

Towards a Disruptive Theory of the Affectual  
Queer Hemispheric Theories of Affect and Corporeality in the Americas

by

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## ABSTRACT

At the heart of this dissertation is a push for critical genealogy that intervenes into two major theoretical bodies of work in rhetoric and composition -- affect studies and queer latina rhetorics. Chapter one intervenes into emerging discourses on publics and affect studies from seamlessly recovering “the body” as an always-already Western body of rhetoric in the advent of this renewed interest in emotion, embodiment, and structures of affect as rhetorical concepts showing the long history of theorizing by queer mestizas. Chapter two focuses on one register of affect: anger, which articulated from the works of writers such as Maria Lugones and Gloria Anzaldúa offers a complex theory of agency for the subaltern subject. Chapter three links emotions like anger and melancholia to the corporeal rhetorics of skin and face, metaphors that are abundant in the queer mestiza and chicana writers under discussion, revealing the dramatic inner-workings of a the queer mestiza subject and the inter-subjective dynamics between the racialized and gendered performance of that body. By re-rooting affect in the queer colonized, yet resistant body, the link between the writing subject and colonial violence is made clear. Chapter four looks at the autoethnographic process of creating an affective archive in the form of queer racial melancholia, while Chapter five concludes by taking writing programs to task for their view of the writing archive, offering a radical new historiography by means of a queer chicana methodology.

## DEDICATION

For my ancestors.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	Page
1 INTRODUCTION: AFFECT STUDIES AND HEMISPHERIC RHETORICS IN RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION STUDIES .....	1
2 COATLICUE AS QUEER RACIALIZED ANGER: AGAINST AN INTELLIGIBLE AGENCY .....	22
3 THEORIES OF SKIN AND FACE: DISCOURSES OF CORPOREALITY AND VISIBILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF QUEER MESTIZAJE .....	58
4 HEMISPHERIC MOURNINGS: OBJECTS OF RESONANCE AND QUEER DIASPORA IN THE AMERICAS .....	69
5 CONCLUSION: PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF A QUEER HEMISPHERIC METHODOLOGY ON WRITING PROGRAMS .....	78
WORKS CITED .....	104





## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION: AFFECT STUDIES AND HEMISPHERIC RHETORICS IN RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION STUDIES

This dissertation will argue that Queer latin@ theorists and activists offer a complex and intersectional account of affect as it relates to persuasion.

A contemporary and complex version of standpoint feminism, these theories add a much-needed critical layer to the current direction of affect studies emerging in the field of rhetoric and composition.

By affect studies, I refer to the recent turn in modes of persuasion with a renewed interest in embodiment and emotion as it relates to the material consequences of what circum-Atlantic theorist, Joseph Roach, would call, the “reciprocal reflections” that bodies make on one another (26). Additionally, the works of rhetorical theorist Sharon Crowley and composition scholar Laura R. Micciche have capitalized on this turn, revealing the links between the visceral registers of public and private life in relation to persuasion and writing. And while this perceived turn in theory owes a great debt to feminist theories who have long theorized emotion as a site of knowledge, queer latin@ writers and activists continue to be given little to no credit for their contributions. For these reasons I consider my project both a recuperation and an excavation.

My analysis will concentrate on demonstrating that queer latin@ theorists and artists possess what emerging writing studies scholar Damián Baca asserts is the “intellectual possibility exceeding that which is made possible by European documentation practices” (137).

My work will both examine and map out a theory of affect that has developed out of a hemispheric need and eclectic “capacity to respond to multiple sites of oppression” linked first to the uniquely queer and colonial legacy of mestizaje (Arrizón 26). The rhetorical practices and theories advanced by the work of emerging queer latin@ writers and artists in the last twenty to thirty years, inflect a much needed valency and nuanced reading into well-traveled rhetorical discussions about theories of invention, agency, and knowledge-making that too often resort to a recuperative effort in an other hemisphere.

The works that I analyze in my project are primarily those of queer latin@s. Additionally, my project includes work by latin@s who relocated to the U.S. Southwest as activist scholars and artists and who have re-articulated their identity and scholarship as a result of transculturation.

This convergence of theories about bodies forged at the interstices of an ever shifting and fluctuating colonial border situation demonstrates the ways in which queer latin@ practices continually labor to challenge a “Western logocentric preoccupation” in rhetoric and composition that “subsumes subjectivity and cultural agency into normative discursive practices” (Taylor 6). Instead, these contemporary queer rhetorics substantially challenge and refashion the ways in which we continue to theorize, model, and speak about agency by adding a gendered and racialized dimension to their critiques. Additionally, these works demonstrate how one intricately attempts to make sense (or refuse to make sense) within a hegemonic way of knowing. Queer latin@s uniquely theorize consciousness and all of its permutations from a “non-dominant difference” that defies an over-simplification of simply understanding anew the mind-body connection

that has caused much anxiety for Western rhetorical theorists, as if the body poses a new problem to thought.

### **Performing Hemispheric Rhetorics- Towards a Queer Americas**

Performance Studies scholar, Diana Taylor would most likely call a “hemispheric analysis” the process of “re-mapping” invoked by the de-centering of the United States as epistemic and historical nexus. A hemispheric analysis thus examines the relationships between cultural mediation (what I later characterize in Chapter Three as the transmission of affect) activated by memory and involved in the processes of embodiment. In this way, a hemispheric performance works to transmit subjectivity, even when queer latin@ the forces of cultural hegemony challenge subjects. Taylor furthers this point by noting that, “many contemporary performances carry on these representational traditions [that of the Americas] as they continue to form a living chain of memory and contestation” (50).

While the field of rhetoric and composition is quick to claim memory as one of its main canons, it has a long way to go before it can be credited with having not only included the “representational (and non-representational) practices” of the Americas in its historiographies, but having seriously engaged with the practices of these spaces as serious methods.

Because these writers and artists produced work that was not (an)historic, this dissertation will first situate queer latin@ works within the contested and cultural legacy of mestizaje that is defined loosely as cultural mixing between the European and Indigenous communities due to colonial contact in the Americas. While “mestizaje” is a contested and problematic term for some, the definitions of “mestizaje” that guide my critical readings of these writings and performances rely most heavily on that put forth by

Alicia Arrizón and Rafael Perez-Torres and do so in a chican@ context rather than that of Mexican Nationalism. Arrizón defines queer mestizaje as the “intercultural subject in the performance of endless alterity” (7). In other words, the performances that queer the Americas do so in a constant state of invention, which simultaneously seeks to “incorporate structural dimensions of the borderlands” as an artistic methodology (7). “Alterity” here is the conscious effort to resist, not merely the fantasy of an over-valorized transgressive possibility. While Arrizón uses an Anzaldúan understanding of “border thinking” and its “queer/gendered sensibility” (27) articulated through a colonial difference to make her claims, Perez-Torres further asserts what mestizaje is not: “an essential lack” nor an “essential estrangement” (81). The generative tension produced in the term mestizaje is greatly responsible for its richness as the historical and material context for understanding the hemispheric practices and affective vocabulary I will identify in my study.

In addition to staging my dissertation as a project of this hemisphere, I will trace the transitions of hemispheric imagery from the pre-Columbian figure of Coatlicue as a site of feminist invention to performance artists’ more avant-garde deployments of the body as a way to theorize multiple-oppressions and rework dynamic hemispheric cultural memories.

### **Queer Latin@ Theories of Affect**

“Cultural Memory is,” as hemispheric studies professor, Diana Taylor asserts, “among other things, a practice, an act of imagination, an interconnection . . . Memory is embodied and *sensual*” (82). Mexica thought most closely associated the heart (not the

brain) with memory, invoking the idea that the body both retained and transmitted knowledge suggesting that the effects of memory were often deeply *sensed* and *felt*.

The historical and hemispheric situation discussed in the previous paragraphs illuminates how a queer latin@ subject position may very well necessitate a theory of affect. Better yet, these theories take on the project of better naming affect, but do so in a way that produces “meaning and identity in a new register” (Perez-Torres 47). In other words, the affective vocabulary that I map out in this project is a bilanguaging effort—what Latino Subaltern Studies scholar Walter D. Mignolo would characterize as a “linguaging embedded in the body” or the “living language” that occurs between colonial lives (253).

Beginning first with the affective vocabulary, or rather the way we “name and interpret” emotions and affects on the body— *coatlicue*, *la facultad*, *intimate terrorism*, *nepantla*, and *conocimiento* to name a few, I will demonstrate how these bilanguaging terms may more closely approximate the often unrecognized *inertia* met through bodies within the legacies of the Americas. A close reading of self-identifying lesbian/latina and Argentine scholar, Maria Lugones’ and Chicana Studies professor, Chela Sandoval’s works, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes* and *Methodology of the Oppressed* respectively, will focus on representing the “emotional perspectives” offered in multiple sites of contradiction (Contreras 124-125). Both women engage critically with Gloria Anzaldúa’s affective concepts offering new uses and perspectives on them. In doing so, another set of terms is made available to us, another lens in which to understand the circuitry of affect as it relates to multiple oppressions. Chapter Three’s vocabulary will essentially frame the way I continue to theorize and read bodies in the last two chapters.

More assertively, I posit that queer latin@s utilize a unique set of complex rhetorics for a racist, homophobic, and classist world's "learned affects" (Micciche 107). In *Latina Performances*, Alicia Arrizón supports this point with her sustained and experienced observation about queer intellectuals:

For intellectuals such as Moraga, Gloria Anzaldúa, and myself, the impact of homophobia and sexism within the Chicano community and in other Latino contexts, and the oppressive definition of gender roles in these environments, are subjects that require a serious critique. Our intellectual role as activists, cultural workers, or academics represent a challenge linked to a concern for a body which constitutes itself in critical relation to a set of hegemonic social and cultural orders. In fact, our practices as queer intellectuals not only attempt to subvert these oppressive orders, but have become an indication of the contradictions they constitute . . . the work of queer academics, artists, and activists strives to reach out for alliances across identities and spaces to deal with new cultural forms and new political subjects. (9)

For Arrizón, queer latin@ artists offer a critical body—that is, a set of embodied practices and expressive works which bare on the body or make visible the felt and material effects of oppression and resistance *in* and *on* itself and among others.

To illustrate this, I will examine not only the words put forth to theorize queer latin@ lives, but I will also offer a critical look at how anger has been theorized by writers such as Maria Lugones and Gloria Anzaldúa as a means of articulating a complex theory of agency in Chapter 2. Building upon these ideas, Chapter 3 attempts to go deeper into the embodied rhetorics and metaphors of skin and face to reveal the dramatic inner-workings of a the queer mestiz@ subject and the inter-subjective dynamics between the racialized and gendered performance of that body with audience, hemispheric memory and their tentative, yet sticky<sup>1</sup> connections to other bodies. In this instance, anger

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<sup>1</sup> A term used by Sara Ahmed denoting the binding effect of emotions in circulation among and between objects and subjects.

offers a decolonial performance of identity with all its entanglements in process and attempts to mark another kind of visibility (other than that of the written) in its spatial and affective dimensions.

Chapter 3 on skin and face, as well as Chapter 4 on mourning and queer racial melancholia deal with the tension of being both queer and latin@ among other categorical terms within colonial modernity. Finally, in Chapter 5, the evocation of the term “queer” is meant to position these hemispheric bodies of rhetoric (yes, double-meaning intended) in a semi-antagonistic and productive tension within the field of rhetoric and composition<sup>2</sup> because a queer latin@ or mestiz@ methodology privileges ephemera (gesture, D.I.ARRIZÓN videos, flyers, etc.) as a legitimate record of activity over that of writing alone, challenging the racist and violent history of writing in higher education, specifically university and college writing program historiographies.

### **A Queer Hemispheric Methodology and Its Implication for Rhetoric and Composition**

I will read my sites of analysis as performances and also as theorized phenomenon of the body; expressed in both writing and in bodily practice. These performances make available another current of thought as it relates to the material consequences of a “lived difference” in the Americas. In many ways, I see my project imagining the unwritten pages of Laura Micciche’s, *Doing Emotion*, where Moraga and Anzaldúa appear as parenthetical queer chican@s who theorize and “mine emotion discourses” (16) but nothing more. At the same time, the complex legacy of the Americas calls for a layered expression of critiques in a semi-artistic/theoretical genre that

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<sup>2</sup> I realize this may be less the case for programs defined more broadly as Media Studies or Communications.

challenges the rigid boundary of academic writing. In this way, I hope my work is more a form of academic lyricism that fits the likes of Bernadette Marie Calafell's *Pro(re-)claiming Loss: A Performance Pilgrimage in Search of Malintzin Tene'pal* or Karma Chavez's, *Breaking Trances and Engaging the Erotic: The Search for a Queer Spirituality*. Both works re-member and re-inhabit a hemispheric and bodily memory from a deeply personal and sensory place in order to theorize community. Both employ "performative writing" (auto-ethnographic at times) as a means to do so, along with close critical readings of texts. While I do not propose this is a biographical dissertation, as a scholar I do want to position myself in the same way Jacqueline Martinez does: as a queer chican@ who "understand(s) the inseparability of the intellectual and activist from the concrete conditions in which she practices her intellectualism and activism, the inseparability of the (Chicana lesbian) theorist herself from that which she theorizes" (62). My work, as Martinez advocates, will be self-critical, reflexive of location and its effects without being too self-indulgent.

My project will necessarily do some archival work for Chapter 5. I go into this positing what I have called previously, a queer archival sensibility. A queer archival sensibility does what Judith Halberstam calls, "extending [the archive] beyond the image of place to collect material or hold documents" (169) but rather positions oneself, the researcher/archivist, as an interpreter of these "floating signifiers"—transient remains that the archivist must work diligently to re-interpret and assemble. Laura E. Perez, author of *Chicana Art: The Politics of Spiritual and Aesthetic Altarities*, likens this methodology to that of a "tlacuilo (glyph maker) and a tlamatini (decoder of glyphs)" (13). Framing my understanding of archive is Taylor's notion of the repertoire in tandem with the archive.



For Taylor, the repertoire “enacts embodied memory” or at the very least urges archivists to understand and read more closely the relationship of embodied practices with that of the archive (20).

At the most philosophical, my work aspires to engage in a critical dialogue with privileged Western and Eurocentric rhetorics about embodiment, categories of emotion, and the metaphors or language used to describe affect without necessarily having to “piggy-back” (to use Mignolo’s words) off of their theories (e.g. Butler, Bourdieu, Derrida, Foucault) to support my points. Feminist philosopher, Maria Lugones provides an excellent example of this when she theorizes large philosophical and categorical terms within the context of Western Philosophy and Feminist studies (Fraser, Frye Hoagland, and Spelman) without re-inscribing their authority into her text.

Essentially, this project will bring current rhetorical studies that are labeled as part of the “affective turn” that remains intent on reclaiming and recuperating Ancient Greek notions, to re-explain the *techne vs. episteme* debate, or for its foundational understandings of emotion’s sociality<sup>3</sup>. Hemispheric, non-dominant bodies have long understood that knowledge is produced within and by the body, and that our re-iterative cultural practices transmit ways of knowing for generations to come. The anxiety of recovering a “normative separation of language from the body” has predominately been a Western, Eurocentric one (Trigo 91). This project attempts to avoid emerging discourses on publics and affect studies from seamlessly recovering “the body” as an always-already Western body of rhetoric in the advent of this renewed interest in emotion, embodiment, and structures of affect as rhetorical concepts.

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<sup>3</sup> Sara Ahmed uses this term.

My project will necessarily do some archival work for Chapter 4. I go into this positing what I have called previously, a queer archival sensibility. A queer archival sensibility does what Judith Halberstam calls, “extending [the archive] beyond the image of place to collect material or hold documents” (169) but rather positions oneself, the researcher/archivist as an interpreter of these “floating signifiers”—transient remains that the archivist must work diligently to re-interpret and assemble. Laura E. Perez, author of *Chicana Art: The Politics of Spiritual and Aesthetic Altarities*, likens this methodology to that of a “tlacuilo (glyph maker) and a tlamatini (decoder of glyphs)” (13). Framing my understanding of archive is Taylor’s notion of the repertoire in tandem with the archive. For Taylor, the repertoire “enacts embodied memory” or at the very least urges archivists to understand and read more closely the relationship of embodied practices with that of the archive (20).

At this juncture, I am more interested in calling into question how corporeal rhetorics of skin and face in the context of queer mestiz@s extends the continuum of hemispheric performances of the Americas alongside of identity performances that continue to be more traditionally evoked as a Hemispheric memory, such as the Pre-Columbian, Coatlicue. I do this in order to show a range of hemispheric expression for all of its potentialities and failures. Unlike before, Chapter 2 will emphasize the affective role “brooding” plays as a rhetorical and affective form within hemispheric performances. I am also interested in drawing connections between this chapter and rhetoric and composition pedagogy that emphasizes the rhetorical nature and importance of emotion or affect to persuasion and forming subjectivity.

With this in mind, the theoretical underpinnings that guide my close readings of these performances and texts at large are latin@ subaltern studies. Latin@ subaltern scholars, like that of Walter D. Mignolo, challenge the “epistemic superiority” of Western-Eurocentric knowledge(s). Performance Studies asserts to do the same in the realm of combating what has been called the “discursive bias” in the field of rhetoric and composition studies. Performance Studies as a field and as a theoretical frame, invites one to privilege embodiment no less than the written word. Additionally, feminist and queer latin@/chican@ and fronteriz@ writers and artists have provided me with both a racial and gendered lens that allows me to see the effects that are generated as a result of their unique histories. Last, my work emerges here as contextualized dialogue amidst feminist and queer critiques of emotion or rather affects’ relation to publics, conceived broadly as the “affective turn.”

### **Performing Hemispheric Rhetorics- At the Borders of Embodiment**

As a whole, Chican@ genealogies of emotion, embodiment, and affect seek to interrogate the field of rhetoric and composition’s complicity in what performance studies professor Diana Taylor observes as the “legitimizing [of] writing over other epistemic and mnemonic systems.” (18). In *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, Taylor engages us first in a sustained discussion about the importance of performance and performance studies in challenging disciplinary boundaries and traditional ways of thinking about methodology and canon (26-27). Additionally, Taylor critiques the “discursive bias” inherent in writing studies. For Taylor, the privileging of the discursive made sexy a la Judith Butler and Jacques Derrida is primarily a “Western logocentric” preoccupation that “subsumes subjectivity and

cultural agency into normative discursive practices” (6). Taylor instead offers another language to explain a particular nuanced understanding about performance as a transmission. She notes:

Although it may be too late to reclaim performative for the nondiscursive realm of performance, I suggest that we borrow a word from the contemporary Spanish usage of performance—*performático* or *performatic* in English—to denote the adjectival form of the non-discursive realm of performance. Why is this important? Because it is vital to signal the performatic, digital, and visual fields as separate from, though always embroiled with, the discursive one so privileged by Western logocentricism. The fact that we don’t have a word to signal that performatic space is a product of that same logocentricism rather than a confirmation that there’s no there there. (6)

*Performático*, connotes Taylor, is an urgent understanding that “embodied performance makes visible an entire spectrum of attitudes and values” but more than that, at the very least we must begin to *attune* our discursive languages to better describe the bodily and fleshly languages we seem to have little language for (49).

This of course is not to say that discussions have not emerged in the field of rhetoric and composition about the performance of identity—they have—and the emerging influence of performance studies and interdisciplinarity have helped do this—however, these discussions have mostly pivoted on the performance of a particular *vernacular* usually seen by a linguistic or literacy studies framework that still assures writing as a performance, but rarely the other way around-- seeing embodied performance in its own right as a legitimate way of transmitting knowledge and understanding. By and large these ways of knowing have remained “Other” epistemologies outside of mainstream rhetorical studies. One only has to look at how

those “in-the-field” are being trained. As recent as 2007, a Graduate Level Rhetorical Studies course blog page read:

When Aristotle defined deductive reasoning as “the body of persuasion” in the Rhetoric he largely purged the discipline of its preexisting concern with the connection between physical embodiment and forces of persuasion. During the past decade these repressed elements — and their related structures of affect, performativity, materiality, and sensation — have returned with a vengeance to rhetorical studies. In this seminar we will examine both the importance of embodiment to the origins of rhetoric as well as its more current return(s): how the body has emerged as a problem for critical thought in the past and the questions it provokes for rhetoric, politics, and ethics in the present.

Often the commonplaces circulating and framing this graduate level course informing rhetorical theorists to-be are the following: (1) that a singular rhetoric exists in place of rhetorics, (2) that rhetorical studies and persuasion at large began and returns to that put forth by Greek culture, and (3) that the body poses a new problem to thought. I would challenge these commonplaces by saying that the body as a problem for critical thought is mostly a problem/anxiety for those epistemologies which emerged from a so-called Western rhetorical tradition, and that we should be more vigilant in offering “simultaneous, hemispheric traditions of rhetoric” especially Chican@ theories of embodiment, so that we avoid seamlessly recovering “the body” as an always-already Western body of rhetoric in the advent of this return (Baca 151). In other words, we might look more towards the past and current “shifts and migrations” through the methods of spacialization and periodizing writing studies that allows for as Damián Baca asserts, “an intellectual possibility exceeding that which is made possible by European documentation practices” rather than read subaltern knowledge seamlessly as a repressed evolution (137). This change in how and what we read as rhetoric begins with a push

towards valuing the complex works of Chican@ theorists who are engaging in a embodied theory-making in the process of trying to understand the pressing moments of recognition on their bodies when faced with multiple oppressions.

Baca's colonial critique of the European writing systems imposed on Mesoamerican cultures in *Mestiz@ Scripts, Digital Migrations, and the Territories of Writing* gives presence to a tradition of this hemisphere, the Americas, which has largely gone unnoticed by those assuming the center of rhetoric and composition. He urges implicitly for a more sustained study of writing as it happens with and on the body and most interesting to my project here, the energies moving through its parts:

Writing systems do not “evolve” so much as they shift and migrate across territories, technologies, and digital cultures. By digital here, most writing specialists may imagine N. Katherine Hayle's sense of the word as systems of complexity built upon simple binary codes, choices at the level between ones and zeros. While we all know that our computers are built on binary logics, scholars of written communication have yet to ground a study of writing on human digits, the appendages that produce kinetic energy [my emphasis], a gestural force that in turn produces permanent or temporary marks of meaning. (7)

Baca's provocation not only resists over-simplifying past indigenous or vernacular systems of knowledge by drawing overly simplified comparisons to current meaning making systems or seeing them as discursive poverties, but also asks us to take up more earnestly the matter of communication and transmitting meaning outside of what we have deemed “representational.” Baca's claim, like Taylor's, pushes us to implicitly validate the unstructured ether and the ways we habituate (structure) and produce (reiterate) bodily practices between our bodies. Doing so pushes the studies of communication outside the comfortable realm of what typically constitutes the representational regime<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Diana Taylor's word for modes of representation that seem most intelligible according to a Western logocentric tradition.

within rhetoric and composition. This emphasis on grounding a study of human digits and the often unrecognized inertia met through bodies of colonial, homophobic, and classist regimes invites and welcomes such inquiries as affect (the ether without structure) and looks to how the effects of certain (il)logics are transmitted and get grafted upon bodies and continues to stick<sup>5</sup> to certain communities of bodies.

Like sociologist Lionel Cantú and Women's Studies scholar, Alicia Arrizón, this inquiry recognizes the need for a "more intersectional queer analysis" offered in Queer Latin@ and Chican@ Feminists' works than performativity theorists such as Judith Butler (Cantu 35; Arrizón 27). Arrizón notes how Queer Chican@ performance artists, like that of Elvira and Hortensia Colorado of the Coatlicue Theater Company, use Gloria Anzaldúa's liminal *fronteriz@* and *chicana* subject positions as a methodology and "conscious effort to incorporate structural dimensions of "the borderlands" into its framework in order to avoid an over-determined rendering of subject formation by way of the discursive (Arrizón 36). In a similar critique, Arrizón couples Walter Mignolo and Anzaldúa's "border thinking" together as "counters to poststructuralist theory" but she privileges Anzaldúa because of her attention to a "queer/gendered sensibility" articulated through colonial difference (Arrizón 27). Attention, or rather, ironically, that to which I am attending—the body here in the form of writing---traces what Teresa Brennan would call the "rhythmic intersections that are communicative" transmitted and diffused through the *chican@* bodies pressing recognitions and explications of these rhythms (Brennan 145). A contemporary version of standpoint feminism, the theories forged by queer

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<sup>5</sup> Sara Ahmed's term denotes the adhesive effect that histories of contact can have on the intersubjective level, especially as one considers how figuration/substitution that happen with figures of women and how a "dismembered mother and goddess" begins to stand in for the identity of *mestizaje*.

chican@s, offers a much-needed critical layer to the current direction of the affective conversation. Their subjective standpoint is not the imposition to better knowing. In fact, like Brennan, these queer versions of coallicue take the project of better naming affect.

### **Recent Conversations in Rhetoric and Composition about Emotion and Affect**

As recently as 2007, Laura R. Micciche notes (though only briefly) the long-standing contributions Queer Chican@s theorists have made into the discourses surrounding *affect*. Micciche notes that, “Only feminist scholarship has consistently capitalized on emotion as a resource for coalition building as well as for theorizing experience” (16). In this regard, she cites Moraga and Anzaldúa’s work, *This Bridge Called My Back*, as one that “mine(s) emotion and emotion discourses in order to arrive at a better understanding of women’s realities” that worked hard to “de-privatize emotion” (16). While Brennan’s book is primarily concerned with critiquing the conflation of language used to distinguish emotion and feelings from affect, my explication of Lugones’ and Sandoval’s work focuses more on representing the plentitude of knowing that have come out of a Queer Chican@s theorizing of emotion and the bodily effects of being surfaced by borders, an interstitial life that occurs with consequence at the limits and contingencies of global and gendered oppressions.

Sharon Crowley’s widely acclaimed work, *Towards a Civic Discourse*, is a more recent example of critique that focuses on the importance of emotion to rhetorical study and civic life. In her chapter “Belief and Passionate Commitment,” Crowley asserts, “representational discourse itself, including the public expression and defense of fundamental beliefs, affects and is affected by the visceral register of intersubjectivity” (88). While Crowley notes that “something” happens in the realm of the non-



representational, she invokes Western European psychoanalytic discourse in the form of Lacan and Žižek to leverage her arguments towards a certain brand of agonism in both a recuperative effort on behalf of Ancient Greek Rhetorical Traditions put into conversation with post-structural theories. I am more interested in forwarding a different kind of affect, and a different kind of agonism<sup>6</sup>, or dissonance that is alluded to late in Crowley's text. My theories are most concerned with the visceral registers of persuasion that continue to be invented from a queer subaltern positionality. It's no surprise then that Crowley towards the end of her argument contends the following about a certain counter-hegemonic resistance that is more likely to occur within the spaces of subalterns, even amidst subjects who accept "strictures" that subject them:

... I will hazard that new or countering beliefs are more likely to be heard and considered by subalterns, those who are subjected to rather than subjects of a hegemonic discourse. That is to say, counterhegemonic beliefs may be taken up more readily among those who are not included in a dominant subjectivity, who are reckoned by and within it as different. (192)

Foregrounding "available means" as her operative definition for rhetoric, Crowley also notes that, "Depending on the relative force available for maintenance of a hegemony—its extent of dispersal, the success of practices and institutions that enforce it... events and practices can coalesce in such a way that disconnects [in the way one identifies or values, my add) can create openings in the apparently seamless articulation of hegemony" (193). Crowley's observation recognizes the potential for what Audre Lorde and María Lugones would more easily recognize as a "non-dominant difference" that

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<sup>6</sup> Crowley invokes Chantal Mouffe's use of this term in close relation to the Ancient Greek rhetorical practice of *dissoi logoi*. Baca cites a more hemispheric name for such a practice that occurred among Aztec *tlataminime* (wise interpreters of *amoxtli*) in the form of *diafrismo* in "blending of two concrete terms to convey an abstraction." Liminality is also theorized in a similar way for Chicana@ feminist theorists in the realm of the interstice.

occurs as a particular alterity; a reiterable difference produced within a dominant or hegemonic ideology that very well may invent other relations among one another or even new spaces from which to rearticulate our arguments and “authorize different ways of connecting beliefs” (Lugones 84; Crowley 193). Connecting beliefs differently in both Lugones’ and Crowley’s sense would essentially move us towards a very different way of configuring and speaking about agency and oppression.

I argued earlier, as many others have, against a simple recovery of an already privileged Ancient Greek and Latin Rhetorical Tradition and historiography to answer our need to better understand the visceral registers and affective dimensions of persuasion to re-invigorate American political and ethical life. Instead, I want to map out a theory of affect that has developed out of a hemispheric need and eclectic “capacity to respond to multiple sites of oppression” linked to the uniquely queer and colonial legacy of *mestizaje* (Arrizón 26). While I do not propose a more “pure” theory for public life in this hemisphere, I do propose that we might serve “the subjected” better if we are to include their theories and ways of knowing (that perhaps go beyond what is deemed knowledgeable) into our methodology and our rhetorical account of affect.

Amidst all the theories and discussions being forged at this moment with regards to affect and the study of emotion, the theoretical contributions by Chican@s and Queer Chican@s in particular have been long overlooked. Often reduced as “doing the same as [insert European Post Modern theorist]” or “being involved with identity politics” such a simple read underscores the tension of what is “truly available,” “intelligible,” or “representational” for others on behalf of subaltern epistemologies. And yet, for decades now Chican@ and Fronteriz@ writers, theorists, and performance artists have recognized

the “visceral register” race, sexuality, and class has operated upon—not just as beads-on-a-string to be counted but as inter-subjective elements of recognition within a particular colonial border scene. Specifically, I am intrigued by the provenance of *Coatlicue*, as a distinct imaginary site of invention within the legacy of mestizaje discourses, that works hard to push forward another vocabulary for affect as well as another framework for understanding the rhetoricity tied to the visceral. These complex theories of affect, beginning with *Coatlicue* among others, advance the common *topoi* so often taken up by rhetoric scholars with regards to the study of timing, desire, agency, consciousness, structures of feeling, invention, *techne*, alterity and their inextricably affective dimensions.

### **Central Research Questions of the Dissertation**

Several central questions both guide and emerge from this dissertation. In this chapter and literature review I am interested in asking what rhetorical concepts can be reinvigorated by studying emotion, feelings, and affect as categories of analysis within the decolonial and contemporary contexts of queer latina, mestiz@, or chicana rhetorics? Furthermore, how do these queer latina/mestiza/chicana writers account for affect within Lionel Cantu calls the “liminal borderland position or mestiza” that best considers the “structural dimensions of the borderlands” (Cantu 36). In other words, how does anger or what is called the coatlicue state theorized, offer a periodized, spatialized account of affect from the geopolitical and historical space of the frontera? What kinds of identity processes are involved in anger and how is identity thus constructed through processes of subalternization and resistance, anger, skin memories, and melancholia being examples of these processes. Second, I begin to ask, how then do these queer mestiza or chicana

rhetorics as sites of analysis challenge predominately Western-Eurocentric notions or conceptions of subjectivity and therefore agency?

This dissertation organizes its middle three chapters as varying registers of affect. Anger being the ether, an almost form of affect that touches the skin. Skin being the most tangible and corporeal, and melancholic objects resonating, being reconstructed and reactivating one's memory.

Chapter two on decolonial anger in the form of coatlicue asks how is agency, consciousness, and affect at large theorized differently within the texts of María Lugones, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Chela Sandoval? Furthermore how do these theorists, particularly Lugones' redeployment of Anzaldúa's affect concepts theorize the intersections of class, race, and gender? How do they challenge or add to rhetoric and composition's current discussions of affect? With anger or the coatlicue state, I am also interested in seeing how a complex rhetorical theory of agency is forged while asking how does brooding (the coatlicue state) operate as a unique rhetorical form among queer latinas?

Chapter three builds upon the arguments of Chapter two but looks at the more corporeal aspects of the writing subject—how skin and face is theorized through the bodies of the queer mestizas under discussion. In this chapter, alterity or otherness is figured largely by emotional otherness, non-intelligibility, or acts of disidentification, asking why does the attachment to the body, to the skin, which is always already an attachment to affect (be it melancholy, anger, desire, etc.) at once unearth and potentially disrupt the fundamental meaning and value making processes of colonial modernity? How do these understandings of skin and the body productively trouble the enterprise of writing?

Chapter four is an artistic interlude into this project. Originally prompted by a blog about the experiences and meaning of the word *poch@* by Cruz Medina, the chapter involved an auto-ethnographic encounter with my queer chicana identity and experience. The chapter involved creating a short film that involved weeks of editing a two hour long recording of a family reunion in New Mexico into nine minutes of film that wove in critical theories that were foundational to my understanding of a queer archive is and does, as well as engaged my own hemispheric memories of the Americas. They are a set of memories that I deem both queer and melancholic. There is a longing to this piece of writing in Chapter four that is not easily reconcilable and instead works to dwell in that loss as a means to invent rather than forget it.

Lastly, Chapter five is the most explicitly pedagogical of all the chapters. It is the direct application of queer hemispheric or queer mestiza concepts of the archive that directly challenge and unsuture the complacent historiographies of rhetoric, composition and writing programs, offering a radically revisionary account of state policies and practices around language learning and writing studies that links specific historical events and colonial logics in the 1800s-1950s with racist xenophobic movements like SB1070.

I characterize these rhetorics as queer *latin@* pessimism because they do not simply celebrate hybridity or *mestizaje*, but rather, are willing to brood and mourn in the conflicting memories and violences of the Americas that comes with writing and identity processes.

## CHAPTER 2

### COATLICUE AS QUEER RACIALIZED ANGER: AGAINST AN INTELLIGIBLE AGENCY

This border, frontera, is material, epidermal, lived in the flesh, and suffused through all modes of communication and ultimately the very terms of intersubjective existence.

– Jacqueline M. Martinez, *Phenomenology of Chicana Experience and Identity*

The ‘logos’ then is in and of the flesh, but it is not all there is to the flesh. There are also the subjective, affective, and driven paths embedded in flesh and blood, as well as the living logic that presses our subject to follow paths that preserve life around and beyond it.

– Teresa Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect*

#### **Visitations in the Skin- Intimate Encounters with Coatlicue**

The story is first told this way: Coatlicue, also Coatlalopeuh, Aztec mother of over four hundred children becomes pregnant. Feeling shame about her mother’s pregnancy, Coatlicue’s daughter, Coyolxauhqui plots to kill her mother along with her other siblings. Miraculously, a hummingbird feather falls from the sky onto her pregnant belly. Surfacing as her son, Huitzilopochtli, the glamorized Aztec God of War, kills his sister in order to protect his mother. For this reason Coatlicue is often depicted as a giver and taker of life. With Duality. But “cultural removal,” as writer Alma Rosa Alvarez notes, occurred foremost at the level of sexuality as the Catholic Church attempted to “phonetically associate Coatlalopeuh within the Spanish Virgin of Guadalupe” but did so at the expense of making a “devaluated Indian self” that was repudiated in favor of a

more pious virgin (56-57). Fragmented into parts, disappeared and interred, *Coatlicue* is re-imagined queerly and affectively in the pages to come.

There is a poetic element to the fact that the marking of this paper will have earned commemorative marks on my skin. In what Jacqueline Martinez would call a “counter stance in the flesh,” Marian (with no relation to the Virgin), my partner of over a year has bought me a tattoo for my thirty-first birthday. It is a way of remembering; commemorating a milestone in my journey to acquire knowledge, earn my Ph.D. in a personally difficult year. I think about this potentially defiant act. How I grew up being told by my father that well-behaved, obedient young daughters do not get tattoos and they certainly do not consciously defile their bodies.

When I return to Phoenix in December, these fluctuating felt moments and a rite of passage will be communicated without a word— but in the heavy gray and black ink punched through layers of my skin—transmitted through the epidermal. I am imagining the pleasure of my version of this “Mexican Medea<sup>7</sup>” coiled around the shoulder of my arm, into the dips and hallows of my back.

You could call my interest in *Coatlicue* a critical obsession. I did not grow up with the hemispheric imagery<sup>8</sup> or memory of her. And while I later recalled the intricate patterns of snake-skin, skulls, breasts and mouths carved in stone appearing in old *National Geographic*s and archeology textbooks my grandfather stored for a local university in his warehouse, they seemed more an artifact of antiquity and a history far gone, than a history of encounters. More accurately, the images, figurations of *Coatlicue*

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<sup>7</sup> A reference to Cherrie Moraga’s post-millennial play, *Hungry Women*.

<sup>8</sup> That spatially and periodically remembered of ancient MesoAmerica and through years of colonial encounters as part of the larger hemisphere of the “Americas.”

did not stick to my visceral registers when I did encounter them. While her more contemporary counter part, Mary, may have hovered in the far reaches of my mind, in roadside stops to a stoned shrine in Los Ojos, New Mexico during a family peregrinaje, or near a cross dangling from the faded wall in my Great Grandmother's Teodora Baca-Martinez's Ogden, Utah home, women, especially women like the monstrous *Coatlicue*, slipped past me without recognition. Yet, I did have experiences of feeling oppression and privilege that I wanted to put into words. I wanted expressions for the way it is to have a queer body that moves with an affricative strut, to be uncomfortable *in* and *about* a body in relation to other bodies. I wanted the words for the moment I realized I no longer hated women as a woman, and began experiencing the world as one (and a queer one at that). And my body of course has intrasubjectively desired, and continues to desire, the pleasure in being released in language, in gesture, in dance, in the intersubjective *ether* between and with other bodies.

I came to know *Coatlicue* more "intimately" in María Lugones' reenactment of Gloria Anzaldúa's living theoretical work. Now, as I look at the pages of the article, *From Within Germinative Stasis*, in Ana Louise Keating's, edited collection of *New Perspectives on Gloria Anzaldúa, Entre Mundos/Among Worlds*, I note the multitude of marks, of resonances with words, metaphors, descriptions of felt states at the intersections of brooding, feeling at *los intersticios*, of the non-normative, of rage and rebellion and "intimate terror" of oneself and her relation to others, to the world. More, I remember the exact moment, the memory of interacting, interpreting, and scribbling like modern day *tlatinime*, in the margins of Lugones' work and finally encountering in a



word, the multiplicity of ways one can viscerally register a multitude of varying experiences, sometimes even contradictory and felt at once.

While it may make academics uncomfortable to interject such a story of the body, I do so not as a way of foreclosing argument with a subjective standpoint that essentializes a kind of experience—for even skin— stretches, fades, darkens, and folds—but rather, for opposite reasons; to do what is rhetorically described as an “interstitial practice” of inventing from *an in-between place* in order to provide a shared path between two seemingly disparate theories; contemporary standpoint theories from a queer and colonial milieu and post-structuralist critiques of standpoint coming from the affective turn.

### **Coatlícue Emerges as a Queer Genealogy of Mestizaje**

Joseph Roach’s circum-hemispheric account of performance in *Cities of the Dead* provides a premise for this type of genealogical project that I propose:

Genealogies of performance attend not only to “the body,” [as Foucault suggests], but also to bodies—to the reciprocal reflections they make on one another’s surfaces as they foreground their capacities for interaction. Genealogies of performance also attend to “counter memories,” or the disparities between history as it is discursively transmitted and memory as it is publicly enacted by the bodies that bear its consequences. (26)

Genealogies in this sense of the word trace the changing influences of a categorical term in relation to the *affected* Queer Chicana@ subject. Highlighting these moments of *surfacing* that Roach mentions, *Coatlícue* is what Ahmed would call a “sticky” performance: one theorized and recognized within multiple historical resonances and a hemispheric understanding of Mestizaje. *Coatlícue* is, as I will demonstrate, an evolving and nuanced, complex theory of affect in the face of many oppressions at once. My paper

questions the contributions these Chican@ make to current rhetorical and communication studies.

I focus on two enactments and productions of Queer Chica@ affectivity in this next section—María Lugones’ feminist re-reading of Gloria Anzaldúa’s notions of *Coatlicue*, and Chela Sandoval’s vision of *Coatlicue* as political hermeneutic—methodology and theory for working within and against felt and embodied oppressions. Ultimately, these women account for a particular queer genealogy<sup>9</sup> of Mestizaje—specifically the rhetoricity of what is culturally understood as, *Coatlicue*, by Queer Chican@ activists<sup>10</sup>.

I want to focus first on the taking up of this term as both a distinct “terminological intervention”<sup>11</sup> and later as theory of queer affectivity. But to understand *Coatlicue*, one must understand it “conceptually” in relation within the complex legacy of syncretism or cultural blending, most simply put, invoked by Mestizaje within the spectrum of Latinidad. In an interesting inquiry into the recent explosion of Chican@ cultural references to the Pre-Columbian Goddess, Jean Franco’s, article, *The Return of Coatlicue: Mexican Nationalism and the Aztec Past*, attempts to understand the constant “re-assemblances” that have performed the hemispheric memory of Coatlicue, first in Mexico’s notion of itself as a Nation, and secondly as a reactive touchstone (quite literally) for Chican@ feminism (1). I would like to adopt Alicia Arrizón’s reading of mestizaje as it marks for her “intercultural subject in the performance of endless alterity”

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<sup>9</sup> Joseph Roach and David Valentine frame their work around Foucault’s notion of a “critical genealogy” which may excavate particular practices of past bodies into the present.

<sup>10</sup> I use this term loosely and positively so that we see theory performed as an activism.

<sup>11</sup> I am referring to Chela Sandoval’s theorization of Coatlicue in *Methodology of the Oppressed*.

(7). By queering mestizaje, the “recognition” for difference that was often erased in Mexico and Chicano National Movements discourses is made visible (180).

My first encounter with the term, *Coatlicue*—describing the affected phenomena inflected on the body— like many other readers, was in the context of Gloria Anzaldúa’s, *Borderlands/La Frontera*. Her two chapters, *Entering the Serpent* and “*La herencia de Coatlicue/The Coatlicue State* imagined the “ambiguity surrounding the symbols of Guadalupe, La Chingada (Malinche) and La Llorona” (53-54). Much has been said about Anzaldúa’s work since she first published in 1987. And as her work is re-interpreted and interrogated many times over, I am very aware of the criticisms that have arisen. In *Blood Lines: Myth, Indigenism, and Chicana/o Literature*, Sheila María Contreras’ particular reading of indigeneity within Anzaldúa’s appropriation of *Coatlicue*, highlights her use of the term “Shadow Beast” to characterize the *Coatlicue* State as one “deeply associated with psychoanalysis [Carl Jung and company], as well as [her] references to psychoanalytic theorists strengthens her association with modernist practices of using the “savage” to illustrate hidden realms of human consciousness” (122). Contreras’ reading critiques Anzaldúa for making the Indigen@ subject the almost mystical (or hidden) site for understanding a “dark subconscious.” While Contreras problematizes this particular re-inscription of indigeneity, she continues to note that Anzaldúa’s work is marked by the “discursive history of primitivism and its reliance on the excavations of archeology” (128). But even in this critique of Anzaldúa’s most recognizable term, Contreras notes the “emotional perspectives” offered in this “state of contradiction” and that “the intellectual acts of thinking and writing [like Anzaldúa’s] that have deep and profound effects on the body” (124-125). Contreras essentially pushes for us to continue to

interrogate *coatlicue* in this form of indigeneity while also following other lines of inquiry that may “reveal new paths in her complex and compelling “serpentine” web of meanings” (126). This process has first and foremost revealed a path towards better rhetorical understanding of the relation of memory to certain emotions as a binding agent for the social.

In, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Sara Ahmed examines the relationship of language to bodies and their generative effects (6). Incisively, Ahmed’s reading cites that “affective economies do not reside in subjects or objects, but are produced as effects of circulation” (8). Much like Crowley’s earlier claims, Ahmed’s inquiry supports a “sociality to emotion” that is “relational” (7-8). Such a view highlights the circuitry of affect involved in a “memory with a history of contact(s)” like that of *Coatlicue* (7).

By remembering Anzaldúa’s work as one that hoped to theorize the affective queer dimensions of homophobia, racism, and *fronteriz@* subjectivity, I assert that Anzaldúa’s work, and better yet, others’ re-interpretations or re-enactments of her writings show a consistent attempt and *pathe* to engage with the affective economies that are “felt on the surface of the skin” and are the surfacing effects of those “past histories of contact” involved in *Coatlicue* as a particular expression of *mestizaje* (Ahmed 7; Arrizón 184).

Anzaldúa’s “interfacing” work does not mark nor preclude a simple etiology, nor is she the only *Chican@* to theorize emotion or affect. Respectively, Norma Alarcón and Cherrie Moraga’s metaphors, of the “interstice” and “wounded skin” are a few more of the affective vocabulary that has come into use to describe the production of bodies. But Anzaldúa’s, reinvigoration of *Coatlicue* has gained a particular currency and effect in and

of itself that is of interest for scholars, particularly because queer performance artists have re-performed *Coatlícue* as a “desire for cultural decolonization” and as a “process of knowing split subjectivities” (Arrizón 70). What I find remarkable about *Coatlícue* is precisely its remarkability, that is, its *affective potential* for invention.

### **Enactments of *Coatlícue* in the *affective* works of Chela Sandoval and María**

#### **Lugones**

In a fragmentary and interesting collection of oppositional texts, Chela Sandoval’s, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, situates *coatlícue* as both a “love that breaks” and “technical effect” that is not only enacted but also enacted upon (140-155). In this way, Sandoval’s project which is mostly concerned with using modes of “consciousness” (differential and oppositional) as a way of *effacing* embodied racial, gendered, and globalizing processes. Using French semiotician Roland Barthes’ definition of “punctum,” Sandoval notes that in a similar way, “Third world writers too understood ‘love’ as a hermeneutic or invention for social change” (139). She specifically takes up the “*coatlícue state*” in the following passage:

Third world writers such as Guevara, Fanon, Anzaldua, Emma Perez, Trinh Minh-ha, or Cherrie Moraga, to name only a few, similarly understand love as a “breaking” through. Whatever controls in order to find “understanding and community”: it is described as “hope” or “faith” in the potential goodness of some promised land; it is defined as Anzaldua’s *coatlícue state*, which is a “rupturing” in one’s everyday world that permits crossing over to another; or a specific moment of shock, what Emma Perez envisions as the trauma of desire, of erotic despair. These writers who theorize social change understand “love” as a hermeneutic, as a set of practices and procedures that can transit all citizen-subjects, regardless of social class, toward a differential mode of consciousness and its accompanying technologies of method and social movement. (139)

While I would argue Sandoval's reading of *Coatlicue* initially sounds a bit utopic, this may very well be her point. In the pages to follow Sandoval discusses the *effacing* effects that a love structured by *coatlicue* can have on the ability to make consciousness, or knowing available (142). *Effacing* is the best word in this context of Sandoval's work, because the word implies the thinning of the tissues, a shortening of fibers, that tends to poke through a field of densely articulated beliefs<sup>12</sup>. "Tissues" also implies a level of embodiment and transmission of beliefs that occurs in those ether of affect. For this reason, "punctum," too, is the right word, because, by definition, "*punctum*" is a process or point differing in appearance from other surrounding tissues. In other words, difference embodied creates can learn to "drift" and "refuse" various narratives of logics of domination. "Drifting" is one way Sandoval explains the transitivity of knowing in affect. It is that "learning to disrespect the whole" valued by Western thought that is so often embodied that makes resistance, a thinning, an opening possible.

Putting Sandoval's words side by side that of well-known rhetorical theorist, Sharon Crowley, who most recently used discussions of affect to complicate our ideas about the ability to resist within collective fantasies and mythical ones, may invent a more interesting dialogue between the kinds of resistance that are possible and also question what's at stake for those who have the hope or faith of a mythical place or collective fantasy like Aztlán in their process of resisting domination.

As a scholar, María Lugones' reenactment may have very well been the most affecting text or performance of *coatlicue* I have yet to encounter. First theorized in her book, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, Lugones critiques the varying degrees of felt anger as it

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<sup>12</sup> Sharon Crowley uses this term in her discussion of how change in beliefs can occur in *Towards a Civic Discourse* (192-193).

relates to fear and oppression. She comes back to these concepts in a most engaging way in the posthumous dedication to Anzaldúa's work in the *EntreMundos/Among Worlds* anthology. Lugones' essay, *From within Germinative Stasis* does the difficult task of inventing by reenacting the affective spaces in which Anzaldúa imagines and excites for us. Lugones' reading provides a rich heuristic in the following ways for addressing various genealogies of *affect* at the intersection of the queer chican@:

1. Brooding as a legitimate, emotive site of knowledge production.
2. A refusal to make "sense" within the (il)logics of violence and domination.
3. Temporal, contradictory, and preparatory states of being which supports a complex notion and account of alterity and fuller understanding of agency as an evolving embodied process.
4. Incarnate memory emphasizes what independent scholar Katharine Young would call the "phenomenological notion that flesh as conscious."
5. Renaming practices as performatives that serve as sites for invention.
6. Provides an understanding that "sociality to resistance" by the way beliefs register viscerally.

While this list is no means exhaustive, what it demonstrates for me is that queer chican@s, those non-normative racialized and gendered bodies that have long theorized a complex and nuanced theory of affective and phenomenological phenomena, could greatly inform worn discussions or rhetorical models of agency or resistance in discussions, for example, about belonging. It also shows that these scholars have a hemispheric, rhetorical tradition of having to invent in the interstice, having to create meaning for their lives in logics that deem their lives unimportant and unintelligible.

Lugones notes that *coatlicue* can become a way of "remaking oneself" by "re-inhabiting a past to remember her possibilities, possibilities occluded in her present multiple subjected self" (92). In what she describes as an "insulating strategy"—Lugones imagines a level of interiority and exteriority that is transmitted but often seen as "coiling

up” actively (91). Like Sandoval, Lugones posits *coatlícue* as a sort of structure without structure, that is, it is a state that allows us to “dwell in certain states” of responsibility or terror in order to know other possibilities for liberation out of domination (88). Lugones’ theorizing emphasize the importance of certain mnemonic transmissions and activities as a generative way of “feeling (a biographical, named experience) and sensing (being stimulated by the intensities of place and persons amidst an interstitial life, as in the case of *la frontera*), and, helps us to see agency not simply as one kairotic<sup>13</sup> event, but rather as a sometimes continuous, “repetitious activity” with little direction that alters itself in relation to others in various moments of “feeling and sensing” that quietly acts (94-95) and cannot be understood as simply a single movement of resistance to oppression. This is, in part, because resistance is an ongoing struggle, and not, as Lugones points out, “an accomplished fact” (90).

### **Acts of Excavation in Queer Historiographies**

I came to this project in a number of ways, but first and foremost as an act of excavation. Even with an interest in queer historiographies and theories, the texts that I was routinely assigned to read or that were privileged as “cutting-edge” turns in rhetorical theory in our course readers were predominately from those of Eurocentric and normative bodily positions that helped erase variations of difference put forth by queer racialized bodies. While emotion and felt states have typically been associated with the “hyper ethnic and therefore feminine,” I was hesitant to inadvertently re-inscribe this common place with my work in affect studies. But, what I found in these theorists, Chela

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<sup>13</sup> Queer Latin@ and Chican@ theorists and artists have done a great job theorizing this notion of “timing” or “resisting” the time of resistance to the tune of embodiment. For examples, see such performance groups as ASCO or José Muñoz’s work in *Disidentifications*.



Sandoval and María Lugones' reenactments with Anzaldua's *coatlicue*, among others (*la facultad, intimate terrorism, nepantla*, et al), was a critique in process and an interpretive framework for understanding various "pressing moments" on the body attuned with the embodiment of those oppressions that would provide an interesting intersectional reading to the already saturated presence of affect occurring in our field. More than that, these women use what Walter Dignolo would most likely call a "bilanguaging," that is, the languaging imbedded in [the] body," an affective or "living" languaging that is between bodies and lives and have been existing in this way for a long time (253).

### **Historicizing Gloria Anzaldúa's Borderlands/La Frontera within the Neoliberal Moment**

The "world" doesn't so much stop as it cracks. What cracked is our perception of the world, how we relate to it, how we engage with it. Afterwards we view reality differently-- we see through its rendijas (holes) to the illusion of consensual reality

– Gloria Anzaldúa, *Let us be the healing of the wound: the Coyolxauhqui Imperative*

At the 1996 Encuentro Intercontinental por la Humanidad Arizón contra el Neoliberalism, the famous Subcomandante Marcos of the Zapatista movement is quoted as saying that Neoliberalism was that which wanted to, "Turn the world into one big mall where they can buy Indians here, women there..." (Martinez and Garcia, *Neoliberalism: A Definition for Activists*). In part, economists, politicians and activists have understood neoliberalism to be a re-articulation of liberal ideals couched in the rhetoric of free enterprise. This new articulation of freedom coincides with American expansion and globalization in the name of "liberating" free markets and spreading democracy, relinquishing debt or offering free reign to multinational corporations (but not individuals

of the state) despite the disparate impact they may cause, North American Free Trade Agreement's (NAFTA) impact on the Mexican/US border being a prime example of this practice. Last, public spending on human or social services are cut, deregulated and privatized replacing rhetorics of community with rhetorics of individual responsibility. In *Freedom with Violence*, scholar Chandan Reddy makes an important critique of the ways "freedom" becomes the condition that makes violence both possible, supplemented, redistributive and legitimated by the State and argues that a queer person of color critique is both needed and necessary for producing an exposition of the inherent contradictions of capitalism and the neoliberal state apparatuses.

1987. Black Monday, the largest stock market crash since the Great Depression. The Iran Contra Affair is taking place. The height of Televangelism in the Christian American Right. AZT is just introduced onto the market at the height of the AIDS/HIV crises. Reagan has just challenged president Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union to tear down the Berlin Wall, a movement that was better known as Perestroika. Brownsville, Texas one of many cities along the Mexico/US border that became a manufacturing hub from NAFTA experiences record flooding. Author and activist, James Baldwin dies. This is the year, Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* is published by Aunt Lute.

Although Anzaldúa's reads for some as participating in an identity politics of her time and in composition and rhetoric circles most often positioned as a multicultural author (a label she has also adopted positively), her work is often decontextualized and de-radicalized by reducing her contributions and conflicts as simply linguistic or about racial identity, evacuating the erotic from her writings as well as see the intersection of

these everyday erotics with her race, class, and gender experiences. If decontextualized, it is done so in a way that only pathologizes her as the token, angry lesbian woman of color among multicultural texts. I situate Anzaldúa's text because it is important to understand that one of the methods by which neoliberalism has successfully "quieted" radical visions and critiques of racial capital has been through gestures of incorporation, inclusion or harmonizing that have done more to tokenize or erase queer voices of color and little to question the structural violences of late modernity, which neoliberalism or economic liberalism has continued to advance. Interestingly enough, the epigraph, of Anzaldúa's above is from one of her lesser-known writings, which extended her metaphors and affective concepts of *conocimiento* (a deepened knowing) to a critique of U.S.

Imperialism during 9/11.

In this section, I offer a different reading of Anzaldúa and Lugones than I have met with before. Here, I read Anzaldúa's texts as part of a larger, "emergent structure of feeling"-- an angry, queer and melancholic structure of feeling that is a consequence of neoliberalism and borderization (also known as *tercermundización*<sup>14</sup>). Borrowing from sociologist Raymond Williams' famous concept, "structures of feeling"--emergent (and residual) structures of feeling often occur in a counter culture, or rather, as an alternative or oppositional affect to the dominant sense or official consciousness of a given culture or time (132). Williams was interested in the edges of representation. Or rather, the affective dimension of social worlds. He believed, unlike the feelings that are narrated or storied

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<sup>14</sup> Walter Mignolo extends Ortiz and Glissant's distinctions between globalization and *mundalización*—*mundalización* the local histories that are impacted by the global designs that are produced by an image of the modern world. *Tercermundización* invokes similarly the extreme violences, poverty and psychic debts bestowed upon the "Third World" by imperialist and multinational corporations in the name of "advancing" history.

by dominant culture and that we are told to care about (freedom, happiness, privacy, etc.), emergent structures of feeling, on the contrary, offer lived and felt experiences that may be on the fringe of these more official and sanctioned forms of feeling or emotion often spoken in terms of totalized “worldviews” or “ideologies.” William’s concepts have become an important part of queer theory’s critical repertoire at seeing the inseparability of place with representation and its everyday dynamism with that is not quite yet abstracted by categories or thought--something less tenable, more ephemeral or in process--like feelings, experiences, or consciousness-- but lived in the present. From the space of *la frontera*, Anzaldúa describes a similar recognition in her concepts of *la facultad*. In *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Anzaldúa defines *la facultad* as “... the capacity to see in surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities, to see the deep structure below the surface. It is an instant ‘sensing’, a quick perception arrived at without conscious reasoning” and that sees the “faces of feelings” that makes one can do this “excruciatingly alive to the world” (60). However, unlike, Williams’ “structure of feeling,” *la facultad* is articulated from a queer, mestiza sensibility and is most often cultivated by those at the margins or who most oppressed by dominant culture.

Building off of William’s notion, Jose E. Muñoz urges us in *Disidentification: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* to read queer texts and histories and their respective structures of feeling in a way that also depathologizes affect, be it melancholia or anger (74). This attempt to depathologize affect is an important one because queer persons of color have been and still are historically pathologized as more angry, more violent, and therefore more deserving of state sponsored violences like immigration detentions, prisons, labor exploitation and surveillance technologies, among

others. Perhaps, the most obvious emergent structures of feeling in Anzaldúa's theories are borderization and liminality experienced from a subaltern or marginalized position. To describe the feeling and the specificities of living *on* and *with* the Mexico/US border, a frontier space, is to experience various affective states like *coatlicue*, *nepantla*, *intimate terrorism*, *la facultad* or *conocimiento*. While there are many border experiences, and by no means does Anzaldúa's text or vocabulary represent all queer latin@s and their experiences in the United States, her now canonical text opens an important genealogy of affect for this historical present of the Americas, as well as interface with the past and future with these affective states.

### **An Autocrítica/Autohistoria<sup>15</sup> Encounter with Gloria E. Anzaldúa**

Gloria Anzaldúa's work came to me during my first year of graduate school in the fall of 2002 by accident. In our Critical Theory Course for all incoming Masters students in English Studies, we were to select and present on a critical theorist. I was interested then in what was called "Third World Feminisms" which critiqued mainstream and predominately white feminist movements' inadequacy to address fully an intersectional account of difference. I continued to be drawn years later to queer theory, postcolonial theory, critical race and ethnic studies. In the thick teal tome, there on the page following Gayatri C. Spivak's famous deconstructivist provocation, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" was Gloria Anzaldúa's, "The New Mestiza" chapter from *La Frontera/Borderlands*. Entering into a new terrain and discourse that made me very much feel as if I did not belong anywhere (not completely white, nor pure Latina, not straight enough, not smart

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<sup>15</sup> The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader's glossary notes, that this new genre or way of writing was coined by Anzaldúa as one that described "women-of-color interventions" into academic traditions of theory, as well as autobiographical writing that weaves personal narrative with theory (Keating 319). To the best of my ability, I try to engage this genre in the dissertation.

enough, not fluent in Spanish, not fluent in the language of ‘cacademia’ et al.) her pages were a welcome gift. One that has continued to give me meaning and academic sustenance.

I had left Salt Lake City, Utah with a Bachelor’s in Literature and had written a forty to fifty page thesis two years prior comparing pan-Africanist ARRIZÓN.E.B DuBois’s “double-consciousness” with what I was reading in my “Chicano/a and Hispanic Literature” courses at the time and saw as a sort of “triple consciousness” (what I coined “tres voces”) due to the legacy of mestizaje. I had no idea that twelve years later, I would return to a similar thesis, only from a much deeper place---both intellectually and personally. At that time I did not yet know who Anzaldúa was much less her theories/teorías.

Whenever I encounter difficulty in my life, I go back and read Anzaldúa, because each time, something new will stick. Something new will apply to my life. Another part of my experience and identity seems understood or to have added a layer. Ontologically speaking, I become another being.

In 2007 came another one of those times. I had just returned from traveling and living abroad in Buenos Aires, Argentina and was starting the third year of my PhD program at Arizona State University. I took the summer to regroup after losing three of my committee members to early retirement and an unhospitable university climate around academic freedom and censorship. I was reading *Entre Mundos/Among Worlds* an anthology dedicated to new perspectives on Anzaldúa’s writings when I found myself pleasantly lost in María Lugones’ playful philosophical engagement with Anzaldúa’s concept of “Coatlicue” in her essay, I poured and poured over the pages. Spilled ink. Left

coffee stains. I germinated on the article for years in the desert. The theory remaining in stasis and in the body. Brooding.

In 2009 another. I have “come out” to my family. I leave the racist SB1070 desert of Arizona. I move to Tallahassee, Florida to support my partner of two years who begins a PhD program of her own. I am all but dissertation. All but pages away from walking. I walk into a body. That body gets ill. Stasis sets in again. A walking out of a body and into another. Reading Anzaldúa’s prophetic lines I feel at times *intimately terrorized*<sup>16</sup> by it: the body’s memory. Now, in 2014 I belong almost completely to the left-handed world. *El Mundo Zurdo*.<sup>17</sup>

### **Maria Lugones’ Re-engagement with Anzaldúa’s Coatlicue State**

In The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader, editor AnaLouise Keating notes the underexploration of Anzaldúa’s *La herencia de Coatlicue/The Coatlicue State* chapter versus her often cited *La conciencia de la mestiza/Towards a Mestiza Consciousness*:

While [*Towards a Mestiza Consciousness*] is one of Anzaldúa’s most frequently quoted, discussed, and reprinted pieces, the latter is rarely excerpted in anthologies or examined in Anzaldúan scholarship. Given its provocative linkages between spirituality, sexuality, revisionary myth, and psychic experience, it’s not surprising that scholars rarely examine “*La herencia de Coatlicue*.” However, these issues were crucial to Anzaldúa herself and represent some of the most innovative, visionary dimensions of her work. (5)

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<sup>16</sup> In *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Anzaldúa distinguishes between these states of being; intimate terrorism and the Coatlicue state by asserting that intimate terrorism is when our ability to be our own agents is taken away from us by the dominator in the name of benevolence or our own good. In doing so, we are rendered “immobile” and “feel a victim” and blame dominant culture. Whereas, the Coatlicue state attempts to take control; bring an activity to brooding or immobilization that becomes a protective, necessary separatism. In the latter, the mestiza, resists victimization and attempts to regain control of her body, her affect, her many lives.

<sup>17</sup> A term used by Anzaldúa in earlier works to connote the diverse needs of communities in coalition as well as envision an alternative world that could accommodate those diverse needs. It translates roughly to “the left handed world.”

One of the few scholars to have actually engaged Anzaldúa's concept of "Coatlicue" is Argentine feminist philosopher, María Lugones. This chapter will focus on Lugones' reengagement with Anzaldúa's concepts in two particular publications: her book, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes* and her essay, *From within Germinative Stasis: Creating Active Subjectivity, Resistant Agency*.

I am drawn to Lugones' redeployment of coatlicue state for a number of reasons. One, I read "La herencia de Coatlicue" or the "Coatlicue State" a few different ways in this dissertation. First, it can be seen as knowledge production that occurs in anger (other forms of grief, melancholia, and alterity) but from a decolonial standpoint and in doing so, it offers a complex theory and understanding of agency in the context and legacies of the geopolitical location I understand to be the Americas. Additionally, Lugones' taxonomies for anger help us understand the multitude of ways marginalized and oppressed groups resist everyday dominant culture's understandings of them. And last, her theory urges us to ask, what is the rhetorical nature and political promise in anger for building coalition in order to do anti-oppression work that does more reinscribe the status quo?

Imbedded in Lugones' redeployment of Anzaldúa's theories is a powerful turning away as much as it is a turning towards. Anzaldúa hits upon this turning away in *La Frontera/Borderlands* when she declares:

My Chicana identity is grounded in the Indian woman's history of resistance. The Aztec female rites of mourning were rites of defiance protesting the cultural changes which disrupted the equality and balance between female and male, and protesting their demotion to a lesser status, their denigration. Like La Llorana, the Indian woman's only means of protest was wailing. (43)



Anger, like defiance, is not simply a negative psychology or a willful opposition to being a happy subject of the colonial modern world, but rather anger is an act of mourning. It mourns against a history of dispossession or *despajamento*.

### **Why the Coatlicue State is an Important Intervention into Queer Historiographies**

Lamenting the lack of recognition Anzaldúa's work (including earlier pieces from the Queer Women of Color Anthology, *This Bridge Called My Back*) gets for playing a "formative role in developing queer theory" AnaLouise Keating asks, "Are most queer theorists so Eurocentric or masculinist in their text selections...?" (*The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader* 5). My initial response to this question is both yes, and no. But before, I explain gay Latino and other queer theory that formally recognizes and gives credit to Anzaldúa for providing them with queer person of color theory and intersectional framework like the late José Esteban Muñoz and late Lionel Cantú, Jr., perhaps critic Heather Love in *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* best offers a hypothesis as to why this is so:

Queer critics have generally understood the concept of identity to be both politically and philosophically bankrupt. Although such critiques of identity have made for important changes in gay and lesbian politics and theory, it seems that the queer stance against identity has short circuited important critical work on the history of identity. Identity is, as many of these critics have attested, a deeply problematic and contradictory concept; nonetheless, it remains a powerful organizing concept in contemporary experience. We need an account of identity that allows us to think through its contradiction and to trace its effects. (44)

In part this dissertation attempts to highlight the ways queer mestiz@ writers Anzaldúa and Lugones are already doing this, offering an account of identity that allows us to think through contradiction and trace its effects, primarily the effects of colonialism

and all the other “isms” that act so violently upon these bodies and the ones they have been or are yet to be.

In *An Archive of Feelings*, Ann Cvetkovich furthers this point when she notes in her chapter on Transnational Trauma and Queer Diaspora, “Queer diasporas contain the promise of public cultures that reject national belonging and virulent nationalisms as the condition of possibility for community” (121).

I am interested in anger as a particular kind of cultural production and identity process as it occurs in the context and cultural legacies of *mestizaje*. This chapter’s inquiry is situated tightly between Maria Lugones’ work on gender and racialized anger in *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions*, in particular her re-engagement with Gloria Anzaldúa’s work in addition to other artists and activists understandings of anger as it becomes a complex way of “sensing” the world.

In *Mestizaje: Critical Uses of Race in Chicano Culture*, scholar, Rafael Pérez-Torres poses the question to readers, “What is the significance of *difference* to the Americas” (50)? For Lugones, this difference may be best understood in the concept of “*coatlicue*.” In *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, Maria Lugones attempts to answer this question but in terms of “agency” and “alterity” in the context of anger produced by the queer *mestizaje* subject.

Examining Lugones’ work on hard-to-handle anger and her re-deployment of Anzaldúa’s notion of *coatlicue*, I argue that her work be read as an important critical deviation from current ethnic and cultural studies rhetorics using agency and oppression as its terms. I would go even further to claim her writings as a body of work emerging from this site and space of “non-dominant difference” in the Americas be read as a

Latin@ pessimism. A pessimism, I will argue in the remaining chapters, that well may be the most generative of “utoponimias” or *non-places*.

But why anger? And why now in the context of queerness and race in the Americas? No doubt, feminist scholars such as Lugones have long inquired and theorized emotions as a legitimate epistemological category. Additionally, we have seen a preoccupation with affect-- due to what has been recognized as the affective turn-- a renewed interest in embodiment, emotion, feeling, and affectivity.

Many have asked me why I have chosen to begin this book project with a chapter on Anger. I became interested in anger for many reasons; one of them being that as a queer, mixed Chican@ or mestiz@, I have been angry most of my life. Often for reasons not clear to me. *What was I grieving? What was that loss exactly?* Equally, I have been interested in understanding the nature of that anger and the anger of Others. I found that most often my anger occurred during times of loss, when feeling unseen or unwitnessed, and at times of grave injustice. I became interested in narratives or stories of anger. I listened with intent when my father, a bi-racial Chicano sporting an Afro in rural Utah during the 1960s and 70s described the racism and outcast status he faced as mixed-raced, non-Mormon teenager from a family of seven raised by their single mother. I delighted in the fact my father was a kick-boxer. A praying mantis. That he could express his anger with his body- an “iron-palm” or grapple. I began to understand in his stories, that the body both held and could release anger. And ultimately, I wanted to understand what that anger was in response to. I have found that the rhetoric of anger is most often a narration of loss that powerfully defies dominant narratives about the way we *should* grieve or feel. I am drawn to the rhetorical opportunities within this anger.

And so, I became even more interested in how the body narrated or expressed those losses, injustices, and events of incomprehensibility for the queer mestiz@ subject. As a scholar of rhetoric this is what I was most drawn to-- what might be the rhetorical value or rhetoricity available in anger? And particularly, how have the lived communities of queer frontera or mestizaje subjects, performed anger or understood anger rhetorically? To begin here with anger is to perhaps begin with the not so obvious of effects. The most not so obvious of pessimisms. To start with anger is to begin in one valence of affect: Its ether. Its accumulation.

### **Anger, Accumulation, Latin@ Pessimism, and the Limits of Humanist Discourses**

I write here as a pessimistic queer mestiza researcher and intellectual interested in anger as one particular expression of accumulation. As activist and scholar, Cindy Cruz notes in her essay on the ways queer mestiza youth are conscripted by dominant ideologies and educational institutions, a mestiza scholar is interested in “interrogating the lived conditions of [her] communities” (668). In doing so, Cruz’s methodology locates knowledge in the “carnality of the brown body” (664). Like Cruz, my work and methodology wants to “feel” its way through theory via the brown body. However, I write this somewhat reticent of over celebratory accounts of the queer mestiz@ or frontera’s ambiguity, liminality or hybridity, as I have seen these terms merely be re-appropriated by dominant discourses as abstract metaphor to explain any liminal subject, erasing the ontological difference, the very real and lived difference of becoming a subject, and in particular a political subject under these conditions. Instead, I am more interested in the generative possibilities of what a critical or pessimistic stance of these claims predicated primarily on the terms of liberation, oppression or agency-- terms that

primarily come out of subaltern studies-- would produce. Such a critique has the been at the center of inquiry for a recent body of work growing out of what has come to be known as the Afro-pessimist Movement. Led by critics such as Saidiya Hartman and Frank B. Wilderson, these theorists focus on the undeniable fact that the gratuitous violence of the black body and subject cannot be explained nor made sense of *in and by* humanist discourses, in particular humanist discourses on representation. Humanism emphasizes the value of agency and locates that agency primarily in the linguistic or discursive realms, making language and discourse its primary modes in which representation can happen. For Afro-pessimists, the frameworks of psychoanalysis and subalternity offer little political promise. Wildersen articulates his critique in *Red, White, and Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms* in the following way:

Humanist discourse, the discourse whose epistemological machinations provide our conceptual frameworks for thinking political ontology, is diverse and contrary. But for all its diversity and contrariness it is sutured by an implicit rhetorical consensus that violence accrues to the human body as a result of transgressions, whether real or imagined, within the Symbolic Order. That is to say, Humanist discourse can only think a subject's relation to violence as a contingency and not as a matrix that positions the subject. Put another way, Humanism has no theory of the slave because it imagines a subject who has been either alienated in language (Lacan) and/or alienated from his/her cartographic and temporal capacities (Marx). It cannot imagine an object who has been positioned by gratuitous violence and who has no cartographic and temporal capacities to lose-- a sentient being for whom recognition and incorporation are impossible. In short, political ontology as imagined through Humanism, can only produce discourse that has at its foundation alienation and exploitation as its grammar of suffering, when what is needed (for the Black, who is always already a slave) is an ensemble of ontological questions that has as its foundation accumulation and fungibility as a grammar of suffering. (1)

I'm drawn to Wildersen's argument for a shift in grammar. (What new conversations would this produce?). I find Wildersen's concerns in many ways aligned with what

Latin@ pessimists are similarly disenfranchised over. What this passages highlights is a concern over the way contingency produces a theory of agency that renders a rhetorical scene as mostly one of accident or uncertainty. For Wildersen, contingency figures violence as an accident or event of transgression. Additionally, arguments of historical contingency – that is, the indeterminacy and randomness of a subject’s life, political or not, are often cited as hopeful sites or sources of resistance. I believe critics of Wildersen misread his pessimistic view when they charge him with foreclosing large and everyday resistances that someone like Lugones is concerned with theorizing Wildersen’s concerns lies specifically with the black body and subject’s capacity to be rendered fully human or intelligible. As Wildersen notes, “the black has sentient capacity but no relational capacity” (1). The Black subject is emotional. Can be felt through (but rarely for), felt up, substituted for, but not related to as a subject, only as an object. And to be related to means to be identified with. Here, Wildersen’s insistence for an analysis that considers how Black subjectivity and its relation to gratuitous violence is an attempt to shift conversations away from the simple possibility of resistance to the impossibility of identification, to the impossibility of incorporation, to the impossibility of recognition, to the impossibility of legibility/intelligibility, of humanness for the Black subject not as a self-defeated stance, but as a position that refuses to accept the terms of humanist discourse that understands black and brown subject’s suffering as accidents of history. Instead, he stages the failure of the discourse with this pessimistic positionality. In exposing these discursive failures rather than simply assuming a discursive poverty of the black and brown subject, he perhaps invents for us a new scene. Although from a decolonial feminist position, Maria Lugones makes similar critiques of humanist

discourses' inability to recognize, incorporate, or make legible brown bodies or Mestiz@ subjects. Lugones uses anger as both the categorical term and the affect in which to do her critique.

I'm also interested in examining the relation of anger to violence. In particular, I am drawn to the way we discuss and understand historical accumulation and political subjects' ability to resist or possess agency. For Wildersen, agency thought through in the deficit terms of humanism is predicated on the idea that "transgression" – that is an offense or violation of the law or hegemony – always occurs with an intent. (I consider the beautiful antimetabole of Malcolm X's speech-- "We didn't land on Plymouth Rock; Plymouth Rock landed on us." It implies a different direction toward who was being done to and where the doing was done.) Like Wildersen, Lugones' wants to challenge the directionality of oppression and its explanatory grammars. Her later work suggests she does so from a "decolonial feminist" standpoint, noting, "I understand the dichotomous hierarchy between the human and non-human as the central dichotomy of colonial modernity" (*Toward a Decolonial Feminism* 743). In this way, the subaltern or colonized body, also the mestiz@ body, is already a queer subject or body, because its subjugation served as a colonial and modern project of the Americas whose specters continue to haunt us in what she calls, "the coloniality of gender" (*Toward a Decolonial Feminism* 746). But unlike Wildersen's astute critique of humanist discourses, Lugones works diligently to critique it from the "...relational subjective/intersubjective spring of liberation..." which she sees as "both adaptive and creatively oppositional" (*Toward a Decolonial Feminism* 746). In this way, Lugones doesn't totally reject theorizing the intersubjective or individual nuances of feeling or affect but is able to effectively still engage with a

critique that is simultaneously collective. Her efforts are to decolonize our understandings of anger as an affect in relation to gender, sexuality, and race.

Wildersen's critique is eye opening and for some too radical. Radical because it seems to overdetermine the black subject and align itself with a kind of *necropolitics* put forth by writers like Achille Mbembe who examine the relationship between "technologies of control through which life is strategically subjugated to the power of death" (qtd. in Garrison). But it does seem to fit the realities of our racial present when we consider the history and legacies of violence of the black body and brown bodies that begin to approximate blackness asymptotically. For these subjects "just being black" is enough to warrant transgression. See *James Byrd, Oscar Grant III, Jr., Trayvon Martin, Islan Nettles*. For Wildersen there is no political promise or ontological life left in the vestiges of humanist discourse. While I cannot make the same claim as Wildersen for mestizaje subjects because of their differing but related colonized and diasporic histories, I do think he raises important objections about the limitations of humanist discourses that pervade most of coalitional politics and rhetorics of resistance that figure agency for brown subjects. Ontological projects, that is the project of becoming a subject, are haunted by a preoccupation with a particular passageway towards liberation or intended affect. Although some may read her as somewhat restrained by these humanist discourses in her own work, Lugones' exposes these contradictions of that discourse from the context of the queer mestizaje in her essay, *From within Germinative Stasis: Creating Active Subjectivity, Resistant Agency* which originally appeared in an anthology dedicated to Gloria Anzaldúa's writings and in three particular chapters in her book, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*.



Lugones' rhetorical theory of anger is also an oppression theory. She explores with acuity the logic of separation implicit in Karl Marx's and feminist scholar, Marilyn Frye's accounts of oppression, but "resists their 'inescapability' " and instead endorses an "ontological pluralism" for her account of subjectivity for the oppressed (55).

My chapter here is interested in exploring the following questions and themes in Lugones' work: How might her attempt to decolonize affect help us better understand in the discipline of rhetoric and posit anger as a much more complex and nuanced understanding of agency and so called pathos? In what ways might anger be as set of unique identity processes or formations? What is the relationship of anger to violence? And furthermore, what are the rhetorical implications of anger for queer communities of color?

Perhaps one of the most under-explored and yet valuable re-deployments of Anzaldua's work has been theorist Maria Lugones'. What makes Lugones' works so unique and valuable is her re-articulation of Anzaldua's work as primarily concerned with articulating an affective theory. Particularly, as we see a lot of predominately white historiographies re-claim the body and affect as their own, Lugones re-enactment of Anzaldua's work reminds us that Latin@s and Black feminist scholars have been doing/living that kind of work for a long time. This chapter explores Lugones' work-- focused on her concept of *coaticue* as a complex rhetorical form-- and paying special attention to the relationship of anger to violence and agency. Her work in theory is concerned with the knowledge of and in the body and the transmissions of what might be understood as emotion or feeling. This is not surprising with her training as a feminist philosopher who has worked to decolonize both feminisms and philosophy as disciplines.

Lugones provides a topography of Anzaldúa's work, a sort of emotional geography of the borderlands of Mexico and the U.S. both physical and psychological and begins to focus her efforts on the emotion of anger. In her chapter on *Hard to Handle Anger*, Lugones' rhetorical training is clear. Lugones is not concerned with any old anger. No, she's interested in anger communicated from a space and place she coins as a "non-dominant difference." She notes she is careful not to re-appropriate Anzaldúa's path, but rather to re-enact it. By doing this she invents a new taxonomy or way of thinking about anger when articulated as the *coatlicue* and *nepantla* states.

Lugones defines and categorizes anger in "different worlds of sense" articulated as resistant, incommunicative, germinative or separatist in the name of self-care, evaluative which in her case is the most affective of dimensions, and lastly distinguished from the anger of dominators, which is a sort of emotional indifference or non-attention towards the oppressed ("Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes" 117). By discerning the various kinds of anger as articulated through a varying world of sense, Lugones reveals both the complexity of anger and agency. And that in fact the affective vocabulary Anzaldúa's 1987 work in *La Frontera/Borderlands* offered posits *coatlicue* as brooding; as a kind of invisible process of subject and ontological formation that occurs at the border, not just any state of liminality but at the limn of the colonial, modern and gendered. In fact, Lugones calls her re-inhabitation of this space "her complex incarnate memory" (*From within Germinative Stasis* 85). But what this implies is that agency in the terms in which we discuss and theorize it in rhetoric and composition fields has yet to fully engage with a theory of agency that takes into account these differences: the differences articulated from a body read as intelligible in the logics of capitalism, colonialism, modernity and

gender; specifically the queer and angry mestiz@ body. Liminality articulated from this standpoint is a different thing than liminality at large. It's a particular kind of in-between-ness. As Lugones notes, "the Coatlicue state...marks an important break with colonization" (*From Within Germinative Stasis* 93). More than a theory it is real. It feels real. It's pressing quite literally on the body. In this way Lugones posits Anzaldúa's work as a theory of energy.

In her article *From within Germinative Stasis: Creating Active Subjectivity, Resistant Agency* Lugones looks at Anzaldúa's re-activation of the flesh. Gloria Anzaldúa invokes a familiar mythology of the mestiza but alters it from a Chicana Lesbian perspective inventing a psychological taxonomy and set of strategies for resisting oppression: intimate terrorism, rage, reciprocal contempt out of shame, internalized rage and contempt which she coins the Coatlicue state (88). All unique ways of experiencing oppression.

What then is the link between anger and coalition? And not just any old anger, but anger articulated from a decolonizing position. At its root, the word coalition means, coalesce: to bring together and nourish. So, then, what place does anger have in coalition? For queer communities of color, in particular, giving up one's anger is akin to giving up oneself. Giving up one's histories. One's identities. One's bodies.

If, Coatlicue, that is a decolonizing anger in process, as we established earlier, is at its most rhetorical an act of separation, then Lugones' reading of Anzaldúa, anger poses an interesting challenge to coalitional politics. I would go as far to say that it provides a new ethics for coalition.

## Against an Intelligible Agency: Impurity, Purity, and Separation

“Anger does not promise understanding. It’s a promise *against* intelligibility.”

-Maria Lugones

So what does it mean to be angry from a particular hemispheric memory? Or to have the emergent structure of feeling of a text articulated as *coatlicue*, a state of brooding? For Lugones, anger is an affective-spatio praxis bound up in culture. It moves in not so obvious ways. One inhabits a memory of a state prior to colonization to imagine a world or sense outside the racial and colonial, the periphery, inhabiting a memory of the past as a means to transform or to be against something. In this way anger, not a simple articulation or expression, but rather bound up in the inner or outside work of the self. Anger, here is subtle in its movement. This doesn’t mean it’s not audible. But, it does mean that there is a resistance occurring that is not easily visible or seen. The emotional, spiritual work that resists “interiorization” through a complex process of transculturation resists being swallowed up by dominant culture. Anger is most often in relation to a prior violence but as read in our current political culture is decontextualized from this prior againstness or violence. What Lugones’ reading of anger or her reinhabitation of the *coatlicue* state offers us is a reevaluation in rhetoric of audience and intention. It challenges us to misread what might seem like a failure of communication. One who is angry hasn’t simply forgotten her audience, rather, she has forcefully disidentified with dominant culture’s notion of what a prudent or intelligible choice would be, because the queer *mestiz@* or *chican@* is making a “[choice] outside the domain where [she is] dominated” (86). Lugones reveals the intimacies of anger (And I must confer, these are

often my productive moments as a writer and subject). More importantly, resistance begins in affect, in feeling, with the “sense of being pressed” (89). Instead, as Lugones, notes “her memory, the control of meaning, the scope and tenor of her possibilities are ahead of her and within an ancient history of violent struggle” (90).

Lugones defines “active subjectivity” as a resistant kind of being thought felt way from the borderlands and aligns this with the less visible work of “germinative stasis” – a brooding – a self that splits away from being subsumed by white colonial culture that is a “widened sense of self” that Lugones speaks as best practiced in the repertoire of memory. This wider sense of self occurs as brooding in one’s oppressed subjectivity and it is in the multiplicity of relations, of imagining yourself in relation to other realities and oppressions that make resistance possible.

Lugones re-visits Anzaldúa’s strategies of the self: intimate terrorism, rage, reciprocal contempt, and internalized rage. Like Lugones I see power and agency in “valorizing these despised states of being” (88). For Anzaldúa, and Lugones, it is the relationship the body has to the border that “splits us from histories and possibilities through its colonial excision” (87). In anger, or the coatlicue state, another rhetorical form emerges-- liminality that inflected by a colonial memory. Or put another way, a process identity formation that Lugones would call a form of “ontological pluralism” where liberation “...lies in the fact that the oppressed know themselves in realities in which they are able to form intentions that are not among the alternatives that are possible in the world in which they are brutalized and oppressed”

*(Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes 59).*

Additionally, anger is also about self-care. It is “...rage [as] a way of isolating [the] self, of making space...pushing back” (*From within a Germinative Stasis* 91). Memory is always linked to affect or emotion. We remember our orientation to a history or place. We live presently with that orientation. There is also the caution of self-annihilation with anger or the coatlicue state invoking the maternal with the still-born images forewarned by staying in this state too long.

Lugones reinhabits Anzaldúa’s work as a means to contend with the dominant sense of intelligibility. Contempt is in opposition to being touched by the dominant body and she “exercises agency...through active withdrawal of the self” (*From within a Germinative Stasis* 92).

Western notions of communication have conceived anger as a brief madness. One that is not controlled, mastered, or managed well, but rather in a state of in-betweenness, the state of liminality from a decolonial standpoint. To pathologize rage or anger in this moment is to essentialize or see rage as the same as all others. For the queer mestiz@, Lugones reads anger or rage as an opportunity to access agency rather than not.

### **Rhetorical Implications of Anger in Queer Communities of Color-**

The modern western conception of agency orders one’s sense of responsibility toward a set of prescribed ready-made choices, none of which are compatible with liberation. Agency, in this sense, presupposes *ready-made hierarchical worlds of sense* in which individuals form intentions, make choices, and carry out actions in the ready-made terms of those worlds

– Maria Lugones, *From within Germinative Stasis: Creating Active Subjectivity, Resistant Agency*

In conversation with other feminist works on anger, Lugones observes dominant culture’s resistance to seeing anger as a positive psychology, or having use-value. More

recently, scholar Sara Ahmed has asked readers in her book, *The Promise of Happiness*, “Do we consent to happiness? And what are we consenting to, if or when we consent to happiness?” (1). I juxtapose anger against happiness here because it reveals to me what anger might be against. Anger is often viewed as being against a social ideal constructed by the dominant culture or oppressor as your refusal to be happy or get over “race” or “gendered” differences. Additionally, anger has described one’s inability to manage their emotions in relation to taboo subjects or structural violences where the angry subject simply lacks will or personal power and agency because of their preoccupation with the past’s injustices and its legacy in angry subjects’ bodies. But as Ahmed notes in the *Cultural Politics of Emotion*, “what we may feel depends on the angle of our arrival” (41). Lugones reminds the reader, that an angle of dominance might arrive on us in the form of oppression.

In the year 2010, I arrive back in my hometown of Seattle, Washington after a long illness and first failed queer relationship. I withdraw. I go into the *coatlicue state*, touching no one, no body-- for two years out of grief. It is an act of self-protection. Later, it is a shared anger that makes me fall in love again. I am thirty-four years old and I meet another queer mixed Chican@ like myself. Only the shared anger is not easy to share. There is an intimacy to anger. A queer and racial intimacy. The anger is exhausting. A certain affective fatigue sets in. It is simultaneous a move of agency and at once absolute expenditure.

I belong to a Seattle area list-serv for self-identifying Queer People of Color (QPOC). I attend a healing ceremony that insists on being whole. I feel the pressure to reconcile the parts of my life that have been grievous or angry. It is not uncommon to do

this, in our community. And maybe this is why Anzaldúa and Lugones' words spoke to me. I was in the process of healing. I still am.

I consider this when I imagine the link between anger and coalition. At the root, the word coalition means to coalesce: to bring together and nourish. So, then, what place does anger have in building coalition, particularly among queer communities of color (QPOCs)? Especially, when for communities of color, in giving up one's anger is akin to giving up oneself. Giving up one's histories. One's identities. One's body.

What Lugones' reformulation of anger articulated from the culturally specific place of the queer mestiza subject offers coalitional politics and queer communities of color is another way of reading conflict in queer movements, but also another reason to value, rather than devalue anger that comes from a queer person of color positionality. It also offers a way to imagine a better future for queer communities, a kind of critical utopic vision in its pessimism.

Sylvia Rivera is a prime example of this articulation for trans and queer persons of color movement. Rarely remembered by mainstream queer liberation movements as a queer trans latina woman, activist, Rivera, was Puerto Rican and Venezuelan heritage whose work was grounded in communities of color (like the Black Panthers and the Young Lords, a Puerto Rican nationalist group based out of Spanish Harlem) of and their most urgent issues such as housing, police abuse, gentrification, disproportionate poverty, and homeless youth. In all the scenes captured on film and in stories of her life, what is often most remembered about Rivera is her visionary anger. Deemed non-intelligible to her audiences that include white, mainstream gay liberation movements, Rivera's insistence on issues that impacted queer communities of color and her refusal to be



quieted (during Stonewall she resisted being dragged off the stage and booed off the mic) by gay mainstream's fear that she would radicalize the movement. What Lugones' theory of anger articulated from a queer mestiza sensibility tells us is that to read Rivera as simply not understanding her audience would be slighting the complexity and the subtle and not subtle movements of agency available in her anger. The againstness that Rivera's anger reveals is the conflicting and paradoxical ideologies represented in liberal discourses that promise inclusion and freedom for gay and lesbian mainstream movements and subjects at the cost of excluding queer communities of colors and their more pressing issues.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORIES OF SKIN AND FACE: DISCOURSES OF CORPOREALITY AND VISIBILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF QUEER MESTIZAJE

“If anger pricks our skin, if it makes us shudder, sweat and tremble, then it might just shudder us into new ways of being; it might just enable us to inhabit a different kind of skin, even if that skin remains marked or scarred by that which we are against.” (175)

- Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*

#### **Feeling Flesh**

Four years later, it is a different skin that touches me. A different partner. A slightly altered set of associations. I am wearing a different exterior. Lighter. Spotted and scarred. Aged by a disease and the simple wear and tear of years passing. Interpreted and constructed socially more often as *güera*: A white girl. A “passing” Chicana in Seattle.

I am struck by the fact that I never got that tattoo described in my earlier writings on the connection of skin and Coatlicue. I never finished that year. Instead, I will finish, four years later. In place of that tattoo, I wear a three-inch scar on my anatomical right arm. It zig and zags at the softest center of my inside elbow. It is a talisman of traumas. It reminds me of what has been cut out. A connection – mourning and my father. In the future, when they are to draw blood for any other tests to my health, they must use the other arm. I will have lost too much feeling there. Little can be drawn out.

Queer latina writers, like Gloria Anzaldúa, Cherríe Moraga and Maria Lugones along with many artists and activists, have extended the existential questions (How do queer latinas make meaning of themselves and the world? And just as importantly how does the world (not) make sense of them as subjects?). Second, in the realm of affect,

what does it mean to exist as a queer mestiza, or better stated, what does it mean to *feel* queer mestiz@? Maybe more accurately, how and why do I live an affective life? As we established in Chapter 2, mestizaje is a contested term with a host of historical legacies and baggage. However, theorists like Lugones have found ways to re-read mestizaje as one that attempts to work *through* and *against* notions of racial purity, impurity and separation. In its most explicit relationship to skin, mestizaje emerged simultaneously within the Americas during colonization as New Spain's racial caste system which focused mostly on discourses of skin and blood and were "...highly codified [systems] of identification grounded in visible social markers" (Taylor 87). In the last chapter, I spent a great deal of time theorizing anger articulated from the cultural memory of the Americas and I will continue that discussion by looking at the mnemonic practices associated with the rhetorics of skin and face as they related to discourses of visibility, consciousness, and alterity for texts and performances under discussion here. I theorized affect from the body of queer mestizaje-- the "coatlicue state"-- it being one of many "emergent structures of feeling" that is in resistance of the dominant culture of the period-- doing so by enacting the Pre-Columbian past and re-directing its energy to the future, *coatlicue*-- offering a complex theory of agency that is alternative to the dominant worlds of sense where agency operates.

In this chapter, I am not proposing a solution to race or gender, but rather I am more interested in sharing the connection between the varying registers of affect. If anger, does indeed "prick our skin" as Ahmed suggests in the epigraph above, or present an archive in which "we are against," what are the varying ways, tactics, or performances of skin as identity? What inscriptional practices upon the body (skin, face, hair) occur in

context of queer mestizaje or the border subject/fronteriz@? How might we read these practices as a unique set of embodied rhetorics despite the insistence of many that any focus on skin and racial identity is necessarily engaged in identity politics or needs to “blind” itself to socio-economic, gendered, or racial differences in order to overcome multiple oppressions?

### **The Relationship of Visibility, Purity, and Impurity to the Corporeal**

Rhetoric and Composition scholar, Kristie Fleckenstein’s, *Vision, Rhetoric, and Social Action in the Composition Classroom*, relies heavily on Anzaldúa’s descriptions of bodily fluids (“blood and pus and sweat”)---all things expelled from the skin-- for her notion of “corporeal rhetoric” and advancing her argument on what embodiment, corporeality, and empathic social action are to the field of rhetoric and composition. While it is clear she links the lack of visibility and feeling for women of color as the primary source of various -isms (racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.) I find it interesting that she aligns this definition of corporeal rhetorics with metaphors of injury, expulsion, and detoxification involving the skin. Here one’s interiority in relation to skin is that which exceeds incorporation. I read in this the impossibility of incorporation a melancholic refusal. It is in that refusal, not its incorporation, that agency is most productive, for Anzaldúa.

Fleckenstein’s definition of corporeal rhetoric is the path in which “...the body shapes itself into an image that becomes a word, and that image- word seeks to change some aspect of reality” (91). And yet, agency in the above is not dependent upon the word or the discursive. The skin communicates enough in this moment simply by what it

is doing or not doing. Thus, skin visibly communicates an assumed lived “bodily difference” (Alcoff 102).

Helpful in understanding this perceived bodily difference is Linda Martín Alcoff’s distinction between bodies and embodiment, a delineation that is not quite made clearly enough for me in Fleckenstein’s arguments. For Alcoff, embodiment is tentatively an active expression of identity, feeling, or the interiority in relation to a body’s visible exteriority. In bodily differences, embodiment is tangible. Visible. Experienced.

This is where skin within the structural dimensions of the Mexico/US Border or other related legacies such as the Americas becomes an interesting embodied rhetoric to analyze and phenomenologically experience as a writer. One feels the border pressing upon them. It feels the surveillance scanners diagnose the body: *nos/otras*. (We/Them)

For self-identifying queer latin@ or mestiz@ writers like Anzaldúa, Moraga, or Lugones, the skin becomes the unique embodied site of knowledge.

### **The Ontological Pluralism of Skin in Queer Mestizaje Rhetorics**

In her introduction to the anthology *Haciendo Caras/Making Face, Making Soul*, Anzaldúa notes that “*haciendo caras* has the added connotation of making *gestos subversivos*” (xv). It is a sort of defiant look [of the body] offered by queer women of color challenging dominant cultural scripts. Additionally she asserts a few lines later:

‘Face’ is the surface of the body that is the most noticeably inscribed social structures, marked by instructions on how to be *mujer*, *macho*, *working class*, *Chicana*. As *mestizas*, [being mixed]--we have different surfaces for each aspect of identity, each inscribed by a particular subculture. We are ‘written’ all over...carved, tattooed with the sharp needles of experience.” (xv)

The metaphors that frame the anthology, are ones most closely associated with the skin. The surface of the body. Be it the face or the masks/las máscaras and interfaces between the layers of our experiencing body. What is significant as I read these lines now is where Anzaldúa locates her metaphors or what theorist Jay Prosser might coin as “skin memories”-- a boundary pushing re-membering that goes beyond the discursive or simple narratives of the body’s surface. Instead, for Anzaldúa she marks the skin and face by re-appropriating the cultural memory of Moyocoyani, the creator in the Aztec mythology, a memory located prior to colonization. In this *nahauas* tradition, the face represented metonymically, the body with the face, and the heart, the soul. The face was equated with action.

Agency, in this moment locates itself in the specific skin memory of the Americas. By doing so, the anthology imagines queer mestizas and other queer women of color she finds coalition with as having a say in their own bodily making and unmaking. Additionally, what is even more resolute is tone of the skin memories invoked. For Anzaldúa, even though she reads agency in these faces, they are layered with “self-hatred and other internalized oppressions” (xv). It is “inside the skin” that shame or the need to “pass” as “white” or “feminine” resides. Anzaldúa goes on to argue, “When our caras [faces or skin] do not live up to the “image” that the family or community wants us to wear and when we rebel against the engraving of our bodies, we experience ostracism, alienation, isolation, and shame” (xv). Anzaldúa’s discussion of these metaphors of face and by extension skin are populated by a sense of mourning. As a sense of cultural contest that has broken limbs, broken skin.

If melancholy, a feeling of loss or separation is inscribed upon the body, it is most likely, as Anzaldúa posits, within and upon the skin of the queer mestiza subject. At the same time, Prosser's understanding of skin memories also challenges the degree of consciousness or the kinds of control we try to exert over our skin. Writers like Maria Lugones who have redeployed Anzaldúa's embodied and corporeal rhetorics complicate and re-invent agency as noted in the last chapter through the very temporal and spatial qualities embedded in the mestiza subject's bodily surfaces.

Ahmed's opening quote is not suggesting we leave the wound open, but rather that we allow it to be seen. Visible. It then becomes much like anger, an image of a deeper pain or injury. Past the skin. It is, as Lauren Berlant argues, "an index of duration" (qtd in Seigworth and Gregg 25).

Skin is the interface between how one feels and how one appears to the world. In this there is the identity you are expected to perform. Here visibility narrates not only memory but temporality. Time marks the skin and can also be concealed. However, time is not the only affect. For queer communities of color, whose difference is marked quite visibly on the skin, skin is both the site of trauma, excessive violence and surveillance technologies that seeks to diagnose - to know through the skin in order to figure out whether a body belongs or does not belong.

Additionally, the skin is its own border. It is a threshold between the body and its cognitive and affective lives. It is with the skin that one feels, experiences, and renders the world. It is through this rendering that one can gain an account of consciousness. Phenomenologically, the study of skin has informed this chapter.

In the works of Anzaldúa, Moraga, as well as other Latin@ activists and artists, the skin becomes a site of knowing - an epistemology or site of knowledge production. It is also, most importantly, a site of resistance. This resistance is a response to what Alcoff has termed the set of “perceptual practices” which inform how we read visible difference including gender and race in and on the body (126). For Alcoff it is these identities that both “structure our contemporary perception...[and] constitute the necessary background from which [one knows] the world” (126). In other words, visibility alone, the skin, the body, does not ensure nor explain the perception of identities. In fact, it is through these discourses of queer mestiz@ skin that there is a larger and varied context in which one can be interpellated uniquely. This is particularly true for the queer mestiz@ subject because the concept of mestizaje begins with the tension between purity and impurity in many respects.

In her section about visible and embodied identities, Alcoff is interested in challenging the early dismissal of claims of race and gender experienced in the realm of the visible, thus erasing these differences through its own blindness in favor of a universal human subject. Alcoff examines what she calls “the ideology of visibility” when she observes:

Visibility is also vital to how race and gender operate in the social world to allocate rules and to structure interactions. Thus, the experience of embodiment is in important respects a racialized and gender-differentiated experience. (103)

I read this as resisting an early adjournment of alterity experienced in relation to skin.

Alterity, or the experience of Otherness, for the queer mestiz@ subject has largely been figured through the tension of bodily difference between the colonized indigenous body



as well as the colonizer. No one has theorized this better than Maria Lugones in her distinction between impurity, purity, and the act of separation. It is the tension of impurity and purity that is inherent in the mestizaje identity that creates the experience of simultaneity. This simultaneous identity of being both colonizer and colonized, both “pure” and “impure” in skin or blood quantum (mixed blood) has been one of ongoing internal conflict and grief.

While my experience does not speak for all queer latin@s or mestiz@s<sup>18</sup>, there is a sense of grief over having a mixed identity that simultaneously is made up of the colonizer who decimated, destroyed, subjugated, and oppressed the indigenous half that makes up the mestizaje.

In chapter two of Maria Lugones’ *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, she talks about skin as a type of “desiderata,” which means *desired things*. Here desire is related to touch. Additionally, one can only feel through this touching. And brooding is a type of touching that connects anger and affect to the skin, the corporeal. Lugones reinterprets Anzaldúa’s *coatlicue* state as a unique embodiment of the Américas that *touches* the past mnemonically.

The skin is then a site of memorialization. It is a site of remembrance and materialization. For Lugones, to be angry is to feel the lived difference of bodies. To record it in the skin. To be held there in the epidermis. And perhaps to carry it forward

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<sup>18</sup> I say this conscious to the fact that not all self-identifying queer latin@s or mestiz@s feel this conflict nor identify with the colonizer aspect of mestizaje. Many, like Anzaldúa, identify more with their indigenous roots because of what her skin communicated. Whereas, others, like Moraga, have given more time to theorizing the experience of being a güera (light skinned Mexican), a vendida (sell out) or poch@ (assimilated Mexican-American).

into the future. In fact, skin is the location responsible for generating Lugones' anti-oppression and coalition theories.

For Lugones, skin is where lived difference brings forth consciousness. It is through the experience of difference and otherness in a queer mestiz@ body that their awareness is raised or changed. Anzaldúa called this mestiza consciousness. For Lugones, as it was Anzaldúa, the skin of the mestiz@ body is where this physical, emotional, and geographical border between Mexico and the United States is tethered.

Scholars frequently discuss Jacques Derrida's explanation of the relationships among subjectivity, writing, and violence. Unlike Derrida, Anzaldúa locates the relationships of subjectivity, writing, healing, and violence within her postcolonial critique of the geopolitical space of Southwest borderlands.

For Anzaldúa, writing signifies subjectivity rendered legible. She also treats writing as deeply paradoxical in its ability to heal and to hurt. In her view, writing signifies healing the colonized body by reconstructing and reunifying it--a process that occurs when a writer confronts the traumatic past. For her, healing does not mean forgetting the tragedies of the past or simply surmounting one's anger about those tragedies. Instead, she argues, anger is one way to dwell in the past as a means of creating a new relationship with the past in order to heal. Writing, she contends, can heal because it can serve as a means of creating one's own subjectivity and agency as one wrestles with the past and is angered about it.

While recognizing the capacity of writing to heal, Anzaldúa simultaneously claims that writing is a form of violence theorized through metaphors of skin because it is linked to a colonial violence against the subjugated body. In other words, she regards

writing as a struggle inasmuch as any postcolonial writer writes under the weight of centuries of violent colonialism imposed by a European societies on its victims in the Western Hemisphere. This struggle, she maintains, is linked to violence.

Building on Anzaldúa, Lugones emphasizes the positive possibilities of writing, championing it as a means to revise subjectivity in order to achieve liberation. For her, anger can fuel writing that is capable of extricating writers and readers alike from the violence of colonialism. She insists that, like the body, writing is performance.

I would like to push their important concepts. Although Anzaldúa, in particular, is fairly well-known in our profession, scholars and anthologists sometimes downplay her emphasis on anger. I underscore the importance of remembering and confronting the violence of colonialism through performances of the body and of writing. Such memories and such confrontations often entail a resurgence of anger, which are inextricably implicated in writing.

Writing is both the weapon of choice for Anzaldúa and Lugones to articulate their theories, but the tension is also present in the wounding and cutting of the body, skin, and face. Here skin is in opposition to writing. Scholar, José Rabasa remarks on this memorial dissonance inherent in the writing process for subaltern subjects of the Americas. Historicizing his claims colonialisms of New Spain in New Mexico and Florida, he notes, “Writing entails power structures: writing as the memory of subordination, as the result of theft, as the erasure of culture, as the process of territorialization...” (14). For Rabasa, as well as Lugones in her re-deployment of Anzaldúa, “writing codifies and legitimates violence against groups” (Rabasa 14). What

is unique however, is how Lugones writes through this violence, both in the register of affect (affectively) and epistemically.

I argue that the writing or perhaps, more broadly for Lugones, communication, by the queer latina or mestiza subject, has a unique rhetorical possibility or opportunity. For Lugones, intelligence and the body are not at odds with one another. This is important when we think of how various writing and rhetoric historiographies remember the body and knowledge as being diametrically opposed to one another. In fact, for Lugones, the “self in-between” or the liminal Latina lesbian (*jota*, *tortillera*, or *ambiente*) subject begins to know and invent her being or subjectivity differently through the body. Anger, as discussed in the previous chapter, becomes a way to activate the queer mestiza body with specific and at times dual memories of the Americas that then become a site of identification that invents new ways of being. I see this as different from simply celebrating or manifesting difference. Instead, I see Lugones’ re-embodiment with these memories in her redeployment of Anzaldúa’s *coatlicue state* as an attempt to link the writing process and its creativity and invention to the competing memories of its violence in the Americas. Doing something with the “discourses of domination” perhaps never intended (Rabasa 14).

Here, skin is in opposition to writing. Writing is a violence theorized through metaphors of skin because it is linking a colonial violence of skin to an embodiment. Writing is both the weapon of choice for them to articulate their theories, but the tension is also present in the wounding and cutting of the body, skin, and face. In this border context, there can be no theory of affect without skin.

## CHAPTER 4

### HEMISPHERIC MOURNINGS: OBJECTS OF RESONANCE AND QUEER

#### DIASPORA IN THE AMERICAS

Knowing the color of the sky is far more important than counting clouds. Or to put it another way, the most radical art is not protest art, but art that takes us to another place, envisions a different way of seeing, perhaps, a different way of feeling.

– Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: Black Radical Imagination*

Cultural memory is, among other things, a practice, an act of imagination and interconnection. The Intermediary begins to imagine her heart—her memory. Memory is embodied and sensual, that is conjured through the senses; it links the deeply private with social, even official, practices...Memory like the heart, beats beyond our capacity to control it, a lifeline between past and future.

– Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*

#### **A Queer Assemblage**

<http://Arrizón.youtube.com/watch?v=JkqlmMmPGT8>

The short film linked above, *Hemispheric Memories: En cada mente, su propio mundo*, co-created with friend, Alan Smith over the past two weeks, was no doubt an attempt to re-understand loss and melancholia, and perhaps even alter its effects. The film is not only disorienting for the viewer because of the quality of the original VHS film, but its parts, like memory, are incomplete; assemblages of what I gathered as the most salient moments of loss, awkwardness, identity, and the familial of all bodies involved. I picked these 9 minutes and 40 seconds of images out of an archive of roughly two hours of film taken during a Martinez-Baca Family reunion in 1994 near Chama, New Mexico because

it offered the most revealing tensions about the relation of memory and affect to identity. Specifically, if I can claim as much, I would say these are first and foremost poch@ memories.

### **Poch@ as Queer Racial Melancholia**

I became interested in Cruz's invitation for me to posit poch@ as a form of queer racial melancholia for a number of reasons. In two critical texts I was reading, *The Feeling of Kinship: Queer Liberalism and the Racialization of Intimacy*, and *A Dialogue on Racial Melancholia*, author David Eng makes an interesting claim. By and large, structures of feeling like intimacy, privacy, home or freedom were "given ideological support" through the colonial legacies of New World material conditions like that of slavery and diaspora (12). Such an observation notes the colonial and racial dimensions that such structures of feeling carry. I see poch@ as a potential structure of feeling that is a product of these sorts of legacies.

*In Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, where Eng's dialogue with Shinshee Han appears, the authors attempt to carefully investigate "depathologized structures of feeling" (344) and see marginalized people not as permanently "damaged" or incomplete subjects, but as subjects in "conflict" (363). Eng goes on to describe the sorts of struggles he saw among many of his Asian American students who experienced depression or conflict over issues of assimilation, immigration, and language. Similarly, work like that of sociology professor Gabriela Sandoval's, uses Anzaldúa's notion of Coatlicue state and mestiz@ consciousness to help explain self-injury among Latinas as a way of coping with the complexity of societal violence. Her use of Coatlicue, one particular expression of melancholia of the Americas, attempts to detach the stigma of self-injury to the

individual, not to valorize the practice, but to recast it as a larger effect, an expression of melancholia on the skin, and an attempt to mark on the body publicly, very private losses, the kind of losses not sanctioned in everyday discourse.

Poch@ shares this similar strand of concern. Largely defined as a Mexican-American who is rejected or assimilated into dominant culture, this rejection has mostly been linked to the language or discourse one uses. I want to re-inflect the term with another shade of meaning or possibility. Or better stated, a similar meaning but from a different register. Of course the questions become for us then, in the context of positing poch@ as an expression of queer racial melancholia, what are we mourning? Grieving? And specifically, what have we lost?

When I think of the word poch@, being the word nerd I am, I can't help but link it to its literal meaning—bruised fruit, and all that this image conjures up for me. At its most literal, I think of the skin. A distinct marked difference. A record of activity. I also imagine the labor, networks of capital, and communities connected to fruit as an industry. I think of fruta and its link to idiomas surrounding one's sexuality. I think of strange fruit and artist Ken Gonzales-Day's work that makes the absent present in his Erased Lynchings and Hang Trees series which chronicles "19th Century concepts of difference" as a reason for immigrant latin@s in the Western United States to be hung at a time when black lynchings were epidemic and horrifically spectated as a norm. I think of Communication professor and GLBTQ activist Karma Chávez's work on Victoria Arellano, a transgender immigrant who was denied AIDS medication while being detained by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in San Pedro, California and who later died while in custody because of inadequate care. These are some other

hemispheric memories that largely go unseen or unfelt. These are the sorts of losses we grieve for, but often don't have a discursive space to do so, perhaps, because discourse is not enough.

When I have spoken of my work in these ways many have responded to it as a form of re-victimization or identity politics. The response is, "Well, eventually we need to get over it." Another form this takes is looking only for positive representations of latin@s as in studying the rhetorics or emotional discourses of hope or pride contextualized within various hemispheric or Latin@ contexts. Our "political present" directs us otherwise. Rather, we need to dwell in these "despised states" (shame, brooding, grief...) a little longer or the very least feel their generative possibilities.

In this way, we can read poch@ as queer. Queer because its methods rely on a non-normative approach. I also read poch@ as "a conflict, rather than the damage" within the "continuum between mourning and melancholia" of an idealized form, never subsumed by idealized feelings or affects around the experience of being Mexican-American or mestiz@ but in a constant state of negotiating the demands of institutions, history, and society (Eng 363). Poch@ then is not an essential estrangement, an essential difference, nor an essential lack, but rather a state of constantly negotiating these various structures of feelings.

### **Genealogies of Affect in the Americas**

I think conceiving of poch@ as a form of queer racial melancholia and similar lines of inquiry are important and timely. Affect studies or what has been coined within many disciplines (including Rhetoric and Composition) as the affective turn (perceived as renewed interest in embodiment, corporeal rhetoric, and emotions) has for the most part



continued to cite hemispheric rhetorics that analyze and theorize affect in the Americas as only “mining emotions,” but not much more (Micciche 16). Largely, the affective (re)turn or (re)valuing of “emotion’s rhetoricity” has by and large returned to Greco-Roman traditions in what appears to be a seamless recovery of the body for the discipline’s already unchallenged historiography. Doing so whether intentional or not erases the contributions writers, artists, and activists have long understood as an interstitial life: one felt, lived, and experienced in and on the body among other bodies—because of identities.

There are exceptions of course. Outside of the discipline of rhetoric and composition, Anne Cvetkovich and Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano’s assessments of Cherrie Moraga’s work are sustained and refreshing to say the least. And within the discipline itself, Kristie Fleckenstein’s work, *Vision, Rhetoric, and Social Action in the Composition Classroom* while greatly indebted to Cicero and Kenneth Burke for rhetorical concepts of antinomy and agency, is one of the first more mainstream composition and pedagogy books to engage rather than simply cite a hemispheric writer or artist, when she dedicates at least ten pages of discussion to performance artist Coco Fusco as a way of theorizing “empathic social action” and “corporeal rhetoric.” Still, I want to push the presence of these theories within dominant conversations about pathos and agency that preoccupy our field further.

What if we placed María Lugones’ rhetorical theory of “active subjectivity/resistant agency” or “brooding” as a “complex incarnate memory” linked to invention which emerges as a re-enactment of Anzaldúa’s concept of Coatlicue alongside Fleckenstein’s discussion of agenic invention? What if we understood Lugones’ concept

of brooding as a much more complex, rhetorical form? An even more productive question we might begin to ask instead is: what does affect/emotion/ways of feeling do in the context of the Americas? And what would a methodology that frames itself around affect within in the Americas look like? Or to put it another way, what might a *poch@* methodology or politic look like if affect were its terms?

As a scholar, my work has attempted to map out a genealogy of affect within the Americas. The affective vocabulary I've encountered (and in no way is this list exhaustive) includes such concepts as *coatlicue state*, *la facultad*, *intimate terrorism*, *nepantla*, *conocimiento*, *wounded skin*, *vendida*, and now *poch@*.

### **A Not So Final Cut—Una herida abierta**

To keep the wound open, or to engage in a “living melancholia” –a “refusal to view identities under social erasure as individual pathology and permanent damage” and instead commit to its “communal appropriation” is indeed a difficult and exhausting task (Eng and Han 366). In this exhaustion, I want to come back to the film that begins this blog entry and the reason for the two epigraphs by Robin D.G. Kelley and Diana Taylor.

In the past few years I have experienced what queer theorist, Anne Cvetkovich would call “an affective life.” It is a life where “[an] archive of emotions [has resulted] from ungrievable losses...” called into question for me long held assumptions about agency, memory within the body, and the effects of trauma not just on an individual but collectively (qtd. in Eng and Kazanjian 15). This affective life I speak of consisted of a few things in the span of two years: First, I lost my father not to death, but to unspeakable trauma, and thus I lost a living link to my identity as a *latin@*. That same year I was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). A year later after moving to

Tallahassee, Florida from Arizona, I lost my partner from the stress that illness put on our relationship and the very real struggles queer people encounter daily, advocating on behalf of, or for the rights and health of their loved ones in a system that does not recognize their relationship as valid in the first place.

As if this loss were not enough, my illness was one that literally made my body disappear. I had nerve damage caused by an earlier viral infection which left my stomach paralyzed, among other things and made it so that I could not digest food. This condition went misdiagnosed for nearly eight months. Even with a diagnosis there was no treatment but hope that with time it would slowly heal. I witnessed, as if outside myself, the body rebel.

In doing so, I began to question the way we largely make the individual body responsible without accounting for its history of affects, nor the effect it has on others. Despite no clear etiology, one fact remained. The muscles of my body had remembered, recorded years of trauma, but my mind, which was part of that body, forgot. One reaction to the intensity of these experiences in such a short period was the loss of my memory. A year later I am just beginning to recall things that happened.

Days before Cruz sent me a Facebook message asking if I'd like to write for his blog, I found among a stack of unpacked boxes a DVD recording of a 1994 Baca-Martínez Family Reunion. The day my father gave it to me, two days before his 50th birthday, was the last time I ever spoke or saw my father in person.

The title of the film came from a *dicho* my close friend and poet, Fernando Pérez, shared with me. The saying was in response to losing a close friend of ours who took his own life. In trying to make sense of this loss, Fernando's father tells him in Spanish over

the phone, essentially “In each person’s mind is their own world.” I selected this saying or because it is both true and not. While much of our thoughts and feelings may stay private, the way we relate to the world is largely through emotion and the bodies that feel, experience, and produce these emotions with us.

Making this film was a way of altering or transforming memory in a way that produces a new feeling, imagines another path and therefore a new relation to its history and the history it purports to tell. The process included erasing some voices in certain places and looping or splicing them in at others:

**Frame 1.** That is my great-grandmother, Theodora Baca Martínez, correcting my grandfather’s memory. She moves seamlessly in translation. This was our first house.

**Frame 2.** I try to imagine the interior life of my father. The sorts of longing he had behind his VHS camcorder capturing his history. A biracial, bicultural son. He was raised by his single-mother, a blond haired, blue-eyed daughter of German and Scandinavian immigrant farmers. On weekends he visited his father’s family in Ogden; the same families you see gathered here in these moving frames. I imagine a longing to know. A sense of grief or loss over a tongue that won’t turn, trill, or move in the ways it wishes it could.

**Frame 3.** This collection of film was the last thing my father gave to me. I have not spoken to him in over three years. This same year, 2008, I fall in love. This is also the same year I am diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. This is not to say the two, love and trauma, are related.

**Frame 4.** Pocho/a. Bruised fruit. Discoloring of skin. A queer feeling.

**Frame 5.** Memory in Mexica thought resided in the heart rather than the head. This gives new meanings to pulling at the heart strings, arrhythmia, and the fact my father had to have his fixed.

**Frame 6.** If this is indeed the living museum, between my hand, sweeping red rock and canyon, I want to know then, who is its uneasy curator?

**Frame 7.** Even in pain I was an unusually happy and smiling kid. But in these moving pictures, I am awkward, uncomfortable, picking at my skin.

**Frame 8.** One of my students from last quarter reminds me that nostalgia means home-sick. I think of my grandfather's phrase which Alan and I engineer and make a refrain: There used to be home.

**Frame 9.** This is the last time you say out loud, I love you. Years later, I still think your body will bloom back and walk through the door waiting for me to greet you with my mouth. Instead, I am stuck with candles and virgins that bear your same name.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION: PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF A QUEER HEMISPHERIC METHODOLOGY ON WRITING PROGRAMS

Barrio Resurrected: San Pablo as Counter-memory for WPA Work

The presence of those who have lived  
in these crumbling adobes  
lingers in the air  
like a picture  
removed  
leaves its former presence on the wall.

– Jimmy Santiago Baca, *Martín & Meditations on the South Valley*

#### **Introduction**

In his inquiry of what it means to be an intellectual of a diasporic or *migra* past, *A Chicano Farmworker in Academe*, Adalberto Aguirre Jr. asserts even when minority or subaltern faculty members are “actively solicited when a minority applicant applies” rarely does their participation extend outside of these types of activities and thus places minority faculty in a “segregated context in academe” (19). Aguirre’s charge is one I have considered for a long time. Institutions are not without history and I was particularly fascinated when I first began encountering scholarship on writing program administration how these histories played out as an interested rhetorical form<sup>19</sup>.

My project has changed a great deal over the past five years since I initially took this up in my first Ph.D. course at Arizona State University taught by Duane Roen. The course worked hard to acquaint mostly rhetoric and composition graduate students, all

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<sup>19</sup> I’m invoking both Scott Lyons and Jeanne Gunners’ observations that treaties, policies, and histories are all very rhetorical and “interested” forms.

potentially who would serve as administrators in a writing program at some time in their career, with the scholarship and issues they may encounter in such a position. Exactly in the way Laura Micciche warns in chapter four of *Doing Emotion: Rhetoric, Writing, Teaching*, I presumed that Writing Program Administrators (WPAs) “seemed to occupy a powerful location” (74). No doubt it is a dangerous move to perhaps over-valorize the power a WPA has, but at the time I was more troubled with what I perceived to be the lack of desire (and understandably so I soon realized), for subaltern intellectuals to attain this perceived powerful and influential position. What I found was very little has been written yet in the way of writing program administration leadership that addressed race or the colonial legacies embedded in these programs” practices in much of the required reading for Graduate Students interested in WPA Scholarship. As well, other graduate students seemed resistant to my pushing our conversations in these directions. I also wanted to see a more critical engagement with how this gap in representation may explode the ways in which we continue to construct a historical narrative of WPA scholarship, or better yet, a critical genealogy<sup>20</sup> of writing program leadership and writing programs very contextualized, institutional relations to writing. Unlike the beginnings of this project that seemed more concerned with answering, “Why are subaltern intellectuals or minority scholars not yet included in the discussions of WPA work, or what could this “unique intelligence” or “experience of marginalization” add to WPA scholarship?” is now less interested with essentializing these “subaltern traits” than it is with inventing an opening to a colonial critique of writing program’s narrow historiography of rhetoric and composition as its “founding” point of departure for the development of program design.

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<sup>20</sup> Foucault’s method of seeking sometimes contradictory, even simultaneous traces of influence that inform the field of Rhetoric and Composition and relationally WPA orientations.

My work also wants to give a resistant reading to the origin of subaltern history within Writing Programs— which tend to relegate the inclusion of minority history or intellectuals of color with the advent of Open Admissions in the U.S. as if minorities have never been makers of their own histories and as if they are always “lagging” behind the dominant’s vision of attaining a certain, preferred knowledge. Such a view of their participation confines the subaltern or minority subject to the role of the “to be accommodated.” My research comes out of theorizing and occupying the space of Tempe over five years (with a keen interest in Xican@ histories) allowing me to see the work of Writing Program administrators differently. In essence this paper is my sharing of that process.

I also knew after my pilgrimage to the many local Arizona archives and spaces, in the same way that recent works such as Damián Baca’s, *Mestiz@ Scripts, Digital Migrations, and the Territories of Writing*, provokes, that there continues to exist the need for a hemispheric account of writing and rhetorical histories to influence our administrative work and our theories of writing programs. Baca’s call for example, resets the origins of Mestiz@<sup>21</sup> writings to an ancient time as well as a re-mediated scene of writing in the present that is contingent on past and current colonialisms (2). My work here attempts to theorize WPA work as a cultural production re-seen within a Latin@ Subaltern<sup>22</sup> bent that closely engages with the cultural and rhetorical theories put forth by

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<sup>21</sup> While Baca uses the term Mestiz@ throughout his work to connote “the larger milieu of Latinidad,” I use the term Xican@ most often associated with writer, Cherríe L. Moraga’s de-colonial attempts to re-install a queer and indigenous past. While I understand the critiques against misappropriation and nostalgia, those who read Moraga as doing such miss the subversive nature of her work. I continue to use the term Xican@ throughout because I rely most heavily on Queer Xicanas for my archival sense, and for the sake of consistency. Of course, some slippages are sure to occur.



Walter Mignolo, Diana Taylor and Damián Baca among others. The final section of this paper hopes to put forth a critical and interpretive framework for evaluating the local and historical relation of WPA programs to its often complicatedly performed institutional obligations.

My provocation is writing program administration re-thought through the processes of *subalternization*. When I say subalternization, I mean understanding the process of subjugation and its relation to writing instruction and writing imagined. In particular, I am interested in imagining what a counter-memory<sup>23</sup> would do rhetorically as a departure point for archival work that has begun to frame the futures of writing programs and the theoretical turns that WPA work could some day take. To repose the questions already implied of composition and rhetorical studies in the most recent special edition of *College English*, Writing, Rhetoric, and Latinidad, *what happens when we invent, imagine [writing programs] from a different memory or a broader history of rhetoric within the Americas?* (561) What would it *do* or mean to WPA scholarship? Additionally, how do begin to include newer, rich theories from these histories that force writing administrators to broaden their own notions of how knowledge is archived and transmitted?

### **Re-Framing Time- Memory and Discontinuity within WPA Work**

“Historiography ascribes “the migrant” (including succeeding generations n<sup>th</sup> level) a flat, one-dimensional existence in which s/he has always just arrived, thus existing only in the present, but like a time traveler

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<sup>22</sup> I say Latin@ subaltern in reference to the strand of marxist and global critiques that formed out of scholars in the Americas who were particularly concerned with understanding a colonial dimension that was somewhat absent from other strands of marxism. These group of theorists were also concerned with understanding the potentiality of border intellectuals and the role languages play in knowledge making and colonializing processes.

<sup>23</sup> See performance theorist Joseph Roach’s use of Foucault’s term.

simultaneously hailing from a culture that is centuries (or in the case of Africa, millennia) behind, thus making him/her the representative of a past without connection to or influence on the host society's history." (653)

– Fatima El-Tayeb

As I look through the five-hundred thirty eight pages of Stuart C. Brown and Theresa Enos's *Writing Program Administrator's Resource: A Guide to Reflective Institutional Practice* (2002), I notice that excluded from this compilation is any work which acutely takes up colonial or globalizing dimensions of writing program histories. This may be because, in general, the field of rhetoric and composition and writing programs continue to locate their "original" history in such narratives as scholars James Berlin or Robert Connors<sup>24</sup>. While I want to be a generous reader and scholar of the work to those who have been in the field longer than I have been alive, I am reluctant to defer or surrender to the continuity of our field's history too quickly. Such a surrendering erases subtleties of how race gets reconstituted, imagined, and re-performed publicly and nationally over time. Mexican-Americans at Normal School in the late 1800s (currently known as Arizona State University) during territorial and settler expansion, for example, is one history that I encountered in my research that challenges such a simple reading of minority or subaltern inclusion.

Uniquely, both Enos and Brown have been administrators in writing programs located in the Southwest<sup>25</sup> respectively among others, and I'm sure they have no doubt

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<sup>24</sup> I cite these two authors as examples, because they are the ones listed, aside Maureen Goggin, as representing Writing Program Historiographies in Brown and Enos's compilation. Baca has already taken up this argument quite well in *Mestiz@ Rhetorics*.

<sup>25</sup> I want to note that the Southwest is by no means a(n) homogenous expression of *Mestiz@* experience and culture. Each state has its own unique history and migrations.

witnessed the distinctions that places, or rather spaces<sup>26</sup>, have had on the design and futures of writing program curricula. Rather, I believe WPAs could shift their focus to the “discontinuities” of this history within Writing Program archives. The history that occupies part of my piece here is one of those discontinuous strands. Likewise this discontinuity is another way of doing what Shirley Rose announces as an archival lens—a lens that develops and cultivates “a different orientation to time” (276).

I read this announcement in the context of archives in a very specific way. For me, Rose’s “different orientation to time” is directly linked to the memories that writing programs are willing to both remember and excavate. Latin@ Subaltern theorist, Walter D. Mignolo helps me to understand the implications a new temporality or sense of time would imply in relation to the production of knowledge and geo-political and -historical locations for writing programs. The act of remembering for the WPA archivist is to invent and interpret the past excavated. It is also a politic and investment in space and time based research.

In his chapter, *Post-Occidental Reason*, Latin@ subaltern theorist, Mignolo engages in a thorough discussion and taking up of Homi Bhaba’s concept of “time-lag” in *The Location of Culture*. Mignolo notes that Bhaba saw this concept as, “the splitting of colonial discourse” as well as a “new form of colonial discourse” with “a new location of postcolonial theorizing” (119). While Bhaba’s “time-lag” for Mignolo seems to privilege and be preoccupied with a level of “agency over representation,” it signals for Mignolo the “epistemological controversy in postcoloniality is that the split subject of colonial

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<sup>26</sup> I invoke Baca’s push in his final chapter, *Mestiz@ Scripts*, for composition and rhetoric to “expand its specializations.” In other words, to focus more broadly on the “relationship between race and rhetoric” within the Americas own hemispheric memorial reserves (151).

discourse mirrors the split subject of postcolonial theorizing” (119). In other words, “time lag” seems to imply that the dominated is somehow lacking in knowledge (rhetorical understanding, literacy, languages skills, et al) or behind in the modernist project of the colonizer. Or worse, is trapped by its consciousness or the inheritance of using colonial knowledge to represent the subaltern itself (121). Mignolo’s considerations contribute greatly to my understanding the history of the Southwest, and Arizona more specifically, as yet another instance where the “coevalness” of certain colonial histories’ articulation is tacitly denied and disappears into the “enunciative present”— what Mignolo sees as the colonizer’s attempt to only see their “time,” their schedule for progress, and their discourse as the only site of enunciation. This is because the bilanguaging<sup>27</sup> effort of border intellectuals who challenge the rationality of colonial structures at their interstices, their weakest, most malleable points, does not appear to offer the same sort of knowledge (119-121).

Because I am excavating forgotten educational and administrative histories in the Southwest United States and cannot help but notice their disappearance from conversations and narratives in our field, and because I can not divorce many of the most circulated historiographies in WPA Graduate Courses from their assumptions in a certain historical continuity I, like Jeanne Gunner, tend to view WPA histories with a sort of suspicion that comes from seeing their complicity in re-enacting a cultural hegemony that does little to critique its own methods (263).

My project seeks to understand a new temporality for Writing Program practices by involving approaches to the archive that come from an array of new and emerging

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<sup>27</sup> Bilanguaging is the sort of discourse and knowledge produced by “dual memories” articulated in two or more languages (Mignolo 267).

scholarship whose critiques who have yet to be fully incorporated or engaged within the frameworks of writing programs' scholarship. My provocation also suggests that historical people offer a context and space for theorizing, teaching, and historicizing writing in a way that has often come at the expense of standardizing experience.

I have also taken WPA scholar Shirley Rose's push for WPA scholars/archivists "good research" to be "informed by current theory...that has the potential to inform future theorizing and research in these fields" (278) by inviting WPA scholars to reconsider how we are rhetorically framing our sense of disciplinary identity **and** what the archive does by bringing performance and colonial critiques as new frames to the WPA context, as well serve as a serious invitation to consider how public memory of our socio-cultural spaces in close proximity to the university are at constant play with institutional definitions and curricular imaginaries.

This burden of memory seems especially heavy in an administrative position and economy that privileges "efficiency" as much as efficacy. For this reason, I suspect when I have pushed for Writing Programs archival research to consider re-imagining and continue theorizing the *effects* new historiographies could have on Writing Program curricula we implement, I have been met with "realist" arguments who say implementing such projects would be too costly or time consuming. No doubt, these "realist paradigms" for writing have already been costly to "others."

### **A Review of Race and Colonialisms within WPA Conversations**

Jeanne Gunner's prophetic last chapter in the WPA text, *Historical Studies of WPA Individuals, Communities, and the Formation of a Discipline*, edited by Barbara

L'Eplattenier and Lisa Mastrangelo, voices some of my same concerns laid out in the previous section about the simple recovery of past WPA histories:

My concern is to maintain a critical perspective on and a contextualizing awareness of the role writing programs and WPAs have traditionally played in supporting hegemonic cultural practices, in order to ensure that this new historical move does not unintentionally reproduce the repressive practices of our earlier era and the accomodationist [my emphasis] positions that have been part of the later period of professionalization... Reconstruction is an opportunity for critique; histories are interested rhetorical forms, and our work should include examination of whose interests are being served by them.” (263-264)

In essence, the notion of a WPA as we know it is a fairly new articulation. It is an historically enunciated position often limited by the “gate-keeping function” and “procedures” that Gunner asserts “help[s] constitute more and less worthy student groups measured against the privileged form of traditional academic discourse and standardizing a curriculum that reinforce[s] this linguistic privileging” (266). If this is true, the WPA position, like writing, is trapped in the historiography of a modernist, colonial, and an inevitably “racist” project.

As recently as May 2008 in a CFP posted to the WPA-listserv by Asao B. Inoue, editors of a collection on *Race, Racism, and Writing Assessment* noted that the 2005 Census Bureau showed “45% of all children under the age of 5 years old are children of color” (CFP, 2008). Additionally, the CFP notes that such educational centers, (like the National Center for Educational Statistics’ projections in 2007 for the year 2016) show that degree-granting institutions will see an increase of about 29% Black, 45% Hispanic, 32% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 34% for American Indian or Alaska Native students (qtd. in CFP, 2008). Although the book project ties assessment most directly with race, it also calls specifically on Writing Program Administrators in the following of ways:

## Racism in Writing Program Administrations

1. How are race and ethnic categories accounted for in local writing assessments, their validation studies, test results, or consequences?
2. How do racial categories inform the construction of writing assessments, the instruments used, and/or decisions made?
3. Where is race in writing across the curriculum assessments? What might writing assessment and racial identity have to do, for example, with the “pipeline problem” in STEM?
4. How does race or racism affect or factor in writing centers and tutoring programs?

When I critique Writing Program Administration, I critique from a very specific, geographical situation and politically loaded place. I also write from very specific “hemispheric memories” of the Americas<sup>28</sup>. Arizona State University is one of the largest writing programs and universities in the country. It is also located in the colonial southwest where nearly half of its inhabitants are of Latin@ descent<sup>29</sup>, many of whom have been in Arizona for years, and were original settlers of the area in a time when the border was still imagined and seen in a somewhat more symbiotic relationship with Mexico and the U.S. and perhaps in a no less colonial, but more nuanced and historicized way.

Our students, if the above CFP and Census stats project correctly, show how urgent this project is and how remiss we would be to not take this historical moment of the WPA position to better interrogate the ways we could make the teaching of writing and communication a less colonial and less violent endeavor. Calling writing in this context, what it is— colonial— re-inflects the conversation of WPAs with the

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<sup>28</sup> See Mignolo and Baca

<sup>29</sup> According to a 2005-2007 American Community Survey by the U.S Census, Hispanics or Latinos in the City of Phoenix, Arizona alone accounted for more than 41.5 percent of the city’s population.

responsibility of more seriously re-inventing and reinterpreting historiographies and practices within the context of racism outright and moving the discourse of “exceptionalism,” “diversity,” and “multiculturalism,” that most populates those discussions into a more productive direction.

For example, in a Spring 2003 issue of the *WPA Journal*, the word “diversity” came up 15 times in various articles, including ones that discussed “globalization” in the context of Writing Programs. The word “race” occurred 5 times in this same issue, but very vaguely as an “issue,” “impact,” or “circumstance” of race. Race is most often coupled by the usual nodal of “gender” and “class” but never specifically in relation to one another. Additionally, none of these entries discussed what these terms implied within the specific contexts of the WPA administrative concerns being addressed.

Victor Villanueva punctuates this point for me perhaps more poignantly in “On the Rhetoric and Precedents of Racism”, which originally appeared in *College Composition and Communication* in June of 1999:

Because the country has always consisted of many groups (even before the first Europeans), the notion of ethnicity rings true. And because so many ethnicities still feel attachments to their ancestry, even if only as nostalgia, the concept of a cultural plurality sounds right. Ethnicity and the cultural plurality suggested by multiculturalism appeal to common sense in ways that can address racism—and sometimes they do, maybe often—but without tugging at its hegemony with the kind of force so many of us would wish. (834)

Part of what initiates a more “productive force” that Villanueva wishes for comes in the critique of language and writing instruction’s hegemony. Doing so involves a more serious uptake and incorporation of current theories that reside outside, (or better,



alongside) the typical historiographies that currently dominate our field and just importantly in the administrative and institutional practices that guide WPAs.

Similarly, the approaches and methodology towards writing and language instruction's implementation could emerge from these "coevolving" theories and remembrances to begin to articulate a new direction and space for our work, as my concluding sections hope to do. WPA work in this way, by including newer critical frames like those of Queer Xican@ theorists who trouble our simple notions of the archive with performance and affect. Or they include Latin@ Subaltern theorists who critique time, historiography, and even scholarship's role in the colonial make available for us the historical and theoretical possibilities forged and invented at these interstices of memory and theory that can in fact rearticulate WPA work.

### **The WPA as Modern Day Peregrin@**

Archeology, the dictionary says, is 'the study of material remains of past human life and activities.' More than that, it is the seedbed of memory, and its fascination comes from the leap we take into continuity.

– Josephine Jacobsen, *Artifacts of Memory*

I have gone back and forth constantly as a writer and scholar as how to integrate this section into my research. I received feedback from some of my colleagues saying that this section belonged as a footnote while others wanted to hear more of the specific sojourn into the San Pablo Barrios. This very tension of knowing what to privilege and presence and what to keep in the margins is emblematic of the larger tension about what is considered academic scholarship or worthy evidence within our own discipline of rhetoric and composition. And so, I bring that tension to the forefront in my own re-embodiment and pilgrimage within the space where my institution resides.

Heavily influenced by recent queer Xican@ scholars in Communication and Performance Theories turn towards studies of affect and embodiment of public spaces to re-understand memory as a means and process of understanding subjectivities, I decided to take a pilgrimage, to re-imagine in the act of remembering, what lay beneath and near my university. My pilgrimage was in resistance to a particular epistemic ignorance and blindness that tends to characterize colonial forgetting and perceived indecipherability. Further, my pilgrimage was an attempt to “reinstall”<sup>30</sup> a colonial and queer Xican@ difference into the histories and legacies of the university. Finally, my pilgrimage was a bodily enactment with both the archival remains and local repertoire of remembrance. I say “queer difference” alongside “colonial” because a queer approach to archival practices and writing directly challenges the normativity of these practices. Because the WPA is viewed so often as having to maintain the status quo or the normative, it is clear that queer approaches have yet to diffuse fully into conversations about WPA work.<sup>31</sup>

It was in my early career as a graduate student that I became invested and interested in Arizona’s settler history and, more closely, in the town of Tempe where my university resides, because I was invested in knowing my own history. My father’s family was Nuevo Mexicano, who had been active sowers and citizens of its land since the mid 1550’s during the founding of Santa Fe. This past year I replayed old film of when my father and I drove from Tacoma, Washington to Chama, New Mexico for a

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<sup>30</sup> I invoke Mignolo’s discussion of remapping and reinstalling colonial difference as a way to challenge the “temporal dimensions within spatial configurations” (25). Mignolo uses Laguna writer, Leslie Marmon Silko’s, “Almanac of the Dead” which re-locates Tucson, Arizona as a new center and “claim for memory” and offers a new perspective of history (25).

<sup>31</sup> While I do acknowledge that it is promising that well-known queer scholar, Jonathan Alexander did present during a Diversity Workshop at the most recent 2009 WPA Conference, WPA scholarship has a long way to go in fully integrating the implications of these theories at their racialized and gendered intersections into our administrative work and approaches.

family reunion of the Martinez side. Much of the film features me as an awkward teen walking through waist-high grasses of Los Ojos and Chama trying to imagine the lives of my grandparents who translate their stories into the camera bilingually. As I revisited these memories, I was overcome with its affect, its persuasive power in wanting to understand and excavate similar histories where I was teaching. What I uncovered was a very rich and telling history that shaded in more fully the institution's troubled history, particularly with the implementation of writing instruction, among Mexican-Americans and the Indigenous communities of Tempe.

So, one late July morning this past 2009, my close friend, poet, and colleague, Fernando Pérez and I meet at the café of one of those many strip malls that populate Arizona, attempting to be modern day *peregrin@s*. If we are devotees to anything, it is to the hard desert clay below our feet, *la tierra*, and the relation to her and her history of transgressions in order to understand, even alter, our own mutual suspicions<sup>32</sup> about the academy as a site of social progress, promise and futurity. Pilgrimages have been described as a specific rhetorical strategy, an ethnographic performance, or mnemonic activity that involves re-embodiment as a technique for critique. Bernadette Marie Calafell's definition of pilgrimage builds on Olga Davis's assertion of pilgrimage "as a way to interrogate larger cultural histories" (53). I would also add to the long list of definitions here Davis' understanding that pilgrimages also "function as community building effort" as well as perform a certain "social drama" (157). Summarizing pilgrimage's role in Calafell's performative piece, *Pro(re-)claiming Loss: A Performance*

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<sup>32</sup> See Leela Ghandi's point about this phenomenon between those trained in postmodernism or colonial critiques and others in the academy.

*Pilgrimage in Search of Malintzin Tenépal*, pilgrimage becomes a way for queer, or rather, a privileged history's non-normative subjects to be "called into the spaces of identification where lived experience is altered and potentialities are opened as identity continues to be in the making" (54). Our act of retracing where significant events took place for Mexican-Americans, Xican@ uprisings in the 1950s and earlier, and Indigenous communities in Tempe, was a way of "re-activating space" (53). The inter-subjective<sup>33</sup> quality of memory and communal role represented here by these theorists has large implications for WPAs as activist scholars.

Days leading up to the re-tracing of the Tempe barrios that existed from the late 1800s until the 1950s, we met with Chican@<sup>34</sup> Archivist Dr. Christine "Chris" Marin at Arizona State University, to whom I am greatly indebted for her own mnemonic reserves<sup>35</sup> of local knowledge of Mexican-American families in Tempe. While we spoke of the connections and possibilities archival work may have for our own, she led me to the dissertation of Laura Muñoz's, *Desert Dreams: Mexican-American Education in Arizona 1870-1930*, which challenges the traditional, continuous history of white settler domination or inevitable Anglo-expansion. Instead, Muñoz's sustained inquiry into the lives of early Mexican-American Tempeneños, along with other settler communities in frontier Arizona, confirms that Mexican-Americans played an active role in their own

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<sup>33</sup> Inter-subjectivity implies a relation between subject, and that subjects might empathize and act in a way to see and share the experiences of one another without tokenizing one's experiences, which is quite the opposite action; Tokenizing is the action of noticing one's "other" presence perhaps, but making no room for it, and worse, not recognizing an other's way of doing things. Remembering as praxis is one very rhetorical way of doing things.

<sup>34</sup> Marin is listed as the "Chican@ Research Specialist and Archivist" at ASU, hence the use of this spelling here.

<sup>35</sup> Diana Taylor cites Peggy Phalen's term in regards to views about performance genealogies and expressive movements as they interact in the "continuity" and "transference" of knowledge. Taylor goes on to critique Phalen's over reliance on a politics of visibility as presence.

education, in particular at the Tempe Normal School now known as Arizona State University. Normal is a telling word. Normal Schools, modeled after the French system (often land-grant<sup>36</sup> institutions) were established to train and set the curricula “norms” for teachers in the area.

In the days following our meeting with Dr. Marin, I read over Muñoz’s research. Muñoz’s dissertation begins with a detailed description and case study of educational formations in the settler Southwest. Her study of Mexican-American parents at the Leeds School in Apache County, for example, during the late 1800’s shows that they were incredibly active in “pursuing educational access for their children” in the form of petitioning and government participation (20-21). This participation occurred within varying social and economic classes of Mexican-Americans, mostly who were migrant populations composed of “Nuevo Mexicanos Arrizón Sonorenses” connoting a “variant history” of Mexican-American immigrants and their relationship to state institutions as active policy makers” (20-21). Muñoz goes on to provide, much like writing scholar Damián Baca has, a “new discursive territory” and makes available “a new memory” or other “traces of influence” in which writing scholars, administrators, teachers, and students in the Southwest, and Arizona more specifically, must confront (Baca 29).

The historical uncovering and excavation that Muñoz’s work continues to do is even more revealing when one sees how clearly the historical relation between writing and U.S. Imperialism is for Mexican-American communities in Arizona, and how

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<sup>36</sup> It’s important to note that the history of who is “granted land” is shared here in the story of eminent domain abuse in order for the university to expand their services and mission. Considering that Arizona education had shifted from a doctrine of biculturalism to assimilation to segregation, the year of Xican@ urban diaspora in Tempe coincides with the segregation taking place in its primary and secondary schools. For other examples of eminent domain and redevelopment abuses see “The Battle of Chávez Ravine in Los Angeles,” a la “Dodger Stadium.”

educational policies have governed language education, particularly for these communities. Mexican Americans were not and are not an inevitably dominated community, but rather a community whose identity, along with its relation to education and writing, has shifted and been continually re-performed within a very particular national imaginary over time. Muñoz's research shows that Mexican-American citizens in Arizona, and Tempeñeos as well, moved from having an educational "experience of relative biculturalism" to downright assimilation and later legalized segregation (94).

Ironically, this shift was made possible by the instrumentation of research and writing. Rearticulated through what Muñoz calls, "a culture of empire," educational policies and diagnosis with regards to language and writing as a marker of a particular intelligibility, Mexican-American children were wrongly characterized as illiterate because they were unable to speak English (64-68). Muñoz cites the harsh implications of this 1918 report by the U.S. Department of Interior and Bureau of Education's, John C. Monahan who, "in 30 weeks with the help of 5 investigators, 1700 teachers, school administrators, and state education officials along with deemed 'prominent citizens'," determined Mexican-American children incompetent learners (64-68).

Historian Gilbert Gonzalez critiques this era's particularly disturbing trend of administrative positions within education being dominated by Anglo-Americans and U.S. policy makers promoting assimilation in Mexican-American's education, "implemented policies" but "rarely possessed an understanding of either Mexican culture or Mexican children (qtd. in Muñoz 64). This particular logic of "implementation before understanding" continues to permeate much of the WPA outcomes and writing program's view of minority and subaltern discourses which have continued to see these issues as a

mostly post-Open Admissions phenomenon. These conversations should not predicate themselves on the dominant's invitation. Rather, we are already here participating with our counter-memories – or more accurately, as Indigenous rhetorics scholar Scott Lyons puts more simply, “seeking recognition at the colonized scene of writing” (13).

Muñoz's unpublished work would not be characterized as a typical piece of the archive, and that is precisely what I find so problematic about current archival notions: they rarely extend from what is already seen. But what about that which is performed by the administrative body? What about the administrative repertoire performed on a daily basis interdependent on memory of past successes and failures? Of past interactions between communities? For these reasons, writing program administrators have a particular obligation to memory in the context of their intellectual work.

The Portland Resolution adopted by the Council of Writing Program Administrators notes that the scholarship of administration should remain “cognizant of current developments in teaching, research, and scholarship in rhetoric, composition, and program administration.” Additionally, the statement on *Evaluating the Intellectual Work of Writing Program Administration* adopts the notion that “preserving... and interpreting past knowledge” and “arguing knowledge claims in order to invite criticism and revision” are key goals within the “contemporary scholarly paradigm” put forth by such professional organizations as the MLA (Brown and Stuart, Appendixes A and B, 491-517). I want to make the claim that my push to integrate more fully voices of the unique shifting histories and memories like those that I encountered in the San Pablo Barrio in Tempe would result in a more ethical and encompassing approach in the ways in which we administer rhetoric and composition programs.

This ethical obligation means extending our common notions of what the archive is and should be for this exact reason—because it may very well offer historical context and a space to theorize our work differently. It also means we should be more creative and innovative with the archive. WPAs possess, at the very least a rhetorical power and interpretive role in which to challenge our current archiving practices which seem to look at the statistics of placement, retention, enrollment, etc., but rarely interrogates the structures of those mechanisms nor offer a contextualized account of these policies. With the exception of Deany M. Cheramie’s, *Sifting through 50 years of Change-WPA at a Historically Black University* and David Gold’s, *Rhetoric at the Margins: Revising the History of Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1873-1947* very little work exists that specifically takes up this call.<sup>37</sup>

Knowing this local history helps me as a future WPA to understand and perhaps even begin to disentangle these colonial logics from their respective and contingent historical legacies.

Muñoz’s research, along with collected photos, web transcripts of interviews with residents of the San Pablo and neighboring barrios, newspaper clippings of the university’s desire to excavate what were ancient Hohokam burial sites (despite ignoring earlier requests by Jacob Moore of the Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community for the city to seriously protect and recognize the “spiritual qualities” of the nearby butte that engulf the university boundaries in the public transcript of Tempe’s Development Review Committee hearing in July of 2008) are just some examples of how cultural productions

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<sup>37</sup> Recipient, Karen S. Rowan’s, WPA 2007 Research Grant proposal doing “space and place” based research on the Writing Centers at Minority Serving Institutions such as HBCUs, HSIs, and TSIs was the first of its kind that appeared in the Online WPA Journal archives.



both from inside the institution and, more importantly perhaps, by communities outside of it, offer clues into an *affective culture*<sup>38</sup> surrounding Arizona State University, and specifically how instruction was viewed and implemented in “another time.” Just as important, it shades the certain relationships past communities may have had with administrative centers of the university and how the rhetorical failure of promises made on behalf of the university to the Mexican-American families in Tempe, and Indigenous communities throughout Maricopa, (most often made in writing, I might add) still taint attitudes towards the institution and in particular the colonial endeavor and implementation of writing, especially at a university who still “houses” their writing program in a Department of English.<sup>39</sup>

### **Xican@ Que(e)rying- Challenging Traditional Notions of the Archival in WPA**

#### **Work**

Some of the pieces I note above are not classified typically as archival objects. Instead they are collected ephemera, transient remains sometimes made material, sometimes only told.<sup>40</sup> It is at this point in my study where a queer Xican@ rhetorical

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<sup>38</sup> See Laura R. Micciche’s work in the discipline of rhetoric and composition regarding the affective turn.

<sup>39</sup> These programmatic views of instruction and its implementation are directly connected to views of the archive. The Writing Program at ASU Main campus for example has yet to put forth a statement committed to a more flexible curriculum that accounts for its local histories past and present. It has not committed itself to past communities that it purports to serve. Normal Schools, while they did employ the colonial norms of language and literacy of the time, still served as counter parts to the elite private schools, the schools that most WP Historiographies are based on. Ironically, this serving the public is becoming less “normal” at my university where public education becomes more and privatized in structure. The privatizing directly correlates in the privatizing and the cutting out of local histories in the name of economic revitalization. Administrative training that goes beyond “diversity” – liberal “tolerance”—etc. etc. may actually work to “critique” the neo-colonial rhetorics which many universities and WP readily employ and adopt—ones that ultimately in their totalizing of administrative work, erases colonial difference with tacit...terms like, “global university,” and ”entrepreneurial spirit” to name a few.

<sup>40</sup> John Howard’s queer archival work on how the gossip or “talk of the town” in Brandon, Mississippi, regarding the queer spectacle of Dabney Marshall, “walks” the reader through the town of Brandon, as a “way of generating new memories and transmitting new affects,” and urges that a queer disposition or

sensibility most informs my work. Queer Studies theorist Judith Halberstam notes that a “queer archive” is not “merely a repository” but rather “requires a nuanced theory of the archive” which entails “extending [the archive] beyond the image of place to collect material or hold documents” (169). In that way, Halberstam views the archive as a “floating signifier” that pushes for interpreters of the archives to “imagine the *lives implied*” by their [remains] (169). Halberstam is quick to give credit not to just academics whose scholarship surrounds archiving, but the “cultural producers” within communities outside such institutions (170). While I am indebted to Halberstam’s conception of queer archive for my understanding of how writing program archival practices might be challenged, I extend these notions of archive by relying heavily on Performance Studies scholar and Hemispheric Institute director at NYU, Diana Taylor’s notion of archive in tandem with the rhetorical concept of repertoire. What is unique about Taylor’s analysis in her 2003 book, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, is the implicit critique of writing as a colonial project and endeavor. In other words, constructing the notion of archive from Taylor’s standpoint, inevitably forces writing administrators and programs alike to question the “historical role writing has in sustaining power” because it presumes to anchor history or rather preserve itself in the name of efficacy and defend itself from alterability (19). Taylor’s more nuanced reading of archive displaces archive from its Greek etymological root, to mean something more than “a public building” (19). In her act of translation, Taylor demystifies the commonplaces surrounding notions of the archive’s immutability. She is also quick to

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orientation to the traditional archive might very well valorize the “gossip” or non-normative forms of legitimate documentations. Doing so, challenges the way we typically have conceived documentation strategies in WPA work, or at the very least, notes that evidence of what is or was happening can be located outside the margins of what is initially visible.

note its political dimensions, insomuch that archives are just as open to “change, corruptibility, and political manipulation” as other, less valorized forms of transmitting knowledge (19). She goes on to define the repertoire as that which “enacts embodied memory.” Taylor is wise to note that the repertoire requires a different kind of “presence” than the ones that typically characterize western ontology and subjectivities (and activities). Instead it is a presence that both “[retains] and transforms choreographies of meaning” (20). Making a similar argument as Mignolo’s “bilanguaging”—Taylor claims that the “repertoire allows for an alternative perspective on historical processes of transnational contact and invites a remapping of the Americas, this time by following the traditions of embodied practices” (20). Both practices—the archive and the repertoire, are mediated. In essence, both practices “negotiate meaning between the past and present” (21). And more importantly, their acts of remapping and re-embodying these local memories of the San Pablo Barrio and Hohokam, concern themselves with the *lives implied by the future*.

As Fernando and I retrace and reactivate the experiences of those who lived before us in the space of Tempe’s urban remains, I try to imagine the vibrant Indigenous communities like the Tohono and Akimel O’odham, who flourished along the Salt River long before colonization began in the 1500s in Arizona. As we ride past the concrete walls of a now artificial lake, I conjure up images of the many Mexican Nationals who fled the Revolution in their homeland and who enjoyed relative success as business owners and citizens with their European counterparts in the early 1900s. I think of their stores at the corner of each empty and vacant lot. I try to remember that which may not register historically. As we bike in the 117-degree heat, we are reminded of the

inhospitable—an institution. Daily we cross these streets. Streets where nearly thirty years prior to the Brown vs. the Board of Education, Adolpho Romo protested physically with his body and through legal channels in the 1925 case of Romo vs. Laird, to have his children attend the new 10<sup>th</sup> Street School in Tempe rather than the 8<sup>th</sup> Street School where Mexican-American children were segregated based on being able to speak Spanish, and were taught writing by uncertified teachers in training from the Tempe Normal School, now Arizona State University. We continue to move through the small numbered streets, parts that are still predominately Mexican-American barrios. The Barrio al Centro, also known as San Pablo, and Barrio Mickey Mouse, mark one the most recent moments in resistant Xican@ memory in Tempe in relation to the University, where long-standing families living in the barrios are forced out by the university through eminent domain abuses in order to make room for more dormitories and new sports facilities such as the football and baseball stadiums. The University makes a promise to the Xican@ of San Pablo barrios: In exchange for land, they receive employment from the university. Employment includes janitorial and gardening positions on campus. This must be the “segregated context” among many others that Aguirre warned about early on.

Often I find it a queer feeling to be on my campus. There is no nostalgia. There is no sacred feeling. Perhaps because these presences have been so carefully erased with the surgical precision of an asphalt-paver.

### **The Case of Complex Communication and Bilanguaging WPA Work**

Liberal conversation thrives on transparency and because of that it is monologized. Complex communication thrives on recognition of opacity and on reading opacity, not through assimilating the text of others to our own. Rather, it is enacted through a change in one’s own vocabulary, one’s sense of self, one’s way of living, in the extension of one’s

collective memory, through developing forms of communication that signal disruption of the reduction attempted by the oppressor. Complex communication is creative. In complex communication we create and cement relational identities, meanings that did not precede the encounter, ways of life that transcend nationalisms, root identities, and other simplifications of our imaginations.

– Maria Lugones, *Ignorance* (84)

While our field has been quick to appropriate queer Xican@ and border scholars’ metaphors to describe “boundary making” and “negotiating difference”<sup>41</sup> it has undoubtedly failed in incorporating these theories as a framework for administering.

Ultimately, I am interested in what Louise Wetherbee Phelps might call a “generous expansion and re-interpretation” of the archive and its function in relation to writing programs (11). Additionally, adding the concept of “repertoire” to current discussions regarding the WPA archive, both dependent upon one another for the transmission of institutional and programmatic affect, would be a fruitful turn in the conversation, because it might begin to legitimate and open up a space for those archives and repertoires re-mediated and re-interpreted by a new WPA to transform current administrative practices and in turn alter our curriculum.

Phelps also observes that “feelings are reinforced by critical and cultural theories that characterize power exclusively as ideological oppression” (13). While this may account for some of the reluctance, opening a space with these new frameworks is in opposition to seeing power as unilateral. Instead, as Lugones’ theory of complex communication notes, an understanding of opacity – the quality of not being easily

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<sup>41</sup> See Kenneth Bruffee’s, *Thoughts of a Fly on a Wall* where he is quoted as saying: “But margins are not boundaries. Margins are lesser, dilute, or trivial versions of what goes on at the center. In contrast, boundaries are where margins the center becomes what it is not. So, although centers define margins, boundaries define centers” (Bruffee 61).

decipherable or rather of having multiple layers and invested stakeholders or coalitional members – mirrors the complexity of most histories and most writing programs. Opacity has an interesting philosophical history and, in particular, an interesting relation to the logic of clarity and linearity. In many ways it is oppositional because it highlights the dense layers of investment often covered up by “pedagogical pragmatism<sup>42</sup>” in writing programs most often operate under.

Mignolo’s conceptual frame of “bilanguaging” – that is producing archives and repertoires of administration that don’t merely historicize the other or subjugated, but invent “from these positions new ways of knowing” – would fall under the rubric of “complex communication.” Bilanguaging, a type of border thinking and border knowing (what Mignolo calls “border gnosis”) “emerges as a displacement of this genealogy and as an effort toward restitution of location as a geopolitical and epistemological configuration of knowledge production” (Mignolo 305). This genealogy means the current genealogy preferred in our scholarship that has gone unchallenged. It means the current way of doing and knowing in our scholarship that has gone unchallenged. Enacting such a framework requires WPAs, the complex communicators and interpreters to go beyond invitation. Remarking on a point highlighted by Toni Morrison’s work on black imagination, Indigenous critic and Maori activist, Linda Tuhiwai Smith asserts that one cannot simply interpret “imagination” as a way of seeing or understanding the world. Neither can it be seen as the overly determined way in which there exists for subjects the either /or choice of being constructed in or by the world. Such a simple interpretation of how imagination “happens” flattens the way in which imagination is a way in which the

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<sup>42</sup> Term used in Muñoz’s piece when commenting on the Bureau of Education’s irresponsible diagnosis of bilingual Arizonans as “remedial” or “illiterate.”

world is “shared”. In other words, the “other words,” the struggle to translate and “find language” to “interpret and perform, within that shared imagination” invents, alters, even transforms experience materially (37). The complex languages of border thinking, border gnosis and bilanguaging is not simply an encounter... but a co-evolving phenomenon and happening.

My moment of re-embodiment of the space of the San Pablo barrios and the ancient Hohokam sites is an attempt at both remembering and inventing (sharing) new. This reading of *historical discontinuities* is in essence an act of bilanguaging that Mignolo insists that “...in certain situations and in certain colonial legacies could lead the way toward a radical epistemological transformation” or furthermore a move towards decolonizing Writing Program Administration (267).

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