUEPAN MUCHOS MUNDOS (WE WANT A WORLD WHERE MANY WORLDS FIT): A CULTURAL RHETORICS READING STRATEGY AND THEORY OF WRITING FOR ACTIVIST GENRES

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ABSTRACT

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While much has been said about individualized rhetorical practice, a unifying theory about how writing functions to animate communities has yet to be articulated. Furthermore, the connection between cultural rhetorics and a theory of writing has yet to be further explored. The dissertation analyzes various texts created outside the university to form a reading strategy that will help understand how decoloniality, relationality, materiality, and cultural rhetorics converge to provide material changes to the public beyond the classroom. This reading strategy focuses on understanding what makes texts produced by activists to animate communities particularly effective. The dissertation examines how the self-published newspapers written by the Young Lords exemplifies writing's ability to animate communities. Through inductive analysis, I examine how Indigenous rhetorical practice engaged in by the Young Lords was particularly useful in effecting material change in their immediate communities. This reading strategy asks readers to identify if a text contemporizes relations, pursues materiality, and considers contextuality. Utilizing these strategies informs a cultural rhetorics theory of writing in which writers affect the nature of writing through their attunement to these practices. Additionally, this reading strategy exemplifies how politics, or how the mechanisms by which the public exercises its power over governing structures, relates to the practice of rhetoric.

This dissertation is dedicated to Melissa and Harvey, without whom this would not mean anything.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

Topic and Context

In our present moment, activist writing has never been as prevalent. Online organizing has proven to be an indispensable tool for organizations looking to make themselves visible to large audiences through the use of effective rhetorical strategies to build networks of allies, to provide support to communities, and to shine a light on whatever dark corners need to be exposed, in the name of justice. While much has been said about individualized rhetorical practice, a unifying theory about how writing functions to animate communities has yet to be articulated. Furthermore, the connection between cultural rhetorics and a theory of writing have yet to be further explored. The dissertation will analyze various texts created outside the university to form a reading strategy that will help understand how decoloniality, relationality, materiality, and cultural rhetorics converge to provide material changes to publics beyond the classroom. This reading strategy focuses on understanding what makes texts produced by activists for the purpose of animating communities particularly effective.

This is a reading strategy for activist genres, but it is not limited to the composition of manifestoes, newspapers, and other public facing and publicly composed texts. Writing instructors, community organizers, and publicly minded students can find utility in understanding how writing has been used historically to motivate and animate communities. Specifically, I focus on a set of texts written by the Young Lords, who ultimately had great success in using their writing to animate their communities. Through inductive analysis, it became clear that the Indigenous rhetorical practice engaged in by the Young Lords was particularly useful in effecting material change. This

reading strategy asks readers identify if a text contemporizes relations, pursues materiality, and considers contextuality. Utilizing these strategies informs a cultural rhetorics theory of writing in which writers affect the nature of writing through their attunement to these practices. Specifically, this reading strategy examines how politics, or how the public exercises their power over governing structures, relates to the practice of rhetoric. These strategies are reflective of numerous rhetorical traditions but are primarily influenced by Indigenous rhetorical practice. These practices are centered because of the unique disposition of relationality in Indigenous epistemology in decolonial efforts, concepts increasingly discussed in Rhetoric and Composition.

It is important that I attempt to define conceptualizations I will be using throughout this dissertation. Rhetoric, "Decolonization," and community, for example, are concepts that have been appropriated and re-appropriated throughout the discipline to the point that actual definitions for these concepts are nebulous. In whatever way these concepts are defined, it is clear that not defining these terms would imply singular definitions for these terms, something I know not to be true. As such, I will make clear what it is I mean when discussing these elementary concepts throughout the dissertation.

Rhetoric

As this dissertation explores the limits and possibilities of rhetoric, defining the concept as I interpret it is necessary. Defining rhetoric has been a very complicated exercise throughout my brief academic career. Certainly, there are (Western) canonical definitions of rhetoric that I relied on to teach the subject. The didactic principles of Aristotle's rhetoric may be too bellicose to accurately reflect my attunement to coalition

building. Kenneth Burke's definition, more well-worn in contemporary usage yet still somehow slightly underrated, more accurately reflects the classical ideas of rhetoric in this dissertation. He defines rhetoric as "the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or induce actions in other human agents" (Burke 41). However, this definition has limitations as well. Its focus on *words* that "form attitudes" relies heavily on the unidimensional notion that rhetoric is merely persuasion. Similarly, this definition only reflects a discursive rhetoric. As a first year Ph.D. student, I attempted to address these concerns by offering my own definition of rhetoric as "culture expressed through different compositional forms to express methods of knowledge and meaning making." Implied in my own definition is that culture itself is rhetorical in that there is inherent persuasion in expressing one's culture. Rhetoric, according to me at the time, was to persuade others separate from myself that my cultural self was valid. This definition was valuable to me in that I truly believed that persuasion was at the core of rhetoric, even if I did not explicitly state it. As a discursive act, mediated and informed by words, persuasion is not the limit of rhetoric.

While these definitions of rhetoric focus exclusively on the act of persuasion, I believe that problematizing this implicit claim can provide a broader horizon for what rhetoric is and how it functions. For example, cultural rhetorics defines itself as the "study and practice of meaning making," and as an embodied practice with four points of practice for cultural rhetorics work: decolonization, relations, constellation, and story (Bratta and Powell). This broad, epistemological definition allows for more strategies beyond writing, reading, and speaking to be rhetorical. As such, when using the term rhetoric throughout this dissertation, I will be referring to the broader concept of cultural rhetorics. In this sense, rhetoric is a method by which people construct meaning

from a given source. Constructing meaning can also be a viable definition of reading. Reading, as a practice, requires the reader to take in a variety of stimuli to construct meaning, rhetorical or otherwise. The focus of this dissertation will help parse out the "otherwise" to develop a form of reading that is not only rhetorical but activating.

Reading Strategy

Defining the act of reading in the discipline of rhetoric and composition has been relatively consistent since Haas and Flower's "Rhetorical Reading Strategies and the Construction of Meaning," published in *College Composition and Communication* in 1988. They argue that reading itself is a discursive act, in which readers construct meaning in the specific discursive situation in which a piece is written, meaning that the "the writer of the original text, other readers, the rhetorical context for reading, and the history of the discourse" (Haas 167) are in a dynamic relationship with the reader. This construction of "multi- faceted, interwoven representations of knowledge" is representative of the cognitive process. Implicit in Haas and Flower's work, however, is that there "good" reading habits teachers can show students. Given that reading is a discursive act, meaning there is communication between multiple actors that is sent and received, "good" reading could also be taught to teachers. This reciprocal method of extracting and constructing meaning from texts implies that there are meanings that are constructed and meanings that *are not* constructed. These failed constructions, according to Haas and Flowers, provide the foundation for rhetorical interventions in writing studies. An emphasis on rhetorical construction as a reading strategy could prove to be instrumental in imagining the possibilities of rhetoric as a discipline.

Rhetorical readings typically ask readers construct a rhetorical situation for the text, which will account for author's purpose, context, and effect on audience, whereas a reading strategy not only accounts for rhetorical strategies, but content and functional strategies as well. This rhetorical construction represents an "enlargement" of constructed meaning. While Haas and Flower identify rhetorical strategies as a key function of highly effective readers, accounting for content and functional aspects of meaning construction are as important, if not more, in determining motivating factors. Understanding these factors in relation to each tell us how a text can constructs meaning for its readers and how readers act on these constructed meanings.

Cultural rhetorics teaches us that these factors work together in relation and are in a sense rhetorical. The act of reading and writing are highly relational. These are not merely "information exchanges" thought a representational system of figures. Rather, they are both needed to construct a rhetorical situation. In constructing these complex rhetorical situations, writers are inherently directed toward action.

I use the concept of a reading strategy instead of rhetorically reading to gesture toward the impact the writer has on the process of writing. This active approach emphasizes the dynamic nature of writing in which the cultural and linguistic assets writers bring constantly alter the purpose and context of a written piece. This strategy puts forth a theory of writings that posits that writing is not merely a system of representation but a force of change itself. These dynamic aspects of writing do not merely create a one-way system by which a writer composes knowledge but a system of relations in which writing affects writers after it has been produced. The conditions, methods, modes, and mediums of writing can in turn alter the writer, their purpose, and their context.

Decolonization

Though decolonization is a popular topic of discussion outside of publications in our discipline there is not much published rhetoric and writing studies scholarship to be read in the field's most prestigious journals despite many scholars taking up the mantle of doing "decolonial" work. While the intention of the authors of these works is noble, they describe and engage in the idea of decoloniality in a manner different from how decoloniality is discussed in other disciplines, which is not a problem in and of itself. However, this difference does not enrich our collective understanding of decoloniality but rather further obfuscates material projects of decoloniality. Rhetorically, this can be perceived as a harmful appropriation.

Ellen Cushman et al. assert that attending to the "concerns of settler-colonial logic" informs our disciplines understanding of structural oppression" and that a "decolonial approach extends far beyond Indigenous rhetorical concerns" (Cushman et al. 1). In response to this symposium, Cassie Cabos et al. argue "Specifically, the authors note the ways in which defining cultural rhetorics via American Indian rhetorics can frame decolonial scholarship as a Native rhetorics concern rather than a broader scholarly commitment designed to contend with marginalization and injustice across the colonial matrix of power" (Cabos et al. 375). While the concerns of the respective symposiums are generative in the conceptions of delinking from modern colonial logics to enrich the discipline, I am struck by their use of language that implies a delinking of native sovereignty to colonialism. Colonization is ultimately, at its core, concerned with the control of indigenous people. To decolonize is to inherently separate or negate colonization, a project that may not be possible given the lived reality of settler colonialism. Inherent in settler colonialism is the act of displacement and settling. Those

who are displaced, then, should be centered in conversations about decolonization, especially given the rich intellectual tradition of decolonial work from those who have been colonized.

Can there be another name for something that accounts for the marginalization and injustice across matrices of power? Walter Mignolo, whose concepts of delinking are most often cited in the discipline of rhetoric and composition, is specifically citing European conquest as an origin for the matrix of power in modernity. While the matrix of power affects most aspects of our existence, it should not be discounted that issues epistemic and material autonomy affect indigenous peoples daily. As such, usages of decolonization that do not attend to and center indigenous peoples furthers the logics of settler colonial by displacing the concerns of native people while broadening decolonization as a catch all for oppression.

Throughout this paper, I will make reference to "decolonization" (n.) and "decolonial" (adj.) as separate concepts. I have to separate these mainstream understandings of decolonialism as something not just tied to social justice but as a much larger epistemic and material project. Like Walter Mignolo, I understand that I cannot provide a catch-all definition for decolonial or decolonization. I can, however, provide those definitions of which I embody. There are many definitions of decolonialism and decoloniality. Eve Tuck, for example, provides one of the most poignant and widely disseminated definitions of decolonization while Mignolo offers a definition for decoloniality that is widely cited. This difference between "decolonization" (a process) and "decoloniality" (a state of being) is crucial is discussing the effects of decolonial rhetoric. The small differentiation in suffixes dramatically changes the scope of the representative project.

Decolonization describes, from the perspective of non-aligned states, their struggles to detach themselves from Western power. Mignolo says that Decolonization is a third option, but not in between democracy and socialism, capitalism and communism" (Mignolo 53). To put it simply, decolonization refers to a material repatriation and rejection of capitalism. Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang argue "Decolonize (a verb) and decolonization (a noun) cannot easily be grafted onto pre-existing discourses/frameworks, even if they are critical, even if they are anti-racist, even if they are justice frameworks" (Tuck 3) because the struggle for decolonization occurs every day on stolen land. To call for decolonization in the abstract, specifically in conjunction with discipline specific concepts, when native peoples are denied the right to vote or access to clean water, is ineffectual at best and harmful at worst. For these people, decolonization is not a metaphor.

However, this interpretation of decolonization occurs increasingly due to the buzzword status of decolonization. "The easy absorption, adoption, and transposing of decolonization is yet another form of settler appropriation" because "Decolonization doesn't have a synonym. (Tuck 3). Increasingly, the term is used colloquially in place of terms like social justice or for struggles against "racist, hetero-patriarchal systems of oppression" rather than imperial expansion of Western nations. The difference between the two terms is as drastic as decolonization a "revolution in which the state will be taken and the project of the previous state replaced by the revolutionary one without a questioning of the theory of the state and economic rules," while decoloniality is the "long term processes involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic, and psychological divesting of colonial power" (Mignolo 52). This material repatriation is often not what most rhetoric and writing scholars are discussing, but rather an epistemic reconstitution

that would better be defined as decoloniality. As such, if we are to decolonize "anything," we have to be decolonizing from something and what is being decolonized varies from paper to paper. In terms of what is published, scholars are discussing an epistemic colonial tradition and searching for means to seek "alternative" rhetorics rather than decolonial rhetorics.

If we use the provided definitions, there are specific institutions and forces from which people actively seek material reparation and epistemic freedom. While there may be a conversation about epistemic reconstitution, the syntactical variation between decolonize and decoloniality effectively prevents these conversations from happening. While decoloniality and decolonization as a stand-alone project cannot be grafted onto existing frameworks, decolonial rhetoric is different. The discipline attempts to grapple with issues of decoloniality but does so in a manner that either confuses the aforementioned concepts or uses the term as a fill in for issues of equity and social justice. Therefore, there are no strict definitions of what could be considered decolonial rhetoric. In looking to establish decolonial rhetoric as a project engaged in good faith in the discipline, decolonial rhetoric can be better understood when examined in relation to a field that addresses issues of decoloniality.

The need to reframe understandings of what constitutes "composition" or "rhetoric" while honoring indigenous knowledge either through practice or through citational practice is essential to any decolonial work that can occur in rhetoric and writing studies. By building networks of relations, or constellating, rhetoric and writing scholars not only engage in a good faith effort of decolonial delinking but engage in a rhetoric and writing framework grounded in decoloniality. Decolonial rhetoric, then, is dependent on a cultural rhetorics reading strategy.

Community

Community, like most abstractions, needs contextualization in order to make sense of and define. As such, community in and of itself is rhetorical. Like rhetoric, contexts decide what is being communicated, argued, and lived. Most colloquial definitions of community regard community as a social group— a group by which to socialize and share basic society norms. However, what preconditions must exist in order to make something *not* a community?

In our field, many genealogies of "community" have been theorized.[1] From being held together by shared beliefs and languages to communities of ideas, crisis, and memory, the community as a constructed network based on region or belief systems persists. These networked conceptions of identity offer a post-humanist idea of community that is inclusive. These definitions do account for unintended constructions of community. For the purposes of my research, however, I am less interested in the operating definitions of community because the inherent abstraction provided by most attempts at definition and more interested at what these communities do as constructed.

For myself, definitions of community from indigenous thought more closely aligns with my understanding and experiences with these networks. Community's definition can be expanded on a series of relational networks, relying on connections people share, both material and discursive. The idea relationality as a research framework was best explained by Shawn Wilson in *Research as Ceremony*. According to Wilson, relationality means to understand one's relationship: to land, people, space, ideas, and

[1] See Berlin, Fish, Grabill, and Porter.

the universe as interconnected and fluid (Wilson 7). These relational networks are not only rhetorically constructed but in turn construct rhetoric. Relationality, as an indigenous framework emphasizes the role each person has on others, both human and non-human to construct meaning. As such, my discussion of community in this dissertation is heavily influenced by the concepts of relations and relationality as this is how each of the organizations I discuss conceptualizes community.

Questions and Objectives

Through my research, it became clear that articulating a rhetorical definition of "politics," as with decolonization, was nebulous or assumed to have a consensus definition. While the discipline broadly discusses an intangible politics of ideas, representations, and more broadly "rhetorics," a concept of "politics" working with decolonial efforts through rhetoric has been discussed very little. This dissertation is guided by the following questions:

1. How do readers construct meaning from political text and why is it important to rhetoric?
2. Does rhetoric itself need "politics"?
3. Does rhetoric account for material change?

This dissertation seeks to understand the political implications of rhetoric because rhetoric is not in and of itself political. Rather, I want to understand how *political rhetoric* can be measured as effective. I posit that the political sphere is the laboratory for rhetoric. Where else would the act of constructing meaning be more effective than in the machinations of governance? If rhetoric is indeed a persuasive act, then victories in political sphere, where the stakes are high because of the magnitude of

the ramifications of any decision made, surely would be a measure of effectiveness. Furthermore, this dissertation works to understand if persuasion is a necessary component of politics. Did the Young Lords necessarily need to persuade their community that they deserved more community health action? If so, this dissertation explores how those meanings and conclusions are constructed from rhetorical acts and the lessons that can be gleamed from specific rhetorical constructs for further action. Ultimately, I am attempting to define and emphasize the political ramifications of cultural rhetorics. Cultural rhetorics is political through its ties to relationality and materiality, both necessary components for decolonial politics, and my reading strategy makes this clear.

A secondary objective is to decipher what it is the field means when it refers to political acts. The use of politics as a subject is common in the discipline. Discussions about coalitional politics or racialized politics are common in the rhetorical zeitgeist. However, more traditional understandings of politics in rhetoric, specifically an understanding of procedural governance and the strategies concerning power dynamics in the state, have been discussed very little. The dissertation will look toward how citizens use rhetoric to influence governance. This political focus takes a clear Marxist prospective in which I evaluate how rhetorical practice (meaning-making) figures into the production and regulation of social wealth, both of which or decolonial concerns (Greene). As such, I aim to articulate how cultural rhetorics accounts for Marxist thought in the decolonial action of the Young Lords and show the two are intertwined.

Focus and Scope

This dissertation will to the textual production of the Young Lords as a starting point to understand how political rhetoric a practice of cultural rhetorics is and how a critical reading strategy helps uncover the utility of political texts. I then shift focus to two contemporary groups' publications to evaluate each movements material and rhetorical success based on my reading strategy. I focus on reading strategy instead of writing strategy to underscore the symbiotic relationship between reading and writing. One cannot reproduce models they have never experienced. Furthermore, a critical reading strategy requires a rhetorical awareness that can be more easily practiced in reading.

As this dissertation will be discussing three movements, it would be prudent to introduce them here. Around the world, including in this country, there have been historical and contemporary examples of movements that sought to compose a pre-figurative politics as decolonial action. However, I focus on organizations whose decolonial mission is centered in the United States. These organizations are more or less in sync with the broad strokes of political action. How they conceptualize decolonial action and how they instigate this action with rhetoric varies greatly. It is not my intention to compare these groups directly but rather to emphasize the rhetorical differences between organizations on the same side of the political spectrum.

<u>Young Lords</u>

As a street gang occupying the Lincoln Park neighborhood of Chicago, The Young Lords provided what most gangs in the 1960's provided marginalized youth—protection, recognition, and a sense of autonomy despite disparate conditions. These conditions were exacerbated by the urban renewal programs championed by Mayor Richard Daly,

which effectively redlined Lincoln Park for further development into a wealthy suburb and pushing out the majority Puerto Rican and Black populations further from the city center.

One YL member, José "Cha Cha" Jiménez, relied on the skills he learned from the YL gang in order to support his frequently relocated family. During one stint in jail for drug possession in 1968, Jiménmez witnessed the frequent mistreatment of undocumented Mexican field workers at the behest of the police. He volunteered to be a translator for the monolingual police, and after reading the works of Thomas Merton OCSO, made the conscious effort to work toward bettering the lives of people like himself. Using the Black Panther Party as a template, Jiménez re-envisioned the Young Lords, refocusing their efforts from turf wars to protecting the people they lived with. They took direct action to address the needs of the community. They truly embodied a revolutionary approach to community care and later usedd all their rhetorical tools to bring about attention toward health equity in the Bronx.

One such tool was the publication of their own newspaper, distributed in communities like the Bronx, the *YLO (Young Lords Organization)* and later *Palante*. A familiar term amongst Latinx and Afro-Latinx of the Caribbean and its diaspora, *palante is* shortened mash-up of *para adelante,* meaning "forward." This rallying call, front and center on the masthead, informed community citizens of the issues important to the Young Lords, manifestos, and calls to direct action. The second issue, published in May of 1970, publicized what would become known as the "13 Point Program and Platform of the Young Lords Organization." The 13 points are as follows:

1. WE WANT SELF-DETERMINATION FOR PUERTO RICANS—LIBERATION ON THE ISLAND AND INSIDE THE UNITED STATES.

2. WE WANT SELF-DETERMINATION FOR ALL LATINOS.
3. WE WANT LIBERATION OF ALL THIRD WORLD PEOPLE.
4. WE ARE REVOLUTIONARY NATIONALISTS AND OPPOSE RACISM.
5. WE WANT COMMUNITY CONTROL OF OUR INSTITUTIONS AND LAND.
6. WE WANT A TRUE EDUCATION OF OUR CREOLE CULTURE AND SPANISH LANGUAGE.
7. WE OPPOSE CAPITALISTS AND ALLIANCES WITH TRAITORS.
8. WE OPPOSE THE AMERIKKKAN MILITARY
9. WE WANT FREEDOM FOR ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS.
10. . WE WANT EQUALITY FOR WOMEN. MACHISMO MUST BE REVOLUTIONARY . . . NOT OPPRESSIVE
11. WE FIGHT ANTI-COMMUNISM WITH INTERNATIONAL UNITY
12. WE BELIEVE ARMED SELF-DEFENSE AND ARMED STRUGGLE ARE THE ONLY MEANS TO LIBERATION.
13. WE WANT A SOCIALIST SOCIETY.

While most points align with platforms from other ethnocentric-leftist groups (Black Panthers, Brown Berets), point five, "We want community control of our institutions and land," most explicitly outline demands for material autonomy. By seizing these institutions from the state, albeit, for a short time, the Young Lords showed power through communal autonomy. Furthermore, they exemplify the ability of a community's self-sufficiency.

The group recognized the need for better community services. After an associate of the organization, "Mingo El Loco", died as a result of treatable wounds from a stabbing because ambulance took over an hour to arrive, the group decided to take the demand

for what they termed “decent” healthcare a main goal for their organization. They talked to sympathetic health care workers in their community and learned that much of what afflicted people in their community— lead poisoning, long waits at the emergency room, over prescription, and a lack of ancillary care— could be provided with mass health programs like those in wealthier suburbs. In addition to their 13-point platform, YL released a 10-point health program in January of 1970. These 10 points include:

1. We want total self-determination of all health service at East Harlem (El Barrio) through an incorporated community-staff governing board for Metropolitan Hospital. (Staff is anyone and everyone working in Metropolitan, except administrators.)
2. We want immediate replacement of all Lindsay and Terenzio administrators by community and staff-appointed people whose practice has demonstrated their commitment to serve our poor community.
3. We demand an immediate end to construction of the new emergency room until the Metropolitan Hospital Community–Staff Governing Board inspects and approves them or authorizes new plans.
4. We want employment for our people. All jobs filled in El Barrio must be filled by residents first, using on-the-job training and other educational opportunities as bases for service and promotions.
5. We want free publicly supported health care for treatment and prevention.
6. We want an end to all fees.
7. We want total decentralization of health—block health officers responsible to the Community-Staff Board should be instituted.

8. We want “door-to-door” preventative health services emphasizing environment and sanitation control, nutrition, drug addiction, maternal and childcare and senior citizen services.
9. We want education programs for all the people to expose health problems—sanitation, rats, poor housing, malnutrition, police brutality, pollution, and other forms of oppression.
10. We want total control by the Metropolitan Hospital Community-Staff Governing Board of budget allocations, medical policy, along the above points, hiring and firing and salaries of employees, construction and health code enforcement.
11. Any community, union, or workers organization must support all the points of this program and work and fight for them or be shown as what they are—enemies of the poor people of East Harlem.

When the Tuberculosis Society refused to even bring a testing vehicle to administer tests, the Young Lords Party stole a truck used by the organization and administered the tests themselves. Recognizing inequity in their community, YL understand that treatable conditions, such as tuberculosis, “could be stamped out with mass health programs that go out to the people” (Enck-Wanzer 189). They discovered after administering the tests that one out of every three people tested positive for tuberculosis. This inequity began their fight for what they deemed a “Revolutionary Health Care Program for the People.” Partnering with “radical” medical students, and health professionals, YL instituted a “People’s Health Week” that included occupations, teach-ins, and demonstrations meant to educate the people about the difference between “capitalist medicine and socialist medicine,” specifically in their attention to the “social determinants of health.”

Sometime after the YL instituted their preventive health program for tuberculosis, three members went to Prospect Hospital in South Bronx to ask for material assistance from hospital administrators. They were denied. When hospitals refused to treat more than 40 of the borough's 40,000 addicts, they seized the hospital and implemented physicals, medication, beds, and a brief educational program about addiction. The YLP understood that there was no reciprocity their relationship with the healthcare system. They were customers, not patients. They understood that a relationship between doctors and patients needed to exist outside of networks that existed already. While their actions weren't long-lasting, the reverberations of their direct action influenced a generation of healthcare advocated that has seen the implementation of better health services in the Outer Burroughs the New York City.

Their revolutionary approach to communal autonomy embodied a greater care for community as it was constituted. While they retained distinctly anti-Western ideals through their resistance to capitalism, they used the materials and technologies available to them. They embodied indigenous practice through their communal care models and their insistence on a pre-figurative politics or re-working the existing institutions to make them work for the community. Their frequent sign off in *Palante*, "All power to the people" does not specify for whom the power is intended. Rather, their analysis of an increasingly capitalist healthcare system knowingly signals that capitalism and community health are incongruous.

Relevance and Importance

In addition to articulating a reading strategy that emphasizes a cultural rhetorics theory of writing and identifying a political rhetoric, this dissertation seeks to

understand how decolonial futurity is possible within current university models as well as institutions beyond the university. Claims to decolonize or to be anti-colonial x or y are often paradoxical because of the contextual and material realities of anti/decolonization. Textual production is a means toward structural change. Understanding the complexity of the rhetoricity of textual production always for the opportunity to fundamentally change the foundations of institutions for the better of communities beyond institutions. Reimagining of webs of power as webs of relations inflates the complexity of power relations in our contemporary world both in and out of academic institutions. Reimagining these power structures through textual production is a means of rhetorical sovereignty (Lyons).

This dissertation will engage in a cultural rhetorical and an Indigenous methodological framework and further this work by placing in political contexts. By doing so, I hope to specify my interpretation of the power rhetoric in politics beyond mere persuasion. This will contextualize the study of individualized rhetorics toward a rhetoric for the common good. This universalist approach offers a connection between leftist, Marxist, Indigenous, and cultural rhetorics that has yet to be articulated. In doing so, I hope to expose the broad coalition in the discipline of rhetoric concerned with issues of justice, sovereignty, and autonomy that exists in separate corners of the disciplinary field.

Chapter Outline

Chapter two begins with a literature review and ends with an explanation as to how I will be analyzing the texts of the Young Lords, the Woodbine Collective, and the Ruckus Society. The literature review looks to see how the discipline of Rhetoric and Writing

take up the subjects of decolonization/decoloniality, cultural rhetorics, Indigenous Rhetorics, Latinx rhetorics, and writing theory. In reviewing this literature, I present a cultural rhetorics reading strategy that ultimately posits a cultural rhetorics theory of writing and its function in activist circles. This reading strategy focuses on the concepts of materiality and relationality through strategies that include contemporizing relations, pursuing materiality, and considering contextuality.

Chapter three walks the readers through an inductive close reading in which I parse out moments that reflect the Young Lords rhetorical strategy of speaking to relationality and to materiality. This done though a close analysis of the self-published newspapers that contextualizes the rhetorical moment in which these texts were created as well as the rhetorical moment in which the communities consumed and acted on the rhetoric of the Young Lords. At the end of the chapter, I show how I measured the effectiveness of the Young Lords rhetorical strategy.

Chapter four takes the extracted reading strategy from chapter three and applies it to two contemporary examples. The groups whose literature I analyze, the Woodbine Collective and the Ruckus Society, were not chosen for their reputation among activist circles. Rather, they were chosen because of their close proximity to my own social networks. By utilizing this reading strategy, I attempt to understand the effectiveness of each group's rhetoric through publicly available literature. The chapter ends with assessment of the political utility of each group's rhetorical constructions.

Chapter 5 will address the implications such a reading strategy will have in rhetoric and composition with the intention reframing notions of "allyship" toward a rhetoric of relations. I will also outline recommendations on how to further the implications of this dissertation toward other sites of study.

Ultimately, rhetoric, as a practice and a field, should reflect the dynamic nature of the intellectual mission of the academy. When old definitions no longer suffice, new definitions and paradigms should take their place. To do this, one must know where they are starting from. This way, getting lost in the practice of constellating relations would not become a circuitous exercise in communication but rather a destructive force form which better paradigms and conceptualizations of the discipline can be built.

CHAPTER 2

Introduction

This chapter begins with a literature review that focuses on how the field of rhetoric and composition has taken up concepts such as Indigenous epistemology, decoloniality, cultural rhetorics, and their connection to writing studies. I then introduce a cultural rhetorics-informed framework that I will use to analyze publications from The Young Lords, followed by a close reading of texts produced by contemporary radical groups in the United States in subsequent chapters. I intend to show how such a reading strategy underscores the importance of relationship building and materiality, important aspects of cultural rhetorics, can animate communities toward undertaking direct action.

Cultural rhetorics exists as a "situated scholarly practice in which the particularity of rhetorical practices within specific cultural communities sheds light on the myriad ways that culture and rhetoric emerge," ("Our Story Beings Here") and a synthetic reading strategy informed by cultural rhetorics, decolonial rhetorics, and Indigenous rhetorics helps us extrapolate how culture and rhetoric emerge in textual production contexts specific to decolonial and political ends. This reading strategy would more purposefully illuminate how culture and rhetoric emerge in radical contexts. Furthermore, this reading strategy helps us observe how writing functions to preserve identity in spite of colonization. In offering this reading strategy, I hope to show that how identity and the preservation of identity is both a function of writing and a feature of intellectual sovereignty, both necessary aspects of decolonial politics.

This reading framework, based on cultural rhetorics practice, highlights rhetorical tendencies of radical texts. The connection between reading and writing as a singular strategy to encourage action has been discussed in the field but discussing this

connection in relation to Indigenous ontology has not[2]. Reading the texts produced by the Young Lords through this cultural rhetorics-informed framework reveals three tendencies: these texts (1) contemporize relations; (2) pursue materiality; and (3) consider contextuality. Paying attention to these three tendencies sharpens cultural rhetoric methodology by providing a blueprint for inciting and sustaining direct action. In the next chapter, I will show fully how this reading strategy works by examining newspapers published by the Young Lords. However, to introduce this framework in this chapter, I will first look to the field of rhetoric and writing studies to show how reading with these strategies in mind can better inform readers about struggles for autonomy of individuals and of Indigenous communities. In short, this chapter will provide a literature review, discuss my methods, and introduce the cultural rhetorics informed reading strategy. Though this chapter uses moments of direct action to construct a theory about reading the documents these actions produced, it centers theory's ability to plan, strategize, and take ownership of resistance, which I argue can be more important than direct action alone. The following section will discuss how the field has taken up issues of decoloniality and how it connects to contemporary Western thought about subjectivity in writing. This connection illustrates the importance of relational frameworks in building a just world.

[2] For more about reading rhetorically, see Bunn (2013)

Literature Review

Indigenous Methods/Ontologies

The larger, ontological imperatives of creating a just world require a philosophy that centers interdependent relations. A number of Western scholars have pointed to decolonial strategies in order to form such a philosophy. However, in discussing decoloniality, many Western scholars make the crucial mistake of not including the voices of the Native and Indigenous intellectual tradition. Leaving out Native and Indigenous voices in discussions of decoloniality makes it impossible to work against coloniality, since it leaves out the voices of those most affected by it. In order to even begin imagining righting the wrongs of coloniality, it is necessary to have a cursory understanding of what some non-Western, Indigenous ontologies are based on.

Indigenous philosopher VF Cordova writes of Native American philosophy that all "cultural groups have stories that 'explain' the origins of the world, of the nature of man, and the ways man should conduct himself in the world as it is described" (67), claiming that answering these questions in the methodological purpose of philosophy. Specifically, Cordova explains that the questions that undergird Native American philosophy center on relationality and answering, "what kind of a world would it have to be in order to justify a claim that all beings are related?" (67). This kind of conceptual framework that guides Native American thought, according to Cordova, directly opposes positivist conceptual frameworks found in the West. The inherent problems of communicating one worldview (Indigenous) to Western worldviews, then, is nearly impossible.

At the same time, these two worldviews (Indigenous and Western) cannot exist separately. Rather, it must be acknowledged that these disparate worldviews exist in

relationship with each other. Writing, then, can serve as a means of world-building by emphasizing Indigenous identity. By forcibly making space, (epistemological, political, and physical) Indigenous resistance through writing shows how he can remake a more just world by acknowledging that these frameworks can be expanded. The revelatory act of centering Indigenous epistemology within Western academic research is discussed in depth in *Kaandossiwin: How We Come to Know* by Kathleen Absolon (Minogiizhigokwe). Though not a rhetoric and composition scholar, Absolon is increasingly cited in work by cultural and Indigenous rhetorics scholars. Finding a congruency between worldview and methodology (Absolon 24) makes space for Indigenous peoples and has the potential to expand the methods we bring into our discipline. If more people from underrepresented communities see themselves in the discipline, we work to build more equitable frameworks and move "away from the consuming trap of being reactive to colonialism and dominance" to a path of self-determination and liberation" (Absolon 165). Absolon's is a methodological approach meant to "rewrite and reright" Indigenous people's position in history (Smith 29). According to many Indigenous thinkers, history is not merely a totalizing discourse meant to assert Western conceptual frameworks onto peoples that have been colonized. Rather, a constructed history has the power of being a conceptual framework.

Understanding how story passes from community to community gives people agency to construct their histories that reflect their ontologies. Colonized peoples are writers in the sense that some constructed traditional, alphabetic texts. They were also writers in that they constructed their own history without alphabetic text. Interpreting how these histories are constructed is informative for writing teachers because the task of rhetoric and writing studies is to better understand these meaning-making practices. These

decolonial strategies can be used to understand how writing makes things happen (in this case, autonomy). In short, this liberatory reading framework provides the opportunity to not only recognize or speak to a just world, but rather illuminates ways a just can be created.

A key component of the cultural rhetorics informed reading of texts is understanding how the text situates itself. Are the writers a part of the struggle, belligerents, or spectators? Work that claims to be decolonial or liberatory will take relations and relationality into account. This contextualization of how the texts situate themselves informs the interconnectedness that is predominant in Indigenous ontology. The idea relationality as a research framework was best explained by Shawn Wilson in *Research as Ceremony*. According to Wilson, "relationality" means to understand one's relationship: to land, people, space, ideas, and the universe as interconnected and fluid (7). If, collectively, we can move away from seeing networks as objects of study and rather see the relationships within networks as the site of study, there is an opportunity to inflate flattened understandings of networks such that meaningful change can continue to grow. Relations are constantly "creating [themselves] because everything is alive and making choices that determine the future" (Wilson 46), thereby making these constellations of relations (rather than the networks) discursive subjects for further theorization. A framework that centers relational accountability, then, complicates the relationship between researcher and the researched, instead focusing on a reimagining of a community and the bodies that constitute that community.

A literacy of communal relations is a starting point for communities to strategize politically. Centering relationality also questions the primacy of Western rhetorical methods and methodologies by deconstructing positivist relationships that center what

can be observed and recorded. As such, this framework initiates a decentering of foci of study or individual sites as objects. If relationality accounts for why we should treat each other with respect, it is because of the ability to recognize intellectual sovereignty. In the next section, I will discuss how a popular collection of essays attempts to engage with intellectual sovereignty from the perspective of decolonization.

Cultural, Decolonial, and Latinx Rhetorics

Decolonizing Rhetoric and Composition Studies: New Latinx Keywords for Theory and Pedagogy, an edited collection by Iris D. Ruiz and Raúl Sánchez, is one the few examples of rhetoric and composition scholarship that deals exclusively with issues of Chicanismo, Latin American writing and rhetoric, and decolonization and their interconnectedness. As a book with "decolonizing" in the name, the collection has great potential to provide a direction for other Chicanxs in rhetoric and composition who have thus far felt underrepresented despite a number of prominent scholars who identify as Latinx or Chicanx. While the authors in this edited collection talk about and center their Latinx/Chicanx identity, I had yet to see any scholars discuss the decolonial possibility of Chicanismo. However, this collection makes few connections between decolonial thought and Indigenous ontologies in its theorizing new possibilities of decolonial rhetoric and decolonization.

The collection arises out of need the editors identify to "claim and reclaim important conceptual terms that have been misused or appropriated by institutional, hegemonic forces working against the interest working against the interests of minority students" ("Introduction" xiii). The collection foregrounds its theoretical work in the idea of epistemic delinking, borrowed from Walter Mignolo, in which other principles of

knowledge and understanding emerge from the colonized background in order to clear space for decolonial approaches to ethics and politics. Inspired by Raymond Williams' *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, the collection attempts "reclaim" such terms as "race," "code-switching," and "mestizaje." By featuring the work of Chicanx and Latinx scholars, the collection seeks to lay groundwork from which future generations of Chicanx/Latinx scholars can theorize about the field in an act of epistemic decolonization. To be sure, the collection does accomplish some of its aims in re-appropriating terms to better restate Chicanismo in the academy. However, there are issues in the collection that cannot be ignored if the goal is to "decolonize" rhetoric and writing studies. The citational practices and mixed definitions of "decolonization" in the book form a barrier to coalition-building between Latinx communities and Indigenous communities in that the collection does not do enough to complicate the history of indigeneity and Chicanismo. Not acknowledging this complicated history can hinder the collection's interpretation of decoloniality.

However, this collection is a step in acknowledging the complicated ramifications of colonialism in the Western hemisphere. The collection is a good place for scholars in and out of the field to gain a sense of how specific keywords used in multiple clusters can be applicable to the fields of rhetoric and writing studies. More importantly, the collection centers thematically on issues of decoloniality. The collection begins with an essay written by one the editors, Ruiz's "Race," in which she attempts to delink race from its religious, scientific and discursive points of origin. Ruiz links racism to the silencing of tlamatinime[3], Aztec spiritual leaders, by Spanish colonizers in the sixteenth

[3] Nahuatl language word meaning "someone who knows something."

century ("Race" 7). The silencing of tlamatinime by the Spanish and the forced conversion of Indigenous peoples to Christianity was based partly on their Indigenous identity and was the genesis of a particular, epistemic racism against the Indigenous peoples of Latin America that continues to this day. By framing race as a social construct with material implications based on epistemic traditions such as religion, Ruiz effectively delinks the idea of race being based solely on skin color. While reverberations of skin color were most definitely a reason from subjugation of Indigenous peoples by European colonizers, the miscegenation of both white Europeans and Indigenous peoples of the Americas makes it hard for many white-presenting Latinx/Chicanx to articulate the distinct and real forms of racism that they face. At the same time, Ruiz's chapter does not engage in the colonial history of colorism in Latin America. Terms like *moreno/a* (dark-skinned) could be considered derogatory in some countries, for example. As such, Chicanx/Latinx rhetoric can be a colonizing rhetoric if it does not engage with the complex history of colonization in the Western hemisphere.

Thematically, the collection addresses decoloniality, but it does not engage directly in the topic despite the title referencing it and it being discussed in the introduction. The most helpful chapter in this book is Gabriela Raquel Ríos's "Mestizaje." Rios articulates the problematic nature of the relationship between American Indians, Chicanxs, and Mexican indígenas, claiming that the conversations amongst rhetoric and composition scholars about mestizaje further reify the racial dynamics of mestizaje as theorized by Martí and Vasconcelos ("Mestizaje" 110). She approaches the analysis by deconstructing mestizaje and by highlighting the history of oppression of the Mexican state on the Indigenous peoples of México in the name of nationalism. She articulates ways in which mestizaje can be decolonized through Gloría

Anzaldúa's mestiza consciousness, or a consciousness that embraces the ambiguity of being a mestiza, opening the possibility for the challenging of Western epistemologies such as the subject-object split and binary oppositions ("Mestizaje" 112). She further contextualizes a decolonizing approach of mestizaje through an "indigenist" turn of decoloniality that problematizes mestizaje as a relic of modernity not based in ontologies of Indigenous peoples ("Mestizaje" 114). She argues that the fetishization of mestizaje and mestiz@ rhetoric problematic in that it is a romanticization of Indigenous cultural practices, erasure of Indigenous futurity and the "pure/mixed" fallacy of blood quantum ("Mestizaje" 121). The deconstruction of mestizaje offers a substantial case for a decolonization of the term— she dissembles and reassembles the term and with it main-stream understandings of decolonization, including authors she appears with in the collection. Highlighting this problematic relationship furthers the mission of relational accountability.

Ríos aligns herself with Indigenous epistemic thought and privileges the struggles for sovereignty over merely claiming a Meso-American ancestry. She engages in a thoughtful and pointed critique of prominent Chicanx scholars in the field of rhetoric and composition in such a way that in can influence scholars to move away from dated conceptions of mestizaje and also indigeneity. Interestingly, she is the only author to have this pointed conversation about indigeneity in the collection. In fact, her chapter is one of the only chapters to engage the work of Indigenous scholars though references in the chapter and by citational practices.

While this collection certainly has its strengths, it is this lack of engagement with Indigenous ontologies that is concerning for a collection whose aim it is decolonize. In disregarding the conversations about indigeneity in general, the collection does not

oppose Western ontologies and epistemologies but instead only advocates for a widening of perspectives. Given the multiple definitions of decolonization the collection relies on to form its own sense of decoloniality, the collection excludes Indigenous voices from its conversation. In a way, the collection is one of the few that focuses exclusively on "decolonizing" Rhetoric and Composition, it thus excludes Indigenous voices from the field's conversation as a whole. It seems that in some ways, the collection takes Mignolo's idea of "de-linking" literally. However, in its complication, mestizaje is inherently connected to indigeneity even if it has benefitted from its European ancestry. Text that acknowledges its relationship to indigeneity and coloniality as a concept goes further toward doing the work of decolonial rhetorical strategies.

If a collection such as this is claiming the work of decolonialism, then including the voices of those who were colonized and continue to have their sovereignty ignored would be a positive gesture toward being inclusive of Indigenous thought and frameworks The issue, as theorized Gerald Vizenor, is the "absence of the tribal real" that have been "terminated in the course of nationalism" (4). This a reflection of the idea mestizaje as posited by Martí and Vasconcelos[4]. By claiming the identity of the mestizo by erasing the cause of the miscegenation that led to the creation of mestizaje, the idea of Indigenous peoples in popular Latin American thought become fetishized. Though Ríos broaches this idea, by not including more Indigenous scholars in this collection, the work of decolonizing is ambiguous at best and an act of erasure at worst.

[4] Originators of Mexico's nationalist identity after its second revolution.

Decontextualization of decoloniality as a concept prevents this collection from embodying a decolonial strategy.

The editors rely on two definitions of decolonizing that they outline in the introduction. The idea of epistemic delinking, they argue, is a discursive epistemic form of decolonizing the field. Furthermore, they acknowledge the differentiation between the terms decoloniality and decolonization. The work of decolonization is to resist settler-colonialism on Native land and has been conflated to be seen as a metaphorical act of resistance in support of civil/human rights (Tuck 2). The editors try to mitigate this conflict by claiming that because they work "with, on, and in language," they must be "attuned to the dynamics of signification, figuration, and metaphor" (Decolonizing xvi). In one breath, the irony of the metaphor is acknowledged, and in the second, the editors affirm their support of the metaphor they deemed problematic. To be "attuned" to the dynamics of metaphor is to understand that metaphors reinforce writing as a solely representational technology. Though the Maya script is one of the few writing systems that existed and survived beyond the initial conquest, writing as we understand it, functioned differently for Indigenous peoples of the Americas. As such, limiting our understanding of decoloniality through the Western systems can be problematic in that entire communities are excluded. The discursive work of rhetoric and composition scholars should not so easily dismiss the work toward sovereignty that many Indigenous scholars, including those in rhetoric and composition, are committed to if decolonization/decoloniality is discussed.

Colonization's effect on the Western hemisphere is not limited to the material and certainly affects the various ontologies of the Americas, acting as a cultural eraser that minimized or destroyed much of the codified rhetorical methods that existed here

before conquest. Sarah Hunt writes that the "Processes of colonialism in North America involved representational strategies that transformed Indigenous peoples and their lands conceptually and materially, in order to facilitate their displacement and to render them less than human" and that "This ideological imposition has been central to the violent suppression of Indigenous peoples' vitality and sovereignty" (29). She also claims that "Knowledge production within dominant institutions and disciplinary conferences such as these forced deterritorialization, as well as the displacement of Indigenous children from their families to residential schools" (Hunt 3). While the observation of Mignolo's matrices of power is certainly helpful in beginning to understand how colonization has taken hold of our current lived reality, what successful groups have done is work within current structures to build new structures. Identifying how Indigenous groups intend to rectify, not reverse, the harmful material effects of colonialism is a necessary component in reading these texts.

Furthermore, material improvements in and of themselves are not the singular goal of groups with a decolonial mission. Mignolo writes that "improvements in material conditions in some countries, such as laboratories, libraries, buildings, etc.," and that material progress in the Western hemisphere was designed for Euro-Americans (167). This, as exemplified by the Young Lords, explains the conditions that led to commandeering of testing vehicles. These technological advancements existed outside of the realm of possibility for the Afro-Latinx community in North Harlem. Though it was designed to affect people and its purpose can be reimagined to fit into and assist the material conditions they needed to affect. Textual production works in this way. A shift of materiality affects the rhetorical conditions in which these texts and these groups exists.

"Decolonizing" Writing

There have been examples in contemporary literature that define and align decoloniality with the material realities of indigeneity. Andrea Riley-Mukavetz illustrates the potential for decolonial thought in her course design published in Composition Studies. In the design, she describes a course called "Decolonial Theory and Methodology" and described the course as introducing "students to decolonial thinking, situates the course materials within the historical and contemporary circumstances that necessitate a decolonial approach, and encourages students to develop a decolonial scholarly and pedagogical practice reflective of their intellectual and professional goals" (Riley-Mukavetz 124). Riley-Mukavetz's critical reflection on the class embodies the spirit of the decolonial project more so than do the pieces I discussed earlier in this chapter. She says:

> "I will frame these discussions as a way to explore our complicity in colonial practices and further understand how to delink from the logics of modernity. I think the struggle will always be to help students understand that I do not expect them to leave this course fully delinked from the colonial matrix of power or completely knowledgeable about how to do decolonial theory. In fact, that is a completely 'unrealistic expectation for anyone' (129)."

Riley-Mukavetz acknowledges that delinking from the logics of modernity (Mignolo) and epistemic disobedience are only a part of the decolonial project. However, the rhetorical constructions that result from considering the context in which decolonization are a viable starting point toward political action.

The understanding that expecting people who have benefited from colonialism to unlearn and delink because of one course unreasonable. However, it is that discomfort

that functions as a starting point from which people learn to grow. Additionally, she grounds her understanding of decoloniality from an Indigenous perspective by composing a reading list that is made up from a majority of Native authors and thinkers. Riley-Mukavetz understands the importance of the project and does not metaphorize decolonialization. The course offers potential for an interdisciplinary approach to teaching decolonial frameworks to students in the humanities. By educating these students in decolonial theory, the nature of communities and by extension community care has the possibility to change in material ways.

When discussing issues of decoloniality, it is clear the discipline has showed a tendency to deemphasize the importance of contextualizing decolonial struggles. While emphasizing a Latinx identity as opposed to a Latinx identity in relation to other Indigenous identities, Latinx rhetoric can be a colonizing force in writing studies. As I will show later, the Young Lords are particularly effective in that they do not take for granted their Indigenous relations in decolonial projects. Decolonial action is not a result of writing about identity but a necessary response to Western hegemony and a means of survivance. The field's concern with identifying how we communicate our worldviews, whether it be through direct action or writing, sets discursive and recursive practice in opposition. This binary is not a compelling argument in describing the phenomena of why writing can inspire action. This points to the importance of texts not just as indices or as a technology but as an active participant in world-building. Liberatory reading strategies emphasizes the function of writing as an active participant. In the next section, I will discuss how the field has talked about writing and subjects as active participants in relational webs.

Contemporary Western Theoretical Connections and Writing Studies

I would be remiss if I did not discuss the current narrative the discipline's concern about New Materialism and Actor-Network Theory does little to engage and create on other ontologies. I have no desire to merely acknowledge that the rhetorical mainstream does not meaningfully engage rhetorical practice outside of the Western tradition because Indigenous theories are often misapplied and misunderstood. Rather, I argue that the Western tradition should be cognizant of its interdependence on Indigenous thought in a broader web of relations.

This relational web found in Indigenous ontology has been reconceptualized as networks in contemporary philosophy. Discussing community engagement, community writing, or community care, for example, reducing these elements to "networks" flattens the potential to understand these networks because of a misapplied understanding of relationality. It is clear why New Materialist thought would be tempting to most rhetoricians; they describe a familiar understanding of the word we each live in. Bruno Latour claims that "ANT (Actor Network Theory) does not tell anyone the shape that is to be drawn—circles or cubes or lines—but only how to go about systematically recording the world-building abilities of the sites to be documented or registered" ("On Recalling" 21), which would align with a more postmodern turn on composition and of understanding life itself. Nathanial Rivers and Paul Lynch draw this connection in *Thinking with Bruno Latour in Rhetoric and Composition* when acknowledging that non-human objects are rhetorical as well when they say, "the text does not simply record knowledge; it (re)mediates knowledge into its next needful iteration—that is, text and knowledge create each other" (Rivers). Where the theory falls short is in the theorizing of the network itself, of the effect and rhetorical nature of the relations carried in this

plane and the next. The idea of ANT as "perfectly fit for a blind, myopic, workaholic" doesn't account for the autonomy of these networks, thereby making their theory incongruent with wide-spread social change, sovereignty, and relationality as understood by Indigenous ontologies. In short, decentering the individual does not make this philosophy more congruent to relational theory, but their understanding of the text as something iterative and in relation with knowledge itself is a helpful and useful theory in rhetoric and writing studies.

In expanding the possibility of decolonial futurity through textual production, understanding the rhetoricity of texts is essential. Susan Miller's idea of the textual subject is a subject that acts through writing. The writer, then, is not a singular nexus of power, but an agent affected by the writing to alter and transgress. The intersection of discourses of power are not a maze through which an ANT tunnels. Rather, these are inflated matrices where power can be observed and changed. The power of texts used to radicalize offers one way of expanding networks. The power of texts to act as agents of change in and of themselves in decolonial futurity is another. The texts offer a means toward rhetorical sovereignty because they are active agents in networks. Rhetorical sovereignty, as defined by Scott Lyons, is "the inherent right of [Indigenous] peoples to determine their own communicative needs and desires" (449). As a pedagogical strategy, rhetorical sovereignty is useful in delineating what stories and ontologies are transmitted through collective networks. The idea of "sovereignty" itself, however, "carries Euro-American connotations of power, independence" and importantly "recognition by others as powerful and independent in a nation's exercising of its rights to self-determination" (King 19). A rhetorical sovereignty, pedagogically, then, can provide for an opportunity to change the nexus of power in which communities operate.

A move toward focusing on relationality as opposed to networks or non-human rhetorics in the struggle for justice by understanding the futurities created by Indigenous resistance on this continent is essential.

This placing of rhetoric in literary terms comes with some limits. Miller addresses this in *Rescuing the Subject* by answering the question of what the texts do in relation to what the texts are. For example, classical conceptions of rhetoric, as dialogue, persuasion can be distilled as mere propaganda (Miller 30). This subjective nature of literary like criticism essentializes rhetoric as a quality of text rather than how a text objectively performs rhetoric. In this sense, rhetoric functions as a tool of making sense in the face of many meanings, thereby answering the question the like of Miller and many other scholars have attempted to answer— what does a text do, and how?

Furthermore, what is writing supposed to do? Raúl Sanchez writes extensively about the function of writing in Inside the *Subject: A Theory of Identity* for the study of writing and *The Function of Theory in Composition*. Sanchez argues that as a discipline, moving away from writing as a representational technology but toward an understanding of representation as a function of witting. Rather, writing is a means to "fix meaning" to "present presence" as if it has a representational function (*Inside* 85). This starting point is what Sanchez refers to as the "functional aspect of exteriority (*Inside* 4). Exteriority, according to Sanchez, mark the idea that "there are things beyond or different from symbols, and which we think of as being represented by symbols. In short, contemporary understandings of writing as function of taking the interior—symbols, meaning, culture—and creating and indexing through a code by which we identify the signified through symbols.

An understanding of relationality as an interdependence necessitates an understanding as not only a representational technology. Rather, this dissertation attempts to understand how "materiality intersects with the textuality or discursivity" that writers inhabit. Specifically, the Young Lords sought to reclaim an identity for themselves and other marginalized peoples in their immediate communities as a rhetorical act to underscore the "ubiquity of identity-based cultural activity" such as writing (*Inside* 34). In the specific context of the Young Lords, their resistance emphasizes their identities as functional and symptomatic responses to colonization. The cultural rhetorics reading strategy offers a means of understanding how their writing is not merely an expression of discontent but emblematic of entire ontologies that exist outside of the Western academic tradition and how these ontologies manifest in political ways. Recognizing it here offers the potential to recognize it in other sites. This expansion of what writing is and could be is instructional as composition theorists try hone the function of theory in our field.

In the specific sense of this dissertation, textual production is itself a rhetorical act to create meaning from the struggles of marginalized communities. By creating texts, legitimizations are legitimized in the discourses and contexts of a plurality of Westernized understandings as most of the marginalized populations in this study exist on the borders of Western influence. It is this reason that engaging in a textual analysis of these texts has proved to be difficult. Rhetoric, a means of making sense, is the subjective analysis of these objects, the texts. This subjectivity legitimizes the objects and by extension the struggles and injustices documented in the coming chapters.

Theoretical Framework

By engaging Indigenous ontologies and contemporary rhetorical thought relationally, the act of reading texts changes fundamentally. Instead of observing texts as only representative of language, I encourage readers to view texts rhetorically, as sites where knowledge is created, deconstructed, and transformed. I argue that understanding how a text (1) contemporizes relations; (2) pursues materiality; and (3) considers contextuality encourages the field to change how it views the power of writing and how writers can make material change with writing.

Relations

Linking toward the Indigenous realities of decolonization by acknowledging our relations is an integral part of cultural rhetorics informed reading strategy. The Young Lord's organization, the radical group I will discuss more in depth in chapter 3, operates on the same plane of relationality as many other Latinx people—of Indigenous peoples, but not necessarily Indigenous themselves. Because of this, the establishing of their relations with Indigenous communities may appear veiled at first. Some may take the mission of the Young Lords as purely Marxist-Leninist or in some instances an organization focused on mutualism and mutual aid. However, reading the texts produced by the organization reveals that their commitment to their communities is reminiscent of the groups Indigenous roots.

Their first independently published issue of the *YLO*, a precursor to *Palante* gestured toward ontological relationality. They write:

> YLO considers itself as part of a Movement—a movement that wants a new society in which all people are treated as equal; a society whose wealth is controlled and shared

by all its members and not by a few; a society in which men and women view other members as brothers and sisters and not as people to be exploited and hated. (YLO)

Certainly, this can be read as straightforward socialism. This explains a resurgence of the group's popularity amongst the Brooklyn socialist set[5]. However, taken in conjunction with their 13-point program[6], it is clear that this a gesture toward inclusion of Indigenous struggle by outlining their relations. For example, point 2 asks for self-determination of all "Latinos" and point 5 demands "community control of all institutions and land." Point 13 does call explicitly for a socialist society, but in conjunction with the demands for self-determination and respect for peoples of the third world, Indigenous relationality cannot be ignored. Rather it is at the front of all the YL's demands. Socialism is modernity's antidote to capitalism. The YL understands this. At the same time, they understand that socialism cannot be the antidote to Western colonialism even though they operate within two different ontological traditions. However, if the label is more palatable to activists and community members who may or may not engage in Indigenous thought, then it will be used to meet political ends.

This nuanced understanding of the relationship between Latinx and Indigenous peoples has defined past and current arguments about the decoloniality and socialism. While both concepts may not be palatable to mainstream readers, undergirding their relations to Indigenous peoples honors Indigenous ontologies while arguing for sovereignty using colonial concepts. Readers may be unaware of the connections despite the YLO faintly gesturing toward Indigenous solidarity. When contextualized in broader

[5] I see articles about the YL published in increasing frequency. Articles in *Mijente*, *Vice*, and *Bustle* are very popular.
[6] The 13-point plan served as the mission statement of the YLO. Again, this will be discussed more in depth in Chapter 3.

understandings of how coloniality has irreparably affected the Western hemisphere, the relational network the YLO points to becomes clearer.

Contextualization

It is important that work such as this position itself toward radical contextualization. This, like in my discussion about the differences between decolonialization and decolonial, relies on grammatical understanding. I do not mean radical in the adjectival sense, in that the act of contextualization in this framework as a revelatory or liberatory act. Rather, I focus on radical in its noun form. That is, I advocate for a focus on contextualizing these texts based on people who are revolutionary. To put this more simply, the act of contextualizing these texts in their moment is not the radical act. Noticing that these texts work for radicals would be more appropriate for this context. These texts are not representative of radical ideas as much as they are radical action in and of themselves.

Furthermore, contextualization refers to the ways meaning making operates typically in Native communities. VF Cordova writes that Indigenous peoples and Euro-Americans see world from two different perspectives (69), claiming that the Euro-American searches for one "universal absolute"—an all-encompassing and absolute truth" while Indigenous peoples understand the world through its complexity, its relationships, and its lack of a fundamental truth. These concerns undergird conceptual frameworks that work to answer the philosophical questions presented by existence. Furthermore, these conceptual frameworks are themselves rhetorical. In relation to each other, these frameworks speak to the core values, practices, and beliefs of specific communities. This contextualization is important because words have meaning, and

action predicated on words that have been misunderstood is counterproductive, especially when the word seeks to describe an emerging discipline.

Materiality

The previous two aspects of a framework of liberatory strategies call to acknowledge relations and to contextualize these relations to decolonial action. As such, the final aspect of this framework is centered on the physical world. A liberatory strategical reading examines the material conditions and consequences of direct action as a result of textual production. If relational accountability is a listing of the ways in which all peoples are connected to others as well as the world around them and contextualization is an act of locating oneself and struggle in a broader context, materiality explores how these circumstances can change through direct action.

There is a rich history of Indigenous movements strategically bettering the lives of their community members or at least making the attempt to. The Dakota Access Pipeline protests, for example, were a highly visible set of actions taken against the state that ultimately ended in more visibility for the struggles of Indigenous autonomy but were unsuccessful in preventing the pipeline from being built. Regardless of how success is measured, it is clear that groups that helped to organize the protests understand the complicated nature of achieving material goals with direct action.

Similarly, this kind of action-oriented writing has been studied in the field of professional communication, where a "concern with understanding the purpose and function of writing" within organizational contexts. Ultimately, this writing encourages some kind of action, whether it be more persuasive for business writing or action-oriented technical writing. Both of these fields focus on occupational ramifications of

writing well. Instructions, memos, and emails, for example, are vital for the functioning of any workplace. This active formation and reformation are not dissimilar to affected materiality in that professional and technical writing encourage a material change to material conditions, whether it be a new policy or a new strategy for direct action. In short, texts focused on materiality write toward a praxis that functions almost as a set of instructions. These clear instructions are written to be understood by as many potential allies as possible without specifically focusing on theoretical or academic language. This "big tent" appeal makes this writing strategy even more effective.

Conclusion

As a rhetorical practice, decoloniality in the texts that are produced for the public helps legitimize struggles for academic and Western, neoliberal audiences. As a functional framework, decoloniality provides material attempts at better the conditions of marginalized populations. Understanding the production of these texts as inherently rhetorical helps to make sense of what these projects intend to do, thereby defining a political function. Understanding these practices through a cultural rhetorics framework can help us understand that these practices are not separated by identity but rather that we are all implicitly connected to these struggles. Existing within Mignolo's idea of the matrices of coloniality, as we all do, makes each of us complicity in coloniality. However, this also provides a blueprint to subvert colonialism.

Understanding how groups have taken up writing as a means of resistance is important for the future of writing studies. Ivan Illich, in *Tools for Conviviality*, identifies the need for new tools in an over-industrialized society in which enterprise "frustrates the end for which it was originally designed" (Illich xxii-iii) and perpetuates

conditions that prevent individuals from realizing their fullest potential. He argues for tools that "enlarge the range of each person's competence, control, and initiative" that serve "politically inter-related individuals rather than managers" (Illich xxiv). Coupled with an understanding of cultural rhetorics as a framework by which to analyze texts and their production, writing can be understood to a tool for conviviality. Writing, especially for these organizations whose texts propagate a decolonial futurity, materialize decolonial potential. These tools for combatting coloniality in material ways give students and instructors a means for producing real, lasting change.

In writing this dissertation, I hope not to disparage those engaging in the "decolonial-ish" but to bring my understanding closer to theirs through my research. It is my hope that those who are like me can see themselves in the practices, writings, and teachings of these groups and will move forward toward a more just and equitable future. In my next chapter, I will show how the reading strategy works using examples from the Young Lords' self-published newspapers.

CHAPTER 3

The last chapter sought to parse through disciplinary literature to support and create a cultural rhetorics strategy of reading texts that synthesizes theory from writing, rhetorical, Indigenous, and decolonial studies with cultural rhetorics. This strategy is particularly useful in understanding leftist and revolutionary organizing, providing a blueprint for contemporary groups to effect material change in their respective communities. However, focusing just on text and its accompanying discursive impact does not do enough to be seen as material at first glance.

A rhetoric that focuses on material conditions is not a new idea. David Coogan wrote about the effects of service learning and their potential to better material conditions for communities in his article in "Service Learning and Social Change: The Case for Materialist Rhetoric." While there are definitely issues with service learning as a practice, Coogan's assertion that Materialist rhetoric "raises the question of social change by extending the unit of analysis well beyond the text" (Coogan 670). This is a furthering of Cushman's "rhetor as agent of social change" and that centers outcomes-based approach of rhetorical action and performance. Cushman argues that the rhetorician should find ways of enabling communities to "use language and literacy to challenge and alter circumstances of daily life" ("Rhetorician as an Agent" 12). Interestingly, words like performance and analysis implied that these endeavors are that of scholars and that the "revolution should be left to the revolutionaries" (Coogan 690).

This dichotomy between those that do and those that do not furthers positivist notions of the work and the function of knowledge production in our discipline. However, as an academic, I still think there should have a way of reading these texts academically because of the limiting activism of being a scholar. In this sense, I use the

word “academically” to mean “critically,” or the use of analysis expose potential merits and faults. In this sense, beaded belts, sculpture, and performance are not any less “academic” than a monograph that would merely describe the artifacts. A critical understanding of artifacts provides essential contextualization to understand the artifacts importance to culture. Therefore, it is important to propagate a method of reading these texts that does not create hard boundaries between academics and activists, revolutionaries and teachers, discourse and practice. There is room for a practical mestizaje[7] that would allow for change to occur in numerous institutions. This blending complicates the field’s understanding of writing by illuminating these binaries and dismantling them. This is a what a cultural rhetorics informed reading strategy argues.

Some initial history of the Young Lords founding and the organization itself was covered in Chapter 1, but the history of their publications requires a more thorough analysis to fully contextualize their place in the group’s direct action. The story of the one-time criminal street gang becoming a radical communist organization has been detailed in countless oral histories. The history of YL publications, however, is inseparable from the history of the group itself. With a successful newspaper, the publication itself was successful. When the newspapers were not successful, the organization fell apart. In posterity, they provide useful examples for radical groups using text as the primary catalyst for change.

[7] Blending, mixing

The Political Awakening of the Young Lords

Inspired by *The Black Panther*, a weekly newspaper published by the Black Panther Party, The Young Lords Organization, as it was first known, essentially republished material from The Black Panther, using it as a prototype. Omar Lopez, and elder in the organization tasked with taking over publication of the newspaper because he had taken some classes at Loop City College, understood the rhetorical importance of publishing this newspaper. He described "the role of the newspaper is not confined solely to the spreading of information, to political education, and to winning movement allies" (Enck-Wanzer 6). The newspaper would provide much-needed work for individuals in the Young Lords looking to contribute to the revolution without necessarily incurring unwanted attention from the police. Like the circulation of *The Black Panther*, *YLO* was unabashed in its role as a propaganda-heavy job creator. This propaganda, however, was not meant to trick the Lincoln Park community. Rather, the publication sought to provide "constant clarification" to the public regarding its actions. Knowing that major news outlets would vilify their struggle for equality and take advantage of the lack of "a clear understanding of the American system and its complexities" (Enck-Wanzer 6). The organization understood that "the cadres were all street, young men and women who weren't very good at academics, but nevertheless had something to say." Very early on, this rhetorical understanding of circulation and of action was a founding tenant of the organization.

The Young Lords Organization spread to New York City in the summer of 1969 when two student groups, Sociedad Albizu Campos in El Barrio (Spanish Harlem) and a group that had begun to call itself the Young Lords in the Lower East Side both discovered the work of the Young Lords in *The Black Panther*. After visiting Cha-Cha Jimenez, the

charismatic an often-incarcerated Young Lords leader in Chicago, the two groups combined to form an official Young Lords chapter. The New York chapter began to contribute material immediately to the Chicago publication team. The New York chapter was much more active with the direct actions and interventions and many of the initiatives were first outlined in the *YLO*. As a student-led organization, the New York chapter's ambitious evangelizing of Manhattan began with the creation of their own propaganda wing that featured a weekly radio program and Palante, a weekly newsletter turned biweekly full-spread newspaper that reflected the artistic, sometimes avant-garde sensibilities of the New York chapter. In the summer of 1970, after raucous and at times violent meetings between the two chapters, the national Young Lords was no more, splintering into Chicago's Young Lords Organization and the Young Lords Party of New York.

The schism between the groups' vision of their separate propaganda wings is itself a reflection of class divisions amongst its members. The Chicago organization billed itself as "grassroots" revolutionaries, relying on the labor of family units in the Lincoln Park neighborhood to move municipal officials. Just the same, this organization was limited in the sense that a working-class family— with mouths to feed and bills to pay— could not dedicate itself to the revolution full-time. Furthermore, publication costs were prohibitive, and the Young Lords Organization (Chicago) had no funding. The New York chapter used labor from its younger, college-enrolled, and more active membership. This division between the groups produced an iterative approach to "the revolution." These distinctions allowed essentially two vastly different groups to communicate a unifying vision based on sovereignty and justice. Ultimately, their rhetoric came about

through the organization's attempts to radicalize their communities through their writing. This rhetoric is made clear through the following reading strategy.

As explained in the last chapter, liberatory strategies are a reading framework based on cultural rhetorics practice that exhibit three tendencies. It (1) contemporizes relations; (2) pursues materiality; and (3) considers contextuality. This reorientation can be a better-suited articulation of cultural rhetorics and its potential to be understood in specific contexts not only as a way to understand how cultures communicate, but why. The publications from the Young Lords Organization provide an apt example of political rhetoric as knowledge creation, through a process that blends Indigenous and Western technologies.

Relations

As a Latinx organization, the Young Lords Organization and the Young Lords Party that preceded it did not make outright claims to indigeneity unlike similar burgeoning Chicanx movements. Ruben Salazar, a leader in the Chicano movement in Los Angeles, described Chicanos as "Mexican-American with a non-Anglo image of himself." Leo Limon added that "…a Chicano is … an Indigenous Mexican American." This explicit situating of oneself within colonial structures is at times helpful in aligning oneself in decolonial action. However, the lack of specificity is at times problematic because it does not account for the majority of those affected by coloniality in this hemisphere. Throughout YLO and Palante, the writers use the "Latino" identifier, which has long sense been left behind by contemporary activist circles, opting for the term "Latinx" instead. By claiming to be "Latinos," the Young Lords aligned themselves with colonial understanding of Latinx indigeneity. While it is easy to levy this judgement in posterity,

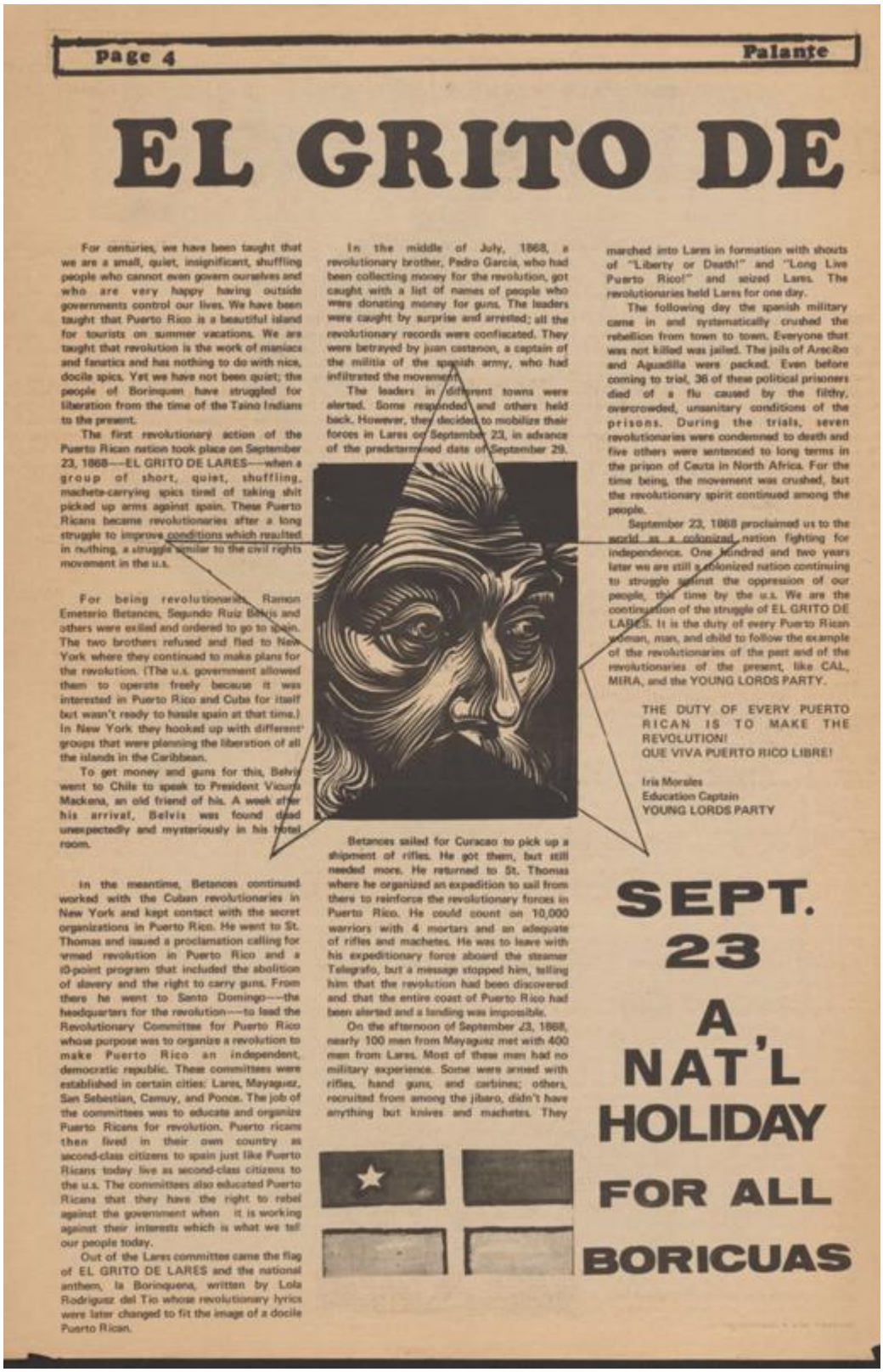
it is clear that The Young Lords made their solidarity with Indigenous communities known through their word and actions.

One action the Young Lord's Party in New York made was to include histories of Puerto Rican revolutionaries in *Palante*. Because of the publication's more artistic nature, the highly stylized section in the twelfth issue titled "El Grito de Lares" evokes Soviet propaganda with the centered star over a bearded man. The editorial provides a brief history of the Lares uprising, a cataclysmic event in Puerto Rico that jumpstarted the Puerto Rican civil war from Spain. It was in Lares that the seeds of revolutions were planted in multiple municipalities, where "Puerto Ricans then lived in their own country as second-class citizens" to the colonizing Spaniards (4). While a short insurrection occurred, the revolutionaries held Lares for one day before Spanish forces "systematically crushed" the rebellion, imprisoning hundreds. As with many symbolic gestures of revolutions, the "grito" was a clarion call to other Latin American countries that coloniality would be actively fought against.

The piece is and its call for national recognition of "El Grito de Lares" (Figure 1) is reminiscent of the heavily nationalistic calls for revolution from similar Mexican American and Chicano groups that existed concurrently with the Young Lords. Chicano groups described their own nationalism as mestizaje, or" "the process of interracial and/or intercultural mixing . . . in the Americas, particularly in those areas colonized by the Spanish and the Portuguese" (Martínez-Echazábal 21). This perception of nationality and identity has contributed to ongoing anti-Indigenous and anti-Black ideals of Chicanismo. This claim to indigeneity, fueled by nationalistic pride, can erase specific understandings of Indigeneity and relations to land before colonization" (Rodriguez 231). However, Borinquen and Chicanx identity differ in some important ways through

the specific Borinquen identity. While La Raza Cosmica is predicated on the basis of a "interracial mixture" by which a new race is created, the activism as evidenced by the Young Lords centers their borinquenismo[8], or a sense of identity that is based on their Indigenous roots tied to Borinquen[9], not as Puerto Ricans.

[8] Of Taino Descent
[9] Taino name for the land called Puerto Rico



Page 4 Palante

EL GRITO DE

For centuries, we have been taught that we are a small, quiet, insignificant, shuffling people who cannot even govern ourselves and who are very happy having outside governments control our lives. We have been taught that Puerto Rico is a beautiful island for tourists on summer vacations. We are taught that revolution is the work of maniacs and fanatics and has nothing to do with nice, docile spics. Yet we have not been quiet; the people of Borinquen have struggled for liberation from the time of the Taino Indians to the present.

The first revolutionary action of the Puerto Rican nation took place on September 23, 1868---EL GRITO DE LARES---when a group of short, quiet, shuffling, machete-carrying spics tired of taking shit picked up arms against spain. These Puerto Ricans became revolutionaries after a long struggle to improve conditions which resulted in nuthing, a struggle similar to the civil rights movement in the u.s.

For being revolutionaries, Ramon Emeterio Betances, Segundo Ruiz Belvis and others were exiled and ordered to go to spain. The two brothers refused and fled to New York where they continued to make plans for the revolution. (The u.s. government allowed them to operate freely because it was interested in Puerto Rico and Cuba for itself but wasn't ready to hassle spain at that time.) In New York they hooked up with different groups that were planning the liberation of all the islands in the Caribbean.

To get money and guns for this, Belvis went to Chile to speak to President Vicuna Mackena, an old friend of his. A week after his arrival, Belvis was found dead unexpectedly and mysteriously in his hotel room.

In the meantime, Betances continued worked with the Cuban revolutionaries in New York and kept contact with the secret organizations in Puerto Rico. He went to St. Thomas and issued a proclamation calling for armed revolution in Puerto Rico and a 10-point program that included the abolition of slavery and the right to carry guns. From there he went to Santo Domingo---the headquarters for the revolution---to lead the Revolutionary Committee for Puerto Rico whose purpose was to organize a revolution to make Puerto Rico an independent, democratic republic. These committees were established in certain cities: Lares, Mayaguez, San Sebastian, Camuy, and Ponce. The job of the committees was to educate and organize Puerto Ricans for revolution. Puerto ricans then lived in their own country as second-class citizens to spain just like Puerto Ricans today live as second-class citizens to the u.s. The committees also educated Puerto Ricans that they have the right to rebel against the government when it is working against their interests which is what we tal our people today.

Out of the Lares committee came the flag of EL GRITO DE LARES and the national anthem, la Borinquena, written by Lola Rodriguez del Tio whose revolutionary lyrics were later changed to fit the image of a docile Puerto Rican.

In the middle of July, 1868, a revolutionary brother, Pedro Garcia, who had been collecting money for the revolution, got caught with a list of names of people who were donating money for guns. The leaders were caught by surprise and arrested; all the revolutionary records were confiscated. They were betrayed by juan castenon, a captain of the militia of the spanish army, who had infiltrated the movement.

The leaders in different towns were alerted. Some responded and others held back. However, they decided to mobilize their forces in Lares on September 23, in advance of the predetermined date of September 29.

Betances sailed for Curacao to pick up a shipment of rifles. He got them, but still needed more. He returned to St. Thomas where he organized an expedition to sail from there to reinforce the revolutionary forces in Puerto Rico. He could count on 10,000 warriors with 4 mortars and an adequate of rifles and machetes. He was to leave with his expeditionary force aboard the steamer Telegrafo, but a message stopped him, telling him that the revolution had been discovered and that the entire coast of Puerto Rico had been alerted and a landing was impossible.

On the afternoon of September 23, 1868, nearly 100 men from Mayaguez met with 400 men from Lares. Most of these men had no military experience. Some were armed with rifles, hand guns, and carbines; others, recruited from among the jibaro, didn't have anything but knives and machetes. They marched into Lares in formation with shouts of "Liberty or Death!" and "Long Live Puerto Rico!" and seized Lares. The revolutionaries held Lares for one day.

The following day the spanish military came in and systematically crushed the rebellion from town to town. Everyone that was not killed was jailed. The jails of Arecibo and Aguadilla were packed. Even before coming to trial, 36 of these political prisoners died of a flu caused by the filthy, overcrowded, unsanitary conditions of the prisons. During the trials, seven revolutionaries were condemned to death and five others were sentenced to long terms in the prison of Ceuta in North Africa. For the time being, the movement was crushed, but the revolutionary spirit continued among the people.

September 23, 1868 proclaimed us to the world as a colonized nation fighting for independence. One hundred and two years later we are still a colonized nation continuing to struggle against the oppression of our people, this time by the u.s. We are the continuation of the struggle of EL GRITO DE LARES. It is the duty of every Puerto Rican woman, man, and child to follow the example of the revolutionaries of the past and of the revolutionaries of the present, like CAL, MIRA, and the YOUNG LORDS PARTY.

THE DUTY OF EVERY PUERTO RICAN IS TO MAKE THE REVOLUTION!
QUE VIVA PUERTO RICO LIBRE!

Iris Morales
Education Captain
YOUNG LORDS PARTY

SEPT. 23
A NAT'L HOLIDAY
FOR ALL BORICUAS

Figure 1: El Grito de Lares

In the first volume of newspapers, while production of the text took place in Chicago, the Young Lords Organization did not explicit claims or ties to indigeneity. Rather, small gestures toward their Borinquen pride were made evident through small pieces throughout the newspapers that explicated a rich history of Puerto Rican identity through important figures. The figures did not necessarily have to be revolutionary. For example, the very first issue included “Historia Latina,” (Figure 2) a piece that would become more heavily featured as publication continued.


José Campeche
1751-1809

Historia
Latina

José Campeche es el primer pintor puertorriqueño reconocido en la historia de nuestra isla. Nació en San Juan en el 1751 y murío en el 1809. Este pintor Boricua casi nunca salió de Puerto Rico pero se sabe que era muy amigo de uno de los mejores pintores españoles de la epoca, un tal Luis Paret. Ambos se complementaban; Paret era culto, viajero y sofisticado; Campeche era provinciano.

Statements
Colombian

A catholic Bisho
see revolution a

Figure 2: HISTORIA LATINA

The piece, uncredited at the time, has no introduction or byline. Like many newspapers, it is preceded and followed by other stories that can be loosely grouped as a "world news" section. Immediately before this page, a story about Cuba's "Saturday Stabbings" (describe fervently as having too many guns and not much violence),

"Vietnam News," and a story about the burgeoning liberatory theocracy of South America. This section follows stories from the city of Chicago and is followed by a reprinting of The Black Panther's printed party platform. Campeche's inclusion, as evidenced by the lack of framing and description of the piece, is important insofar as "Jose Campeche es el primer pintor puertorriqueno reconocido en l historia de nuestra isla" [Jose Campeche is the first recognized Puerto Rican painter in the history of our island]" ("Historia" 7). From the accent marks added to the text after it was typed to simplistic structure of the Spanish itself, inclusion of the piece in the newspaper feels foreign and haphazard.

Throughout much of the early issues, small gestures are made toward acknowledging the plight of Puerto Ricans living in the United States. The fourth issue goes as to proclaim "todo los Puerto riquenos. Somos prisoneros policticos! Libren todo prisonero politico" ("Letters" 2)(Figure 3). This issue in particular exhibits a slight change in the way the YLO discuses borinquenismo. Gone is the "Historia Latina," only to be replaced with a column entitled "Los Nuestros," which translates simply to "ours" (Figure 4). This shift, from Latin History to claiming famous puertorriquenos as "nuestros" is an explicit editorial choice meant to foment support of Puerto Rican revolution and pride in borinquenismo.

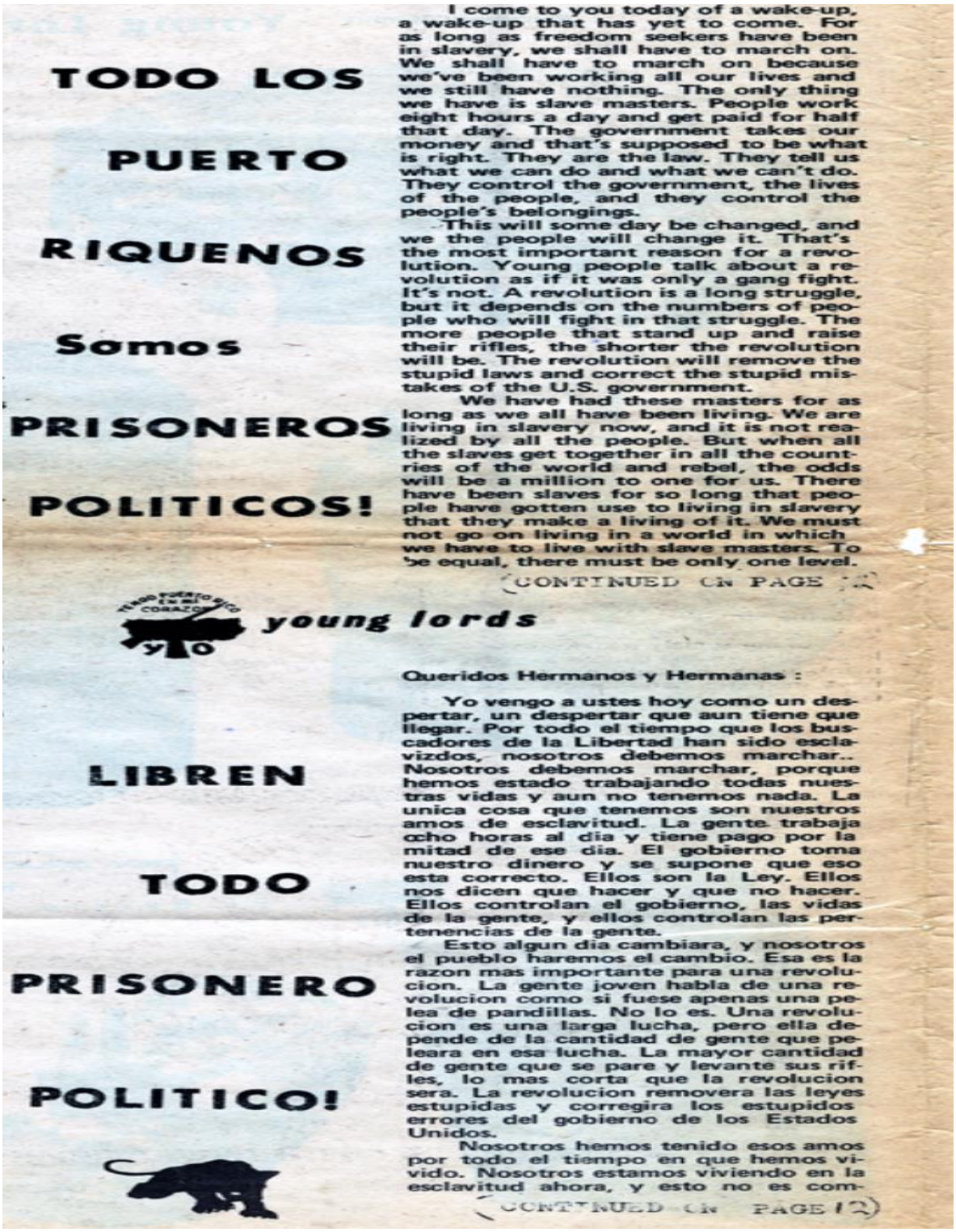
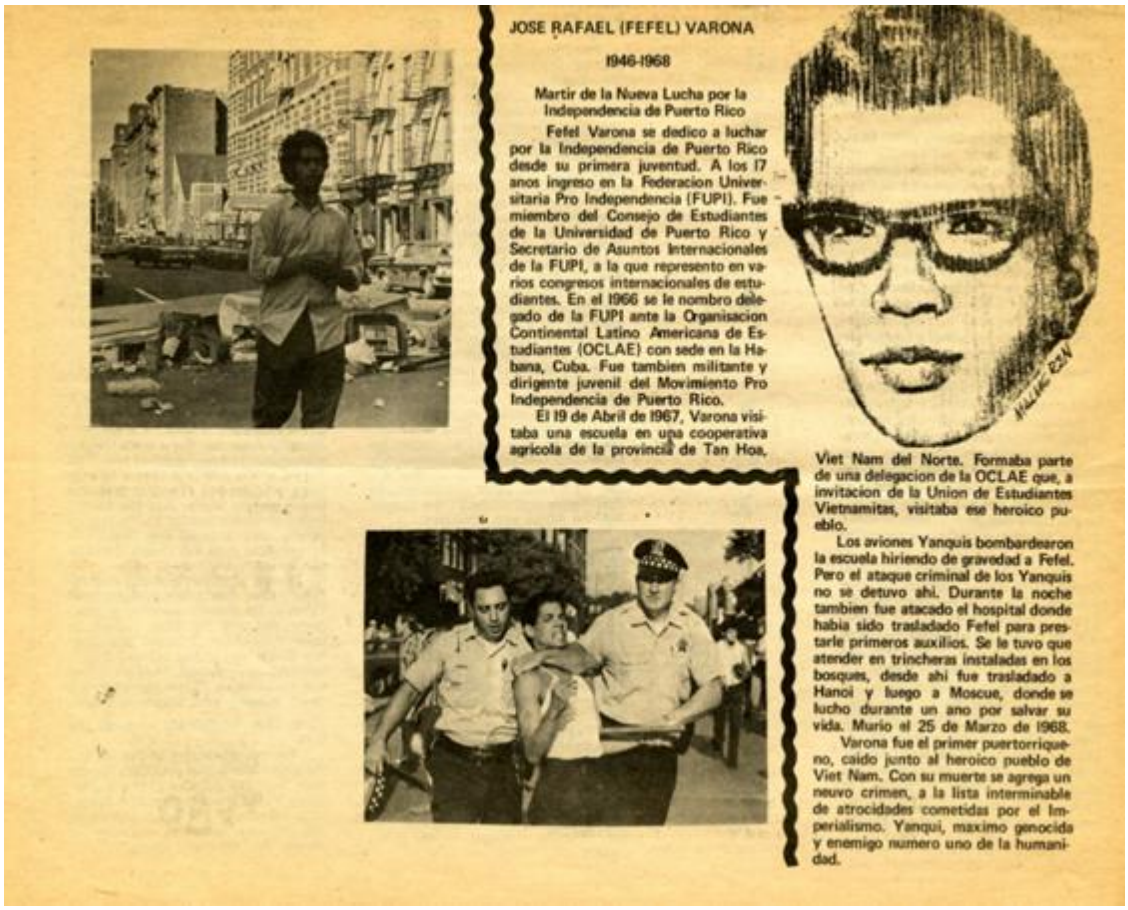


Figure 3: Todo los Puerto Riquennos somos PRISONEROS POLITICOS!



JOSE RAFAEL (FEFEL) VARONA

1946-1968

Martir de la Nueva Lucha por la Independencia de Puerto Rico

Fefel Varona se dedico a luchar por la Independencia de Puerto Rico desde su primera juventud. A los 17 anos ingreso en la Federacion Universitaria Pro Independencia (FUPI). Fue miembro del Consejo de Estudiantes de la Universidad de Puerto Rico y Secretario de Asuntos Internacionales de la FUPI, a la que represento en varios congresos internacionales de estudiantes. En el 1966 se le nombro delegado de la FUPI ante la Organisacion Continental Latino Americana de Estudiantes (OCLAE) con sede en la Habana, Cuba. Fue tambien militante y dirigente juvenil del Movimiento Pro Independencia de Puerto Rico.

El 19 de Abril de 1967, Varona visitaba una escuela en una cooperativa agricola de la provincia de Tan Hoa, Viet Nam del Norte. Formaba parte de una delegacion de la OCLAE que, a invitacion de la Union de Estudiantes Vietnamitas, visitaba ese heroico pueblo.

Los aviones Yanquis bombardearon la escuela hiriendo de gravedad a Fefel. Pero el ataque criminal de los Yanquis no se detuvo ahi. Durante la noche tambien fue atacado el hospital donde habia sido trasladado Fefel para prestarle primeros auxilios. Se le tuvo que atender en trincheras instaladas en los bosques, desde ahi fue trasladado a Hanoi y luego a Moscue, donde se lucho durante un ano por salvar su vida. Murio el 25 de Marzo de 1968.

Varona fue el primer puertorriqueno, caido junto al heroico pueblo de Viet Nam. Con su muerte se agrega un neuvo crimen, a la lista interminable de atrocidades cometidas por el Imperialismo. Yanqui, maximo genocida y enemigo numero uno de la humanidad.

Figure 4: Jose Varona

Additionally, the issue features a section (again, no byline) called "Puerto Rico: 'Island of Paradise' of U.S. Imperialism," a reference to the 1967 Puerto Rican Status referendum. In the article, it maintained that the United States Congress "has a no right to intervene in Puerto Rican affairs" ("Letters" 15) and that the choice given by agents of North American imperialism between self-determination of a sovereign nation or statehood was fraught with a fundamental contradiction— US control of Puerto Rican control through plebiscite already ceded that the illusion of choice is a mockery. Given that the United States viewed Puerto Rico merely as a strategic geographic advantage in the Latin America, control of the territory would not be ceded, no matter what the vote decided.

This tacit understanding of coloniality during the Cold War was deft— the United States would sooner hand over the capital than allow another country in the Caribbean to take on an anti-imperialist foreign policy. The inclusion of such work in their newspaper, at the time available on street corners, was a notable paradigm shift for the one-time street gang. Unlike the Chicano movement in Los Angeles, the *YLO* did not theorize about a return to a state before colonialism. There was no Aztlan[10] or discussion of border crossings[11]. *YLO* emphasized carrying their identities as Taino (the first inhabitants of the land called Puerto Rico) with them through a wholly communist revolution. Their goal to upset capitalism was predicated on the belief that racism was an inextricable part of capitalism and by extension coloniality. Therefore, in order to combat imperialism and white communist hegemony, the Young Lords recognized the need to more closely identify with their indigeneity.

Contextualization

As I mentioned in chapter 1, I advocate contextualizing texts written by revolutionaries. Decontextualized theory has the potential to obfuscate revolutionary goals. Recall the discussion of decoloniality and decolonization. "Decolonize" (verb) occurs in response to colonization while "decoloniality" (noun) refers to knowledge acquired in response to colonization. To put this more simply, the act of reading these texts in a classroom is not a radical act. Knowing the reasons why these texts were produced and how they assisted revolutionary goals is what makes the study of these texts useful. The rhetorical moves made by the writers and producers of the Young

[10] Mythical homeland of the Aztecs
[11] "The border crossed us!"

Lords Organization and Palante not only speak to the core values, practices, and beliefs of these specific communities, but provide a strategic framework by which writing instructors can guide students toward writing for change in their communities.

Radical contextualization happens in both the Chicago and New York versions of the organization and their associated newspapers, but it occurs differently. Initial editions of the *YLO* focuses more exclusively on civic government and action. For those familiar with the alternative weekly newspapers that cover city council meetings and municipal appointments, the *YLO* early editions would be familiar. The very first issue details a confrontation between members of the Young Lords, six local organizations, and police officers at the 18th District Police station in Chicago. The Young Lords flooded he police department and turned what was intended to be a "routine police-community" workshop with activists demanding answers for an instance of police brutality from Capt. Clarence E. Braasch. The protesters came to the meeting well-versed in the meetings rules of order but were quickly adjourned when the crowd booed the captain's response to the killing of a 15-year-old Black teen. The story ends describing the harassment senior members of the Young Lords Organization experienced at the hand of the 18th district police. The piece ends by stating:

> The 18th District seems to have increased their strength and harassment in response to community demands that they cease. The cops seem to want war. Since there are only 14,000 cops in Chicago and 350,000 Latin Americans, it seems possible that the Latins would win such a confrontation. ("Y.L.O. Takes Over Police Station" 1)

This contextualization works for the community this was written for: a primarily working class of Puerto Rican families living in Lincoln Park. These were the police

officers that interact with the community, as evidenced by their immediate harassment of members of this group. What this description of the meeting does is it situates the actions of the Young Lords within a familiar paradigm in an attempt to attain legitimacy. It is likelier that the audience would respond to using the mechanisms of municipal government more effectively than other forms of direct action. To a working-class family with material interests in self-determination, this rhetorical move is savvy in not alienating potential community members who would like to join the movement while advocating the groups broader, loftier goals.

The Young Lords Organization began to contextualize their struggle with the 13-point program borrowed from the Black Panther Party. As with aspects of relationality, the Young Lords did not adopt an official party platform until the formation of the Young Lords Party in New York City. This adoption came with same academic reform for the organization that encouraged the split between the Young Lords Organization and Palante and emphasized a more detailed theoretical approach to revolution than the civic-minded action of the first iteration of the group. The need to form their own platform came from the intention for the Young Lords to be a "revolutionary political party fighting for the liberation of all people" ("Programa" 22). Points 1-3 demand the self-determination and liberation of all Puerto Ricans, Latinos, and "third world people" ("Programa" 22). While this approach of naming specific intuitional colonizing forces may seem abstract, it provides an intellectual justification to the various student groups the Young Lord's Party sought to ally with.

In fall 1970, the first issue of *Palante* appeared, written and published in New York City. The highly stylized first issue struck a similar tone as its predecessor. The notable difference was an increase of illustrations and a more uniform layout and organization.

It is clear that the Young Lords Organization made its appeal to younger, more radical factions of the organization—missing were reprints from other newspapers and in their place were essays written by other students. Missing from these later issues are also the minutia of meeting minutes and other useful information for participating in municipal government. This material was replaced with poetry, art, collages, and stories that informed the readers of issues specific to the issues the community of Harlem and the Bronx were facing at the time.

page 2 palante

MESSAGE TO A DOPE FIEND:

SPICS GOING TO THE COOKER
NEVER REALIZING THEY'VE BEEN COOKED
MIND SHOOK
MONEY TOOK
AND NOTHING TO SHOW FOR IT BUT
SWOLLEN ARMS AND
ABCESSES OF THE MIND.
GO AHEAD SPIC.
STICK IT IN YOUR TRIGGER FINGER
YOU AIN'T GOT NOTHING TO LOSE BUT YOUR FREEDOM
AND YO' MAMA
WHO WAILS FUTILY AT THE TOILET DOOR
WANTS TO TEAR DOWN THE WHOLE PLUMBING STRUCTURE
BUT CAN'T 'CAUSE YOU STILL INSIDE
SHOOTING UP, WHEN YOU ALREADY BEEN SHOT.
YOU AIN'T GOT NOTHING TO LOSE BUT YOUR FREEDOM.
SHOOT THE POISON, THE SMACK OF YOUR OPPRESSOR
SHOOT PEPI ON 8th AVE. PULLING A MULE CART OF CHEAP
DRESSES
TO BE SOLD EN LA MARQUETA.
SHOOT MAMI, SWEATING LIKE HER BROWN ANCESTORS
LONG AGO KILLED BY COLUMBUS AND THE CHURCH,
TO MAKE THAT $60.00 IN THE TOMBS CALLED FACTORIES
MACHINES RAPE YOUR MOTHER EVERY DAY
AND SPIT HER OUT A WHORE
DON'T THROW DAGGER STARES AT MEN
WHO CRUELLY CRUNCH YOUR SISTER'S BUTTOCKS BETWEEN
SLIMY FINGERS.
YOU AIN'T DOING NOTHING TO CHANGE IT, SPIC.
YOU AIN'T GOT NOTHING TO LOSE BUT YOUR FREEDOM.

SHOOT UP OUR ISLAND OF BORINQUEN
POPULATED BY WRITHING SNAKES
WHOM WE NICELY CALL GRINGOS
GREEN GO
GREEN GO
GREEN BERETS EN EL YUNQUE
GREEN MARINES ON CALLE DEL SOL

GREEN BILLS PASSING FROM TREMBLING HAND TO
CALLOUSED PALMS,
AND YOU SHOOT THE POISON
CAUSE YOU DON'T WANT TO STARE AT YOUR OWN UGLY
REFLECTION.
BUT IT'S THERE SPIC,
HANGING OFF THE STOOPS,
DRIPPING OVER ON FIRESCAPES,
IN THE EYES OF YOUR HERMANITO
WHO WANTS TO BE LIKE YOU WHEN/IF HE GROWS UP.
BETTER GET HIP.
QUIT LYING AND JIVING AND FLYING LIKE YOU OWN
SOMETHING
'CAUSE YOU DON'T OWN NOTHING BUT YOUR CHAINS.
AND WHEN THE REVOLUTION COMES/VERY, VERY SOON,
YOU SHOOT AND I'LL SHOOT, AND
YOU SHOOT AND I'LL SHOOT,
YOU SHOOT AND I'LL SHOOT
AND UNLESS YOU SHOOT STRAIGHT,
I'M GONNA GET YOU
BEFORE YOU GET YOURSELF!

Felipe Luciano
CHAIRMAN
EAST COAST REGION

Figure 5: Message to a Dope Fiend

The first printed article in this new format is a poem titled "Message to a Dope Fiend" by Felipe Luciano (Figure 5), elected chairman of the Young Lords Party. The poem addresses the burgeoning heroin problem in the South Bronx and Harlem. The lack of care facilities in the Bronx and Harlem had been a long-unaddressed issue facing the residents for nearly 75 years. The early 20th century experienced the first boom of

hospital construction, with the major metropolitan serving Lincoln, Metropolitan, Harlem, and Sydenham hospitals opening before the start of the 20th century and Jacobi Medical Center opening in 1901. There is no official explanation for the 75-year gap between the construction of the Jacobi Medical Complex and the North Central Bronx Hospital despite a population growth of over 1 million people[12]. There is also no official explanation about the surge of health facility construction beginning in the 1990s. The boroughs with the highest population growths also saw the highest number of health facilities open.

Figure 6: Hospitals before 1975

Figure 7: Hospital Openings since 1975

[12] I constructed figures one and two with data from NYC Open Data as a part of a data visualization fellowship. Visualizing access to medical facilities encouraged me to explore the material ramifications from writing.

Furthermore, the second issue featured examples of the forced sterilization of Puertorriquenas and the first instance of a call to action against an inept New York City Health Department “Pigs attack Health Rally” and “Piense Lincoln” (“Pigs” 2). Whereas the Chicago chapter of the YL favored income inequality, red zoning, and gentrification as their primary focus, the Young Lord’s Party favored shining a light on the health disparities in their boroughs. The visibility The Young Lords brought to health inequities as a result of the heroin epidemic most directly resulted in expanding tuberculosis and lead testing and the renovation of the Lincoln Medical Complex. However, it is certain that their mass community-oriented approach to change helped refocus municipal resources toward providing a stronger case for health access that had been seen before in Harlem and the Bronx.

PIGS ATTACK HEALTH RALLY

Lincoln Hospital is an institution that serves the health empire and not the people. Einstein Medical College, which controls Lincoln, sends inexperienced interns there to practice on our people. The people who are rich enough to afford private hospitals refuse to let these new, inexperienced medical students use them as guinea pigs. The drug companies use people's hospitals, like Lincoln, to test out new drugs that they plan to market. The hospital administration waits for people to get sick rather than go out to the community and start preventive medicine programs (like TB and lead poisoning testing). The sicker we get, the more money the medical empire makes.

Twenty-five years ago, Lincoln Hospital was condemned, designated as unfit to shelter human beings. But the ruling class of amerikkka does not consider Third World people to be humans.

The Think Lincoln Committee, a group of Third World Health workers and community people, realized the kind of treatment our people are receiving; they united with the YOUNG LORDS PARTY, the Puerto Rican Student Union, and HRUM (Health Revolutionary Unity Movement) to demand better services and adequate health facilities. The fifth point of the YLP program states "We want community control of our institutions and land." Lincoln Hospital is an institution situated on our land, and we demand that the Lincoln workers and the residents of the Lincoln area control that hospital.

The Think Lincoln Committee planned a rally for Sunday, June 28, at St. Mary's Park. The day before the scheduled rally, members of all the organizations involved went out to announce to the people what would be happening the next day. When we reached 149th Street and 3rd Avenue, we were met by pigs from the 41st, 42nd, and 43rd precincts. Obviously, they felt that a group of Puerto Ricans and blacks who were giving out leaflets and addressing their people were a threat to amerikkkan "law and order." When they began oinking and shoving people around, they showed the hundreds of people passing by and watching why they are called "pigs"—because they act like animals and use violence to deprive people of their rights.

The police were told that we were going to leave right after the announcement of Sunday's rally, but they started swinging anyway. One of the clumsy fools swung at a brother, missed, and fell through a window of Hearns department store.

This attack was personally ordered by and executed in the presence of barry gotterher, mayor lindsay's personal assistant in charge of the elimination of Puerto Ricans. The viciousness of the attack shows us that the city administration and the medical empires, such as Einstein, are terrified at the thought of Puerto Rican and Black patients and hospital workers beginning to demand control of medical services for our people. It also shows us that the businessmen who run the hospital money-making operations are going to make sure that their employees, the city officials and police, protect their interests.

All together, ten people were arrested. All were beaten on the way to the precinct. Three members of PRSU were singled out for special treatment inside the 42nd precinct. The pigs forced the brothers on their knees and told them to denounce the Puerto Rican people as uncivilized. When they refused, they were punched, kicked and beaten with blackjacks. One brother was taken from room to room, and every uniformed pig and detective in the precinct took turns going into the rooms and torturing him. He suffered such heavy physical punishment that he couldn't stand up in court. He was not hurt when he was arrested; but when he was released, he had multiple head injuries that required 19 stitches, a broken finger, blackjack welts on his arms, legs and back, serious facial bruises and cuts, and broken ribs.

But neither their torture nor repression will stop the people of the South Bronx from fighting for health services that serve the community. In fact, what the struggle has done is to involve yet another sector of our community, the gangs. Traditionally, gangs have been looked at as "hoodlums," but we in the YOUNG LORDS PARTY, understand that gangs are another way of our community defending itself from outside attack. The hundreds of members of these South Bronx gangs are now actively involved in the fight for better health care for our people at Lincoln. As our strength grows, we say to the pigs that participated in this torture of our brother and to those who sat back and let it happen—Beware. We will remember this attack; the people's time will come. Every vicious attack convinces our people that only through armed self-defense and armed struggle can we change the society that oppresses us. Only by picking up the gun, can we be free.

Huey Jung
Ministry of Defense
Bronx Branch

AT HEALTH RALLY

Piense Lincoln

El Hospital Lincoln es una institucion que sirve el imperio de salud y no la gente. El Colegio de Medicina Einstein que controla a Lincoln manda internos sin experiencia para practicar con nuestra gente. La gente que son suficiente rica y pueden pagar en un hospital privado no dejan que estos estudiantes de medicina sin experiencia los usen como carne de experimento. Las compañías de drogas usan los hospitales de la gente (publicos) como Lincoln para probar nuevas drogas que ellos planean llevar al mercado. Los administradores del hospital esperan que la gente se enfermen en vez de ir a la comunidad y comensar programas de medicina preventiva (como pruebas para el TB y envenanamiento de plomo). Mientras más nos enfermamos más dinero hace el imperio medico.

Hace 25 años, el Hospital Lincoln fue condenado, designado como insalubre para humanos. Porque la clase que rije en amerikkka no considera la gente del Tercer Mundo como humanos, el hospital todavia esta en uso.

El Comite "Piense Lincoln," un grupo de trabajadores de salud y gente de la comunidad, se dió cuenta de la clase de tratamiento que nuestra gente recibe y se unio con el PARTIDO DE LOS YOUNG LORDS, la Union Estudiatil Boricua (PRSU), y HRUM (Movimiento Revolucionario de Salud Unitario) para exigar mejores servicios y facilidades de salud adequades. El quinto punto del programa de los YOUNG LORDS dice "Nosotros queremos control comunal de nuestras instituciones y tierra." El Hospital Lincoln es una institución situada en nuestra tierra y nosotros exigimos que los trabajadores del hospital y los residentes de la comunidad controlen el hospital.

El Comite Piense Lincoln planeo una reunión para el domingo, 28 de junio, en el parque de St. Mary. El día antes de la reunión, miembros de todas las organizaciones de la comunidad envueltas en la lucha de Lincoln fueron a anunciarle a la gente que iban a celebrarse la reunión el proximo día. Cuando llegamos a la calle 149 y la Tercera Avenida, nos encontramos con puercos de los precintos 41, 42, y 43. Era obvio que ellos sentian que un grupo de Puertorriqueños y Negros que distribuía ojas informandole a su gente eran una amenza para la "ley y orden." Cuando

CONT. on pg. 18

Figure 8: Pigs Attack Health Care Rally

Both groups emphasized radicalism, albeit in different forms. This is not to say that residents of Lincoln Park neighborhood did not experience health inequality, but rather pull attention toward the specificity of each chapters aims and methods of enacting direct action. As each iteration of the newspaper functioned differently in each local context, it is clear that knowing one's audience is essential not only for publication but determining the scope of its audience's determination to a cause. The Young Lords Organization fracture produced two very different movements within a single group. The authority over which each group had in the group's directives and attention functions as a form of manufactured contextualization that reflected leaderships' own priorities, reform in Chicago and revolution in New York. When it became clear to leadership that reform was not a sufficient driver in change, the groups' focus on radicalism through direct action brought the whole organization further left.

Materiality

The previous two aspects of a framework of liberatory strategies call to acknowledge relations and to contextualize these relations to decolonial action. The last aspect of a cultural rhetorics strategy emphasizes the effects these writings have on the material word. How do these texts encourage action? Notably, the newspaper moved from reporting on direct action to explicitly encouraging disruption through direct action. While many scholars use the "call for action" as a somewhat standard aspect of argumentative action, the Young Lords dedication to practice provides useful examples by which writing teachers can encourage action-oriented writing. There have been significant contributions in thinking about the rhetoricity of emergent agency and action for the "common good" (Cushman). This modernist approach to finding a collective

good can be at odds with materialist interpretations of modernity as a celebration of colonial Europe's "achievements" (Mignolo 2-3). For the insurrection and revolutionary-minded Young Lords, striving toward a "common good" simply was not an ambitious enough goal on a continent where colonization's effects are still felt.

Affected materiality explains how writing, particularly manifesto-like community writing, more directly calls for action than most persuasive essays by through its direction and instruction on how to engage authority and ultimately fight for revolutionary ends. I use the term "affect" to make reference to the permanent material change the Young Lords had on the material conditions of the community rather than short-term changes that modulate materiality rather than alter them. *Young Lords Organization* and *Palante* do this by inundating the newspapers will various kinds of calls to action—nearly every article throughout both iterations of the paper includes a mantra-esque call to action, by advertising community services and through its reporting of their direct action.

The first volume of the newspaper Young Lords Organization makes their activism explicitly known. Though I don't have enough room to include every epilogue, there's a consistent-enough theme that the inclusion of some of my favorites should suffice. A favorite in most epilogue includes the phrase "POWER TO THE PEOPLE!" with some variations ("The streets belong to the people!" "Hasta la Victoria siempre" "The Barrio is Awake! All Pigs beware!" "The moon belongs to the people!"). In reading the newspaper, the question as to who "the people" are when the YL mentions "THE PEOPLE." As I have discussed before, stylistic changes after the organizations transcontinental break were meant to appeal to different audiences. These words function similar to that of codas found in music. Typically, a coda differs somewhat from the structure of a piece

and exists at the end to reinforce thematic cues before the piece eventually ends. In some ways, these codas can function at their bare minimum as a TL;DR (too long; didn't read in online parlance). These specific issues of the Young Lords Organization, however, seem to feature codas and their repetitious nature as calling cards as to who the organization is and what they do. I have no doubt that readers of these early editions either knew or could intuit easily what the organization stood for. However, in a working-class neighborhood where families were more concerned with creeping gentrification and redlining that would remove them from their homes, the revolutionary function of these epilogues reminded the residents that the YLO was indeed working for them, the residents of Lincoln Park.

Letters to YLO

LITTLE JOE SPEAKS

Back a few months ago a few guys began hanging around together, getting high and messing up every day. These fellows were like you and I as Mouse, Little Joe, Big Feed, Mr. Lucky and Frank. You know, the names you hear every day. Well, they were having a good time and didn't notice the brutality and all the other trouble going on in the neighborhood. Then one day Mouse brought up the subject about the organization called the Young Lords. He went on to say how the Young Lords are a group that is for the people, Puerto Ricans and others. Then they decided to help the people and that is precisely what they are doing until now, and will try to continue for a long time to come. After listening to this brother we decided that we were going to hold a meeting and find out how we could start a section of the Young Lords because we also wanted to help our people. We went to see David Rivera, National Field Marshall for the Y.L.O., and David gave us permission to begin adn also buttons and newspapersto sell. Now we are working on selling the buttons and papers to allow the community to know the Y.L.O. is here in Chicago.

We held meetings to discover what we would do for ourselves and how we were going to work out certain problems that our people face.

Right now the Y.L.O. recognizes little Joe as Defense Captain for this section and most of the old street gang is moving with enthusiasm to support the vision of this movement. I can see with my own eyes that we are all "young" but someday, we will be a great organization that will be for the people and help to serve them as brothers.

In the present we are going to open an office for the poor people where they can get free medical attention for their teeth and health in general. Then they won't have to go to some big hospital where they don't know the language nad have to wait in preposterous line for hours.

This is why I am saying that we are going to be a big organization because we are for the people and not for ourselves, and we are determined to better ourselves to everyday for the people!

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE
FREE PUERTO RICO NOW!!!!!

Little Joe

FREE PUERTO RICO!

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Y.L.O.

I was really surprised to find out the Young Lords were nothing like the street gangs I had heard about. The street gang image was a lot of Bull! The Young Lords do more for the people than anyone else! They do not speak for the Young Lords only, but for all oppressed people.

Now I will work for the people, just as hard as the Brothers and Sisters. They fight for what they believe in. Freedom For All People. Baby find out about freedom and the struggle that is necessary to win that freedom.

Power to the People

Virginia Rivera and Belinda Budke

To My Sisters

I have been married for two months to a member of the Young Lords Organization. In those two months I have learned why he wants to stay in the Y.L.O. He wants his people to be free and for high class people to stop walking all over our people. He wants people to be free to walk in the streets wihtout fear of being harassed by the local Pigs.

There are many reasons why I do not mind him staying in the Y.L.O. One reason is because he helps people. The poor people who do not know how to speak English or to fight back and defend their rights. As a wife of a Young Lord I do worry at night when he is out late. I am not afraid that some poor people might jump him, but that a pig might shoot him while his back is turned as revenge for doing nothing more than trying to help people determine their own destiny. We have clear examples: Fred Hampton, Manuel Ramos and dozens of their comrades who were likewise assassinated. The pigs vamp down on anyone who feels he should have true freedoms. I am married to a Young Lord. Whether he is alive or dead I will be sure that our children will be taught to prepare themselves to fight as long as rights are threatened.

Isabel
Revolutionary sister and wife

Paul Speaks

To start off, the Young Lords group in the Eckhart Park area of Chicago was just a group of High School students trying to break out of their present day society. It was fun in the beginning to just simply help each other in times of need, but then we began to ask ourselves if what we were doing was really just a bunch of shit. A member of our group met one day with some brothers from the Y.L.O. National Headquarters and started grooving on their wonderful ideas about how we too could help our fellow men. These ideas really stuck to our minds We began to get hip to the idea that we were a very important part of the struggle to liberate Puerto Rico, the Mother Country, and the rest of Latin America. Right now the group is trying to find some way to raise funds so that we could buy some books on Puerto Rican History.

Since nothing has been done for us by this racist system we are going to do it ourselves and learn to serve Our People.

Love to all my brothers and sisters.

Paul

Free Puerto Rico Now

Brothers:

I've just picked up my first issue of YLO. Great! Groups like yours and the Panthers and the Brown Berets are the ones that will someday wipe racism out of this country. The Young Lords have my full support. Keep up the good work and remember it's us who have the support of the people!

All Power to the People!
Steve Barkley

A letter to the brothers and sisters of Latin America and to the poor people of the world--

In this world that we live in, we find ourselves unable to choose the kind of life we wish to live. We find it a lifetime strggle just to settle down. We find ourselves unable to speak from our hearts without being called communists, gangsters, or getting our heads busted,being put in jail, or even murdered. We live in an atomsphere of pure frustration, of surpluses in injustice and as a result we must revolt out of fear; we must revolt against the forces that keep us slaves in this false democracy of the United States fo America.

If this be the American dream, then we must all wake up We must wake up adn become aware that if we die that dream, we will never experience freedom!

The Young Lords Organization is in need of money for its bail fund and for carrying out the many programs of the Organization. You can help by subscribing to the YLO newspaper ($5 per year) or sending a contribution to YLO, ,834 West Armitage, Chicago, Ill. 60614.

Figure 9: Letters to the YLO

Given who the initial audience for these newspapers were, it would stand to follow that direct action was not actively advertised. In no edition of the Young Lords Organization is there mention of a rally, meeting, or direct action. These decisions, made by the Central Committee, relied on its networks of members of "Latin American gangs in Chicago" to "organize and mobilize the people" to meet the needs of the community" ("Letters" 2). Throughout the initial editions, the word "revolution" is found in dozens of article titles. Interestingly, these occur more commonly in the Chicago sections of the paper. These titles include "YLO in revolution," "You can't kill a revolution" and "Revolutionaries serve the people" in the first six pages of the first issue. However, a grand total of 0 of these articles suggest methods by which communities engage in the revolution beyond reading about it. Rather, the Young Lords Organization uses the word "revolution" in conjunction with stories about services offered by the organization. In the story "Revolutionaries Serve the People" in vol 1 number 4, the author reminds her audience that "no one can defeat all the people, for every revolutionary who dies, a thousand take his place." It is fitting, then, that the author describes how to take care of the babies of the revolution in a newly built day care center and "people's park". Recognizing the lack of childcare facilities for over worked families in Lincoln Park, the Young Lords sought to make "the caring of children everybody's business," imploring all members to "offer [themselves] to the day care center." Additionally, the Young Lords led a "coalition of poor people's groups [sic]" to advocate the Mayor's office for the construction of a public park on the corner of Armitage and Halsted in Chicago. The land, formerly occupied by residents of the neighborhood who had been forcefully evicted, had remained an empty lot for 4 years. Though the site has since been commercially developed, these were important issues to a community over-

worked and long ignored. These needs were community-specific and relied on the active involvement of the residents. In short, the revolution was not only for angry youth, but for tired mothers and ignored children. Their specific rhetorical usage of epilogues and the scope of their vision was successful for this reason.

By the time the group's schism occurred, the revolution (and who was involved) changed somewhat and with it changed the ethos of the group. Like the initial editions of Young Lords Organization, every article in *Palante* ends in explicit calls to action. Unlike the first editions, however, *Palante* was more vocal and explicit in its advertising of direct action. This distinct shift was made with the audience in mind. From working-class families in Chicago to angry college students living in New York City, the shift not only in focus but in tone signifies the direction of the group—from revolution to insurrection.

Before the change in name from Young Lords Organization to Palante a changing of the guard shifted newspaper production in January 1970 from Chicago to New York City. This coincided with a shift in focus from localized municipal politics to larger, systemic change. Specifically, the Young Lords Party focused on a robust Health Program with community control, mass health service, and free healthcare. While similar to other health initiatives at the time, the Young Lords Party vision differed in their holistic approach that addressed public health from beyond the perspective of clinical access (though this was a major focus of their intended reform). The construction of the 10-point health program became synonymous with the Young Lords.

REVOLUTIONARY HEALTH PROGRAM FOR THE PEOPLE

TENGO PUERTO RICO EN MI CORAZON
YLO

NEW YORK

Mingo El Loco was a brother off the block who helped out the Young Lords Organization every once in a while. He would loan the Organization his car, would help pass out our literature, would recruit for us. A few weeks ago Mingo was stabbed by another brother. It happens all the time in the street. Our people are always killing each other off instead of fighting the enemy--the pigs, the businessman, the politician.

The ambulance was called. For one hour it didn't come. Meanwhile the pigs arrived. Mingo was dying on the street, but the police did nothing. Finally, the people tried to take him to the hospital in their own car. He died on the way to Metropolitan.

People dying because of ambulances that arrive late, or in emergency rooms of city hospitals while they wait for hours happens often. The people have become used to butcher health care and resigned to the fact that they'll never be decently treated by the health system.

But the Young Lords, after Mingo's death, began to investigate health in New York and we have begun a program to organize the people-community and workers--to demand decent health care.

As we talked to dozens of sympathetic doctors, nurses, medical students, maintenance, clerical and laboratory workers in Metropolitan Hospital, we began to understand more and more about health oppression.

--We learned that many of the diseases that our people die of could be simply cured or even prevented with correct mass health programs which the hospitals do not have. For instance, thousands of children become sick or die because of lead poisoning, from eating fallen plaster in ghetto buildings. A mass lead-poison detection program could save the lives of thousands of our children. Anemia, tuberculosis, bad nutrition, upper respiratory infections, could be stamped out with mass health programs that go out to the people, into the homes and the communities, instead of waiting for a patient to come in to the hospital with the disease already in advanced stages.

--We learned that doctors were making $60-70 thousand a year because poor people have to have health care. That their organization, the fascist American Medical Association, for years has been trying to keep the number of medical schools down so that doctors could charge high-er fees.

--We learned that the drug companies, like Upjohn, Park and Davis, etc., not only push many useless or harmful drugs just for profit, but that they have much influence in Washington and state legislatures over medical bills. Many times officers of these companies sit on the boards of private hospitals and help determine the policy that has been mistreating our people for years.

--We learned that there are things called health empires: medical schools and private hospitals that through affiliations (contracts with the city) operate and run city hospitals. In New York for instance, Columbia controls Harlem Hospital, Albert Einstein controls Lincoln Hospital, Beth Israel controls Gouverneur Hospital, New York Medical College controls East Harlem's Metropolitan. These affiliations end up helping the medical school much more than the municipal hospital. For instance, interns and medical students have much more practice and experience in the city hospital, because in the private hospital, patients are treated by their own doctor and refuse to be treated by students. The poor people who come to the city hospitals are used as guinea pigs, sometimes, for new treatments, methods, new medicines that will then be used on the rich.

The priorities for the medical schools are training and research. The needs of the people are for mass, quality free health care. The two are often antagonistic in our society.

--We learned that in our communities, control of health must be taken out of the hands of drug companies, avaricious professionals, pig politicians, and racist administrators and put in the hands of the people. That is why we demand:

COMMUNITY-WORKER CONTROL
FREE HEALTH CARE
MASS HEALTH SERVICE

The Young Lords have developed a Ten-Point Program of Health that explains what we want, the minimum necessary for our people--for Puerto Rican, black and poor white oppressed peoples. We have joined with revolutionary workers in other parts of the city, with the Health Revolutionary Unity Movement at Gouverneur Hospital on the Lower East Side, with the Lincoln Hospital workers in the South Bronx, with the Black Panther Party Free Health Clinics in Staten Island and Brooklyn. We are building a city-wide revolutionary health movement that will shake this city to its rotten, pig core.

The revolutionary health groups have also begun forming an alliance with radical medical students and professionals around a week of activities in February, 1970--People's Health Week, which will attempt to have teach-ins, demonstrations and mass health programs, and educate the people about the difference between capitalist medicine and socialist medicine, between medicine that oppresses the people and medicine that serves the people.

By becoming involved in Breakfast Programs, Clothing Programs, Health Programs, the Young Lords are demonstrating to all Latin and other oppressed peoples that we truly do serve and protect. Wherever the people suffer and resist oppression, we are there to aid, shape, and lead their struggle.

Long Live Boricua
Long Live Independent Puerto Rico
Free Health Care for Everyone
Hands off Cha Cha
Venceremos

YOUNG LORDS ORGANIZATION
New York State Headquarters
1678 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10029
212--427--4599

HEALTH CARE IS A HUMAN RIGHT

CHICAGO

The Young Lords Organization, with the help of progressive doctors, medical students, nurses, dentists, dental students, and technicians, is going to begin various health programs at the People's Church at 834 W. Armitage. If everything goes as planned, the health programs will begin operating sometime in late January or early February. The programs that we will open are intended to improve the health of children in Lincoln Park. A dental team will run a preventive dental program for children. Their teeth will be cleaned, polished, and fluoridated in order to prevent cavities and to help the teeth grow. Children will then be taught how to take care of their teeth and will be given tooth brushes and toothpaste. Appointments will be made at a dental clinic for children who are found to need dental work. We are also working on setting up a dental unit at the Peoples' Church to take care of adults which we hope will be ready by late January also.

A medical team will run health programs to meet the needs of children. We will take care of children in two general ways. First of all, we will have doctors to take care of sick children. But we will also have medical teams of doctors and students to run programs to prevent healthy children from getting sick. This will be done by giving medical exams to healthy children to check for hidden sicknesses or sicknesses that are just beginning and can be corrected before they become serious. In addition, doctors will take care of pregnant women through their pregnancy and will help them to register at a decent hospital for their deliveries.

Another of the health programs will provide for the screening and fitting of eyeglasses for adults and for children. Initial screening will be done to find out who needs glasses. Then an eye doctor will fit the glasses. Both the screening and the fitting will be done at the Peoples' Church.

When the health programs begin, they will be open one day a week, Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. If there are people waiting to be seen after 4 p.m., we will stay open later. In the future, the clinic will also take care of sick adults if we can recruit more doctors and space. All care will be free.

We are opening these health programs because the profit-making doctors refuse to take care of poor people and always open offices only in neighborhoods where they can make money. We are opening these health programs because all the hospitals in the area do not think it is important to provide decent health care for poor people. We are opening these health programs because hospitals in the area don't hire enough doctors and nurses to meet the health needs of poor people.

In Lincoln Park West, the infant death rate is much higher than that of Lincoln Park East. We are tired of seeing our young brothers and sisters die because the people who control health services are more interested in making money than in providing health care for all people. We are tired of seeing children with decayed teeth because they can't get dental care. These are some of the reasons we are opening these health programs.

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

YLO in Revolution

Figure 10: Revolutionary Health Program for the People

In the fourth issue, published in fall 1969, “La Lucha Contra La Basura” (“The Garbage Offensive”) featured a four-page spread chronicling how the residents of Spanish Harlem grew frustrated with their living conditions due to garbage not being picked up. The moved garbage from the sidewalks and gutters to the middle of busy intersections. 110th, 111th, 115th, 118th and 120th were blocked at 17th, Madison, Lexington and Third Avenues. This revolt received significant local attention and eventually the Department of Garbage capitulated. In order to take part in future actions like this, the Young Lords Party set up headquarters at the “People’s Church” at 111th and Lexington to “serve the needs of the people of el barrio” by opening a community kitchen, a liberation school for adults and children, and free medical care from volunteers. The creation of the headquarters was instrumental in providing the organization legitimacy by streamlining the production of Palante. While addressing the needs of the community, the young, college-age members of the Young Lords Party were provided an opportunity further grow the revolution while making good on their pledges.

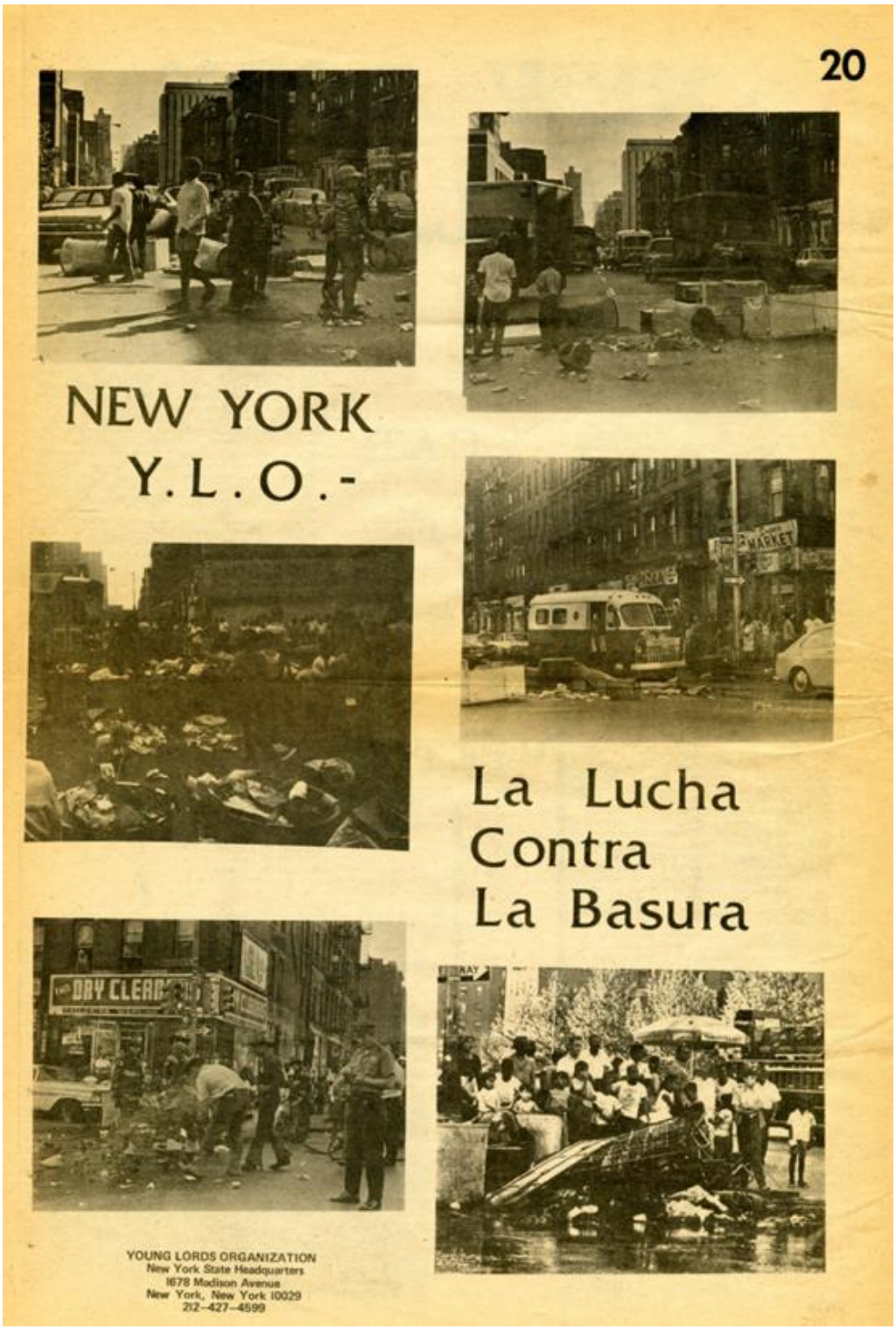


Figure 11: La Lucha Contra la Basura

Conclusion

While only existing for a short of period time, the Young Lords newspapers serve as an archive of material rife with topics for study that would only enrich rhetoric and writing studies as a discipline. The rhetorical choices made by the Young Lords encouraged different levels of civic engagement based on their perceived audience and the reason for writing that audience. To address this question of audience, the Ministry of Information and the YL Central Steering committee provided an animating means of persuasion for its audience while placing historical contextualization as the primary motivating factor. Reading these documents through this lens is a means to deconstruction, in some ways. The three characteristics I cite as rhetorical moves of a cultural rhetorics informed reading strategy allowed me to take a straightforward publication and tease apart meaningful differences. These differences, though small at first, mean much more when put in cultural contextualization. This is the importance of cultural rhetorics and of a cultural rhetorics informed reading strategy. Cultural rhetorics does not exist as a means to point to what we have in common or describe the phenomenological differences of identity. Rather, its centering on relationality describes how various cultures' sense of individuality makes up our collective commonality. Being able to describe these individualities as they differ from culture to culture is the rhetorical goal of cultural rhetorics. The cultural rhetorics informed reading strategy centers these differences, from culture to culture. I use these strategies to illuminate a specific culture, but it can easily be applied to other texts as long as the reader centers relational understanding.

Using the example of the Young Lords, I hope to emphasize that indeed, research and teaching are forms of activism, but are not animating factors of change unto

themselves. For all the talk of decolonization within our discipline, having an example of decolonial action from which to base our studies is a worthwhile goal. If teaching and research is my activism, it would be more than appropriate to exemplify to students and other scholars what this material change within colonial systems looks like and how it is accomplished. Because of the Young Lords' message and the medium through which it was delivered, the communities they served are better for it. And the Young Lords are not alone in this service; a rich tradition of action-oriented writing informs contemporary groups looking to strategically use writing for political ends are no in shortage. In the next chapter, I will discuss how these reading strategies have changed how activists communicate with the general public and how contemporary iterations function.

CHAPTER 4

Chapter three showed how a cultural rhetorics reading strategy could be used to identify how the Young Lords leveraged specific rhetorical tools to motivate, animate, civil disobedience to force the city government to act. This motivating aspect of writing exemplifies the power of a discourse dependent on the "constant and visible contextualization of self and writing within the discourses of hegemony" (Rhodes 1), or radical textualities. If the goal is to understand how radical textualities can be iterated in similar contexts, then reviewing contemporary texts that do just that is necessary. This chapter will apply the close reading strategy to two web texts to identify if contemporary usage of the strategy is useful in understanding the efficacy of these groups' writing practice. Measuring such efficacy is challenging, so this chapter will look toward what material changes occurred because of each group's textual production.

This chapter will introduce two texts from two separate organizations. Both texts, a manifesto and a "how-to" guide, speak to and exemplifies the ethos of each group through their interaction with the ideas of relationality, materiality, and contextuality. Each text advocates for a centering of oneself in the physical world while writing toward that goal in very different ways. What differentiates these texts from those of the Young Lords, however, is their liminal existence online as opposed to physical copies of newspapers that are distributed by one person to other people. By introducing each group and their web text, I will inherently be making an argument about the advocacy of online organizing in addition to explicating and demonstrating a cultural rhetoric reading strategy in examining each text. This method of chapter construction allows me to present my "findings" in a practical way for the reader to see how exactly these reading strategies work in determining a groups efficacy in radical organizing.

"Against the End of The World"

I was first introduced to the Woodbine Collective when I was given a "zine" by an acquaintance who knew vaguely of my research interests. Wrapped in pink construction paper, a single serpent climbs up a staff with a quote from the prolific union organizer Mary Harris Jones—"Fight Like Hell for the Living"—and a subtitle describing the zine as "A Health Autonomy Reader" (Figure 10). The staff and snake, more commonly known as Rod of Aesculapius, surprised me at first as I used to the image of two serpents climbing a staff, known as the Caduceus. The Caduceus, the symbol for the Greek God Hermes, is meant to represent commerce and trade, while the Rod of Aesculapius denotes professional knowledge of medicine. However, a survey of professional and commercial medical organizations[13] shows that 76% of commercial medical organizations and prominent state agencies like US Army Medical Corp, the American Public Health Service and the US Marine Hospital use the incorrect symbol to denote their commitment to professional medical care. While the Caduceus has long been associated with professionalism of a commercial nature, the inclusion of the Rod of Aesculapius seems to be aware of the harm caused by commercialized healthcare in the United States by emphasizing their commitment toward more qualified, not market based, medical knowledge.

[13] Friedlander, Walter J. *The Golden Wand of Medicine: A History of the Caduceus Symbol in Medicine*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1992. Print.

Figure 12: Cover

The zine details several stories about organizations engaging in health autonomy, or the right to practice healthcare separate from the vast network of insurance companies and medical networks that are inaccessible to too many people in this country. From the detailed accounts of Syrian medics fighting with the Yekîneyên Parastina Gel (People's Protection Units) in Syria to the Zapatista-run clinics in Chiapas to the Young Lord's Garbage Offensive, historical and contemporary accounts of health autonomy provide some concrete examples of how writing that resulted in direct action. While I had been aware of non-Western medicine and the importance it plays in the everyday lives of

countless people, the idea of health autonomy struck me as a uniquely American endeavor— in the shadows of hospitals, whole neighborhoods commandeering an x-ray truck to administer inaccessible tuberculosis tests, to care for the public health of the community while the government was suspiciously (but not really) absent. As such, I was struck by the explicitly anarchist notions of mutualism and mutual aid implied in the zine. Given that the zine itself described itself as a "reader," an edited collection of texts for the purposes of learning, knowing more about the Woodbine Collective and how they use writing to engage in their pedagogical mission would be beneficial in understanding what success would look like for this group.

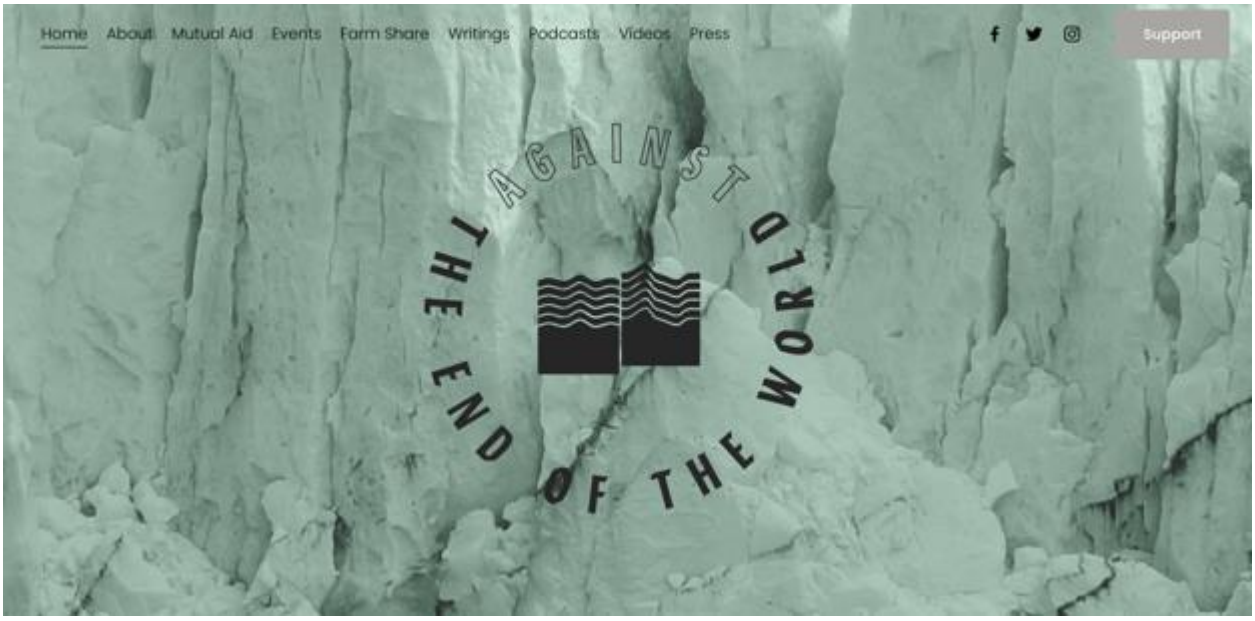


Figure 13: Splash Page

Their online presence is not overwhelming on either social media or on their official website. The splash page features an image of a glacier in the process of shearing, likely to impress upon readers the urgency of Earth's existential problems. In the middle of

the image is the organization's logo—a black multilayered block mimicking mountains, split in the middle, as if to represent tectonic plates in motion. The two images in conjunction allay the slow, massive geological shifts that delineate the Anthropocene. While one image, the tectonic plates, portrays natures immutable change, the glacier's signify the damaging effects of the Anthropocene as humans continue to degrade what finite natural resources available. To further this point, the words "Against the End of the World" circle the tectonic plates. This emphasizes the impression that the group's mission includes emphasizing stewardship of the land for the benefit of future generations. Trying to find out more about the collective, however, without being able to visit the collective in person[14]. They briefly describe themselves as:

> "Woodbine is a volunteer-run experimental hub in Ridgewood, Queens for developing the practices, skills, and tools needed to build autonomy. We host workshops, lectures, discussions and serve as a meeting and organizing space."

This vague mission seems at odds with the hands-on approach this initial zine seems to hint at. The website itself is a well-designed Squarespace themed and hosted page. If the page itself were to be critiqued rhetorically, the "millennial aesthetic" of the web page that was designed using a popular web platform advertised on many podcasts, it would appear to be a web born equivalent of the modular apartment buildings that often pop up in gentrified neighborhoods—visually fine but without character. Details about events, which are listed on the site with time and title, are available on Facebook. The

[14] I had a trip to New York City booked and my itinerary included visiting the Woodbine Collective to attend a seed exchange and learn more about their local efforts in supporting health autonomy. Alas, this trip was scheduled to begin March 31, 2020, and we all know what happened.

"Support" page sends visitors to the organization's Patreon[15] account, where notably, a more thorough description of the group exists. On their Patreon, they claim: "Woodbine is a space to get organized for a collective future beyond capitalism in a time of catastrophe. We're building a community where skills and passions are magnetic forces that pull people together. Since 2013, we've been putting our means in common and building autonomy in Ridgewood."

Though it is unclear what exactly an experimental hub is, the group clearly uses language to appeal to many discourse communities on the left—from "I'm Still with Her" liberals, to Democratic Socialists of America idealists, to anarcho-syndicalists. A lack of precise definitions of terms like "autonomy" and abstractions like "collective future" can leave some readers skeptical what the group believes. However, two documents produced by the collective provide ample opportunity for the kind of culturally mediated textual analysis I argue should be taken.

Their manifesto, taken from their "About" page, certainly takes language on in a way that is different from their fundraising-focused introductions. By its nature, a manifesto is intended to reveal an organization's goal. Thankfully, there are no hard and fast guidelines as to what a manifesto should look like. However, Woodbine's manifesto is not dissimilar to manifestos produced by the Young Lords and the Black Panthers in the 1960s in that it is formatted as an ordered list of demands that aligns with the values of the collective. Unlike the groups, there is a lack of specificity in their intended goals. Manifestos from these historic groups were clear in their emphasis on emancipation and anti-capitalism. Woodbine lacks such a specific emphasis. For example, when speaking

[15] Patreon is a digital platform by which creators can charge subscribers a monthly fee for content.

of the Anthropocene, the current geological age, as a "spiritual, existential, human, and environmental devastation and an old world to be replaced with a new one," (*Manifesto*) there is not a theory for how and why these conditions are present. They go on to describe change in Anthropocene as requiring a "material and spiritual reconfiguration of life." They reject becoming "resilient surviving machines" in favor of learning skills in order to experience as "qualitatively better and richer" than the current experience of being a human in late-stage capitalism. This desire to "dust off" what the writer refers to as "shelved knowledges, practices, and capacities" for a "new education" is reminiscent of the seed-banking appropriation of Western knowledge systems where "intellectual property rights of local and Indigenous communities that develop plant varieties over generations" (McCune) has long been a source of consternation between Indigenous Peoples and researchers. The rhetoric the organization uses seems explicitly inspired by Native thought, specifically Native ways of knowing that refer to humans as "younger brothers of Creation" positions humans as the least experienced in living with the most to learn (Kimmerer). The idea that there is ancient knowledge to be gleamed from rejecting contemporary paradigms, then seem tired circuitously to Indigenous thought. In knowing what events are listed by the organization's website, aside from the seed exchanges, it would not be fair to critique the collective engaging in anything but a benign liberal deference to Indigenous ways of knowing. Without making explicit gestures toward stating a positionality and being relationally accountable, it is difficult to make sense of the relations they have with Indigenous ontology. Given its median income ($70,000) and median rent price ($2,100), this hub in an upwardly mobile neighborhood would, at least on the surface, be an unlikely candidate for being a site of direct action for autonomy, Indigenous or otherwise.

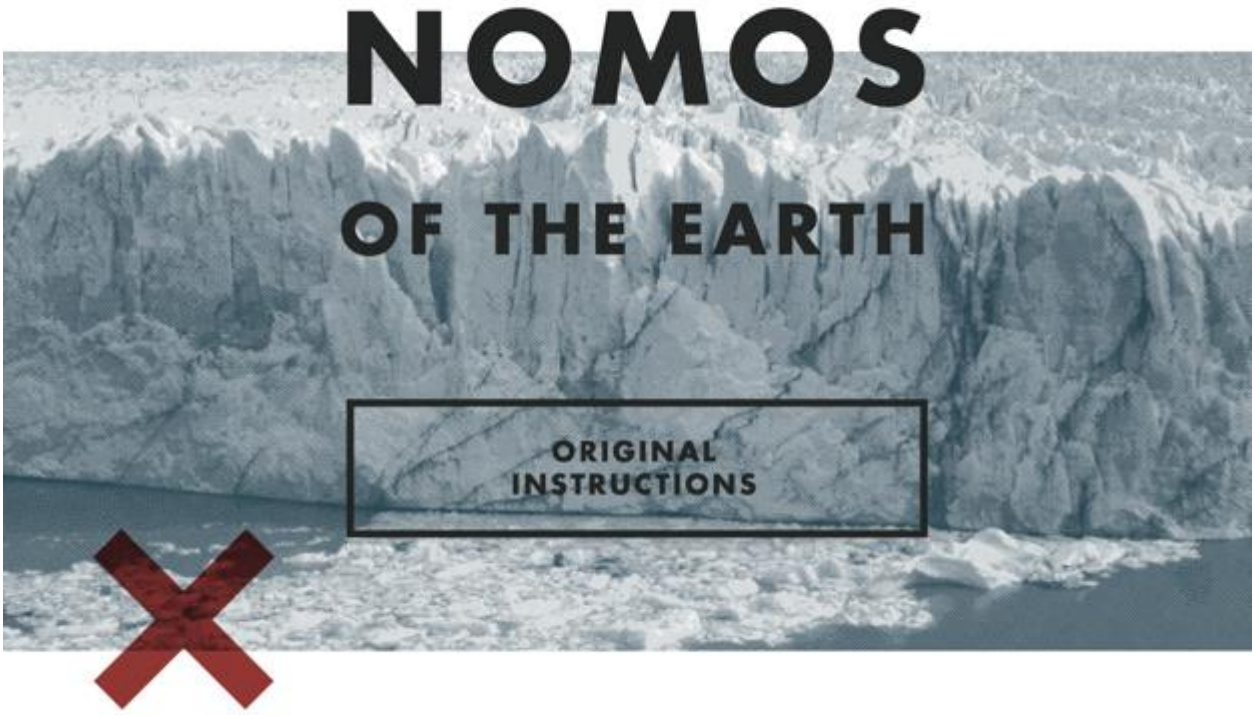


Figure 14: Nomos- Original Instructions

The publication with the furthest reach by the organization is titled "Nomos[16] of the Earth: Original Instructions." The head of the document features a call back to the imagery from the website. It features a glacier in the process of shearing. A large red "X" sits on the lower left edge of the image as if it a mark of assent by the writers. By reading these "original instructions," readers are agreeing to the undertake the original "nomos." Immediately, there are more gestures toward acknowledging indigenous knowledge without engaging it in a meaningful way. The idea that there is an original "law" that governs human interaction with the environment and that there are instructions that

[16] "The Spirit of Law" in Greek mythology or the sociological concept of a habit or custom of social and political behavior.

define and guide human interaction with the earth again harken back to Indigenous ways of knowing.

The steps listed as instructions, listed in order, are

1.Begin from the real.

2.Be strategic

3.Develop techniques

4.Build Power. Build autonomy.

5.Don't be afraid, go ahead.

6.Start now.

The author of these instructions does point out to the reader that "returning to the world" does not mean going back to an "authentic" world, but rather starting from what's "right in front of our faces". The collective asks its members to be aware of the trajectories that point toward the direction of autonomy as a strategy itself. Strategic thinking, according to the group requires participants to center and orient themselves toward autonomy to move on to the real work:

> Learn to make fire. Build structures. Cultivate plants. Raise animals. Cook. Cook for a thousand. Jailbreak phones. Jailbreak friends. Infect networks. Build networks. Sing. Drum. War Songs. Read tracks. Fix cars. Fix bikes. Design print. Design furniture. Design circuits. Spin metal. Weld. Smithing. Bees. Train. Learn to fight. To think. To love. To heal wounds. To heal the world ("Nomos").

These skills, according to Woodbine, are to engage in the material project of "worldbuilding," where ideally, those practitioners of nomos, or dwelling in their exitance, provide the skills to "destitute" the world as we know it. They close out their instructions by claiming "Faced with the catastrophe, there are those who get indignant,

those who take note, and those who get organized. History depends on those who get organized."

While their advocacy for autonomy in late-stage capitalism speaks well to the upwardly mobile in Brooklyn, their text ultimately does not feature the qualities that made the texts produced by the Young Lords successful. Far from engaging in organizational politics, or the informal, unofficial, and sometimes behind-the-scenes efforts to sell ideas, influence an organization, increase power, or achieve other targeted objectives the leaders of the organization certainly gesture toward, the kind of practical, hands-on approach to autonomy should be in-line with, like the Young Lords, other community-based organizations whose mutual aid and know-how reteaching should be the ingredients necessary for change. But just as claiming community isn't enough to practice community, claiming autonomy without situating what autonomy is for the people they work with is an obstacle that obfuscates material goals associated with most struggles for autonomy. Gestures toward relational understandings of knowledge building and contextualizing knowledge production within the broader scope of indigenous resistance, for example, leaves organizations like this somewhat feckless in their endeavor. Publishing about the health autonomy movement that occurred within their city, for example, provides a blueprint for community organizational politic favored by groups in the 1960s. Their language paints a cynical view of the future, that is not shared by organizations like the Young Lords and their efforts toward indigenous autonomy. If all hope is lost, then there any action taken by such an organization would be meaningless.

If the group were to contextualize their fight for autonomy, it would behoove the group to contextualize the harm of gentrification in their neighborhood while offering

material approaches to addressing it. Through occupation and direct action aimed at not just inconveniencing others but direct statements aimed at those in charge, groups like the Young Lords leverage their relationships with their neighbors, as a community, to achieve these goals. Woodbine is close, but without the cultural relevance, it's hard to see this collectives and others of its ilk be successful considering organizations whose materials apply broadly to specific groups of people rather than to a group of upwardly mobile young professionals in Queens.

While I understand that picking on a single group is not the most effective means of illustrating my point, their inclusion speaks to the effects that the appropriation of the language of autonomy that occurs in contemporary discourse communities on the left has in greater conversations about de/anti-colonial futures. Without contextualizing the struggle for autonomy within bigger conversations about colonization and capitalism, they are left with words that do not inspire action. A cultural rhetorics informed reading strategy helps brings this into clear focus. Identifying a lack of relational accountability, contextualization, and materiality in the text makes it clear that the actions taken toward autonomy are merely discursive. However, there are communities that advocate for Indigenous autonomy that situate their struggles well.

Ruckus Society

Two aspects of a framework of liberatory strategies call to acknowledge relations and to contextualize these relations to decolonial action. As such, the final aspect of this framework is centered on the physical world. A cultural rhetorics informed strategical reading examines the material conditions and consequences of direct action as a result of textual production. If relational accountability is a listing of how all peoples are

connected to others as well as the world around them and contextualization is an act of locating oneself and struggle in a broader context, materiality explores how these circumstances can change through direct action.

The Ruckus Society, formed in 1995, describe themselves as "multi-racial network of trainers dedicated to providing the necessary tools, preparation, and support to build direct action capacity for ecological justice and social change movements" ("Mission & History."). While the organization was founded as a prominent training program for anti-globalist demonstrations against World Trade Organization uprisings in 1999 and the Democratic and Republican National Conventions in 2000, their pivot toward supporting Black and Indigenous direct action has resulted to the organization taking a central role in training activist organizations in direct action following the 2014 Ferguson protests and the Dakota Access pipeline protests in 2016.

There is a rich history of Indigenous movements strategically bettering the lives of their community members or at least attempting to, through direct action and civil disobedience. The Dakota Access Pipeline protests, for example, were a highly visible set of actions taken against the state that ultimately ended in more visibility for the struggles of Indigenous autonomy but were unsuccessful in preventing the pipeline from being built. Regardless of how success is measured, groups that helped to organize the protests understand the complicated nature of achieving material goals with direct action. For the Ruckus Society, the achieving of material goals is always at the forefront of how they approach direct action.

In their training materials, The Ruckus Society frames their struggles as material. The "Action Strategy: A How-To Guide" acknowledges that ideals, or "vision," are ethics by which the organization's goals and actions are guided. However, the Ruckus Society

encourages direct engagement with tangible goals. They do not limit their action to protest or non-cooperation. Rather, they guide their members through a campaign strategy that seeks to establish an intervention as a mechanism for change. This is evidenced at Standing Rock, where protestors engaged with "high-level confrontation" by putting themselves directly in front of riot police. In a sense, this action, by placing their safety on the line, makes this explicitly material.

It is also important that work such as this position itself toward radical contextualization. This, like in my discussion about the differences between decolonization and decolonial, relies on grammatical understanding. I do not mean radical in the adjectival sense, in that the act of contextualization in this framework is revelatory or liberatory. Rather, I focus on radical in its noun form. That is, I advocate for a focus on contextualizing these texts based on revolutionary people. To put this more simply, the act of contextualizing these texts in their moment is not the radical act. Noticing that these texts work for radicals would be more appropriate for this context. These texts are not representative of radical ideas as much as they are radical action in and of themselves.

Furthermore, contextualization refers to the ways meaning-making typically operates in Native communities. VF Cordova writes that Indigenous peoples and Euro-Americans see the world from two different perspectives (69), claiming that the Euro-American searches for one "'universal absolute'—an all-encompassing and absolute truth" while Indigenous peoples understand the world through its complexity, its relationships, and its lack of a fundamental truth. These concerns undergird conceptual frameworks that work to answer the philosophical questions presented by existence. Furthermore, these conceptual frameworks are themselves rhetorical. In relation to

each other, these frameworks speak to the core values, practices, and beliefs of specific communities. This contextualization is important because words have meaning, and action predicated on words that have been misunderstood is counterproductive, especially when the word seeks to describe an emerging discipline. These differing understandings of truth are evident in both documents. The Woodbine Collective and their Nomos reflects the Western notion of their being one absolute truth. The Ruckus Society, however, acknowledges one truth: the importance of relationship building and the rhetorical implications of direct action.

The Ruckus Society centers this approach in their resource materials that they provide free of charge on their website. In addition to providing workshops and tutorials, the Ruckus Society provides a series of direct-action resources that include an action strategy guide, a text discussing security culture, a one-sheet that describes roles within action groups, and two guides that provide templates for creative direct action. Their action guide, however, is their most prominent resource on the internet. Described as "a how-to guide," the action strategy guide is designed to help activists design strategic action, defined as "the strategic use of immediately effective acts to achieve a political or social end and challenge an unjust power dynamic" ("Action"). This guide is a surprisingly rich resource that can help organizations plan direct actions from beginning to end. The guide begins by discussing the power of social movements by using basic language to appeal to readers. Notably, however, the author gestures toward relational accountability in describing the importance of strategic action by emphasizing throughout the first section that "work or actions will impact and be impacted by the work of many others" ("Action"). This centering of relational accountability is present

throughout the guide but is most visible in a heuristic developed by Beyond the Choir and adapted by Ruckus.

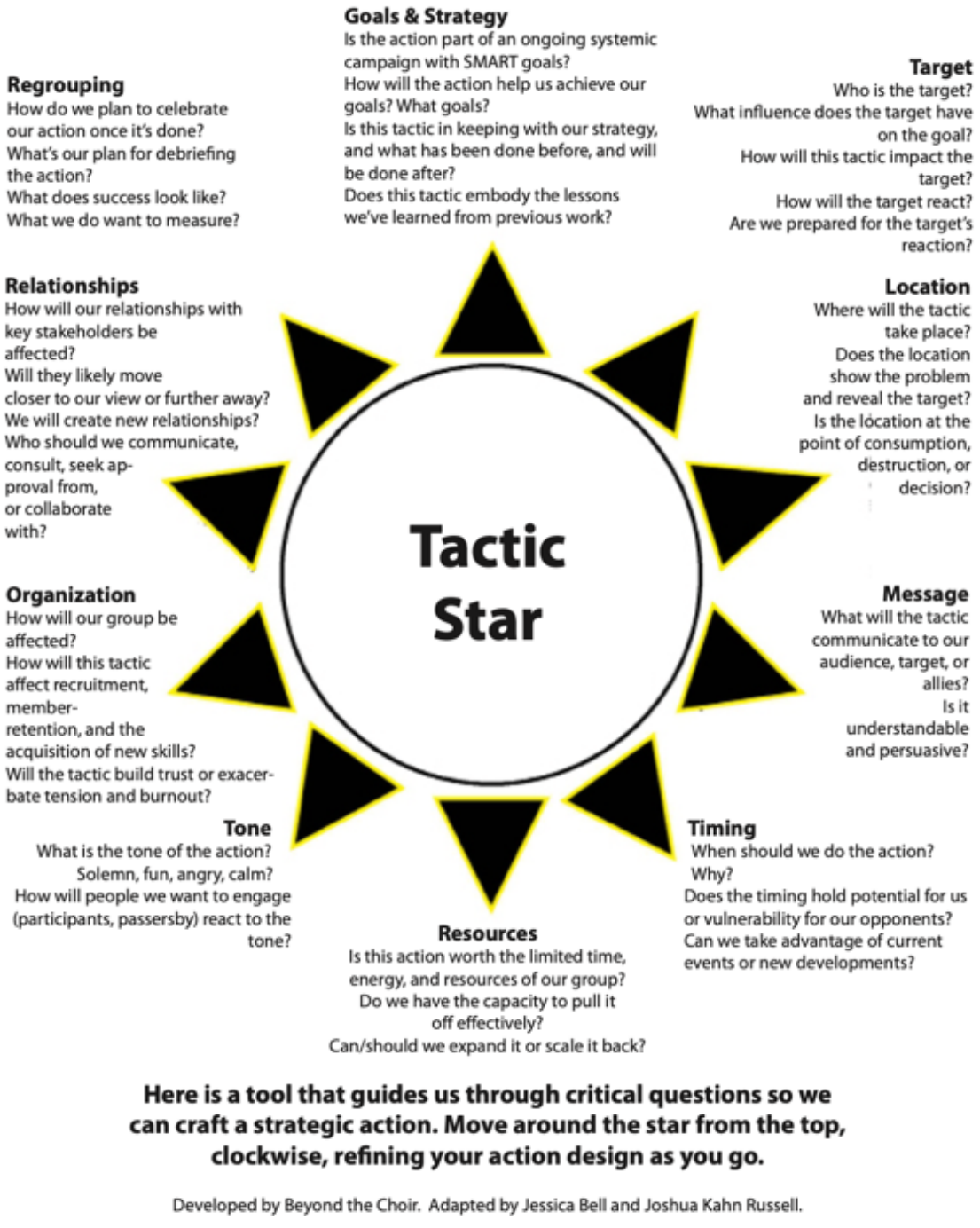


Figure 15: Tactic Star

The tactic star, described as a tool that guides activists through "critical questions" to craft strategic action. The extensive tool lists the most important aspects of direct action and guides readers through each action in the order they should be taken. It asks activists to consider goals, target, location, message, timing, resources, tone, organization, relationships, and regrouping as tenets that are endemic of successful strategic action. Interestingly, the resource guide is not dissimilar to many materials provided by human resource departments in companies throughout the country. In the description of goals for example, the author cites the well-known and somewhat adapted SMART goal acronym that says goals should be specific, measurable, activating, realistic, and time specific. Anyone familiar with the self-help genre would be familiar with this framing of goals and its tone meshes well with the tone of the action guide—optimistic and diametrically opposed to the cynical, nihilistic approach taken by the Woodbine Collective. This is unsurprising as the Ruckus Society places particular importance on how strategic action is perceived and how a message affects the relationships built by activists.

Throughout the how-to guide, the author stresses "campaigning is also about building relationships with other stakeholders affected by or involved in the issue" ("Action"). In discussing targets and relationships, the guide asks, "how will our action affect and involve" stakeholders because "some actions might unintentionally move key groups in the opposite direction." They go on to say, "it is considered respectful for frontline or impacted communities to have some influence over the goals and tactics of groups working on campaigns that affect their daily lives." An example used is having non-Native allies be the spokespeople at a blockade to divert blame and attention from Native community members and organizers. This is to avoid communicating an

unintended message that would prevent the Ruckus Society from recruiting and retaining participants and allies with the organization.

To further this point, the Ruckus Society includes a spectrum developed by the organization Training for Change that is intended to be a reference for organizers to identify which relationships to target. The spectrum (Fig. 14), from left to right, lists leading allies and active allies, passive allies, neutral, passive opponents, and active and leading opponents. This spectrum is asks organizers to focus on moving allies and potential allies one notch toward leading allies. For example, if a group targets neutral parties, the goal would be to convince this group to become passive allies. This slow, relational process again emphasizes the need to acknowledge relationality as each group of allies and potential allies cannot be expected to be converted to leading allies quickly.

Figure 16: Ally Spectrum

The how-to guide is decidedly less theatric than expected and takes a measured approach to describing the importance of direct action. Its focus on tone and relationship building speak to the importance of relationality, materiality, and contextualizing these instances of direct action in their community. The guide uses plain language to communicate its goal and not the academic jargon often found in discourse communities on the left. Additionally, by providing a heuristic for strategic action, the Ruckus Society places a plan for direct action in the material world. The combination of its language and the heuristic used a form of culturally relevant writing practice.

The Ruckus Society is an organization that centers a multi-racial approach to activism so much so that the board stepped down so that BlackOUT, an activist organization fronted by Black Women, could take on Ruckus as an imprint. While its beginnings were in White activist circles, their role in action that benefits communities of color are indisputable. Given the array of communities Ruckus Society has served, their tone and their language speak to the culture of contemporary activism more than any singular racial or ethnic group. Their centering of "relationships" and "tone" seem to be at odds with popular notions of direct action that accomplish unrest but fail to enact material change. With concrete steps, an established hierarchy within the organization, and their relationships to other activists groups, the resource materials provided by the Ruckus Society speak to all aspects of a cultural rhetorics informed reading strategy. According to the list extensive list of authors and organizations in the how-to guides credits, it's clear that the document and its language has been mediated through many activists and the communities to which they belong. It is no wonder, then, that the document speaks so effectively to activist communities without relying buzzwords and

jargon popular on social media that has yet to produce material change many activist communities seek.

Conclusion

In comparison, the groups and their documents exemplify the need for a more rhetorical approach in creating documents meant to be used in inciting direct action. Woodbine's more "activist" approach to writing seems more alienating to potential allies in that it does not accurately reflect the organization's approach toward direct action. Simply put, their approach is not situated in the material word in which their activism is intended to take place. The heady approach of a Queens collective, then, fails to communicate its mission in a culturally relevant way. Their supposed fight for autonomy, then, is merely an ineffectual gesture toward progressive values without the bona fides to support it. Alternatively, the Ruckus Society manages to produce texts that work across many discourse communities without alienating potential allies. Their focus on relationship building creates a surprisingly big tent in which many activist communities can congregate, plan, and enact strategic action. The way the document is written engages in many activist discourses but identifies a culture of activism as the main audience.

Through textual analysis of these texts, a cultural rhetorics reading strategy allows readers to backwards engineer rhetorical practices for developing and motivating activist communities. The "write by committee" approach taken by the Ruckus Society is an example of the reading strategy. By utilizing examples of texts from many different activist communities, the Ruckus Society configured already existing frameworks and language to suit their needs. This approach emphasizes differing discourses across a

community to engage readers and animate action. By doing so, they articulate a rhetorical politics and a politics of rhetoric that rhetoric and composition can learn more from.

CHAPTER 5

Implications

Throughout this dissertation, I have made the argument that cultural rhetoric can indeed be a motivating political force in the discipline, just not in the way many in the field address politics. In the discipline, a broad definition of politics has somewhat obfuscated the material nature of politics. For example, in "Divergence and Diplomacy as a Pluriversal Rhetorical Praxis of Coalitional Politics," Kenneth Walker defines politics as the "situated norms of creating worlds together" (226). This definition encapsulates the discipline's treatment of politics and political theory, that is to use politics as a means to carve out a space for multiply marginalized and underrepresented[17] groups and individuals in the broader political culture. While the need to build coalitions is certain an important part of political strategy, rhetoric's discussion of politics often leaves out actionable approaches that reflect the material world. While conversations about epistemology are vital, the broad conversations can be vague and alienating to those not currently academia.

In *Strategy: A History,* Sir Lawrence Freedman identifies elemental aspects of strategy as "coalition formation… and the instrumental use of violence" (3). Certainly, rhetoric as a discipline focuses on the coalition building. *Decolonizing Rhetoric and Composition Studies: New Latinx Keywords for Theory and Pedagogy,* for example, makes explicit calls for the formation of epistemic coalitions. Cushman et al. argue for a transrhetorical movement for cross cultural conduct in service to a decolonial mission. What the discipline has this far failed to articulate, however, is how to instrumentally

[17] I borrow this term from Dr. Cana Itchuaqiyaq

use rhetoric to achieve the political goal. To think of rhetoric as a purely discursive act to inform what is taught as rhetoric and how it is taught limits the historic potential of rhetorical possibilities to construct a truly just world. What the example of the Young Lords teaches is how the "instrumental use of violence" is an effective measure of rhetoric as well as a rhetorical construct itself.

Violence, as a destructive natural force, ties strategy to the material world. Coalitions are important to sustain change. However, change is initiated through these natural forces. The Young Lord's Garbage Offensive, for example, is an example of a controlled use of violence. While setting garbage in the middle of busy intersections did not leave any casualties, it was certainly a destructive force that resulted from the coalitions built by the Young Lords writing in *YLO* and *Palante*. If they had only published the newspaper and built their coalition, it is not discernable if any action would have been taken by the city to better their health outcomes. If they had not commandeered an entire hospital, the coalitions they built with healthcare professionals would not have resulted in expanded care in the community. The Young Lords provide a valuable lesson to the teaching of rhetoric. Rhetoric can alter the material world, but it must be an animating factor to its audience.

My focus, then, is not on writing itself as the singular action that accounts for material change in a given context. Rather, this dissertation accounts for the action that results from writing and how this happens. Simply put, how does writing relate to the material world? This relation to the material world, I argue, is in effect the way writings effectiveness can be imagined. The National Council of Teachers of English position statement on writing and the teaching of writing states in principle 3.3 that "Assessment should be transparent and contextual, and it should provide opportunities for writers to

take risks and grow" (NCTE). Through this reading strategy, a clear measure of assessment is in place: Does this piece of writing display "fidelity to the interests" of disposed classes (Cloud 74) or does the project contribute to the "endless productivity" (Cloud 74) of communicative practice, in which new meanings not grounded in the material world are perpetually constructed and deconstructed? If so, then the writing in question has a political function.

As such, cultural rhetorics is an ideal disciplinary starting point from which to strategize rhetoric because of the importance relations and the material world. Cultural rhetorics is not limited to a purely discursive subject. Understanding that "knowledge is *never* built by individuals but is, instead, accumulated through collective practices within specific communities" provides the starting point toward political action in the discipline of rhetoric and composition. Cultural rhetorics, if its practitioners do indeed focus on *practice*, is the ideal iteration of action-oriented theory to build a more just world.

Through a cultural rhetorics informed framework, it becomes clear that the larger project, a cultural rhetorics theory of writing and its function becomes clear. This theory of writing posits that writing that makes gestures toward the material and the relational is a highly effective method of writing and through understanding these rhetorical moves, it becomes clear why. This localized writing practice reinforces what is already known about writing— writing resonates with people who can relate to the content, the practice, and the context in which it was produced. However, contextualized within the decolonial struggle of the Young Lords, the realities of this theory's effectiveness become clearer. This theory does not privilege one identity over the other as a more correct way to animate people in any given context. This paradigm shift in rhetoric, away from

identity toward understanding how different rhetorical practices are related is fundamental to cultural rhetorics.

What cultural rhetorics provide in the way of understanding the practice of making meaning and knowledge with the belief that all cultures are rhetorical and all rhetorics are cultural emphasizes the relational nature of rhetoric. No one tradition or method of rhetorical practice is more correct than any other. As such, positing a singular reading strategy as the only way to understand activating texts would not be cultural rhetorics. Instead, by forming a theory of writing, I add to the chorus of voices trying to understand how writing works and functions. While cultural rhetorics is often flattened to be the study of how people of different races, ethnicities, nationalities, abilities, sexualities, gender representations, and other identity markers engage in a rhetorical practice, this view is limiting. Cultural rhetorics, as a field, certainly speaks to these varied rhetorical practices but in a more exact sense, the connections between these rhetorical practices are what is emphasized as the site of study. The interconnectedness implied by the assertion that culture is rhetorical, and rhetoric is cultural is central to this theory of writing.

This is not to say that cultural identity is not important to this theory of writing. On the contrary, identity is fundamental in speaking toward both the relational and the material on stolen land. In leftist political circles, the argument that politics of identity is used by the capitalist class to further divide BIPOC does fully contextualize the importance of identity. The principles of self-determination and radical decentralization necessitate an understanding that "real living and breathing people do identify within racial and cultural categories and that this identification has consequences in terms of

dealing with one another" (Salter). This attunement toward relations necessitates a move toward a rhetoric of relatives and away from the rhetoric of allyship.

As evidenced by the writings of the Woodbine Collective, centering the individual as a privileged site of political engagement can limit the power of relational possibility. The organization's emphasis on learning individual skills to "return to the Earth" without attunement to relationships with the land and the people who have been dispossessed from the land amounts to what political theorist Jodi Dean describes as "mini lifestyle manuals" that provide good allies "techniques for navigating the neoliberal environment of privilege and oppression" (Dean 294). As with metaphorical decolorizations, this imprecise rhetoric complicates writings' utility in activist contexts. A move toward a rhetoric of relations, specifically in activist contexts, could do more than the current neoliberal rhetoric that is "looking for evidence of alternative social logics and alternative ways of being in the world from the Western liberal frame" (Kauanui 26) when there are examples of Indigenous rhetorics that are "already engaged in resistance to capitalism, colonialism and the state, and who are reimagining and reinvigorating community-based resurgence connected to land" (Kauanui 24). Looking to the past for examples of rhetoric for decolonial ends provides a rich example of expanding our ability to build capacity toward social justice.

In the same archives I found much of the Young Lords' newspapers, I stumbled upon the resolutions and speeches from the First Congress of the Young Lords. Held from Friday, June 30, to Monday, July 3, 1972, all members of the Young Lords met to forward their growing proletariat revolution. There they hoped that while in congress

with groups with whom they shared Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung Thought[18], the dream of a protracted peoples' revolution would finally come to fruition. By raising the subjective conditions for revolution through class consciousness, the Young Lords understood the power of newspapers, and by extension rhetoric and writing, to "raise anti-imperialist consciousness and consciousness about the national liberation struggle of Puerto Rico," which they claimed, "progressive elements understood to be a key element in organizing the masses" (Resolutions and Speeches). Throughout the speeches from this congress, speakers consistently use "comrades" as a form of address. Rhetorically, the usage of "comrades" speaks to the importance of relationality, materiality, and contextuality.

Jodi Dean defines comrades as a "egalitarian, generic, and utopian" (384), and a term that "indexes a political relation, a set of expectations, for action toward a common goal" (Dean 63). Comradeship "binds action" and "collectivizes and directs action in light of a shared vision for the future" (Dean 66) by reminding people that "something is expected of them" (Dean 189). Once before, I rolled my eyes when I overheard this form of address. In my mind, I could not understand how continental political thought could possibly be applied to Indigenous sovereignty and the politics of contemporary decolonial struggle. It would not take long for me to understand that forms of address like compadre, comadre, or the more ubiquitous compa[19] come from the Latin word camera, a room, chamber, or vault, or any structure that produces a space and is held open through its architecture (Dean 63). Comrade, or compa, have the same rhetorical

[18] The higher stage of Marxism-Leninism applied to the specific conditions of the Chinese Revolution
[19] These terms roughly translate to companion and is a term of endearment. *Compa* is Chicano slang used in the neighborhoods I grew up in. While *compadre* and *comadre* are more formal, *compa* is reserved exclusively for informal relationships that do not reflect the often-strict language hierarchies of Spanish. Comrade, indeed.

function in Marxist theory and in Chicano neighborhoods. Both traditions emphasize and necessitate the need for close relations whose political work ultimately function as "cultural production, the building of new communities, spaces, and ways of seeing" (Dean 154). Eventually, I concluded that indeed, the circumstances that led to the writing of The Communist Manifesto and The Red Revolution were not the conditions that precipitated the need for the Garbage Offensive. However, as The Young Lords engaged in a pre-figurative politics to build a "new society within the shell of the old." (Kauanui 29) In this new society, their communist paradigm was informed heavily by the work, by the relations, of revolutions past.

As with the Young Lords, contemporary left has much to learn from the historical rhetoric of groups that have come before. While prior analysis of online writing tends to generalize the internet as a third space for allyship[20] in this contemporary moment, online organizing has been somewhat ineffectual based on the lack of material change movements like Black Lives Matter, Occupy Wall Street, and others have thus far failed to achieve. This is not to be of the movements. The difficulties of each contemporary movements to sustain change has been well documented. However, current rhetoric of allyship, both in the discipline and on the internet, is no longer the disruptive force it once was because electoral politics are inaccessible to most people. Alienated from being political beings, the internet provides a space for frictionless communication— a rhetoric without material consequences that is not usually reiterable "IRL." The internet is used to alienate in multiple ways, but most relevantly it is used to separate people from each other, dehumanize users, and monetize human behavior, all inherent

qualities of capitalism – the singular, unilateral, and intersectional wicked problem. If this third space is going to be an effective tool for not only inspiring revolution but a tool for actively instigating and sustaining change, a rhetoric gleaned from the writing practices of the Young Lords, provides a blueprint to activate communities.

This is not intended to be a wistful old to the "Glory Days" or organizations past. The potential of community hubs like the Woobdine Collective and The Ruckus Society are exemplary instances of organizations that actively try to counter the harmful history of colonialism in the United States of America. Furthermore, organizations like the Indigenous Anarchist Network provide a platform to unite the unique anarchist struggle of Indigenous people in North America, who they argue have been practicing Anarchy long before the Europeans (29). What separates a collective like Woodbine and other groups without a focus on Indigenous sovereignty from Young Lords, The Ruckus Society, and the Indigenous Anarchist Network is their usage of a rhetoric of relations that centers a pre-figurative approach to their politics and community building. A cultural rhetorics reading framework is instrumental in interpreting these texts rhetorically so that these rhetorical moves toward relationality, materiality, and contextuality could be better understood and applied toward contemporary activist contexts.

None of the organizations I refer to in this dissertation refer to themselves as political groups. However, it is clear that the Young Lords were a political organization whose writings reinforce their expertise in community organizing and action. Jeff Grabill argues in *Writing Community Change: Designing Technologies for Citizen Action*:

> "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" (59)

Organizations like the Young Lords, Woodbine Collective, and the Ruckus Society effectively are experts in their decolonial mission. Though the creation and use of a specific writing practice that can be understood as cultural rhetorics in posterity, the Young Lords exemplify what a synthetic approach to writing could do in motivating communities. Utilizing a variety of mediums and rhetorical approaches in their publications worked to create an active set of relations among the community they operated in. Though it would be fair to critique their writing practice as disorganized, idealistic, and at times unoriginal, the measurable change they instigated by writing to their community is distinct to their movement and successes it produced.

This reading strategy, acknowledging relations, contextualizing worldviews, and speaking to materiality, is particularly useful in understanding leftist and revolutionary organizing, providing a blueprint for contemporary groups to affect a material change in their respective communities. The story of the one-time criminal street gang becoming a radical communist organization has been detailed in countless oral histories. The history of YL publications, however, is inseparable from the history of the group itself. With a successful newspaper, the publication itself was successful. When the newspapers were not successful, the organization fell apart. In posterity, they provide useful examples for radical groups using text as the primary catalyst for change.

In analyzing websites and texts of various leftist groups, the internet functions in two ways: 1) A means of organizing in which groups can collect information from

individuals while planning action— usually a demonstration and 2) A repository for sometimes vast corpora of information, resources for these groups. Ideally, both functions make online sites of knowledge building with the explicit intent of animating people to some material action while attempting to subvert hegemony to shift the paradigm to make people believe that they can act vis-a-vis control their lives. However, some groups work to move people offline and toward politically engaged direct action.

Summary

In this dissertation, I have argued how decolonial futures are possible in the discipline of rhetoric and writing studies by introducing a cultural rhetorics reading strategy based on cultural rhetorics scholarship. I began with a literature review in which I discuss how decolonial, cultural rhetorics, and writing theory all tacitly examine the material possibilities and consequences of writing and show how a synthesis of these fields of study and their methodologies can better inform rhetoric and writing studies toward social justice ends, particularly for those marginalized communities in urban environments where the mass organization of communities is the most necessary.

Chapter three showed how a cultural rhetorics reading strategy could be used to identify how the Young Lords leveraged specific rhetorical tools to motivate, animate, civil disobedience to force the city government to act. To further my point that their writing practice made a difference in North Harlem, I turned to quantitative data analysis to show empirically the effect of the Young Lords writing practice. These differences turned out to be elemental in understanding how the group and its mission evolved over its short existence.

Chapter four takes the cultural rhetorics reading strategy and applies to two contemporary leftist groups, the Woodbine Collective and The Ruckus Society. I show how each of their texts speak to the ethos of each group and by using the reading strategy to measure their ability to connect of broader audiences of activists. I describe how a lack of attunement to toward Indigenous relationality in the Woodbine Collective made their brand of activism less attuned to sovereignty than The Ruckus Society, whose concrete relation to Indigenous communities as well as apt contextualization of Indigenous struggle in contemporary leftist projects make their usage of rhetoric particularly useful. Again, a cultural rhetorics reading strategy was essential to my analysis of these organizations and their efficacy.

After close analysis, I believe some forms of leftist organization are not as effectual as previous iterations because they do not engage in critically culturally relevant writing practice. Of course, it would be unreasonable to negatively evaluate these texts and by extension, their movements on criteria theorized by a Ph.D. candidate in Michigan. Similarly, it would be incorrect to say that these texts aren't culturally connected. Cultural connections to writing and knowledge building, what I argue is the basis of cultural rhetorics. What the Young Lords did so well was animate their community through their writing that appealed to various audiences while using varied rhetorical techniques. From the academic prose of the later years to the wire-like publishing of other journals in their newspaper at the beginning of the 70s, this group knew that its message had to evolve to speak to different people. This attempt at a paradigm shift, ultimately, was successful in the case of the Young Lords. I argue that utilizing the reading strategy in close readings of leftist websites produced to encourage

action for health autonomy shows how culturally specific writing practices should animate civil action and disobedience.

Future research projects should look to other such writing projects that involved large scale organization and action. There are dozens of examples of self-published newspapers by organizations seeking to enact political change through rhetorical methods. Furthermore, measuring their effectiveness through various data metrics to compose data visualizations that empirically validate their success would be useful in furthering a political rhetoric. While story as a method is valid form of data, providing as much evidence as is possible would only strengthen the argument for rhetoric's effectiveness. In this dissertation, for example, I showed how the Young Lords' writing practice changed their community by visualizing the opening of hospitals and medical clinics in the late 1970s using geospatial visualizations from publicly available data. Doing so gave me grounds to emphasize the utility of writing practice in that specific context. This method can be iterated in similar contexts to show writings effect on the material world.

I believe in our collective ability to change the paradigm. Historical organizing, like labor-influenced organizing of the Young Lords, did, is effective. People, en masse, motivated by a cause, can still move mountains and change sentiment. A new paradigm can be written into existence, but I think it is contingent in writing for the people we want to animate, not an amalgam of potential likes and retweets. This theory for writing, using cultural rhetorics as a guide, clearly outlines aspects of what makes this kind of writing for organizing work.

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