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## PREFACE

This special issue of *Midwestern Miscellany* focuses on the Latino/a literary heritage of the Midwest. It consists of scholarly essays by Maria DeGuzmán, Theresa Delgadillo, and Catherine Ramírez, and a poem, introduced by its author, Rane Arroyo.<sup>1</sup>

While conducting research for my entry on “Latino / Latina Literature” in the forthcoming *Dictionary of Midwestern Literature, Volume Two*, I was pleased to encounter many Latino/a writers—gifted authors in all genres—with close ties to the Midwest. Among these Rane Arroyo, poet and playwright, responded helpfully to my many queries for information, suggestions, and finally a new poem to start off this issue.<sup>2</sup>

As for the scholars here represented, their efforts are foundational. While Latino/a literature is the subject of much research and criticism, secondary sources on specifically Midwestern Latino/a writers and texts are not easy to find. Some major authors, like Tomás Rivera, have extensive bibliographies, but their Midwestern experience and cultural underpinnings are typically understated by critics. More recent contemporaries are only beginning to attract scholarly attention. It is my hope that this special issue will not only lead to a greater recognition of Latino/a contributions to Midwestern culture, but also engender dialogue between scholars of ethnicity and those concerned with Midwestern regionalism.

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### NOTES

1. Some readers may appreciate a brief explanation of terms relating to cultural identity. *Latino*, sometimes used as a general term for people of Latin American origin in the United States, regardless of race or language, is gender-specific. It more properly refers to men (as an adjective) or an individual man (as a noun.) *Latina* refers to women or an individual woman. The composite *Latinola* (or *Latinalo*) is used in print as a gender-neutral term.

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any form without permission of the publisher.

While a bit clumsy, it is the preferred term in academic discourse. *Hispanic*, a term used by the U.S. Census, has the advantage of gender inclusiveness without the punctuation, but it is thought by many to privilege the European heritage of New World people at the expense of indigenous origins. It more properly refers to linguistic matters concerning the Spanish language.

*Chicana/o* (or *Chicana/o*) refers to Mexican-Americans. Popularized during the Mexican-American civil rights movement of the 1960s and '70s, it is gendered the same as *Latino/a*. As for Puerto Ricans, they are referred to as such whether or not they live on the island. Since Puerto Rico's status as a Commonwealth makes it part of the United States, the term *Puerto Rican-American* is redundant. Some Puerto Ricans refer to themselves as *Boricua*, a term derived from *Borinquen*, the indigenous name for Puerto Rico. Some Puerto Rican residents of New York refer to themselves as *Nuyorican*.

Among scholars of Latino/a literature, the United States is referred to as such, or as the U.S. The terms *America* and *American* are avoided because the United States is just one nation in the Americas—North, Central, and South. People in the United States, of whatever ethnicity or heritage, do not have exclusive claim to America, a name designating an entire hemisphere rather than a single nation.

2. My work as editor of this special issue was supported by a Minority Faculty Research Award from the University of Wisconsin System Institute on Race and Ethnicity, located at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. I would also like to thank my research mentor for the award period, Theresa Melendez, Coordinator of the Chicano/Latino Studies Program at Michigan State University, for her advice and assistance.

## CONTENTS

Preface		3
Compass Rose	Rane Arroyo	7
The Already Brownd Skin of "American" Modernism: Rane Arroyo's <i>Pale Ramón</i>	Maria DeGuzmán	15
Exiles, Migrants, Settlers, and Natives: Literary Representations of Chicano/as and Mexicans in the Midwest	Theresa Delgadillo	27
Alternative Cartographies: The Impact of <i>Third Woman</i> on Chicana Feminist Literature, 1981-1986	Catherine Ramírez	47

## COMPASS ROSE

RANE ARROYO

### INTRODUCTION

We have not stopped trembling yet.  
—James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*

I've always insisted that the Midwest is one of my four compass points in my identity as a poet and a human being; the other compass points are: being Puerto Rican, gay, and a member of the working class. These viewpoints / positionalities have sometimes blended and have also often argued with each other within / outside of the borders of my writing.

I was born in Chicago, Illinois, on November 15, 1954. Because of geography, I was automatically *un americano*. I grew up in this energetic city and its rather delusional suburbs, abandoned it for years in Utah as a stereotypical rebellion against the familiar. I returned to Chicago's vibrant gay and art scenes of the 1980's. When I won the Carl Sandburg Poetry Prize in 1994 for *The Singing Shark*—on my birthday weekend, in my hometown, and with the prize being named after a major figure in my dissertation about the Chicago Renaissance poets—my ties with Chicago and the greater Midwest finally felt real, permanent, and important. I returned to my new home in Toledo, Ohio with a sense of the accomplishment of having survived years of displacement.

This isn't to say that there haven't been winter mornings when I have looked out of my window at an expansive snowstorm and have wondered: *what are you doing here?* Landscape, it turns out, is a vital link to one's ancestral understandings of place. For palm trees, I now

have miles and miles of telephone poles. Other times, I can drive in the country and be struck by the beauty of light in the cornfields.

My academic career has returned me to the Midwest (Toledo, Ohio), a move that confirms my own suspicion that I'm a product of a definite historical moment, one in which the anxiety of American citizenship (also known as "normalcy") permeated all aspects of my life. I'm back to where I belong, and yet I don't always have claims to this world. Still, at last, my compass rose is unafraid of blossoming out of season and under the changing sun.

What follows is a poem from my manuscript-in-progress *The Man Who Became A Book*. The initiating idea came as a result of being a creative writing teacher of color among mostly "white" students: why must I continually define myself when those around me don't? Rather than waste time on accusations or deconstructive arguments, I started to look at how I am a member of at least four communities and how hegemony wasn't attractive to me at all. The poem "Being" offers an associative journey through simultaneous landscapes full of some of my ghosts.

#### BEING: AN ESSAY ON BEING A MIDWESTERN WRITER

A student writes: *Puerto Rico*  
is an island next to Manhattan.  
Why does it have palm trees?  
The displaced are rarely astonished

by the ignorance that becomes  
public knowledge. *How do you*  
*bury the dead on an island? Doesn't*  
*the grave fill up with the sea?*

And in workshops, classmates  
would shake their heads at my poems:  
*they look like they're written in English.*  
And José Martí is just the name of

an airport in the mythic land of  
Cuba. And mermen are the sons  
of drowned sailors. Cruise ships  
offer views, but not viewpoints.

Tourists arrive for voodoo digressions.  
My parents traded places when  
Operation Bootstrap said, go and die  
in a foreign land. Lose your language.

I can hear James Baldwin's jazz voice  
on a daily basis, *Baby, it was not meant*  
*for you to survive and you must forgive*  
*the white man, sorry.* True, I never

have imagined myself as the center  
of the fluid universe. Nor that  
it takes just a generation or two  
of immigrants to produce Republicans

haughty in their rags-to-riches-to-  
tax-breaks testimonios. Suburbs  
will be named Paz Verde, El Mar,  
Puerta del Sol, or Mi Bush. They'll

get their lion or León share of patriotic  
pig slop to hurry the Latino vote  
towards selfishness and lack of  
cultural memory and rhythms.

Students critiqued my Jamaican  
student: *but the term "yard people"*  
*sounds so alien. Write for Americans.*  
She knew I knew that she knew

what her task had to be: *Winson,*  
*grammar is evoked when the white*  
*reader can't dance to your music.*  
Not all whites, but enough. The powerless

are often the most dangerous. They want  
your gifts that they suspect have been  
stolen from them. What innocence?  
Andrew Carnegie, I evoke you when

I need to think of evil, you who  
built libraries among illiterates  
who made your puritan fortune.  
Write, my students, as if your lives

depend on the act. It always does.  
The exhaustion of being a puzzle.  
The puzzle of exhaustion. Being.  
But I have it easy, not like Daniel

who was thrown out by his jíbaro  
parents for being gay. He lived in  
a manicured storage locker except  
when he'd spend a clocked night

in a swinging Ikea bachelor pad.  
Still, he'd talk of Puerto Rico as if  
Atlantis was just a standby ticket  
away and wore his elegant black eyes

as if maps spilled with ink or dried  
blood. When young, "pirate" didn't  
seem a career option. As didn't poet,  
astronaut, rock star (Jennifer Lopez,

we know you are being stalked by  
middle-class values). Carnegie,  
I hoped for a taco stand of my own.  
Oh, academia has tried to turn me into

the family piñata: whack, whack, whack.  
I got my idiot savant street smarts Ph.D.  
in Freddy Prinze; in Ricky Martin's  
communist-like crotch deserving

a cornucopia of eyes and I do's;  
in Victor Hernández Cruz's scribbled  
séances. I am tired of the interview  
questions: *You don't look*. What?

You don't sound. What? *You sound  
educated, too much like us*. What  
a fantasy, just like affirmative  
inaction. One review of an early book:

*he is too gay and too Boriqueño*. Two  
strikes! Meeting readers is often about  
finding stray minotaurs seeking mazes.  
Not all of my thoughts are about

the issue about Puerto Rico becoming  
a state. Poor colony denied the status  
of colony. The Midwest also robbed me  
of my accent, but my cats have never

asked me about my race or affiliations.  
Once, Latinos like me worked as  
porn stars in *Pablo the Pool Boy*,  
*My Matador*, or *Aztec A\*\**. The mind

is a primal prison. Now I'm a witness  
of the worst crime: racism is the lack of  
imagination. What memories are  
embedded in places outside of the bed!

Where I teach, I'm the students'  
first contact with Spain or its  
aftermath. Or someone who doesn't  
make their Spring Break in Cancún

comfortable. They have often resented  
that my grammar is superior to their  
own, natives who don't think language  
is worth fighting for. How to prep

for the unexpected questions: *were  
you a migrant worker?* No, nene, I'm  
an American citizen upon my birth  
with the right to work in a factory

at the age of fourteen. *Do you think it's fair that literary magazines practice affirmative action?* Martín Espada has yet to be carried on the shoulder of

a virtual mob singing his virtues. *Why do you only write about foreign things?* Most of my poems are written on American soil and are rooted

in Dickinson and Whitman who understood that inclusion was the only logical choice during a double-fisted time in which

the brain dead Civil War would turn religion and blood into emblems of citizenship. And people have heard my poems, waited for the book

signings to say, *mano a mano*, "Thank you for the music." I always wanted to have a greatest hits CD, Rane the Wanderer as local loco boy

who does well and good. To be played in jukeboxes blaring early in leather mornings like in Nick & Jimmy's where the construction workers

get their dark buzz before the business of earning pay. Honest survivors, I praise you even though it's not in my job description. Poverty is colorblind.

Sure, there are flow charts that can prove that race and class are not accidental Siamese twins. But white workers are also not white,

not in the sense of power and sentient dynasties. Yet, it's always discouraging to see winners listed in *Poets & Writers* and to see so few faces of color

peering back in those black and white pages. Even now, we are herded into special theme issues in magazines and to presses heroic despite the smallness

of their distribution. Advice: write first, publish later. Who said that? Why I did, when I was a cocky twenty-eight year old poet without a degree or book and

only a few broken hearts. I was dancing shirtless in clubs in a frenzy because of AIDS/SIDA, because the Titanic seemed to be repeated with go-go boys

on the slippery deck while the band played "It's Raining Men." Again and again, until...I was strolling down Michigan Avenue between job

interviews, freed to stare at skyscrapers and think of how Sandburg was wrong. There is no democracy in buildings with pecking order, starting

with the penthouse or the best view. I come from people who are poets, but for the actual writing down of words. When one has so little—

words, a man, a cat, books, and a crazy quilt garden—the littlest gain is a drunkenness. A student interrupts, knocking on my office door, *Professor*

(that's me) *my poem is dying and no one cares*. Have you nurtured it, yelled at it, or threatened it? Have you located the poem in a real place,

like our Toledo, Ohio? The Midwest must not pass for either coast and that is our beauty. A gay Latino helping a straight student write a love poem

for "his woman" isn't in brochures—why not? It's rude that Hart Crane hasn't visited me—he who now wears the Caribbean Sea and I his Ohio

flatness. Symmetry can be a balm. I answer that first student slowly: Puerto Rico is not near Manhattan or Jerusalem or Oz. My dead do not

have wings or water wings. I was born in Chicago and have become historical just by living. I write on a student's poem: *no magic realism, but real magic*.

University of Toledo

THE ALREADY BROWNEED SKIN OF  
"AMERICAN" MODERNISM: RANE ARROYO'S  
*PALE RAMÓN*

MARIA DEGUZMÁN

Chicago-born Rane Arroyo is a contemporary Puerto Rican poet and playwright who inhabits the lyrical romances of Anglo-U.S. modernism, the poems of Wallace Stevens and Hart Crane, and wears them like a second skin. His poetry reveals not only the tangled skeins of influence, that of these canonized "American" writers upon U.S. Latina/o cultural production, but also turns inside out the skin of classic "American" modernist poetry to show it up as having taken its substance from Hispanic Caribbean history and culture. His 1998 collection of poems entitled *Pale Ramón* is written in usurping homage to, among other Anglo-U.S. modernist texts, Stevens's famous "The Idea of Order at Key West." This will not have been the first time that Wallace Stevens's poetry has inspired a Puerto Rican poet. Miguel Algarin, founder of the Nuyorican Poets Café, poet and translator of Pablo Neruda, and professor of Shakespeare began working on Wallace Stevens and Immanuel Kant for his Ph.D. thesis, eventually shifting his focus to Pablo Neruda's poems about Puerto Rico (Shodnick 146-47). When I asked Algarin about his interest in Stevens during his Spring 2000 visit to UNC-Chapel Hill, he spoke of the beauty, the gracefulness and sensuousness, of Stevens's lyric line (Algarin, conversation). And, this lyric line is about vision as much as about sound, hallmarks of Algarin's own poetry Roy Skodnick reminds readers in his afterword to Algarin's volume of poetry *Love is Hard Work* (1997). But whose vision, what vision, the vision of what, and what of the vision? How can we talk about vision without falling into a vacuous abstraction?

The case of Arroyo's extended allusion to and ingestion of Stevens's poetry in addition to the work of other U.S. modernist poets such as Hart Crane and William Carlos Williams suggests that Algarin's positioning as a Nuyorican Puerto Rican writer in relation to certain U.S. "American" modernist poets is not entirely idiosyncratic any more than it is abstract.<sup>1</sup> One may argue for a larger cultural pattern of Caribbean Latina/o and more particularly Puerto Rican reclamatory appropriations of "American" modernism. I say reclamatory appropriations to signal the act of appropriation as one of postmodernist resignification that hinges upon a historically-informed diasporic reterritorialization. I use this term "reterritorialization" to signal the other half of the operation of "deterritorialization" of which French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and French psychologist, political activist, and philosopher Félix Guattari write in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, among other works (257). By deterritorialization, Deleuze and Guattari refer to any action (action here interpreted broadly to include words, writing) that decodes or takes apart whatever is perceived as the confines (fenced-in territories, one might imagine) of psychic and sociocultural repression. So, for instance, if much of "American" modernism conceived of itself as a rebellion against earlier poetic forms and themes and utilized the foundational story of Columbus's discovery as analogy for its "make it new" venture, then the reterritorializations of subsequent Caribbean Latina/o poets vis-à-vis this modernist project are accomplished through a manipulation on their own terms of these kinds of analogies. That is, these Caribbean Latina/o poets counteract the peripheralization of Caribbean geographies and cultures as mere props in the self-mythologizing poetic stances of Anglo-U.S. modernism by recoding key intersections of history, geography, ethnicity, class, sexual identity vis-à-vis "nation" and empire, and of literary history.<sup>2</sup> Arroyo's work in particular demonstrates a diasporic sensibility that references multiple geographical locations in the process of recoding these intersections. Verses such as 1) "Chicago, let's spend my shore leave / ...in / a skyscraper bed with an unlocked view which Columbus never saw from his / lonely masts" (3-4); 2) "I stepped out, my right foot shouting of blood, / limping toward first views of the vividness / that is Puerto Rico. The airport smelled of / punk green palm trees and neon salt water" (5); 3) "The streets / of Old San Juan are narrow, dark, scarred by / the passing of empires. It's your eyes, / Glenn, that I follow to our century. / ... You unpack

a novel about vampires in heat. / San Juan throbs like a needle tattooing / a scared young runaway" (56); 4) "against the body builder's / chest, the artist projected / a hurricane in San Juan / and it was meant to mean something / about tears but I just stared at / the blue vein in the man's raised, / left armpit, not far from his fragile heart" (82); 5) "... Pale Ramón borrows / a stepladder from the moon / for a better view of his tropics. / ... / Rum lends color to the ghosts / in these red rain forests" (85); and finally 6) "Father/ asks if I copyright everything I've / written, but what's left to be stolen? / And what of my own thefts?" (16) write and rewrite official stories of the "discovery," conquest, and "possession" of "America" and in particular its historical gateway, the Caribbean, and of the poet's relation to these.

The first of the examples quoted here takes up the Eurocentric narrative of Columbus's discovery of America via the Caribbean with the ironic mimesis of the subaltern who turns the master's tropes back onto the master and suggests that for all his desire to possess, he has missed a crucial "prospect," the "unlocked view" which the diasporic Caribbean man or "Carib" contemplates in subversion of the Euro-American's acquisitive gaze. In the second example, the Puerto Rican narrator steps almost literally into the conquistador's shoes and into the U.S. modernist poet's shoes, singing of *first sightings* but in a doubly reflexive self-conscious way. I say doubly reflexive self-conscious way because with its scenario of arrival in a Puerto Rico of dazzling palms and sea despite the industrial presence of the airport (that also portends departures<sup>3</sup>) it echoes and yet also reverses the movement of something like Stevens's "Farewell to Florida" in which the poet bids adios to a feminized "South of coral and coralline sea...the ever-freshened keys" and sails to the North of "men and clouds" (117). Thus, Arroyo's poetry maps the Anglo-U.S. modernist poet's project back onto that of the *conquistadores* and *descubridores*. But it does this through the Boricua, the Puerto Rican, and in a manner that embraces and physically identifies with the materiality of this South ("my right foot shouting of blood") rather than turning this South into something ultimately left behind like Dido by Aeneas, relegated to memory, a "land...forever gone: (Stevens 118) "ghostlier demarcations" (Stevens 130) and "the ultimate elegance: the imagined land" (Stevens 250). A visceral acknowledgement of ongoing physical connection to the America of the South and the much exploited island—Puerto Rico—is, paradoxically, what sepa-

rates this Puerto Rican poet's lyric "I" from Stevens's own clever mortification of the conquistador in the figure of Crispin "the introspective voyager" (29) who nevertheless makes himself "new" through glimpses of the Other America — "In Yucatan, the Maya sonneteers / Of the Caribbean amphitheatre" (Stevens 30). These glimpses, however, do not move Stevens's Crispin to possess this America because, unlike the conquistador of five centuries ago, he must leave behind its crumbling materiality on a more noble quest for an idealist self-renewal: "And studious of a self possessing him, / That was not in him in the crusty town / From which he sailed" (Stevens 33).

That crusty, crumbling town in all its historical materiality is precisely what Arroyo's apostrophe to Glenn, an Anglo friend and/or lover who gazes at Puerto Rico and perhaps substitutes for the glimpsing Crispin, invokes in the third example I have quoted from his poetry— "The streets / of Old San Juan are narrow, dark *scarred by / the passing of empires*. It's your eyes, / Glenn, that I follow to our century. / ... You unpack a novel about vampires in heat. / San Juan throbs like a needle tattooing / a scared young runaway" (56). The town crumbles not simply from the neutral ravages of time, but from a history of colonialism, multiple colonialisms, the traces of which run like needle-tracks up and down a junkie's arm or like the convolutions of a tattoo on the skin of a young runaway. This third example and the fourth one involving the images of a hurricane projected onto a body builder's chest and a raised blue vein in a man's arm supplying blood to his fragile heart convert Stevens's subtle Platonic eroticism, usually focused on some nameless lady, the image (*la imagen*) of nature as well as of thought, or a feminized Other America (Infanta Marina, Mrs. Alfred Uruguay) into a homoeroticism more akin to yet more direct than that present in Hart Crane's work in its emphasis on the body, body fluids, and bodily processes, curiously these connected with the circulatory system, with blood—the same blood that was limping toward first views of Puerto Rico? The phrase "vampires in heat" along with the romantic reference to following Glenn's gazing eyes reminds readers of the very queerness of the figure of the vampire, a queerness that Sue-Ellen Case investigates in her marvelous essay "Tracking the Vampire." But, the vampire is also a quintessential figure for colonialism, for unequal power relations, and the nonconsensual leeching of resources from one country or body by another. However, the queerness of the vampire

figure ("vampires in heat") together with the reference to the "young runaway," very likely a street kid, work to decolonize the prescribed courtly, genteel straightness of the lyric voice, modernist or otherwise, and also, according to homeopathic or pharmakon logic, to counteract the effects of the other figuration of vampire as evil upper-class colonizer, as, in for instance, "Andrew Carnegie / ... a vampire who visits me without / an invitation. / Goddamn you, I cry out, / I pay my own rent! Get the hell out!" (48-49). Homeopathy is practiced on the principle that a very small highly refined dosage of a substance that mimics the symptoms the patient is experiencing actually enables the patient's immune system to cope with the irritation or malady. A little "poison" of the same or similar kind as what is causing the illness stimulates the immune system into active response. Homeopathy rests on a concept of the efficacy of similarity that partakes of a logic of the pharmakon. As Jacques Derrida unpacks that logic in *Dissemination*, the pharmakon is both "the remedy and the poison: or vice versa" (94). Moreover, it is the remedy to the extent that it is the poison. Arroyo's lines deploy vampires in what might be described as a postcolonial pharmakon mode.

To summarize, the third and fourth examples and other passages like these re-gender, re-sexualize, and even re-class common metaphors for exploration, colonization, and the Caribbean itself. The hurricane or *huracán*, long a symbol among Afro-Caribbeans of the Caribbean that defies colonial domination, appears projected on a male bodybuilder's chest, drawing into its vortex another man's emotions, eliciting an emotional connection to the strong man's body, paradoxically highlighting his vulnerability as a creature of flesh and blood, while recoding the gaze and the object of the gaze, and, potentially, the colonizer and the colonized out of the usual heterosexual romance structure into a scenario of homosexual desire. Though not necessarily always the case, this scenario of eroticism between two men, neither of whom is marked as colonizer or colonized and yet both of whom have been marked, one of them literally, with reminders of a colonial and counter-colonial image repertoire, "post-colonializes" the "foundational"<sup>4</sup> colonial narrative of colonization as heterosexual "romance" (a euphemistic term to be used advisedly). Moreover, Arroyo's homoerotic scenarios that re-gender and re-sexualize tropes employed by modernist poets such as Stevens, Crane, and William Carlos Williams for the discovery and "conquest" of America express a submerged and often repressed U.S.

modernism, what we might call today an incipiently postcolonial queer modernism, postcolonial to the extent that its queerness involves an attempt to dwell in a space between and perhaps beyond the traditionally gendered, sexualized, and fixed roles (male/female, valued original/imperfect, devalued copy) of colonizer and colonized. As Hart Crane wrote, "For here between two worlds, another, harsh, / This third, of water, tests the word; lo, here" (6). One might also note that references to bodybuilders and sailors create a space of class equalization along a working-class model, where both colonizer and colonized are imagined as desiring brothers of the sea, complicitous comrades and, possibly, to consider Arroyo's collection *Pale Ramón* as a whole, intimate enemies.

Finally, speaking of "the word" and of bringing to the surface other traditions within the official accounts of modernist literary production and history, the fifth and sixth examples that read "Pale Ramón borrows / a stepladder from the moon / for a better view of his tropics. / ... / Rum lends color to ghosts / in these rain forests" (85); and "Father / asks if I copyright everything I've / written, but what's left to be stolen? / And what of my own thefts?" (16) form part of an effort dispersed throughout Rane Arroyo's poetry to signal openly to his readers that his poems are indeed intertextual, dependent on borrowings from many sources, especially the work of U.S. modernist poets and, furthermore, that these borrowings were themselves borrowed. The verse that reads "Pale Ramón borrows a stepladder from the moon for a better view of his tropics" illustrates an exponential activity of borrowing. Pale Ramón is a character from Stevens's poem "The Idea of Order at Key West" (130). In Arroyo's verse, this borrowed character is borrowing a ladder to look at his tropics which can also be read "trop[e]-ics" as in conventions, narratives and figures borrowed and repeated. In the case of Arroyo's source, Stevens, what is borrowed and reiterated is the conquest of the Americas story and the figure of the conquistador. This story and that figure like Florida, the Gulf of Mexico, the islands of the Caribbean Sea, and the Spanish language itself constitute Stevens's own borrowings or one might say thefts. What would his poetry be without the "venereal soil" (Stevens 47) of Florida, the sun of the Caribbean and South America that "stands like a Spaniard as he departs / Stepping from the foyer of summer into that / Of the past: (457), the flora, however transplanted, of those climes (sugar-cane, hibiscus, the "big-finned palm" [Stevens 95], the palm at the end of

the mind), and the Spanish language of those "inquisitorial botanists" (Stevens 28)? Borrowing from Stevens, as well as Crane and Williams, Arroyo's poetry adds another layer of double vision to Stevens's famous lines from the poem that introduces "Pale Ramón" into the modernist poet's pantheon of characters:

O! Blessed rage for order, pale Ramon,  
The maker's rage to order words of the sea,  
Words of the fragrant portals, dimly-starred,  
And of ourselves and of our origins,  
In ghostlier demarcations, keener sounds. (Stevens 130)

Suddenly these "words ... of ourselves and of our origins / In ghostlier demarcations, keener sounds" suggest something besides an invocation of the ghosts of the Spaniards who colonized Florida and named it such. Those "origins" and "ghostlier demarcations" inhabit Stevens's poetry and refer as much to his debt to those "fragrant portals" of the Caribbean and Arroyo's awareness of this debt and which he figures not as a debt but as an inhabitation, a haunting cannibalization, a sort of mutual possession of skeins/skins of influence, the sunburnt Caribbean upon Stevens's poetry, Stevens's poetry upon the Chicago-born, Caribbean poet.

Arroyo's model of borrowing or "theft" as a mutual poetic cannibalization entails not so much a modernist making it "new" (for what is "new," least of all the New World?<sup>5</sup>), but an ingesting and remaking of that which he has already claimed as flesh of his flesh. And by claiming it flesh of his flesh, he does not figure his project in stark opposition to Stevens's, as the subaltern versus the colonist. No, Arroyo takes a cue from what one might describe as some of these Anglo-American modernist poets' "postcolonial" colonialism of vision. After all, Stevens's Crispin is not the usual rapacious discoverer, but an "odd" one out (Stevens 32), a self-denying abstemious sort of fellow despite his colonizing ambitions. He desires a colony of the mind's intelligence, thoughts freed of stale associations, an idealist poetry of what "is" (Stevens 41). We may recall Stevens's famous injunction—"not ideas about the thing but the thing itself." Arroyo's poetry never lets his readers forget that to "have" the thing is impossible as it has been physically remade by ideas of it, and yet, it would turn this knowledge of the effects of physical and mental colonialization into, paradoxically perhaps, "a new knowledge of reality" (Stevens 534) that not only explores, but figures in terms of

one another, the relation between subjectivity and history, between the seemingly interior and the exterior (Stevens 481), and, in Arroyo's case, the island and a diasporic identity. Stevens's poetry already confesses this kind of relation, for instances, with the verses, "A scrawny cry from outside / Seemed like a sound in his mind" (534), but most of his poems emphasize the "act of the mind" (240), a holdover of Romantic idealism within modernism. Arroyo's poems, in turn, hold on to the notion of "the act of the mind"—the weight and materiality of history in the search to make it new, cannot conjure and banish history at will, as did Stevens the idealist skeptic, to ghostlier demarcations. For Arroyo, it is too intractable, too full of injustice, assassination and silencing. A verse reads "I reject golden-boy Keats' negative / capability: nothing is nothing" (53) and the poems as a whole convey an urgency to grieve and to erect monuments of words against his and others' obliteration by a society that does not care whether a Puerto Rican, a gay person, and so on lives or dies. Hence the ironic yet lightning-quick revealing lines in the poem "Mother Gives Me A History Lesson" — "Learn from the Kennedys: Make a joyful noise and dump the bodies into history" (27) and "I vote for Democrats because ... / They also think grief is important. / See how many statues they put up during their reign?" (27). What has been described as a book of postmodern poetry by a Chicago-born Puerto-Rican poet — *Pale Ramón*—puts up its historical monuments by, among other things, historicizing Anglo-American modernism vis-à-vis its own cartographies of referentiality. And it would seem to do so because not to do so would mean to be dispossessed, to be ingested, a mere figural body or island in the deep blue sea of Anglo-American modernist adventures, Stevens and Crane, among others.

With regard to corpses not forgotten and commemorative acts in the form of the bodies of poems, Arroyo's *Pale Ramón* creates its own poetic corpus by suturing together Anglo-American modernism with Latin American modernism, at times taking cues from Stevens's own texts with their tributes to Pablo Neruda — "Things are as they seemed ... to Pablo Neruda in Ceylon" (341). In *Pale Ramón*, a poem entitled "The Exile" reads, "it is your sea, Neruda, / returned on wheels. Black hills in the midnight / are the geography of loss easily crossed and / re-crossed by this business of engines" (20). Unlike Stevens's reference to Neruda, Arroyo's reference plainly revolves around a sea-passage, a migration, as loss. It underscores once again

the overall concern of his poetry with what has been taken away and "dominated," claimed and exploited by wheels and engines—a reference, perchance, to the machines of colonialization? Certainly, much of the Caribbean was taken first by Spaniards, then by Anglos, and then even by Anglo-American modernist poets making it "new" with the Other America including the Caribbean and not acknowledging that their new discoveries were old discoveries and that the "discovered" people have been trying to speak of their dispossession and of the monsters who "destroy the known world" (Arroyo 43).

Within the context of Anglo U.S. culture, this speaking to "un-dispossess" oneself takes the form of ingesting modernism understood according to the canon of classic "American literature" and not only mixing it with that of "the Other America," but showing it to have been composed of the "Other" all along. Such historicization of modernism as itself hybridized ingestion traces skeins of historical and literary appropriation, but signals the skin-trade of resources, bodies, lives again and again "taken" and marked but of course not memorialized by the Spanish-Cuban-American War of 1898 in which Puerto Rico became property of the United States, by the immigration services and "border patrol," and by the long history of "racial" and class war in the Americas. Rane Arroyo, as a postmodern, gay Puerto Rican poet, claims this troubled history as his own, and despite assumptions that postmodern means ahistorical, Arroyo's work emanates from a colonial and neo-colonial experience and from a postcolonial/anti-neo-colonialist resistance to, among things, continued domination and exploitation by late-modern U.S. empire and the predations of late-capitalist consumer society in the Caribbean, Puerto Rico in particular, and within the U.S. itself upon racialized diasporic peoples. As political activist, community organizer, and scholar Agustín Lao reminds us, Puerto Rico is, by any definition, the oldest colony of the modern world. The insular territory has traveled a long historical trajectory of imperial "conquests" and "possessions," from the conversion of the island of "Borinquen" to "la isla de San Juan Bautista" along with the emergence of the capitalist world economy, to the metamorphosis of Puerto Rico into "Porto Rico" during the aftermath of the Spanish-American-Cuban War and the ascendance of American empire. As such, it is a uniquely rich example of imperial strategies and anticolonial modes of resistance (Lao 17). Hence, to Andrew Carnegie, symbol of imperial, capitalist greed, the poet observes, "Jesus / had to work hard for his vacation /

in paradise. / The daily unfortunately / is the eternal. And the nightly also" and cries out, "Goddamn you ... / I pay my own rent! Get the hell out!" (48-49). The same is said in various ways to other neo-colonial forces and one need only think of the recent controversy over the sixty-year-old U.S. bombing ranges at Vieques, Puerto Rico to realize how fresh the wounds are.

Crucial to note, however, is that protest and resistance do not result in a binaristically oppositional identity construction for the lyric "I" of the poems vis-à-vis his addresses. Though colonialism and neo-colonialism are never far from the concern of the poems, tactics of inhabitation and incorporation rather than opposition dissolve the familiar dualism of colonizer and colonized. Again and again the lyric "I" steps into the shoes of old Anglo writers (including Edgar Allan Poe) or follows his Anglo friend's line of sight. With just two words, the very title of Arroyo's collection—"Pale Ramón"—named after the character from Stevens's poem "The Idea of Order at Key West" touches off a series of questions about identity. After all, who is this Pale Ramón? Does the adjective "pale" mark him as a white man? And if so, can he then be considered an apostrophized colonizer of the New World, of the Caribbean? Is he a Spaniard or an Anglo? The Spanish name "Ramón" would suggest someone of Spanish descent, but the English adjective "pale" creates a little hesitancy. Furthermore, what is the Ramón's relation to the lyric "I"? Is he the poet's forefather, a lover, or an alter-ego, perhaps an alias for himself? As a reference to a character from Stevens's work, is he a legitimizing strategy—Arroyo's point of entry into or emission from the canon of great "American" literature? In a poem entitled "Amherst", Arroyo's lyric "I" inquires, "Why is a brown man like me interested in Emily / Dickinson, that white woman in a white dress in a / white house in a white town?" (33). One might ask the same question about pale Ramón, who similarly to the white figure of Emily Dickinson pales, a white-hot hungry ghost, in the shadow of the Caribbean brown-man narrator, a narrator who cannibalizes (ingests) an Anglo canon and pop culture and invents a voice and a vision that transforms the relation of colonizing father and colonial son into one of filial and sometimes ambiguously gendered and definitely "queered" shadow-doubles in search of each other's shapes—the shape, perhaps, of a split subject.

These passages destabilize the notion of the literary forefather as white patriarchal authority figure. The figure shape-shifts. "Pale

Ramón" is not only a father, but also an object of desire that trans-genders once into a woman in a white dress (the perpetual bride as drag queen?), and personifies Arroyo's own lyric "I." If Pale Ramón is a father, he is also a son and in these poems the Puerto Rican son—Pale Marron (brown one) rather than Ramón? This son of colonizers and colonized begets the father by showing that father to be and to have been dependent on "him" for his existence—and here the "him" is Rane Arroyo as singing bard and as a diasporic representative of Puerto Rico, that island that has fed its resources and its people to multiple mainlands for so long. Thus, Arroyo's poetry reverses the order of precedence, making it much more difficult for readers to assume what is original and what is copy. In this sense, the whole collection performs a subversive mimesis, a postcolonial mirroring largely figured as a queer literary and cultural exchange of orphaned sailors, Ishmaels all, conquering and being conquered, haunting each other in the postmodern night of "America": "Tonight, I'm your sailor, Chicago, / a sea-orphaned one who will drown / you in my saltern legs. I feel old in / New Town, new in Old Town, down in Uptown, / an imperialist in New Chinatown..." (3). Arroyo's lyric "I" becomes Stevens's "Nomad Exquisite" (95) who supplants the Spaniard of Stevens's verses — "And then that Spaniard of the rose, itself / Hot-blooded and dark-blooded, rescued the rose / From nature each time he saw it, making it / As he saw it, exist in his own especial eye" (316). Arroyo's poetry conveys the implications of shifting positionalities, translocated identities, and diasporic texts circulating without origin point for any poetry of possessive vision, especially that of Anglo-American modernism with its call to "make it new."

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#### NOTES

1. I say U.S. "American" to underscore the historically ambiguous referentiality of the terms "American" and "America," used, as they were, to designate first the Americas as a whole and only later what we think of today as the United States. Many U.S. Latina/o writers, even an assimilationist one such as Richard Rodriguez, employ the term in transnational rather than strictly national sense. See Rodriguez's essay "Pocho Pioneer," for instance.
2. In Deleuze's and Guattari's work, deterritorialization is generally characterized by decoding and reterritorialization by recoding. In fact, one might ask why these theorists do not simply use the terms "decoding" and "recoding." However, they purposely spatialize their concepts, implicitly reminding readers that they are addressing how living environments are inhabited, the movement of bodies (with or without organs) in space, and processes of control exerted over resources, over matter itself. The concepts of deterritorialization

and reterritorialization work particularly well in the context of the history and practice of colonization and neo-colonialization, and postcolonial responses to the former. It should be noted that deterritorialization and reterritorialization are not necessarily liberationist activities, though they do, by definition, challenge the status quo at a given time. One is well advised to think of these activities as content-indeterminate operations. In fact, Deleuze and Guattari remark, "It may be all but impossible to distinguish deterritorialization from reterritorialization, since they are mutually enmeshed, or like opposite faces of one and the same process" (258).

3. In his essay "Puerto Rican Identity Up in the Air," Alberto Sandoval Sánchez notes that for many post-1940s Puerto Rican writers the airport is "a new literary construction": "[t]he airport...is inhabited by passengers and voices announcing arrivals and departures. The airport is the revolving door for air migration, as well as a conglomeration of a mass of people waiting for arrivals and departures" and "The airport is without question a revolving door where Puerto Rican identity is at a crossroads of a nomadic journey. As migrants dwell at airports and airplanes in search for a homeland, their identities are in flux. After air migration, their identities are at a threshold located between departure and arrival, between one flight and the next one, between here and there. Under these circumstances, to critically approach Puerto Rican emigrant identity after air migration means to define it in the context of mobility, crisscrossing, transitivity, dispersion, errantry, discontinuity, and fragmentation, to place it within the experience of a metaphorical nomadism and exile...(193,194).
4. See, for instance, Anne McClintock, "The Lay of the Land: Genealogies of Imperialism," in *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 21-74.
5. See Arroyo's poem "Old News in the New World" in which one can read the world-weary and mournful verses, "A knot in my throat; it's for / the dying in dead-skin Victorian hospitals. / My uncle rots away like untasted mangoes / he'd pick not to talk with us, visitors who saved / on flight fares by hitchhiking with the dead" (*Pale Ramón* 19).

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## 'EXILES, MIGRANTS, SETTLERS, AND NATIVES: LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS OF CHICANO/AS AND MEXICANS IN THE MIDWEST.

THERESA DELGADILLO

#### INTRODUCTION

Since the Chicano/a cultural renaissance of the 1960's and 1970's, the Midwestern United States has emerged as a geographical reality in Chicano/a literature, sometimes merely as a common destination for Chicano/as seeking work, but more and more often as a site of vibrant Chicano/a communities. This essay examines the divergent perspectives and attitudes in this literature toward the Midwest, and toward Chicano/as and Mexicans who have made their homes there. Literature often explores the intersection between place and identity, but the case of contemporary Chicano/a literature presents a unique situation because this body of work arises simultaneously with the articulation of a Chicano/a identity almost exclusively associated with the Southwest and often encapsulated in the term *Aztlán*.<sup>1</sup>

A conception that grew out of the Chicano/a Movement, *Aztlán* has alternately been described as an actual place (the U.S. Southwest), a cultural umbrella uniting all Chicano/as, and a spiritual state or "something that is carried within the heart" (Leal 8). "El Plan Espiritual de *Aztlán*," which was written in 1969 and became a founding document of the Chicano/a Movement, expresses all three positions. Its program of action asserts that "land rightfully ours will be fought for and defended" (Anaya and Lomelí 2). The 60's and 70's claim to the Southwest as the original Chicano/a homeland, territory inhabited by Indian and Mexican peoples was, and remains, a key historical and political argument against efforts to relegate Chicano/as to the status of outsiders or unwelcome immigrants. Unfortunately, however, the Chicano/a nationalism that fueled and

was fueled by the movement of resistance to marginalization often also tended to exaggerate cultural homogeneity and to enshrine the Southwest as the sole site of Chicano/a unity.

Several of the texts I will examine pursue a vision of Chicano/a identity inextricably linked to the Southwest. Obviously, such a perspective is rooted in the experience of the large portion of the Chicano/a population that makes its home in the Southwest. But in these texts, the recognition of a Southwestern-based Chicano/a identity takes place against the backdrop of the Midwest. They suggest that Chicano/as and Mexicans in the Midwest are lost, not because they are no longer in Mexico—a condition that Chicano/as and Mexicans in both the Midwest and Southwest share—but because they live far from the Southwest. These texts thereby imply that Chicano/as have an authentic home only in the Southwest, often equating the Midwest with exile, isolation, alienation, and assimilation.

Daniel Cooper Alarcón argues in *The Aztec Palimpsest* (1997) that recent work by Chicano/a scholars has expanded and complicated our understanding of heterogeneity in Chicano/a cultural identity. In contrast to the unitary view of Chicano/a life and culture that the nationalism of the 60's and 70's offered, he urges a "critical paradigm for Chicano/a cultural identity that can accommodate intra-cultural differences" (xvii). Cooper Alarcón analyzes the "construction and representation of cultural identity" by conceptualizing it as a palimpsest, that is:

a site where texts have been superimposed onto others in an attempt to displace earlier or competing histories. Significantly, such displacement is never total; the suppressed material often remains legible, however faintly, challenging the dominant text with an alternate version of events. (xiv)

He addresses a number of issues related to Chicano/a identity that ideas of Aztlán have concealed rather than clarified. For example, Cooper Alarcón notes within the field of Chicano/a Studies, a "tendency to focus on the Southwest, minimizing the attention paid to Chicano/as who live in other geographic regions," as well as a lack of attention to "the ongoing dialectic between Chicano/a and Mexican culture(s) and the effects on those culture(s) of continued Mexican emigration to the United States" (8). In the analysis that follows, I will examine the ways in which both of these issues surface in the representations offered by contemporary Chicano/a literature.

Texts that stress the primacy of the Southwest as Chicano/a homeland also tend toward a preoccupation with cultural objects rather than relations, and exhibit a nostalgia for an ideal and unified community. These representations, however, are increasingly challenged by Chicano/a texts that suggest that Chicano/as have multiple origins, forge transnational identities, and belong to heterogeneous communities. As Frederick Buell notes in his article "Nationalist Postnationalism: Globalist Discourse in Contemporary American Culture" (1998), this is not always a positive phenomenon. Midwestern Chicano/a and Mexican characters are both victims and agents in the globalization of capitalist economic mechanisms that spur migration, destroy and reconstitute communities, and create greater interethnic contact and exchange. As the literature demonstrates, this process has a long history. To the degree that they imaginatively challenge the boundaries of a fixed identity, these literary representations engage populations and cultures in motion and break down monolithic constructions of Chicano/a identity or community.

#### THE MIDWEST VERSUS THE SOUTHWEST

In the collection titled *Nepantla: Essays from the Land in the Middle* (1993), Pat Mora writes of her relocation to Ohio from Texas in 1989, her travels throughout the world, and her own sense of being between different cultures, experiences, and communities. Mora's essays attempt to subvert the familiar notion of the Midwest as the center of the U.S. by insisting that her life in El Paso, her experience as a Latina, and her travels throughout the world place her at a truer center. It is a challenging argument that certainly rings truer than geographical explanations of center, but one that is partially undercut by her own investment in a sentimental view of the Southwest.

Two of her essays, "Bienvenidos" and "The Border," contrast the Midwest and Southwest. In "The Border," she stages a counter-invasion:

I brought cassettes of Mexican and Latin American music with us when we drove to Ohio. I'd roll the car window down and turn the volume up, taking a certain delight in sending such sounds like mischievousimps across fields and into trees. (12)

One cannot help but appreciate Mora's gesture in releasing Mexican sounds into the Midwestern landscape. The text, however, does not acknowledge that they may already have been there. Sociologist

Julian Samora and historian Zaragosa Vargas, among others, have described the many ways in which significant numbers of Mexicans and Chicano/as, who began settling in the Midwest in the early twentieth century, both brought a unique culture with them and were transformed by intercultural interactions in their new homes. Yet, this brief migration narrative suggests no recognition of the Mexicans and Chicano/as who for nearly one hundred years have traveled to and settled in the Midwest, and continue to do so.<sup>2</sup>

Nor does the text describe encounters with this population in the writer's daily life. One exception occurs in a Cincinnati restaurant where Mora overhears a conversation in Spanish that prompts a longing for return to Texas, where Spanish pervades daily life. Has the writer been privy to an exchange between fellow diners? Between restaurant employees? Are the speakers even Latina/os? The reader is not informed, but remains curious about the writer's "consumption" of Spanish in this setting. If indeed the speakers are Latina/o, this incidental event provides the only mention of their presence in the Midwest; yet, it serves as pointed contrast to a description of a return visit to Texas:

I stopped to hear a group of mariachis playing their instruments with proud gusto. I was surprised and probably embarrassed when my eyes filled with tears not only at the music, but at the sight of wonderful Mexican faces. The musicians were playing for some senior citizens. The sight of brown, knowing eyes that quickly accepted me with a smile, the stories in those eyes and in the wrinkled faces were more delicious than any fajitas or flan. (13)

The emphasis on acceptance suggests that Mora has encountered some discriminatory rejection or exclusion in the Midwest, an injury which is healed by return to Texas. This scene reinscribes the Southwest as the site of Chicano/a unity—the brown-faced musicians playing for the elderly and offering smiles of acceptance present a harmonious picture.

These essays do, however, occasionally resist the temptation to idealize a place the writer understandably misses—her hometown. For example, "The Border" concludes with this observation:

The culture of the border illustrates this truth daily, glaringly. Children go to sleep hungry and stare at stores filled with toys they'll never touch, with books they'll never read. Oddly, I miss that clear view of the differences between my comfortable life and the lives of

so many... Between my insulated, economically privileged life and the life of most of my fellow humans. (14)

Viewing the economic contrasts of the border reminds Mora of the condition of the world, a reminder she misses in the Midwest. Yet, by placing this "glaring truth" at the "border," the text preserves "Texas" as the site of self-knowledge, while the Midwest remains a place of exile. This three part division of space—the Midwest, Texas, the border—corresponds well to Manuel Hernández-Gutiérrez's critical framework for examining identity formation in some Chicano/a literature.<sup>3</sup>

This sense of isolation expressed in these pages is undoubtedly due in part, to the lack of opportunity for contact between a university-trained professional and the largely working-class population of Mexicans and Chicano/as in the Midwest. In this case, the text's Southwestern perspective occludes a view of others and prevents an appreciation of the socioeconomic factors that might impinge on this perception, although elsewhere these essays forthrightly acknowledge privilege. The title of at least one Midwestern literature anthology takes on the task of correcting the misconception that Mora's text inadvertently perpetuates: a community-generated publication, Oscar Mireles's *I Didn't Know There Were Latinos in Wisconsin: An Anthology of Hispanic Poetry* (1989), includes the work of nineteen poets.

In Alicia Gaspar de Alba's *Mystery of Survival and Other Stories* (1993), two stories emphasize metaphoric and literal return to the Southwest to combat a Midwest-inspired alienation or identity crisis. In one of these, "The Piñata Dream," the protagonist is Mary, a young Chicana enrolled in a writing program at an Iowa university who experiences writer's block. Through dream analysis, Mary remembers her childhood on the border, when Mexico was just over the bridge, and discovers that she must re-knit her connection to Mexico and her Mexican heritage. Her new sense of self, made manifest in her adoption of the name, "Xochitl," helps her to begin writing again. The Southwest therefore embodies the conception of cultural balance that Xochitl embraces, suggesting that the further north one is from the Mexican border, the further away one is from being Mexican.

The latter point is underscored by Mary's observation of a Mexican Independence Day celebration in Iowa. The description of an event organized by a Chicano/a community in Iowa would seem

to suggest an acceptance of a Chicano/a identity not linked exclusively to the Southwest. However, although Mary attends this event, she feels no connection to the people there. While Mary's thoughts suggest that "Midwestern Mexican Americans" might be different from other Chicano/as, her description of the event suggests that the difference is not salutary:

I was more than a little surprised to see Old Glory hanging next to the Mexican flag there in the 4-H Club, and when they opened the festivities with the 'The Star-Spangled Banner' instead of the Mexican national anthem (which they played after 'The Star-Spangled Banner'), I knew it wasn't the kind of Independencia fiesta that the people of Juárez would've understood. (56)

Mary doesn't identify with the people at this event, but she does connect to an object, a star-shaped piñata. As she tells it, such piñatas are no longer made in Juárez, but are known to her through her grandfather's stories of his childhood. The piñata, therefore, becomes a "beautiful" and "special" object that links Mary to her Mexican past (57). As in this brief excerpt, the text repeatedly invokes Juárez as representative of an authentic Mexicanness. The sight of this piñata, coupled with Mary's recurring piñata dream, eventually leads to Mary / Xochitl's cultural awakening; however, that epiphany occurs not through identification or solidarity with Midwestern Chicano/as, but through the establishment of distance from them. The newly liberated Xochitl remembers previously suppressed events from her Chicano/a childhood in El Paso, including the cruel methods by which she was forced to learn the Pledge of Allegiance. This memory markedly contrasts with the scene of Iowa Chicano/as voluntarily singing the anthem of the United States, and singing it before the anthem of Mexico. The text leads to the conclusion that the Iowa Chicano/as are not, like Xochitl, balanced and aware, but assimilated and unaware of their indoctrination.

In Wendell Mayo's collection of stories *Centaur of the North* (1996), the issue of belonging resonates on many levels—from the broad subject of social and familial configurations to the particular proposition that a Chicana may feel especially alien in the Midwestern United States. The textual emphasis on the latter often, though not always, obscures the larger issues, including the role of patriarchy and gender paradigms in creating a character's estrangement.

In Mayo's "The Stone Kitchen," the son of an Anglo father and a Chicana mother reflects on his childhood memories of his mother, Silvia. When he was ten, the family moved from Corpus Christi, Texas, a place of "warmth within warmth that felt like family," to a suburb north of Chicago (11). In Illinois, Silvia grows distant. While she talks with her mother in Corpus Christi for hours on the phone, in Spanish, she has few words for her son. When he asks her about who she is, she makes up stories about growing up in Guatemala, Italy, Vermont, and China. In an apparent attempt to recreate home, Silvia crams her kitchen with stone pots shipped to her from Texas. She adorns her windows with garlic and jalapeños and collects so many tins of beans so that the boy comes to see the kitchen as "something strange and fantastic," a feeling heightened by the kinds of food Silvia cooks in that kitchen: "tortillas, heart, tongue, tripas, huevos—and other combinations— heart and pintos, tongue and pintos, tripas and pintos" (12-13). This description suggests that both the place of the kitchen and the figure of his mother embody the family's heart, language, and soul; yet that intimate center remains inaccessible to the narrator/son. Silvia has retreated from her family into her own personal sanctuary. The relocation to Chicago has strained family relations. Although Silvia tried hard to recreate her Texas environment, she fails to accomplish this to the degree necessary for her also to be able to speak her history and her life.<sup>4</sup> She becomes stone.

While the above texts construe the Midwest as inherently alienating and emotionally damaging for Chicano/as and Mexicans, they shy away from addressing the dynamics of class that separate their protagonists from Chicano/a and Latina/o communities. Instead, they ascribe the isolation and alienation of their characters to their separation from the Southwest. It is not surprising to turn to another set of literary representations of Chicano/as in the Midwest featuring primarily working-class characters and find a radically different view of both the Southwest and the Midwest. In contrast to representations of the Southwest as more authentically Mexican or Chicano/a in comparison to the Midwest, Tomás Rivera's ... *y no se lo tragó la tierra* (1971) claims both regions as Chicano/a homelands. The novel is set in the Midwest—Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin—as well as the Southwest, primarily Texas.

Rivera's text takes exception to the myth of the Midwest as a pastoral, idyllic space in the chapter, "Es que duele." In this story, the protagonist/narrator, a young boy attending school in an Anglo-dom-

inated Midwestern town, faces first the racial insults, then the racist violence of an Anglo student. The narrator is so shaken by these events that he cannot clearly remember what happened: "Ya no recuerdo cómo ni cuando le pegué pero sé que si porque le avisaron a la principal que nos estábamos peleando en el escusado" (22). Despite the fact that he was there, he tells us that he only knows he hit the other boy because the janitor had reported it to the principal.

Expelled from school and fearful of admitting this to his family, the boy stops in a cemetery on the way home. Unlike the Texas cemetery he knows, he thinks the Midwestern one is "puro zacatito y árboles," so pretty that he imagines people don't even cry when they bury their loved ones here. The site is perhaps symbolic of the fertile promise of the U.S. Heartland, but in this case, the fecundity is fed by death. The cemetery becomes a bucolic refuge for the protagonist/narrator, but a false one—for to remain in the cemetery, to want the ideal escape, signals death. This text presents a complicated challenge to the view that pervades much American literature—that one can remake oneself in a new land—by contrasting that desire with the limitations imposed on the boy because of his race and class. The cemetery scene suggests both the problem of upward mobility and the danger of idealizing any place.

The latter point emerges more sharply if we consider chapters of *...y no se lo tragó la tierra* set in the Southwest, a region which does not necessarily provide safety and refuge for Chicano/as, either, despite our numbers and longstanding presence there. Chicano/as also face racism, discrimination, and poor working conditions in the Southwest. In "La noche buena," doña Maria, who suffers from agoraphobia, ventures out into the small Texas town to purchase Christmas toys for her children. Once in a store, doña Maria panics and inadvertently leaves without paying for the merchandise. She is accosted by a store security guard, who complains "these damn people, always stealing something," and then she is either thrown or falls to the ground, sobbing uncontrollably at the sight of the guard's gun before being taken to jail (75-76). Afterwards, doña Maria, like the boy of "Es que duele," cannot clearly recall the sequence of events.

The unquestioned domination of Anglos in both the Midwest and Texas leads to uncertainty, doubt, shame, and humiliation for these Mexican characters. In another chapter set in the Southwest, "Los niños no se aguantaron," a young boy is murdered by an Anglo boss on a very hot day for making too many trips to the water tank at the

edge of the fields. The refusal to idealize the Southwest or Chicano/as communities in the Southwest is further underscored in "El retrato," where returning migrant workers are swindled out of their money and family photos by homegrown con artists from San Antonio.

In Rivera's novel, Chicano/a characters in both the Midwest and Southwest struggle, often unsuccessfully, against hegemonic ideologies. Sometimes their "home" points of reference are Texas but sometimes, as in "La noche buena," they are Mexico or the Midwest. At least one speaker in the chapter titled "Cuando llegemos" insists he will join his uncle in Minneapolis and work in a hotel rather than return to Texas (91). This assertion reminds us of the history of Chicano/as and Mexicans in the Midwest; as Zaragosa Vargas notes in *Proletarians of the North* (1993), St. Paul, Chicago, Gary, and Detroit were sites of Chicano/a settlement during the first quarter of the century (1).

While the struggles of Chicano/as across geographic regions may be more alike than different, the canonized version of *...y no se tragó la tierra* suggests that the resolution of those struggles can occur only in the Southwest. Many of the chapters in which the protagonist/narrator gains insights about himself in relation to a broader community or prevailing knowledge take place in the Southwest, including the final, unifying chapter. The emphasis on a Southwestern homeland contained in the established version of Rivera's novel, however, appears to diverge from the author's original vision. Julian Olivares notes that four stories were omitted from the published version of *...y no se lo tragó la tierra*, but by whose decision remains unclear (74). Olivares suggests that the decision rested with Rivera, but he also quotes Rivera expressing the view that he "conceded" to the editors' desire to exclude "El Pete Fonseca," one of the four stories in question, against his own preferred inclusion of it (qtd. in Olivares 75). Olivares further suggests that one reason for this particular exclusion was Rivera's departure from the norm in creating the character of Pete Fonseca:

This representation of Pete Fonseca did not conform to the romanticized portrayal of the pachuco as the rebellious Chicano hero that was appearing in this formative period of Chicano literature. (75)

Another of the excluded stories suggests that Chicano/as might have a homeland outside of the Southwest and that they may succeed in knowing and asserting themselves in the struggle against domination

in places other than the Southwest. I refer to "Zoo Island," currently included in *The Harvest*, a collection of Rivera's posthumously published stories. In "Zoo Island," Chicano/a and Mexican migrant workers and families take a census and erect a town sign, establishing a community in the Iowa migrant camp where they live. As Olivares explains:

It is important to note that "Zoo Island" is not a self-disparaging name; it is a transparent sign through which two societies look at each other. From their perspective outside this new town, the Anglo onlookers will perceive the sign as marking the town's inhabitants as monkeys; but they fail to note that, with the sign, the Chicanos have ironically marked the Anglos. From within the town, the inhabitants see the spectators as inhumane. "Zoo Island" is a sign both of community and protest. ("Introduction" 70-80)

Rivera's intention that "Zoo Island" forms part of the novel ... *y no se tragó la tierra* is not unimportant. Without it, as Eliud Martínez notes, the novel's characters are often "victims of circumstances ... "Helpless" (49). "Zoo Island" is the only story of the original novel that portrays community members acting in unison to define themselves against Anglo attempts to dehumanize them, and it occurs in the Midwest. Its inclusion in the novel would significantly alter the textual emphasis on the powerlessness and confusion of migrant workers, endowing them with greater agency—which in the current published version emerges only among a few characters and only in the Southwest. "Zoo Island" situates a Chicano/a and Mexican community coming to consciousness outside of the Southwest.

Several texts that address or include the Midwest in the range of Chicano/a experience present Mexico not the Southwest as homeland, while others make no reference to any place other than the Midwest itself. Longstanding patterns of migration from Mexico directly to the Midwest, bypassing the Southwest, or via brief stays in Texas, have undoubtedly given rise to representation of Chicano/as in the Midwest. During the 1920's, "Mexico was the primary source of foreign immigration to the United States" (Vargas 24). Northern industries employed labor agents throughout Texas to recruit Mexican workers, and family or village networks soon became informal avenues for facilitating migration and securing employment (Vargas 18-24). Most importantly, Vargas argues that incorporation into the industrial working class and urbanization profoundly trans-

formed Mexican and Chicano/a workers in the Midwest by creating an "industrial lifestyle," and bringing them into greater contact with Blacks and ethnic Whites (20, 202). These features of life for Mexican and Chicano/a populations in the Midwest appear not only in the fiction of Rivera, but in the work of Sandra Cisneros, Ana Castillo, and Hugo Martínez-Serros.

Historian F. Arturo Rosales notes that in the early twentieth century many Mexicans arriving at the border from places such as Jalisco, Guanajuato, Michoacán, Aguascalientes, and Zacatecas readily accepted employment offers in cities like Chicago and Kansas City. The demands of the First World War and industrialization brought greater numbers of Mexicans to the Midwest (22). Rosales maintains that this generation's allegiance to Mexico led them to see themselves as "el Mexico de afuera" (56).

In his study of mutual aid societies among Mexicans in the U.S., José Amaro Hernández records the extent to which these groups participated in political battles in this country, attempting to protect and advance their interests and civil rights (84). Hernández sees the numerous mutual aid societies that appeared in the Chicago-Gary area and in California as groups that provided valuable services and became the forerunners of the Chicano/a struggle for civil rights (75, 83, 84). In the 60's and 70's, Rosales argues, the Chicano/a Movement benefited from both perspectives—identifying with Mexico culturally while retaining a commitment to U.S. citizenship and rights (71). This history reveals diverse Chicano/a communities, some who more readily identify with Mexico than with the Southwestern U.S. Patterns of migration from Mexico directly to the Midwest continue. A 1997 article by Marc Cooper in *The Nation* reports that, in what has become an industry pattern, Mexican and Central American workers now make up a third of the workforce at Iowa Beef Processors in Storm Lake, Iowa (12).

A rich vein of Chicano/a literature has emerged from this transnational experience in the Midwest. Ana Castillo's short story collection, *Loverboys* (1996), contains several stories that explore in unique ways the experience of Chicano/as in the Midwest. In "Christmas Story of the Golden Cockroach," Rosa, Paco, and their children live in a brick house that Paco's father left him "as legacy of the thirty-some-odd years he spent in Chicago working to support his family 'back home'" (104). The house, as the narrator describes it, sits "in the middle of what now looks like the vestiges of a once-thriv-

ing area before the steel mills closed down and left the majority of its residents without a means for a livelihood" (104). This description suggests East Chicago, where a World War I bachelor community of Chicano/as and Mexicans in the steel industry soon grew to include women and children (Samora and Lamanna 1, 28-29).

Though Paco inherits the house from his father, Paco and Rosa "grew up, fell in love, and were married" in the small Mexican coastal village to which they plan to return for a Christmas break. Their vacation travel consists of a three-day drive in a "pickup-turned-camper" loaded with four children, several other relatives, clothes, and appliances. Not everyone returns to Mexico for the holidays. The text mentions the neighborhood *posadas* that will occur while Paco and Rosa are away, suggesting that they belong to a community with a claim to both places.

This brief sketch of the family's history reveals that while Paco's father labored in industrial Chicago, his children and wife largely (though not necessarily completely) remained in Mexico. The father retires to Mexico when the steel mill closes, but Paco replaces him in Chicago. Paco brings his family, but the employment available to the previous generation is no longer available to him. Instead, along with the narrator's husband, Paco is a laid-off welder, trying to provide for himself and his family with a small, at-home auto body shop.

Paco, like his father before him, travels readily if not always comfortably between the United States and Mexico. That makes him part of a transnational community forced to relocate, like the characters in Rivera's novel, wherever there is work—except in this case traveling between two countries. The golden cockroach Paco's father brings with him to the U.S. and the appliances and other items both he and Paco take back to Mexico represent a process of transculturation engendered by economic shifts.<sup>5</sup> Castillo's story cleverly rewrites the myth of American streets of gold, turning acculturation into transculturation: Paco's father did not find gold in the U.S., but brought it with him in the form of his labor. Paco's father engaged in a complex transcultural process whereby he both left his mark on U.S. industrial society and was, in turn, marked by it. Unlike previous generations of immigrants who succeeded in fighting for decent jobs and sometimes provided each other with mutual assistance, in the new and harsher economy nobody knows the true worth of the golden cockroach, which signals the devaluation of the Mexican laborer's role in the industrial economy.

Although economic opportunity is of paramount importance in determining their family's choices, Paco's and Rosa's decisions are also influenced by family and community networks of support in Mexico and Chicago. Like Rivera's novel, this text, as well as those by Cisneros and Martinez-Serros, presents mobile and fluid communities that change and are changed by the economies, ideologies, and geographies with which they come in contact. Though their characters are often poor and always working-class (not sectors of the population usually perceived as trendsetters), these stories show us Chicano/as and Mexicans engendering and participating in ideological and cultural change, often simply through their efforts to survive labor conditions under capitalism.

*The House on Mango Street* (1984) by Sandra Cisneros is a novel profoundly concerned with home—the lack of home, the search for home, and finally the construction of home. The novel ultimately claims Chicago as home. It opens: "We didn't always live on Mango Street. Before that we lived on Loomis on the third floor, and before that we lived on Keeler. Before Keeler it was Paulina, and before that I can't remember" (3). The invocation of multiple streets conveys the narrator's longing for stability rather than mobility, but the naming also functions to claim space. The opening and closing phrases, "we didn't always live ... I can't remember" evoke a search for origins or a lost connection—maybe to the Southwest, maybe to Mexico. However, like the characters in "Zoo Island," the narrator quickly lays claim to the Midwest: "The house on Mango Street is ours" (3). Chicago is now home and it, too, will become a part of memory, especially because it is "a place where new cultures are born" out of urban interactions (Heredia 95).

*The House on Mango Street* reveals a heterogeneous community that includes at least three categories of Chicano/as—those native to the city, including Esperanza and her mother; those native to Texas, like Esperanza's friend Lucy; and those recently arrived from Mexico, like Geraldo—as well as Puerto Ricans, Blacks, and Whites. The young narrator of this novel, though attuned to the diversity of experience within Chicano/a communities, is also aware of what unifies her complex community—in-her words, "all brown all around, we are safe" (28). The chapter in which Esperanza makes this observation highlights both difficulty of bridging the misperceptions between differing communities and strong influence of place and community in shaping individual identities.

The exchanges among Esperanza, Rachel, and Lucy in "Our Good Day" further this connection as well. Rachel introduces herself as Lucy's sister and asks Esperanza, "Who are you?" (15). Her comment and question suggest the centrality of relationships rather than names. Esperanza is surprised that they don't poke fun at her name. Instead Lucy immediately identifies herself as a Texan, linking her acceptance of her new friend with her own Texan background, where names like Esperanza's would not be uncommon. While Lucy asserts a common ground between herself and Esperanza, she also notes a difference when she emphasizes that Rachel has a different point of origin, each place exerting influence on the sisters. The bicycle that the three new friends share in common is emblematic of their unity, but their community is not free of conflict, as the girls fight over who will ride the bike first reveals.

Several characters in *The House on Mango Street* have two names—a given name and a nickname, a Spanish name and an English name, a married name and a single name. The inscription of multiple names suggests that similarity and heterogeneity go hand-in-hand in this novel's language, setting, and characters. Even the multiple names for clouds and homes are evocative of variety in a community.

Yet the contradiction of belonging and not belonging remains. In "Four Skinny Trees" Esperanza identifies with the "four who do not belong here but are here" and describes the trees as fiercely taking hold of the earth, angrily asserting their right to be—if not "they'd all droop like tulips in a glass" (74-75). In order to be at all, the trees must forcefully assert their right to be. *The House on Mango Street* evokes an urban Midwest that is hard, beautiful, and Chicano/a.

The heavily working-class character of Midwestern Chicano/a communities and the work experience itself become the focal point of Hugo Martinez-Serros's collection *The Last Laugh and Other Stories*. The Mexican men in these stories labor in steel mills and railroad yards in the Chicago area. None of his characters yearns for a return to either the Southwest or Mexico. They are either too young to have known any other place or older and therefore too busy working to support their families. Their investment in the Midwest and their experience there leads to the creation of "new cultural phenomena" (Ortiz 103).

Both "Killdeer" and "Jitomates" address José Maria Rivera's efforts to manage a full-time laboring job, and with the help of his

sons, to tend the family's milpa on weekends and evenings. These stories carefully detail work tasks. They convey the importance of work to survival, the skill involved, pride in a job well done, and discipline and innovation in accomplishing tasks despite lack of resources or other difficulties. These stories suggest a convergence of agricultural and industrial experiences in José Maria's labor. They also reveal the harshness of the industrial pace spilling over into the family milpa, altering José Maria's attempts to maintain a foot in the industrial present and the traditional, and economically necessary, milpa. These stories provide a glimpse of how industrial labor transformed Chicano/a workers.<sup>6</sup> Martinez-Serros's attention to the details of work recreates the effort, frustration, and triumph of Chicano/a workers, and the sheer demands of labor that limit and alter personal relationships.

In "The Last Laugh," José Maria Rivera convinces the owner of a run-down flat above a tavern to allow his family to fix it up and live there:

The whole family labored for weeks to repair the place, as if their very lives had depended on it. Soap, brushes, paint, varnish, wallpaper, windowpanes, and so much more had forced José Maria to buy on credit. It was worth it. They made the spacious flat attractive and, in the end, José Maria was ahead since Dr. Stern had felt confused and guilty about how much the rent would be, and he wound up setting it at a pittance. (5-6)

Through their labor and investment, the family improves the building. Their action parallels their participation, and that of others like them, in an industrial economy. Yet, the tension of the word "forced" cannot be ignored, for it indicates that the Riveras are also acted upon in this transaction—the benefit they derive also fetters them. The labor of the two younger Rivera boys, who are assigned to tend the furnace at home, mirrors their father's labor: "Big as their furnace was, Lázaro and Jaime knew it was a toy to their father, a blast furnace keeper in the steel mill" (7). Lázaro and Jaime face the prejudices of two older White men who feel displaced by the boys in the tavern's upkeep, but the young boys successfully defend themselves against the older men's attacks. Their story presents a microcosmic view of the interactions and battles that we assume their father also encounters in the steel mill. Mexican workers forced to negotiate the hierarchies of race in the ethnically mixed Midwest often laid to rest

the familiar stereotype of willing and acquiescent Mexican workers in the course of their struggles, sometimes violent, against the injustices of the industrial workplace (Vargas 87-88, 100-14).

The story "Learn! Learn!" chronicles José María's battle with the local priest over grammar in the church bulletin, an argument that provides an opportunity to satisfy his longing for a life outside of the steel mill. José María does not want the priest of his family to see him as simply a body or a pair of hands, but also as a thinker, writer, and fighter—a human being whose fullness is denied by the nature of the economy in which he is forced to function. However, the story also reveals his homophobia and sexism, making problematic his desire to be accepted as a "man." In some ways, this collection of stories chronicles José María's efforts to deal with this central limitation. His efforts to survive by keeping milpas, collecting garbage, and managing part-time jobs are not only about making money, but also about making use of multiple talents that often appear meaningless in an industrial economy.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The experience of Chicano/as and Mexicans in the U.S. extends far beyond the region of the Southwest.<sup>7</sup> As I hope this discussion has revealed, Chicano/a literature has often claimed the space of the Midwest as its own, creating characters who firmly plant themselves, their hoes, flags, families, and town signs on its landscape. Yet, the tendency persists to overlook or dismiss Chicano/a or Mexican communities in the Midwest in favor of the Southwest, as the true or ideal Chicano/a homeland. In some cases, that tendency leads to the disclosure of competing histories. In texts that interrogate the experience of Chicano/as and Mexicans in the Midwest, the focus on working, planting, growing, constructing—in short, staying, but on terms acceptable to the dignity of human beings—creates an alternative view of homeland. In these texts, the Midwest is not background, but battleground.

Like Paco and Rosa in Castillo's "Christmas Story of the Golden Cockroach," Mexican immigrants often maintain ties both to their hometowns in Mexico and to the urban centers of the U.S. where they live and work. This is one way that the proximity between Mexico and the United States has shaped, and continues to shape a distinct Mexican and Chicano/a experience. Mexicans can and do return to their homeland more frequently than most other immigrant groups.

Chicano/as and Mexicans living in the U.S. continue to experience life in both nations through family and economic connections that are continually reinforced by ongoing large-scale immigration from Mexico. This history and present have contributed to the bi-national awareness and diasporic sensibility of many of the above texts.

The continued migration of Mexicans to the major urban centers of the United States has expanded already existing Mexican and Chicano/a communities. It has also led to the growth of new communities in cities and towns throughout the nation—in the Pacific Northwest, the Southwest, the Midwest, the South, and the East Coast. The reorganization of Mexican labor and residential patterns in recent years has also prompted the Mexican government to offer dual nationality not only to Mexican citizens living in the U.S., but also to the U.S. born children of those citizens. People we are accustomed to considering Chicano/a may also soon become Mexicana/o.

These new realities suggest yet another period of creative tension and negotiation between Chicano/a and Mexican identities throughout the United States. While the Southwest remains an important site in the development of Chicano/a literature, creative and critical, both our literature and history demonstrates that Chicano/a and Mexican communities have long histories beyond the borders of the Southwest. Despite attempts to write over them, these histories emerge—in the overheard conversation in Spanish, the small town Mexican celebration, the Spanish language radio in the background. In fact, what contemporary Chicano/a literature demonstrates is that the palimpsest grows thicker with new versions of Aztlán.

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#### NOTES

1. This essay originally appeared online as JSRI Occasional Paper #6 (1999), on the web site of The Julian Samora Research Institute, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, at web address <<http://www.jsri.msu.edu/RandS/research/ops/opc64.html>>.
2. While literary essay, sociological analysis, and historical account respond to very different conventions in conveying their "truths," my juxtaposition here of these distinct texts aims to uncover competing versions of Chicano/a identity rather than to posit one authentic identity.
3. In his critical analysis of Chicano/a literature, Manuel Hernández-Gutiérrez suggests that the search for identity is marked by the negotiation among what he terms the Barrio, or space of self-affirmation, self-determination and cultural pride; the Anti-Barrio, the site of discrimination and denigration of Chicano/as; and the Exterior, or space of death and exile. Hernández-Gutiérrez suggests that the Barrio is most often associated with Texas and the Southwest, the physical territory of the internal colony of Chicano/as. He sees the

- Anti-Barrio as most often associated with the Midwest, but also present in the Southwest as Anglo domination, while the Exterior is linked to Mexico or other countries.
4. Like the Tomás Rivera story, "Es que duele," Mayo's text explores the impact of loss of community on the individual psyche, linking collective and individual memory. However, Rivera does not limit this phenomenon to Midwestern locations.
  5. As Fernando Ortiz argued in 1940, acculturation and deculturation, terms frequently used to discuss shifts from one culture to another, do not adequately capture the social and historical complexity of intercultural processes. Ortiz's term, transculturation, conveys the intertwined acquisition and loss of culture that occur in such processes, but also the generative capacity of such processes to create "new cultural phenomena" (97-98, 102-03).
  6. This insight derives from Zaragosa Vargas's excellent history of Mexican automobile workers in the Midwest. *Proletarians of the North* documents the changes in residency, lifestyle, work habits, and attitudes prompted by labor in this industry for Mexicans in the 1920's. Vargas records the transformations that industrial work brought for Mexican workers, their employers, Midwestern urban centers and the industrial working class.
  7. In the introduction to the inaugural issue of *Third Woman* in 1981 on "Latinas in the Midwest," Norma Alarcón says that Midwestern Latina writers and artists "are laying down the foundation of our self-definition as well as our self-invention." This strong position in recognition of Latina populations outside the Southwest led to other issues of *Third Woman* devoted to Latinas in the Midwest and East.

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ALTERNATIVE CARTOGRAPHIES:  
*THIRD WOMAN* AND THE RESPATIALIZATION  
OF THE BORDERLANDS

CATHERINE S. RAMÍREZ

In the introduction to *Loving in the War Years*, Cherrie Moraga maps her life via her writing. "Este libro covers a span of seven years of writing," she begins. Then she enumerates the places where her writing has carried her: Berkeley, San Francisco, Boston, Mexico, and finally, Brooklyn, where, she informs her reader, she writes the final introduction (i-ii). In addition to completing *Loving in the War Years*, Moraga helped to found and was an active member of Kitchen Table Women of Color Press while living in New York during the early 1980s (*Loving* 153). In 1983, Kitchen Table published *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, a collection of poetry, creative prose, and scholarly essays by U.S. women of color co-edited by Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa. Far from her native Los Angeles and outside what some may have perceived as the ideological and, at the very least, physical boundaries of Aztlán, the mythical homeland of Chicanos and Chicanas, Moraga launched her career as a writer, cultural critic, and self-described "politica" as she articulated (i.e., enunciated and linked) Chicana feminism and a coalitional politics of, for, and about U.S. women of color (*Loving* 153).

Like *This Bridge Called My Back*, the journal *Third Woman* forged ties between women of color. And like *Loving in the War Years*, which condemns racism and classism in the United States, as well as sexism and homophobia among Mexican Americans, it challenged what Mary Pat Brady describes as "spatial narratives...that have gained a normative or taken-for-granted status" (6). Published at Indiana University from 1981 to 1986, *Third Woman* produced and highlighted the U.S. Midwest as a rich site of and for Chicana and

Latina feminisms. Its six issues (the first five of which were published at Indiana) featured poetry, creative prose, visual art, book reviews, and scholarly essays by and about Chicanas, Latinas, and Hispanic women (all of these labels were used in the journal). In this essay, I focus on "Of Latinas in the Midwest," the first issue of *Third Woman*, to highlight the ways in which the journal used place to relativize Chicana cultural nationalism (in particular, the spatial narrative of Aztlán as the Chicano homeland) and to remap Latina/o America (i.e., the United States of Latinas and Latinos). All the while, it took part in and contributed to a surge in publishing by self-described "women of color" in the United States during the early 1980s. In doing so, *Third Woman* demonstrated the significance of the journal and, later, after it was transformed into a press, the anthology to the articulation of what has come to be known as "borderlands feminism."

In "Mestizaje as Method: Feminists-of-Color Challenge the Canon," Chela Sandoval defines "borderlands feminism" as "a syncretic form of consciousness made up of traversions and crossings: its recognition makes possible another kind of critical apparatus and political operation in which *mestiza* feminism comes to function as a working chiasmus (a mobile crossing) between races, genders, sexes, cultures, languages, and nations" (352). Since the late 1980s, the concept of borderlands has played an important role in Chicana feminist discourse, as evidenced not only in Sandoval's essay, but in Gloria Anzaldúa's influential *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), Sonia Saldivar-Hull's *Feminism on the Border: Chicana Gender Politics and Literature* (2001), and Rosa Linda Fregoso's *MeXicana Encounters: The Making of Social Identities on the Borderlands* (2003) (to name a few texts). In this essay, I also show that, even though it did not use the term "borderlands" in the same way as later Chicana feminist works, *Third Woman* exemplified "borderlands feminism" nonetheless. Indeed, via a transnational, coalitional politics, the journal presaged the concept of "borderlands feminism." By paying attention to its geographical roots and evolution from journal to press, I hope to illuminate a Chicana feminist intellectual trajectory spanning the late twentieth- and early twenty-first centuries.

#### OF LATINAS IN THE MIDWEST

On September 13, 1980, Chicago-based photographer Diana Solis convened the Midwest Latina Writers' Workshop at the Chicago Women Writers' Conference so those in attendance could

"explore ways of helping each other with our work and with the publishing of it" (Alarcón 5). Approximately ten women, including Norma Alarcón (then a graduate student in Spanish and Portuguese at Indiana University, Sandra Cisneros, and Ana Castillo attended the workshop. At the time, none had published much. Cisneros, for instance, had published a chapbook entitled *Bad Boys*, while Castillo had published *The Invitation*, a small collection of poems.

Alarcón credits the Midwest Latina Writers' Workshop for inspiring *Third Woman*. "We all [at the workshop] agreed that we needed a journal that promised continuity, and offered encouragement to the creative work of Latinas and other Third World Women," she states in her editor's introduction to the premiere issue of *Third Woman* (5). With assistance from Solis and Cisneros, as well as other members of *Third Woman*'s editorial board, including Marjorie Agosin, Sandra Esteves, Cristina González, Luz Mestas, Bernadette Monda, Patricia Montenegro, Marcia Stephenson, and Luz Umpierre, Alarcón solicited art, poetry, short stories, and book reviews from Latinas across the Midwest.

From its inception, *Third Woman* emphasized the importance of independence. Participants in the Midwest Latina Writers' Workshop wished to create their own journal because they "wanted to overcome the dependency on the 'special-issue syndrome' that has beset the work of minority women for years" (Alarcón 5). Prior to founding *Third Woman*, Alarcón had served on the editorial board of *Revista Chicano-Riqueña*, a journal of poetry, creative prose, and scholarly essays published at Indiana University Northwest from 1973 to 1979.<sup>1</sup> In an interview that I conducted with her, she stressed the *RCR* provided Chicanas and Puertorriqueñas with the opportunity to publish their work, yet added that she "never felt thoroughly included, even in [its] special issue on la mujer [Volume 6, Number 2]."<sup>2</sup> In fact, *RCR*'S 1978 issue on "la mujer" was emblematic of the "special-issue syndrome" that Alarcón and the other women at the writers' workshop had criticized. "[I]f women didn't...publish...themselves," she explained, "we would not learn what we needed...to organize a kind of literary movement or a...reconfiguration through writing of our reality...and...we'd always be subordinated [to] and dependent on the guys, no matter how generous they were." In order to produce the first issue of *Third Woman*, Alarcón taught herself how to typeset and secured funding from various units at Indiana University, including Chicano-Riqueño Studies, Latin American Studies, Women's Studies, and Latino Affairs.

However, as a means of safeguarding the journal's independence, she noted, she was careful never to make a single unit its institutional home.<sup>3</sup>

#### BEYOND AZTLÁN

One year after the Midwest Latina Writers' Workshop convened at the Chicago Women Writers' Conference, *Third Woman*, Volume 1, Number 1, entitled "Of Latinas in the Midwest" (1981), premiered. Inspired by Marjorie Agosin and Patricia Montenegro's 1980 collection of Latina poetry *From the Midwest to the West*, this issue brings together writing and visual art by Latinas from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin and reflects the editorial board's desire "to make the Midwest come into being [as] a Latina feminist location."<sup>4</sup> In general, the U.S. Midwest has not been associated with Latinas, much less with Latina feminists. In fact, the so-called American Heartland is often perceived and portrayed as a bastion of cultural and racial (i.e., white) homogeneity and social and political conservatism. Furthermore, "Middle America," which invokes the white Midwest, is often upheld as a metonym for the United States as a whole. In contrast, if Latinas and Latinos are included in the national imaginary at all, they are usually associated with the margins of the United States—literally with its coasts and southern border: with California and the Southwest, with the urban Northeast (especially New York City), and with Miami. More often than not, Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory, does not even appear on maps of the United States.

Mexican Americans have comprised the largest "Hispanic or Latino" group in the United States and their population is and has been concentrated in New Mexico, California, Texas, and Arizona, states that have been identified with Aztlán, the mythical ancestral homeland of Chicanos and Chicanas.<sup>5</sup> According to legend, Aztlán is located north of what is now Mexico and is the place from which the Aztecs' forebears originated.<sup>6</sup> It has been superimposed upon not only California and the Southwest, but the territory that Mexico ceded to the United States as a consequence of the U.S.-Mexico War (along with California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, this territory included present-day Nevada, Utah, and parts of Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas, and Oklahoma). The concept of Aztlán gained currency among a number of Chicana and Chicano writers, artists, and activists during the late 1960s and 1970s and was championed in

"El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán," a manifesto produced at the Chicano Youth Liberation Conference in Denver in March 1969. "El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán" heralds cultural nationalism as "the key to organization [that] transcends all religious, political, class, and economic factions or boundaries" (2). Moreover, it identifies brotherhood (a.k.a. carnalismo) as an important characteristic of Chicano cultural identity and community. "Brotherhood unites us," it proclaims, and "love for our brothers" enables us to struggle "against the foreigner 'gavacho' who exploits our riches and destroys our culture" (1).

"El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán" condemns "the brutal gringo invasion of our territories" and claims "the northern land of Aztlán from whence came our forefathers" for "those who plant the seeds, water the fields, and gather the crops and not [for] the foreign Europeans." It emphasizes Aztlán as a physical place: it is "our territories," "the northern land," and "the bronze continents" (1). Above all, it is "home." However, as Rafael Pérez-Torres points out,

As a place, or even as a unifying symbol or image, Aztlán erases the vast differences that help form the richness and variety of the terms "Chicana" and "Chicano." The histories of Mexicans in this country are marked by a series of tensions and ruptures—cultural, linguistic, political, racial—that cut across various social and national terrains in which one can and cannot call one's location "home" (115).

Far from land designated Aztlán and the states with the highest concentration of "Hispanics or Latinos," Alarcón felt removed from an "essentialized notion of home...[and] belonging" as a graduate student in Bloomington, Indiana. She and her Chicana colleagues at *Third Woman* fell outside cultural nationalist narratives of the Chicano homeland. "We felt a kind of relationality to Aztlán [and] the Southwest," she recollected. "We were isolated because Aztlán saw itself as the ombligo del mundo [bellybutton of the world]." However, she and the other members of the editorial staff "worked isolation against itself" by transforming it into independence.<sup>7</sup>

By emphasizing the Midwest and "mak[ing] come into being [as] a Latina feminist location," the first issue of *Third Woman* underscored that space is in fact produced, rather than simply "the grand manifestation of ...natural terrain" (Brady 7). Thus, it exposed the constructedness of Aztlán (i.e., it showed that Aztlán, like the nation-state, is neither natural nor a given, but created). Additionally, Volume 1, Number 1 interrogated Aztlán as *the* Chicano homeland.

Indeed, "Of Latinas in the Midwest" attested to alternative cartographies and narratives that differed from those of and about California and the Southwest. Although Mexicans and Mexican Americans have lived and worked in the Midwest since the early twentieth century, their history and presence in the region are often overlooked.<sup>8</sup> After World War I, many Mexican immigrants began settling in the American Heartland, where they found employment in sugar beet companies, the railroad industry, and manufacturing (Vargas 2). In fact, Alarcón's family moved to Gary, Indiana, in the mid 1950s so her father could work in a steel mill there. Alarcón's own history of migration to and settlement in the Midwest, like that of many of her colleagues at *Third Woman*, respatializes Mexican American history and demonstrates the "richness and variety" of Chicana experience.<sup>9</sup> It reveals that there is no such thing as a singular Chicano or Chicana homeland, history, or experience.

#### BORDERLANDS FEMINISM": BRIDGES AND INTERSECTIONS

By forging an alliance of women and highlighting the U.S. Midwest as a site of Chicana literary and artistic production, the inaugural issue of *Third Woman* challenged two fundamental tenets of Chicano cultural nationalism: carnalismo (i.e., a community of men) and Aztlán. The journal was, in Alarcón's words, a "response, a way of saying, 'There are things beyond those boundaries that you yourself have created.'"<sup>10</sup>

However, this is not to say that it situated itself exclusively in relation to Chicano cultural nationalism, that it focused exclusively on Chicanas, or that it limited its scope to the Midwest. In fact, Alarcón and her cohort clearly defined *Third Woman* as a pan-regional, Latina (rather than exclusively Chicana) journal. They did so because of the relatively small number of Chicanas in the Midwest and by devoting four of the five issues published at Indiana University to a particular part of the United States. Volume 1, Number 2 (1982), entitled "Looking East," focuses on the East Coast; Volume 2, Number 1 (1984) is on the Southwest and Midwest; and "Texas and More" is the title and subject of Volume 3, Numbers 1 and 2 (1986).<sup>11</sup> By highlighting the United States' multiple regions as centers of feminist, Latina artistic and intellectual creativity, *Third Woman* remapped not only the nation, but Latina/o America. It proclaimed that no single place—be it East Los Angeles, South Texas,

the Bronx, or Miami—has a monopoly on Latina cultural production and self-expression.

What's more, *Third Woman* looked beyond the borders of the United States. Latin America is not only the emphasis of Volume 2, Number 2, which is entitled "Hispanic Women: International Perspectives" (1984), but is present in all of the issues. For instance, in Volume 1, Number 1, Lucia Fox's, Salima Rivera's, and Lupe A. González's poems are about Peru, Argentina, and Mexico respectively, while Alarcón pays tribute to Chilean poets Gabriela Mistral and Violeta Parra and the Mexican feminist Rosario Castellanos in "Hay Que Inventarnos / We Must Invent Ourselves," her editor's introduction.

*Third Woman* takes its name from the "third way" of women's activism proposed by Castellanos in her 1975 farce *El Eterno Feminino*. Alarcón describes this "third way" as a project of

transform[ing] our lives and free[ing] ourselves from our oppressive circumstances due to race, class and sex.... [I]t is not enough to merely adapt to a society that changes superficially and remains the same at the root (as in reformism)...it is not enough to imitate the models that are proposed to us and that are responses to circumstances other (different) than ours, furthermore, it is not even enough to discover, to recognize, to know what or who we are. We have to invent ourselves (4).

The name *Third Woman* also evokes the Third World, rather than a specific nation or ethnic group. (In my interview with her, Alarcón stated that she wanted "a name that would not be encumbered by cultural nationalism."<sup>12</sup>) Additionally, the name *Third Woman* "refers to that pre-ordained reality that we have been born to and continue to live and experience and be a witness to, despite efforts toward change" (Alarcón 4). In other words, it points to and disrupts the space between the real (i.e., reality) and utopic, between the present and future, and between being and becoming. In doing so, the journal's name invokes "the 'third' and repressed force that nevertheless constantly rises up through dominant meaning systems, breaking apart two-term or binary divisions of human thought" (Sandoval, "Mestizaje" 356).

Similarly, the label "Latina" can and frequently does represent a third, trans-or-extranational space when situated between the nation-state (e.g., the United States, Mexico) and cultural nation (e.g., Aztlán).

Like the label “woman of color,” it has produced a third identity category, one that simultaneously is subsumed by and disrupts the U.S. racial binary of black and white. I do not intend to argue here that “Latina” is an unproblematic term that locates the women of the Americas and Caribbean beneath a banner of equality and sameness, regardless of nationality, race, class, language, or sexuality.<sup>13</sup> However, I do wish to explore the meanings Alarcón and the producers of *Third Woman* invested in the term as a site of identification, especially in the context of the burgeoning feminist movement led by self-proclaimed “women of color” and “Third World women” in the United States in the 1970s and 1980s. From the outset, *Third Woman* was to serve as a forum for “the creative work of Latinas” (Alarcón 5). In my interview with her, Alarcón stressed that the journal was a Latina, rather than a Chicana, effort for both practical and ideological reasons. In the Midwest in the early 1980s, there were simply more Latina artists and intellectuals (including Chicanas) than there were Chicana artists and intellectuals alone.<sup>14</sup> As she recalled, “[T]he number of women who were publishing and making their way into the arts at that time was so small”—so small that the editors and contributors to the first issue were often one and the same. Alarcón also pointed out that “it was beginning to look as if Sandra [Cisneros], Diana [Solis], and I were doing...everything.”<sup>15</sup> With time, however, the journal would have no shortage of contributors and would help to launch the careers of a number of well-known scholars and creative writers, such as Julia Alvarez, Ana Castillo, Cherrie Moraga, Achy Obejas, Tey Diana Rebolledo, and Yvonne Yarbo-Bejarano.

Volume 1, Number 1 sought to describe and enact a surge of Latina creative expression in the U.S. Midwest. One book review, for instance, praises the work of a blossoming young, Chicago-based poet by the name of Sandra Cisneros (whose picture is also featured on the issue’s front cover). “Cisneros is a talent to watch,” it reads (Cantú 45). In addition, the review lauds Agosin and Montenegro’s *From the Midwest to the West*, which it describes as possibly the first anthology “to bring together the voices of six Latina poets (five Chicanas and one Chilean) who desire to create geographical bridges, to share work and sensibilities across the continent, and to reveal a community of women reclaiming and creating their own culture beyond their back door” (Cantú 43). Like its inspiration, *From the Midwest to the West*, *Third Woman* cre-

ated “geographical bridges” by forging ties between Latinas throughout the Americas and Caribbean. In doing so, it created a network of women, an alternative to the androcentric community posited and produced by Chicano cultural nationalism.

Alarcón felt that it was especially important to break the isolation she and other Latinas in the Midwest experienced by uniting them with Latinas in other parts of the United States and world. “We tried to create a network...a sense of linkage,” she explained in my interview with her.<sup>16</sup> In doing so, the journal articulated “Latina” as a space for both coalition and difference and as a transnational site of identification. Space, the feminist geographer Doreen Massey argues, is “a moment in the intersection of configured social relations” (265). It “depends crucially on the notion of articulation” (8). The space that *Third Woman* worked to produce functioned as an intersection of the Americas as it articulated Latinas from across continents and hemispheres and, thus, exceeded the boundaries of any single nation. As a space for the “traversions and crossings” of multiple races, languages, and nations, the journal exemplified Sandoval’s concept of “borderlands feminism.”

At the same time, *Third Woman* highlighted the differences between and among women who self-identified as “Latinas.” The journal underscored that Latinas hail from various regions of the United States, as well as different nations. Some are from the First World, others are from the Third. Some write in English, some in Spanish, and some in a combination of both languages. And while *Third Woman* produced and relied upon “woman” as a relatively stable concept and category (as evidenced by its privileging of the feminine term “Latina”), it still illustrated the complexity and multiplicity of genders and sexualities, especially in its final issue, “The Sexuality of Latinas” (1989) (the use of the singular in the title of this volume notwithstanding).

*Third Woman* emerged at an exciting moment for feminist women of color in the United States. Key works published around the time of its founding include Ntozake Shange’s *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf* (1975), Martha Cotera’s *The Chicana Feminist* (1977), Audre Lorde’s *Uses of the Erotic* (1978), and Angela Davis’s *Women, Race, and Class* (1981). The 1970s and 1980s also saw the publication of a number of journal issues and anthologies edited by and about women of color. As I noted, *Revista*

*Chicano-Riqueña* published a special issue on women in 1978. Five years later, Evangelina Vigil edited "Woman of Her Word: Hispanic Women Write" (1983), another issue of *RCR* dedicated to Latinas. (Clearly, while *Third Woman* augmented discourse on and by Chicanas and Latinas, it did not put an end to the "special-issue syndrome."). In 1979, Lorraine Bethel and Barbara Smith co-edited "The Black Women's Issue," a special issue of the journal *Conditions*, and in 1982, the journal *Heresies* devoted an issue to women and racism. As for anthologies, in 1970 Toni Cade Bambara edited *The Black Woman: An Anthology*, and 1973 saw the publication of Janice Mirikitani's *Third World Women*. These important collections were followed by Dexter Fisher's *The Third Woman: Minority Women Writers of the United States* (1980); Moraga and Anzaldúa's groundbreaking *This Bridge Called My Back* (1981); Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith's *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave* (1982); and *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* (1983), also edited by Barbara Smith. Feminist presses, such as Shameless Hussy of San Lorenzo, California, Kitchen Table Women of Color Press of New York, Calyx Books of Corvallis, Oregon, Spinsters, Ink (sic.), and Aunt Lute Press (both of San Francisco), enabled many women of color writers to publish their work.<sup>17</sup>

Rather than situating *Third Woman* within the discourse of a particular national or ethnic group, Alarcón and the editorial staff aligned it with the coalitional politics of women of color feminism and what Sandoval has termed "differential consciousness." Differential consciousness produces and is the product of "a *tactical subjectivity* with the capacity to recenter depending upon the kinds of oppression to be confronted" ("U.S. Third World Feminism" 14, italics original). This subjectivity is not fixed, organic, or essential, but fluid and—to draw from Alarcón's editor's introduction in the premier issue—invented (i.e., fabricated). In this introduction, Alarcón compares the journal's contributors to not only Latin American women writers, but to June Jordan, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Adreinne Rich (Alarcón 4). In the following issues, a list of books and periodicals by and/or about "U.S. Latinas, Hispanic Women and Other Third World Women" appears at the end of the journal, as well as advertisements from other feminist publications, including *Sage: A Scholarly Journal on Black Women*,

*Manushi*, a journal published in Hindi and English in New Delhi, and *Conditions: A Feminist Magazine*, edited by Dorothy Allison, Cheryl Clark, Jewelle Gomez, and Mirtha Quintanales. By identifying differences and similarities along the axis of gender and forging ties among themselves and between themselves and other women, Alarcón and her cohort at *Third Woman* practiced differential consciousness and produced "Latina" as a site of both specificity and multiplicity.

In summary, *Third Woman* anticipated the concept of borderlands as it is currently used in much Chicana feminist discourse and distinguished it from that of Aztlán. By showcasing various regions of the United States (and the Latina cultural production to emerge from them), it illustrated that the borderlands as a physical place extends well beyond the U.S.-Mexico boundary and the states in traverses. At the same time, the journal situated itself in and represented a metaphoric or symbolic borderlands (i.e., a crossroads or syncreticism) as an example and enactment of coalition. As such, it defined "borderlands" as Aztlán's antithesis. Aztlán, as many Chicana writers and artists have proclaimed, is supposed to be home, whereas the borderlands as a site of coalition is not. As Bernice Johnson Reagon remarks in "Coalition Politics: Turning the Century,"

Coalition work is not done in your home. Coalition work has to be done in the streets.... Some people will come to a coalition and they rate the success of the coalition on whether or not they feel good when they get there. They're not looking for coalition; they're looking for a home!...In a coalition you have to give, and it is different from your home. You can't stay there all the time. You go to the coalition for a few hours and then you go back...and coalesce some more (359).

Moving beyond their "back doors," Alarcón and her colleagues at *Third Woman* rejected cultural nationalist narratives of a mythical homeland and located themselves at a transnational crossroads: the borderlands.

#### ANTHOLOGIES AND ALLIANCES

In 1987, Alarcón moved from Indiana University to the University of California at Berkeley, where "The Sexuality of Latinas," the sixth and final issue of *Third Woman*, was published.<sup>18</sup> With this issue, Alarcón transformed *Third Woman* into a press and

reinvented herself as publisher. She founded Third Woman Press for "strictly economic" reasons because, as she explained to me, "journals have a very short shelf life. People see them as outdated, whether they are or not."<sup>19</sup> Upon its tenth anniversary, Third Woman Press had published more than thirty books, a significant number of which are anthologies (Cockrell 1). For example, under the auspices of its Chicana / Latina Studies series, it has published *Chicana Critical Issues* (1993), edited by Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social; *Chicana (W)Rites: On Word and Film* (1995), edited by María Herrera-Sobek and Helena María-Viramontes; *Máscaras* (1997), edited by Lucha Corpi; *Living Chicana Theory* (1998), edited by Carla Trujillo; and *Latinas on Stage* (2000), edited by Alicia Arrizón and Lillian Manzor. Additionally, it has published *Chicana Lesbians: The Girls Our Mothers Warned Us About* (1991), edited by Carla Trujillo, and *Writing Self / Writing Nation: A Collection of Essays on Dictée by Theresa Hak Kyung Cha* (1994), edited by Elaine H. Kim and Alarcón. As their titles alone indicate, all of these collections feature work by Chicana, Latinas, and /or other women of color.

Both *Third Woman* the journal and Third Woman Press underscore the significance and value of coalition for a feminist, women of color politics. As in its previous incarnation as journal, Third Woman Press has continued to connect Chicanas, Latinas, and other women of color. However, it has done so in large part via the anthology. After all, an anthology, like most journal issues, consists of a grouping. Unlike the monograph, it brings together different works by different writers, accentuating what they share in common and what separates them from one another. Yet, like the monograph, its "shelf life" often exceeds that of the journal issue. Some scholars, such as Benedict Anderson and Cathy N. Davidson, argue that the newspaper and novel have helped to produce and maintain national consciousness. Likewise, *Third Woman* and Third Woman Press highlight the important role that the journal and anthology have played in forging alliances among women of color and articulating a transnational "borderlands feminism."

As several recent publications illustrate, the anthology in particular continues to serve a key function in shaping Chicana and Latina feminist discourse and building writers', especially scholars', careers.<sup>20</sup> In many ways, *Third Woman* acted as a harbinger for these collections (while Third Woman Press has served as a mechanism for some of them). From a geographic and ideological periphery vis-à-

vis Chicano cultural nationalism, the journal impacted the fields of Chicana/o and U.S. Latina/o studies by helping to launch the careers of a generation of women writers, articulating a feminist, transnational, Latina politics, and expanding the concept of borderlands.

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#### NOTES

This essay is a product of much collaboration and revision. First, I thank Norma Alarcón for talking to me about her life and work and the history of *Third Woman*. I also thank Gabriela Arredondo and Eric Porter for reading drafts of this essay. I credit them for improving it and take full responsibility for any errors and oversights herein. I presented a shorter version of this paper as part of a panel on the Midwest and Chicana/o literature at the annual convention of the Modern Language Association in Chicago in December 1999. The version presented at the MLA convention was also posted on the Third Woman Press website at <www.thirdwomanpress.com>. At the time of this writing (January 2004), this website is no longer up.

1. *Revista Chicano-Riqueña* was founded at Indiana University Northwest in Gary in 1973 and moved to the University of Houston in 1980. In 1986, its name was changed to *Americas Review*.
2. I conducted my interview with Alarcón on February 15, 1999, in Berkeley, California. Unless indicated otherwise, all notes are from this interview.
3. Author's interview with Alarcón (February 15, 1999).
4. Author's interview with Alarcón (February 15, 1999).
5. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the state with the highest concentration of "Hispanics or Latinos" are New Mexico, (42.1% of the state population), California (32.4%), Texas, (32%), and Arizona (25.3%). I use the quotation marks around "Hispanic or Latino" because I am quoting the Census here. See <[http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/GTTable?geo\\_id+01000US&ds\\_name=DEC\\_2000\\_SF1\\_U&\\_box\\_head\\_nbr+GCY-P6&format+US-9&\\_lang=en&\\_sse=on](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/GTTable?geo_id+01000US&ds_name=DEC_2000_SF1_U&_box_head_nbr+GCY-P6&format+US-9&_lang=en&_sse=on)>.
6. Given evidence that the indigenous people of the Americas migrated from north to south during prehistoric times, the assertion that the Aztecs' ancestors originated from somewhere north of present-day Mexico may be more than legend or myth. See Anaya and Lomeli, Anzaldúa, and Chavez.
7. Author's interview with Alarcón (February 15, 1999).
8. However, more recently, several valuable works on Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the Midwest have been published. See, for example, Gabriela F. Arredondo's "Navigating Ethno-Racial Currents, Mexicans in Chicago, 1919-1939," forthcoming in *Journal of Urban History*. Also see Vargas, Valdés, Martínez, and García.
9. Alarcón was born in Coahuila, Mexico. In 1955, her family moved from San Antonio, Texas to Gary. The following year, they relocated to Chicago. Ten years later, Alarcón moved to Bloomington. Author's interview with Alarcón (February 15, 1999).
10. Author's interview with Alarcón (February 15, 1999).
11. While the writers and artists featured in a particular issue of *Third Woman* were from a specific region, the subject of their work was not always about said region. I elaborate on this below.
12. Author's interview with Alarcón (February 15, 1999).
13. For an astute discussion of some of the pitfalls of the panethnic term "Latina," see Chabram-Dernersesian.

14. According to the 1980 U.S. Census, the number of people of "Spanish origin" in Indiana's civilian noninstitutional population was 83,000 out of a total population of 5,387,000 (United States Bureau of the Census 1980, 36, 12). This would put the "Spanish origin" population of the state between 1 and 2 percent.
15. Author's interview with Alarcón (February 15, 1999).
16. Author's interview with Alarcón (February 15, 1999).
17. Shameless Hussy published Shange's *For Colored Girls* in 1975. Kitchen Table published the second edition of *Bridge* in 1983 (it was originally published in 1981 by another feminist press, Persephone of Watertown, Massachusetts), as well as Smith's *Home Girls*. Calyx Books published *The Forbidden Stitch: An Asian American Women's Anthology* (1988), edited by Shirley Geok-Lin Lim and Mayumi Tsutakawa. Spinsters, Ink published *The Woman Who Owned the Shadows* (1983), by Paula Gunn Allen, and Aunt Lute Press published Anzaldúa's *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987).  
For a useful and comprehensive bibliography of publications by and about women of color, see Sandoval, "Mestizaje as Method."
18. "The Sexuality of Latinas" was originally published in 1989 as *Third Woman*, Volume 4. In 1993, it was published by Third Woman Press and co-edited by Alarcón, Ana Castillo, and Cherrie Moraga.
19. Author's interview with Alarcón (February 15, 1999).
20. See, for example, Anzaldúa and Keating; Arredondo, et al; Cantú and Nájera-Ramirez; Latina Feminist Group; and Torres and Pertusa.

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