THE
DECOLONIAL IMAGINARY

WRITING CHICANAS INTO HISTORY

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INTRODUCTION

Let us question the past and it will teach what we must once more remember.

Historical truth is the least of our concerns.
—Sigmund Freud, Screen Memories (1900)

Truth is what man silences through the very practice of language.
—Michel de Certeau, The Writing of History (1975)

This project is an archaeology of discursive fields of knowledge that write Chicanas into histories. Each chapter following the first, historiographic chapter is a case study, or genealogy, in which a specific discursive field is produced and analyzed as “things said” come into existence to imprint the historical body of Chicanas. Deconstructing systems of thought and the manner in which they frame Chicana stories—whether linearly, which is the sanctioned European and Euroamerican historical method; or vertically, which is Foucauldian; or cyclically, which is pre-Colombian—is my task.

History monographs pose particular historiographic questions to advance the accepted official arguments. There is a complicit and implicit understanding about what is privileged in current debates. Studies that reiterate the discussion most successfully set the norm for upcoming works. A historian must remain within the boundaries, the borders, the confines of the debate as it has been conceptualized if she/he is to be a legitimate heir to the field. Breaking out of the borders is like choosing to go outside, into the margins, to argue or expose that which no one will risk. Going outside the accredited realm of historiography means daring to be dubbed a-historical. It means traversing new territories and disciplines, mapping fresh terrains such as cultural studies, women’s studies, ethnic studies, and of course, Chicana/o studies.

This work attempts to go beyond the sanctioned historiographic debates to probe the discursive fields that shape Chicana stories. Only in this way, by going outside in order to come back in with different kinds of inquiries, can I confront the systems of thought that produce Chicana
history. I take a postmodern approach for a number of reasons. Postmodernism is often infuriating for precisely the same reasons that postmodern claims are useful. Nothing is taken for granted. Nothing is accepted at face value. Nothing is real. All is imagined and therefore disputable. The systems of thought which have patterned our social and political institutions, our universities, our archives, and our homes predispose us to a predictable beginning, middle, and end to untold stories. History books become copies of each other, mimicking style, organization, and content. That which is different, fragmented, imagined, non-linear, non-teleological, has no place in the stories we construct about Chicanas. But as members of a discipline with the proper papers in order—whether doctorates, publications, or honorary titles—we must sustain an “order of things” to please the tradition, to prove we are the authorized heirs who may or may not decide what is and what is not a contribution to the field of history.

In this spirit, with these “laws” in mind which beg interrogation, I agree with Michel Foucault, who advocated that we “leave it to our bureaucrats and our police to see that our papers are in order. At least spare us their morality when we write.”

The “tradition” and “discipline” of history is infused with morality, with how the documents “should” be interpreted and written, with ponderings over what is and what is not the definitive story. I have no intention of offering conclusive stories about Chicanas and our past, a past that crosses geographic terrains and political borders. I am more concerned with taking the “his” out of the “story,” the story that often becomes the universalist narrative in which women’s experience is neglected. Women’s history began the project of refuting male experience as the norm. Joan Wallach Scott, for example, has been instrumental in contesting how women have been conceptualized in a field that uncritically universalizes the male experience. To begin in that way is to begin with a fundamental interrogation. How much have women been a part of the stories? Is it possible to recover much, given that the archives have been preserved for the “great men” who have made contributions, in one way or another, whether presidents, generals, or imagined forefathers? The documents on or by women that have been preserved in libraries are often the papers of the wives, daughters, or family members of “great men.”

In the United States, locating documents about Mary Austin Holley, cousin to Stephen F. Austin, the colonizer of Texas in the early nineteenth century, was a simple process. She was literate in English, kept a journal, and wrote letters throughout her life. All were gathered and deposited in an archive at the University of Texas at Austin, and fittingly so. The names match the institutions. But at the other end of the spectrum we have Malintzin Tenepal, La Malinche, La India, whom Chicanas idealize as the mother of a hybrid race. Although she was probably literate and poly-lingual, she had the misfortune of belonging to the race that would be conquered and colonized. Her words were not transcribed by anyone who may have listened at a time when orality was the method of passing tales to the next generation. History, after all, is the story of the conquerors, those who have won. The vanquished disappear. Even when Bernardino de Sahagún and Diego de Landa pursued the “real” story from the Aztecas or Mayas in the sixteenth century, the information became diffused as the Spaniards wrote what they thought they heard from their native informants. Bartolomé de las Casas and Bernal Díaz, both chroniclers for the Spanish Crown, exalted La Malinche as a heroine because she stood beside Cortés. Later, as Mexico became increasingly nationalist after the Mexican Revolution, she became La Chingada to the Mexicanos, the men who damned her for “chingando” con Cortés. Where, then, is the space for the story about women such as La Malinche? How has her legend been imagined, by whom and for whom? Our written Chicana history is often infected with judgments and moralizing.

As I attempt to take the “his” out of the Chicana story, I am also aware that I too am marked with the history I have inherited. There is no pure, authentic, original history. There are only stories—many stories. The ones that intrigue me are the tales by or about women, whether told by men or women; both interest me as I reconstruct the past. This is not to say that the stories are not real and are only imagined in a postmodern sense. That is neither my belief nor my purpose. That which is real for someone is the imaginary for another, especially if the wish is to rectify that reality decades later. For us today, the lines between the real and the imaginary are blurred. Many of us try with our passions to reconstruct the epics, dramas, comedies, and tragedies in a narrative that will echo “truth.” We want so much to unearth the documents and organize the “facts” that will disclose the “real truth.” And what we know, what we discover as we venture into other worlds, is that we can only repeat the voices previously unheard, rebutted, or underestimated as we attempt to redeem that which has been disregarded in our history. Voices of women from the past, voices of Chicanas, Mexicanas, and Indias, are utterances which are still minimized, spurned, even scorned. And time, in all its dialectical invention and promise, its so-called inherent progress, has not granted Chicanas, Mexicanas, Indias much of a voice at all. We are spoken about, spoken for, and ultimately encoded as whining, hysterical, irrational, or passive women who cannot know what is good for us, who cannot know how to express or authorize our own narratives. But we will. And we do.

While this study appears to be a provocation to the discipline of history, it is instead an exposition which emerges from my love of history. Historian Joan Scott has guided the shift in my own thinking about the origins and meanings of historical events and their causes. In Gender and the Politics of History, Scott suggests that emphasizing “how” something
occurred will shift the focus to “the study of processes, not of origins, of multiple rather than single causes, of rhetoric or discourse rather than ideology of consciousness.” The politics of meaning, then, becomes the aim of a history that interrogates the construction of knowledges accepted and condoned in society, thus granting power to those who make knowledge. By employing Foucault’s archaeology as a foundational methodological tool toward what he calls genealogy, both of which are imprinted with the power/knowledge paradigm, I am challenging the written story and its myth. Archaeology asks that disciplines, their categories, their grids and cells be exploded, opened up, confronted, inverted, and subverted; genealogy recognizes how history has been written upon the body.

Part one of this book will reconstruct “things said” through archaeology; parts two and three will utilize both archaeology and genealogy while acknowledging that “things said” are always an inscription upon the body. In The Archaeology of Knowledge, Foucault had not fully developed his thesis regarding power/knowledge, except to point to its basic relationship to discourse. For the historian, discourse is “where power and knowledge are joined.” Referring to this book as “the lost text,” Homi Bhabha pointed to the interstitial spaces in Foucault’s method of archaeology as the space where the gaps unfold the unspoken and unseen. I also argue that for historians, revitalizing Foucault’s archaeology, the precursor to his genealogical method, can help us examine where in discourse the gaps, the interstitial moments of history, reappear to be seen or heard as that third space. Thus, Chela Sandoval’s notion of differential consciousness is also useful to my uncovering of women’s history. Sandoval theorizes that differential consciousness allows for mobility of identities between and among varying power bases—for example, the move from liberal to socialist to feminist ideologies as forms of tactical intervention, or practice. I argue that the differential mode of consciousness to which Sandoval refers is precisely third space feminist practice, and that practice can occur only within the decolonial imaginary. In other words, Sandoval employs differential consciousness to critique hegemonic feminists who appropriate and assimilate third world women’s feminism into hegemonic feminist theories, and therefore third world feminist voices disappear into an interstitial space that third world women occupy. Like differential consciousness, the decolonial imaginary in Chicanas/o history is a theoretical tool for uncovering the hidden voices of Chicanas that have been relegated to silences, to passivity, to that third space where agency is enacted through third space feminism.

Finally, Foucault’s methodology is useful to historians because archaeology seeks to uncover discursive practices by unmasking them. It is self-reflexive in intent, and it is in that self-reflection where coloniality is exposed. Through his own self-reflection, Foucault was undoing European history. When he declared, “Taking a relatively short chronological sample within a restricted geographical area—European culture since the sixteenth century—one can be certain that man is a recent invention within it,” Foucault admitted to being restricted himself to Europe without engaging coloniality. Yet he was critical of the “knowledge of things and their order” that made possible coloniality and the construction of the Other. He concluded in The Order of Things, “man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end.” In essence, he claimed that European white man would no longer be central to history and its interpretations. Stories of the past would begin to focus on the margins and the marginal, hence the colonized. My contention is that Chicanas/o history has been a conscious effort to retell, to shift meanings and read against the grain, to negotiate Eurocentricity whether within European historical models or within the paradigms of United States historiography. Foucault’s methods help to undo the very nature of a Chicanas/o historiography that can potentially descend into the pitfalls of coloniality when systems of thought remain unchallenged.

I also draw on Hayden White’s Metahistory to probe the Chicanas/o historical imagination of the twentieth century in chapter 1. But beyond White’s metahistory is his analysis of the “content of the form.” How do we write history without narrativizing? Why is literature reduced to or expanded by the “imaginary” while history can only be “real”? What are the ‘artistic’ elements of a ‘realistic’ historiography? For me, the question that plagues historians seeking truths and narrativizing facts, facts that are only fragments waiting for the historian who will interface data and episodes into a persuasive story that others of the craft may believe in.

Let me track this book to illustrate why it has moved in this archaeological, metahistorical direction. This work began as a doctoral dissertation. It sought to investigate Chicanas social movements on both sides of the Mexico-U.S. border during a volatile era in Chicanas/o history—the Mexican Revolution. The project was initially intended as a comparative analysis of social movements among women in Mexico and women in the southwestern United States, but I ended up studying Yucatecan women in and of themselves, perhaps naively arguing that Chicanas feminist origins lie south in Mexico. Generally, I asked, did the revolution transform race, class, and gender relations? Later, as I began revisions to hone the dissertation into a monograph, I found myself returning to my original questions regarding the formation of Chicanas/o national identities beyond the geographic and political border of the United States. Chronologies and origins, however, no longer concerned me as much as an enunciative moment. Foucault’s premise that “discourse must be treated as it occurs, and not in the distant presence of the origin” allowed me to think again about seeking origins that serve only to impose false continuities.
porary Chicana feminisms rooted in a past which may be understood as an enunciation in the present. Deconstructing systems of thought that frame Chicana history is my task. In other words, I experiment with a consciousness of Chicana identities. In the case studies, a specific discursive field emerges from the “things said,” thereby mapping identities and feminisms.

Chicanas are marked by a unique diasporic configuration. The Mexican Revolution was a historical moment that introduced a population to a region formerly Spanish and Mexican. Thousands of Mexicanas migrated to the United States as a diaspora. New types of Chicana identities formed out of new mergings: Chicanas born in the United States, many with generations in the region, merged with Mexicanas from Mexico. As a historian trained in U.S. history, I chose to research Mexican women on both sides of the border, recognizing differences; yet language, culture, race, class, and gender evoked parallels rooted in centuries of common history. Despite geo-political borders, those of us who study Chicanas and Chicanos face historiographic dilemmas regarding the placement of people who, although Mexican or Native American by birth, entered a unique double bind as a diasporic yet colonized race in the nineteenth-century United States. From the earliest historiographic essays to more current ones, scholars have consistently argued for a conceptual framework that addresses transgressive Chicano and Mexican experiences in which culture is understood globally. For me, such a paradigm would analyze systems of thought that construct cultural identities carved by a complex history.

In part one, I highlight archaeology. It is through Foucault’s method of excavating words and their inherited meanings that I begin my own digging for words that have shaped Chicano/a historiography. The first chapter interrogates historiography as a colonialist project which has engineered Chicano history in the last decades. At the same time, and more importantly, Chicano historiography has been framed in resistance to the colonialist project. Borrowing from theorists and philosophers of history as well as cultural feminist critics, and building upon the pioneering studies of Chicana feminist historians, I argue that traditionalist historiography produces a fictive past, and that fiction becomes the knowledge manipulated to negate the “other” culture’s differences.18 I also argue for the emergence of a Chicano/a historical imagination that constructs a specific consciousness as reflected in published works since the 1970s, when Chicano/a history began to be conceptualized and theorized, particularly by historian Juan Gómez-Quíñones. His historiographic essays have made a lasting impression on the “poetics,” or the making, of Chicano/a history.

In part two, “From Archaeology to Genealogy,” I feature Foucault’s method of honoring silences, the gaps, the unthought; his archaeology privileges the words of theory over its practice. But at the same time, as I uncover case studies of Chicana feminist thought, I begin to use his genealogical method, in which social practice takes precedence over theory—the imprint of the word upon the physical, psychic, historical body is his genealogy. The three chapters of part two are case studies of specific Chicana feminist thought and practice. Chapter 2 places Yucatán and the Mexican Revolution at center stage, explaining how feminism was articulated and woven into a rigid nationalist model. Chapter 3 traces the movement of the Mexican Revolution into the United States by way of Mexican intellectuals and revolutionaries, specifically through the Partido Liberal Mexicano. I propose that in many ways the script written by the ideologues of the Mexican Revolution was appropriated by Chicano nationalists in the movement of the 1970s and again in the recent 1990s. Chapter 4 illustrates how Mexicanas, as members of a diaspora, expressed their agency in Texas during the early decades of the twentieth century. I put forth my own notion of diasporic subjectivities to augment immigrant identities. I believe that to settle upon Chicano/a experiences as only immigrant erases a whole other history, the history of a diaspora, of a people whose land also shifted beneath them. Finally, in part three I discuss a genealogy of Chicana identities and sexualities as counter-hegemonic responses to dominant cultures. I do so by meditating upon desire: desire as a medium for social change, desire as revolution, desire as love and hope for a different kind of future—a postcolonial one. I extrapolate from Sigmund Freud’s theory of the psyche to argue how the Oedipus complex has left its colonial imprints upon other cultures, in this case Chicano/a culture.

I want to warn you that I do not believe in a beginning, a middle, and an end of history. I do not ascribe to a linear temporality as the only means for speaking and writing history. I do know that fragments coexist, and I want to assign some order to these things, these fragments. The chronology outlined from parts one to three is the tool imposing meaning upon the suggested order. Historians are trapped by the pitfalls of chronology—the imposed meanings of linearity; yet I believe that a conscious, self-reflexive order at the very least acknowledges that meanings are as subjective as the events chosen to be told chronologically. I am also eager to trace transformations through centuries or decades, while change, the historian’s project, will not be so apparent. My imagination has proposed an order so that we may have a dialogue as you read. Whether we agree or disagree does not concern me as much as the dialogue and its potential to stimulate critique. I also want to warn that if you seek categorical, definitive answers, you will not find them. I will submit more questions, more interventions, as I continue to speak from the margins, as I continue to experiment with my own “sitio y lengua,” never forgetting that I am simulating voices that lived and thrived long before me, before you, before any of us.19
Part One

ARCHAEOLOGY:
COLONIALIST HISTORIOGRAPHY,
WRITING THE NATION INTO HISTORY
Chapter 1

SEXING THE COLONIAL IMAGINARY

(EN)GENDERING CHICANO HISTORY, THEORY, AND CONSCIOUSNESS

Historiography is, by its very nature, the representational practice best suited to the production of the "law-abiding" citizen... [I]t is especially well suited to the production of notions of continuity, wholeness, closure, and individuality that every "civilized" society wishes to see itself as incarnating.
—Hayden White, *The Content of the Form* (1987)

... neither of these two "national histories" [Mexico and the United States] have provided the space in which to tell the story of this population.

In the case of historiography, fiction can be found at the end of the process, in the product of the manipulation and the analysis. Its story is given as a staging of the past.

THE DECOLONIAL IMAGINARY

Political borders, geographic boundaries, and discursive categories have shaped late-twentieth-century historical knowledge. We cannot escape the boundaries that our Chicana/o minds have inherited as we take imaginary journeys beyond the Río Bravo into Mexico and Latin America or across the Atlantic Ocean to Asia, Africa, and Europe, traversing borders and centuries to link time and space. To learn history, we categorize time linearly and map regions geographically. Historians assign names to
epochs and regions that reflect spatio-temporal characteristics: the Trans-Mississippi West, the frontier, the Renaissance, the Progressive Era, the Great Depression, the sixties. Within these categoric spaces, we continue to conceptualize history without challenging how such discursive sites have been assigned and by whom. One fundamental result of such traditional approaches to history is that these spatio-temporal models enforce a type of colonialist historiography. In the 1960s, a new discipline of Chicano studies was developed, transforming U.S. history, which had not included those on the margins. Now American studies, cultural studies, women’s studies, and even postcolonial studies are reinscribing how U.S. history will be formulated. Chicano/a history has become recognized in history departments and in some academic circles. Restricted to the boundaries of arguments that came before, Chicano/a historians have tended to build a discipline that mimics the making of the frontier, or “American West,” while at the same time opposing the ideological making of the “West.” In this chapter, I outline the spatio-temporal categories of traditional historiography and examine how these categories influence and direct even the most radical Chicano/a history that longs for resistance. Secondly, I will offer my notion of the decolonial imaginary as a political project for re-conceptualizing histories. And finally, I want to provide another paradigm, an alternative model for conceptualizing a subaltern and self-consciously oppositional Chicano/a historiography that can account for issues of the modern and the postmodern, immigrations and diasporas, and genders and sexuality. I call it a theory of Chicano/a historical consciousness. I will spend most of my time breaking that down.

In these efforts, I do not turn away from history to dismiss or negate the historian’s purpose. In her explanation of postmodernism as it relates to history, Linda Hutcheon states that the contradictory nature of postmodernism “installs and then subverts the very concepts it challenges.” For her, postmodernism “questions from within” as it “returns to confront the problematic nature of the past as an object of knowledge for us in the present.” I, too, turn away from history to confront it in a different way, to challenge, as Spivak would say, “from within but against the grain” by asking, How have we come to study history, especially Chicano/a history? Where do we start as Chicano/a historians? What methods do our monographs engage? Which structures bind us in our studies? “To challenge history or its writing is not to deny either.” It is to ask questions such as, How is Chicano/a history being written? By whom is Chicano/a history written? For whom is the history written? What space is created for Chicano/a history? Do subjugated histories only replicate, copy, and duplicate dominant first world methods and tools, or is Chicano/a history written as something new coming into being, or both at once? How do we know? How do we identify a decolonizing, postcolonial, or oppositional method?

Here I will address the question, What are the discursive formations that pattern the twentieth-century Chicano/a historical imagination defined as our self-conscious recognition of who we are now and how we arrived here? All history is constituted by discursive formations. Foucault would say that “discursive formations produce the object about which they speak” and, moreover, it is discourse itself that “unifies the whole system of practices.” My argument is that Chicano/a history, like any other subaltern history, will tend to follow traditional history’s impulse to cover “with a thick layer of events,” as Foucault writes, “the great silent, motionless bases” that constitute the interstitial gaps, the unheard, the unthought, the unspoken. These interstitial gaps interrupt the linear model of time, and it is in such locations that oppositional, subaltern histories can be found. Foucault’s redefinition of archaeology, understood as a method, disrupts linear continuity to locate silences within the interstices. Bhabha finds in Foucault’s archaeology the gaps where a possible postcolonial imperative exists. I argue that these silences, when heard, become the negotiating spaces for the decolonizing subject. It is in a sense where third space agency is articulated. Bhabha also points out that the “Third Space of enunciations” is “the precondition for the articulation of cultural difference.” In the same manner, Chela Sandoval’s theory of differential consciousness, the “activity of weaving ‘between and among’ oppositional ideologies,” is also that third space where I find the decolonizing subject negotiating new histories.

Like Edward Said’s Orientalism and Tzvetan Todorov’s Conquest of America, which led us to acknowledge the significance of signs when the Spanish and Aztecas met, this book proposes a new category. This new category, the decolonial imaginary, can help us rethink history in a way that makes Chicano/a agency transformative. To think of the past as a colonial imaginary opens up traditional categories such as the “West” or the “frontier.” Traditional historiographical categories, questioned only from within for revision, have been built upon that which came before, and therefore have contributed to the colonial. The categories themselves are exclusive, in that they already deny and negate the voice of the other. Conceptualized in certain ways, they already leave something out, leave something unsaid, the silences and gaps that Foucault’s discursivity could help uncover. Chicano/a historiography has been circumscribed by the traditional historical imagination. This means that even the most radical Chicano/a historiographies are influenced by the very colonial imaginary against which they rebel. The colonial imaginary still determines many of our efforts to write history in the United States. Historians who are more traditional in their approach often claim that history is an objective science. When writing the history of the Southwest, the historian who accepts...
the notion of objectivity can often ignore the colonial relations that are already in place and write a study replete with a coloniality that has not been disputed, but rather has been accepted as the norm.14

The subjectivity introduced by, for example, Chicanas/os and Native Americans of the Southwest is a subjectivity that has challenged histories of the region at least since the 1960s, and in many cases since the early twentieth century. These challenges have pushed the defaced observer, writer, historian to examine the ways in which the colonial imaginary is structuring the very form of their/her objectivity by compelling authors to situate themselves in the making of the "foreign" or the "United States of America."15 Ironically, in the early 1970s, Rodolfo Acuña, Tomás Almaguer, Mario Barrera, and others proposed that Chicanos/as constituted a population of internally colonized people. Many Chicana/o academics since then have resisted with knee-jerk reactions any mention of coloniality,16 and Chicano/a social scientists have subsequently criticized the model because it does not offer empiricists an answer with solid evidence.17 Others are eager to cross over to postcoloniality. I believe that when written from an interstitial space, Chicana/o history happens oppositionally. The (en)gendering of Chicano history—that is, the writing of women into the field—occurs in a similar way. Where women are conceptualized as merely a backdrop to men's social and political activities, they are in fact intervening interstitially while sexing the colonial imaginary. In other words, women's activities are unseen, unthought, merely a shadow in the background of the colonial mind. Yet Chicana, Mexicana, India, mestiza actions, words spoken and unspoken, survive and persist whether acknowledged or not. Women's voices and actions intervene to do what I call sexing the colonial imaginary, historically tracking women's agency on the colonial landscape. The historiographic essays from which I will cite either cast women aside, where they are veiled in Chico historical writings; or integrate gender with race and class formations; or, finally, foreground gender as the inaugural category of analysis.

My commitment to history also moves me to see it with another "I/eye": the "I" which was often denied in the writing of history, where subjectivity was once unacceptable, yet inevitable.

**METAHISTORY**

If history is the way in which people understand themselves through a collective, common past where events are chronicled and heroes are constructed, then historical consciousness is the system of thought that leads to a normative understanding of past events. Historical knowledge is the production of normative history through discursive practice. Metahistory, then, does not record or re-create that accepted past; rather, it is the study of thought in which an intrinsic philosophy of history arises. Hayden White postulates in *Metahistory* that all historical interpretation can be identified within four tropes; moreover, the historical imaginations of nineteenth-century philosophers of history cultivate their thoughts and meanings within these tropes.22 For White, "the theory of tropes provides
a way of characterizing the dominant modes of historical thinking" in which the "deep structure of the historical imagination" can be identified.23

Adopting White’s method, I argue that the "deep structure of the historical imagination" of contemporary Chicano historians has constructed a distinct knowledge of Chicano history in the twentieth century, a knowledge that manifests four periods and four dominant modes of thinking. As I reviewed the development of Chicano/a historical consciousness since the 1970s, I was intrigued with White’s tropes and their usefulness to history’s categories, for I believe that Chicano/a historians are also "captives of tropological interpretation."24 expressed through these dominant modes of thinking and writing Chicano/a histories. The modes of thinking, I believe, are those which frame a Chicano historical consciousness in the twentieth century, a consciousness born from a need to explicate finally a community’s struggle to survive.25 In other words, in studying any text in Chicano history, one inevitably follows the time frame laid out by the "Great Events" of Chicano history and practices one or more of the four modes of interpretation.26 Chicano history has unfolded in four general thematic areas, which are in themselves modes of thinking as well as interpretation: (1) ideological/intellectual—"Chicanos are heroes/intellectuals"; (2) immigrant/labor—"Chicanos are immigrant laborers/colonized workers"; (3) social history—"Chicanos are also social beings, not only workers"; and (4) gendered history—"Chicanos are also women." The Great Events are periodized as (1) the Spanish Conquest of 1521; (2) the U.S.-Mexican War of 1846-48; (3) the Mexican Revolution of 1910 (leading to post-revolution migrations); and (4) the Chicano/a movements of the 1960s and 1970s.27

Historical studies echo one or more of these periods or modes of interpretation whether authors invoke them or not.28 The imprints of the Spanish Conquest in the sixteenth century must be referenced by anyone probing the Spanish colonial Southwest from 1521 to 1821—perhaps the era least studied by Chicano/a historians. One must cross boundaries from the United States to Latin America and then to Europe to peruse the Spanish colonial Southwest. Studies on the native populations before 1521 are fewer and are held suspect by the tradition of history, because written documents are not plentiful. Oral tradition, codices, and archaeological remnants are only a few of the tools for studying pre-Colombian history in the Americas, and these methods are often considered illegitimate by traditional historians. Unfortunately, many pre-Colombian studies, seen through the lens of the Spanish Conquest, echo the period’s imprints.29

Chicano historical periodization is also structurally problematic. Trained under the rubric of a U.S. history in which the Southwest does not exist before 1848, Chicanos/as become historians under spatio-temporal bounds dependent upon a colonial moment. In this temporal scheme, the Mexican period from 1821 to 1836 is conflated with the coming of the U.S.—Mexican War of 1846-48 and the annexation of northern Mexico to the United States as a colony. Hence, post-1848 Chicano/a history is readily confined as "real" Chicano history, the rupture where Chicanos/os become U.S. citizens. Often, the documents must be U.S.-born in order to qualify as Chicano/a history, or they must be linked by kinship to those left behind in Mexico. Without the familial link, then, Chicano/a origins cannot be determined.30 The monographs that reflect the period after the Mexican Revolution emphasize Chicanos/os as incoming immigrants whose realities were profoundly defined by their experience in the United States. In this case, the historical imagination of Chicanos/os of the post-revolution period excises pre-twentieth-century conditions, and the colonial periods of the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries assume another kind of reading. A colonial past is occluded to emphasize a shared immigrant experience with, for example, European immigrants in the United States. A subcategory under the Mexican Revolution of 1910 is World War II. Immigration retains a certain character through the first four decades of the twentieth century, and World War II as an event may have directly affected Chicanos/as, but it was not a war precisely of, for, or against Mexicans.31 Finally, the historical studies of the Chicano movements of the 1960s and 1970s curiously emulate ideological stances prominent during the Mexican Revolution. The social movements of the sixties and seventies wanted to cultivate revolutionary motive and ideology, looking backward to leaders who had helped foment revolution. What appears is a cyclical tracking of the past’s intellectuals to re-create the present. Many invoked Emiliano Zapata, Pancho Villa, Ricardo Flores Magón, and las Adelitas as the heroes and heroines who could provide guidance for the Chicano/a movements.32 Their writings reflect a conscious hero-heroine construction. I will address this again in chapter 3.

Historiography is the writing and the study of history, yet in that writing theories are constructed, albeit unwittingly. The writing of history, I would argue, is the space in which historians build upon what has been written, thereby constructing theories that will become the prominent ideologies of any given area of study. Historians theorize arguments in relation to studies, discursively formed, to agree or disagree with the specific field under scrutiny and its intellectual direction. Historiography has a brief life span for Chicano history, and an even briefer one for Chicana history. A handful of Chicano historians envisioned "Chicano" history just as they were being trained in the 1970s. Before the seventies, Mexican and Mexican American scholars, along with a few Euroamericans, published monographs that would classify areas in Chicano/a studies, but for the most part the field of study had not yet been named "Chicano." Manuel Gamio, Paul Taylor, Ernesto Galazar, and Carey McWilliams made inroads in immigrant/labor studies.33 Carlos Castañeda, on the other hand, wrote volumes utilizing ecclesiastical records.34 George
I. Sánchez investigated education and the overall discriminatory practices against Mexicans in the United States, while Joyita González and Américo Paredes theorized culture and folklore.35 These scholars, most of whom wrote during the early and middle twentieth century, laid the groundwork for an emerging Chicano/a consciousness, which may have seemed "mainstream" but was in fact oppositional. As David Gutiérrez notes, these "pioneering intellectuals" produced scholarship with a "quietly political nature."36 Moreover, while seemingly advancing "objectivity," Sánchez also had a "self-consciously political agenda."37 By combing through Sánchez's monographs, as well as through the works of these early intellectuals, Gutiérrez probed the interstitial third space where a middle voice quietly articulates a position that remains unheard unless one excavates deeply. Oppositional history was being articulated by these early scholars, whose work exhibited a significant intervention. Another consciousness was already emerging.

In the 1970s, when the first group of self-identified Chicano historians reflected on the past, two historiographic essays reviewed published works up to that point, few as they were. I resurrect the essays, dated as they might be, to trace what historians asked of themselves and the questions they posed for upcoming scholars of Chicano/a history. How women fared—that is, the sexing of the colonial imaginary—distinctly concerns me. Historians Juan Gómez-Quíñones and Luis Arroyo canvassed future historians to create a conceptual paradigm that unraveled the complex relationships between Chicanos and their society. Culture, its kinship to race and class, would be a crucial element in a diagram that illustrated economic exploitation of and racial discrimination against Mexican American laborers. Culture was interrogated, pre-dating the intent of current cultural critics. Although the historians failed to raise gender, much less sexuality, as a category of analysis, the trend in early academic studies was to deliberate about women only when they were being depicted as exploited workers alongside men.

The historiographic essays predisposed a flourishing discipline toward a class analysis in which race was explicated through the culture of the worker, thereby privileging historical materialism.38 Such an analysis would reinterpret history by highlighting human activity as the prime mover of society. As people construct their era's events, they also inherit historical circumstances that either inhibit or enhance personal or collective consciousness. With gender infused into the framework, for example, social relations between women and men would have been configured differently, perhaps prompting the recognition that low wages were not the only problem at hand. But none of the initial studies seriously considered gender or sex beyond an economic explanation.

In the last decade, have historians developed a paradigm that reflects cultural and social changes where gender, too, is scrutinized? Although historians who research a topic do not necessarily intend to develop a model that reflects change, as historians we nevertheless apprehend change as a continuous movement over the years, decades, and centuries. The intellectuals and ideologues of the 1960s and 1970s asked us to reclaim the writing of Chico history by adopting a unified strategy or approach. How would our work reflect a mobilizing strategy? How has change been employed to create the historian's imaginary? How much has change—that "empty category," according to Foucault—devised imagined or real histories?39 Can an emphasis on discourse liberate and revise history? When and how does power/knowledge intervene to bear upon discourse? At this juncture, I believe, the writings of Chicano history have focused on social change, but the discourse has been shaped so that gender/sex does not have to be part of the paradigm.40

In this way, I believe that postmodern questions provide a fresh look at Chicano/a history and the manner in which gender/sex is contemplated and negated. Paradigms that take into account only the cultural condition of the worker have been useful, but constricting. While I would not abandon historical materialism, I would build upon a model with Sandoval's differential consciousness, with the interstitial space where Bhabha locates culture, and with Foucault's dream of "a history that would be both an act of long, uninterrupted patience and the vivacity of a movement, which, in the end, breaks all bounds"—in essence, an archaeology in which movement does not rely on a teleological history.41 It is the "living openness of history,"42 where discontinuity is witnessed without the pervasive desire to synchronize or to totalize that which is in the historian's imaginary, to which Foucault refers.

I did not deny history, but held in suspense the general, empty category of change in order to reveal transformations at different levels.43 That is not to say that social change is not also Foucault's project, but that for Foucault, archaeology focuses on the transformation of discursive fields, while social change becomes the project of the genealogist. Transformation simply means that social change is possible without the dialectical promise of a teleological history. The archaeologist also has a task to "describe in theoretical terms the rules governing discursive practices."44 Historiography, on the other hand, is subject to rules established by the field's specialists where change is conceptualized linearly. Archaeology "as a method isolates those discursive objects in the field to ask what role do these discourses play in society?"45 In my mind, this question can move historiography toward a conscious self-reflexive method.

The possibility of a self-reflexive, yet structural, method for Chicano history may have been what Gómez-Quíñones and Arroyo had in mind; however, their method was, for the most part, dismissed by historiogra-
phers, who, ironically, built upon similar structures. Alex Saragoza assessed Gómez-Quiñones and Arroyo, but his select historiography resisted categorization by period, topics, or subfields, and instead attended to more recently published works in Chicano history. His major premise was that Chicano history in the 1980s moved beyond the binarism of “them versus us.” For Saragoza, the flaws in Acuña’s internal colonial model consisted in victimizing Chicanos by reducing their history to a binary opposition in which they were doomed to be victims and Anglos their oppressors. He claims early in the essay that his is not a thorough historiography. Interestingly, he identified three themes in contemporary Chicano history as the structure emerging from the writings: (1) ideology and culture, (2) changes in the U.S. economy, and (3) immigration from Mexico. He observed women as family members, but gender itself was inconsequential. His approach hurls women against the backdrop of Chicana/o historical writings.

Addressing gender/sex, embracing it as part of the whole, is not the work of Saragoza and many Chicano historians before the 1990s. Instead, an apparent concern with women, with gendered categories, with Chicanas, is contained, rather than explored, in themes such as intermarriage and family history, in which women become appendages to men’s history, the interstitial “and” tacked on as an afterthought. Adapting stereotypes—for example, women as wives and mothers—reveals more about what is unsaid and unthought than about gender itself. The stereotypes serve to produce particular systems of thought. These studies marginalized women as the mothers or wives of men and denied them any contribution to a community. When community studies introduce women, they do so mostly to show women in relation to eminent men. Historians are more likely to resurrect Emma Tenayuca or Louisa Moreno as labor leaders in the 1930s and 1940s. This is not to argue that these women do not deserve attention; however, in early Chicano history, unless Mexican American women were married to visible community men or unless they were as highly profiled as Tenayuca or Moreno, their lives remained invisible, enduring between the spaces of a colonial imagination, obscured in the sex/gender systems that fade in and out of the historical imagination.

In his historiographic article published in 1993 on Mexican Americans and the history of the American West, Gutiérrez unwittingly replies to Saragoza. While Saragoza adjudicates upon “The Significance of Recent Chicano-Related Historical Writings,” Gutiérrez cleverly dares to ask, “Significant to Whom?” Unlike Saragoza, Gutiérrez locates Chicana scholars who published as early as the 1970s and champions Chicana historians, along with Euroamerican women historians, who coerce their male counterparts to address gender. His integrative approach to gender is refreshing. He also foregrounds the leading areas of the history of the West as (1) social history, (2) cultural criticism, and (3) feminist studies, a significant overlap with the modes of interpretation I find appearing repeatedly. Social history for Gutiérrez is the umbrella under which immigration/labor would be found.

Cynthia Orozco, Vicki Ruiz, and Antonia Castañeda have written essays highlighting gender at the same time that they review literature. Orozco targets Chicano male historians who deliberately, or unconsciously, omit women’s agency in labor history. She insists upon male consciousness as the culprit who cannot recognize or acknowledge women in history. To her credit, Orozco pinpoints consciousness, its appeal, and its power as the conservative force that inhibits male thinkers.

Ruiz also makes a plea for the consolidation of gender in Chicano male writings. In her otherwise favorable review, she points out how gender is stereotyped, unexplored, and decentered in five separate studies published in 1982 and 1984. Only one study “incorporates women’s experiences throughout the text.” For Ruiz, both John Chávez and Mauricio Mazón neglect women in their histories, while Mazón reduces “pachuquitas” agency by fixating on their “tight” clothes. Francisco Balderrama also leaves women’s activities unexplored, and Richard Griswold del Castillo mentions women, but only peripherally. In Ruiz’s opinion, Albert Camarillo’s is the only monograph that integrates a gendered history.

Castañeda critiques the traditionalist Spanish Borderlands school in her essay “Gender, Race, and Culture: Spanish-Mexican Women in the Historiography of Frontier California.” In a thorough explication, she ferrets out women in the writings of late-nineteenth-century historians such as Hubert Howe Bancroft, where an “implicit gender ideology influences their discussions of race, national character, and culture.” She exposes how “Anglo, middle-class norms of women’s proper behavior” were and are imposed upon Mexican women. In my view, Castañeda traces the colonial imaginary as a sexualizing imperative in frontier California. Here she points out how incoming Euroamericans sexualized Mexican women in their diaries and travel logs. In another incisive essay, revealing the intimate bond between sexual violence and colonization, she theorizes the impact of sex on the colonial imaginary, thereby providing a method for tracking sex on the frontier’s landscape in eighteenth-century California.

Having summarized a few of the historiographic articles pertinent to Chicano history, I turn now to the initial intent of this chapter. My essay avoids and criticizes the notion of a comprehensive approach to Chicano historiography. Instead, I would like to explore texts which have chiseled the features of Chicana/o history, texts which have been studied, read, cited, and noted since the inception of Chicano history in the 1970s, texts which, to my mind, best exemplify a deep Chicano/a historical imagination in the twentieth century. I will place the books into four thematic categories, each of which is a method of interpretation. (See the list on the
left in table 1.) Of course, the categories overlap, and each book conforms to more than one of the four, just as the texts may reflect one or more of the Great Events of Chicano history. Please note: This is not a recommended paradigm; nor is it an appeal for a structuralist model. It is merely a diagram illustrating a Chicano/a historical imagination and its practice, both linearly and schematically—a practice which created dominant Chicano discourses that excluded voices unfitting to the structures laid out, whether consciously or unconsciously.

The right column of the table represents a shift in the consciousness of the Chicano/a historical imagination. While works may not necessarily represent this shift, they are instead somewhere in between, in an interstitial space, as movement occurs from the first to the second column. As the decolonial imaginary disrupts the Chicano/a historical imagination, a new consciousness is born in which “Chicano/a” identity is forced beyond its borders by new cultural critiques; in which the Mexican immigrant experience can parallel transnational, third world diasporas; in which social history derives its appeal from its multicultural imperative; in which gender as a category of analysis explodes as technologies remap the category to reinvent fresh ways of interpreting sexualities and social/political desires. My main focus will be on the texts that correspond to the second thematic category, with a brief mention of those texts that represent the shift into the right column. It is also important to stress that the categories on the right, although schematically drawn, overlap and overstep each other to explode out of the scheme, always transforming and branching into new categories. Therefore, they are not fully developed—nor could they be.

In the left column, categories 1 and 2 overlap, just as 2 and 3 entwine, and finally elements of 4 are found inside 1, 2, and 3. The right column has arrows indicating that movement into different modes is always occurring. While the arrows appear linear, the movement is not.

### TABLE 1

**A THEORY OF CHICANO/A HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1970s/80s/90s</th>
<th>Decolonial Time Lag</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ideological/Intellectual</td>
<td>New Cultural Critique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Immigrant/Labor</td>
<td>Colonized Diaspora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Social History of the Other</td>
<td>History of the Other as the Same (Multiculturalism)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Gendered History</td>
<td>Technologies of Sexualities/Desire/Gender</td>
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</tbody>
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**Ideological/Intellectual**

"Chicanos are heroes/intellectuals."

Under this category, most authors/historians want to point out similarities between two objects in the face of differences. Much of the literature published in the 1960s and 1970s signaled Mexicans as the forgotten heroes and heroines of the frontier. This move toward oppositional history denounced works by Walter Prescott Webb, for example, who valorized the Texas Rangers. Américo Paredes's *With His Pistol in His Hand* and Julian Samora’s *Gunpowder Justice* vehemently disparaged the Texas Rangers’ anti-Mexican, racist practices. As these Chicano scholars condemned historical injustices, they also constructed the heroes, such as Paredes's Gregorio Cortez, whose arrest and conviction for allegedly murdering an Anglo sheriff represented a cultural collision with Euroamerican settlers. Cortez was for Chicanos a wrongfully accused hero who killed in self-defense and managed to elude the Texas Rangers for days before he was caught and tried by an all-white jury in early-twentieth-century Texas. Cortez is probably one of the better-known Chicano heroes in Texas, while Joaquín Murrieta claimed fame in California.

Published works that focused on women as heroines were not as numerous as those that focused on men, but they were decidedly significant. Marta Cotera’s pamphlet *Diosa y Hembra: The History and Heritage of Chicanas in the U.S.*, Adelaida Del Castillo’s article on Malintzin Tenepal, and Alfredo Mirandé and Evangelina Enriquez’s book *La Chicana* idealized specific women as the forgotten idols of Chicano history. The most cited of these works is Del Castillo’s interpretation of La Malinche, who became, instead of the betrayer of the people, the new Chicana heroine.

Heroes and heroines, then, became the subject of third world writers, the intellectuals of communities. The emergence of the third world into writing shifted the sites of discursive territories. Imprinted with the legacies of imperialism, colonization, race wars, and gender class hierarchies, early works by third world writers addressed imperialism and coloniality as they affected race, class, gender, and even sexuality. Franz Fanon, Albert Memmi, and Paolo Freire especially impressed Chicano/a writers. Highly influenced by these global writers, the third world intellectuals of the 1960s and 1970s linked the social and political struggles of people of color in the United States with those of Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Karl Marx, followed by Louis Althusser, also informed Chicano/a intellectual works in the 1970s and 1980s, a departure from the scholars of the early and mid-twentieth century. Historians were no exception. A Marxist—that is, historical materialist—analysis streamlines early studies by Chicanos/as. A more popular text is Ácuña’s *Occupied America*, which collapses both the ideological/intellectual space and the immigrant/labor...
category. Gómez-Quiñones's works, however, gravitate toward the ideological/intellectual category. His early essays, even when topically favoring labor studies, are punctuated by Chicano “intellectual precursors” whom he locates during the Mexican Revolution. His dissertation, for example, pinpoints influential Mexican intellectuals, while his biography of Ricardo Flores Magón fuses the hero with the intellectual. In 1977, Gómez-Quiñones theorized “On Culture” long before cultural critics began interrogating the meaning of Chicano/o identities. Identity became class-bound, and culture was dictated by class and region. In his latest book, *Roots of Chicano Politics, 1600–1940*, Gómez-Quiñones begins with a chapter called “Political Culture of the North,” in which, for the most part, a historical materialist analysis supersedes all others.

Marxist historians, such as Gómez-Quiñones and Acuña, infused the narrative with theory, convinced that certain truths had been uncovered finally. Like Memmi, who spells out that “the colonialist likes neither theory nor theorists,” Chicano/a historians refuted history narratives in which Chicanos/as were neither seen nor heard. Like colonialists, traditional and non-Marxist historians suspiciously eye theory, reasoning that one must remain “true” to the documents. Peter Novick, in *That Noble Dream*, introduced to the field what had been on the minds of many: the idea that objectivity was both fallacy and illusion. He traced the field of United States history and its move into professionalism, marking the American Historical Association as the site where Euroamerican men conferred to lay the bedrock of the discipline. But the voices of “others,” the marginalized, were not even imagined to exist at the AHA. Not until the 1930s, with the wellspring of Spanish Borderland scholars, did historians concede that the Anglo-Saxon East was not the Spanish-Mexican West. No longer restricted to Anglo-Saxon colonialist historiography, a modern brand of colonialist historiography named the social-racial dynamics in the Southwest in the name of the Spanish.

The historical study of Chicanos/os, however, was no longer restricted to studies conducted by Euroamerican researchers who once bolstered stereotypes about Mexican Americans in the United States. Before Acuña popularized the internal colonial model in his first edition of *Occupied America*, published in 1972, Chicano historiography had only quietly subverted colonialist historiography. The studies by George J. Sánchez and Carlos Castañeda, published in and around the 1940s, did not overtly question colonialist minds in the Southwest, yet their work pioneered the inception of the internal colonial model. Once control of northern Mexico’s land had been won in 1848, the next stage was to enforce a colonialist knowledge in order “to erect the past as a pedestal on which the triumphs and glories of the colonizers and their instrument, the colonial state, could be displayed.” Building monuments and naming battlefields after those who had “won the West,” the colonialists eulogized their victories. In Texas, the Alamo Mission and San Jacinto battlefield continue to occupy firm spaces as they contribute to the production of colonial knowledge. In these spaces statues and photographs of Anglo-Texan, or Texian, heroes such as Sam Houston and Stephen F. Austin comfort the hearts and minds of Texian nationalists, who still celebrate the former republic’s history with a fervor. Chicano historians responded and envisioned heroes on the frontier as an oppositional retort to Anglo heroes such as these.

Acuña’s text marked a historical moment, one that was mimicked by oppositional scholars, in which the legacy of the frontier was impugned, then vindicated, in a double movement. Ranajit Guha illustrates the double move in the following passage:

> [The appropriated past came to serve as the sign of the Other not only for the colonizers, but ironically for the colonized as well. The latter, in their turn, reconstructed their past for purposes opposed to those of their rulers and made it the ground for marking out their differences in cultural and political terms. History became thus a game for two to play as the alien colonialist project of appropriation was matched by an indigenous nationalist project of counter-appropriation.]

For many, *Occupied America* signifies a Chicano/a nationalist project of counter-appropriation.

**Immigrant/Labor**

“Chicanos/as are immigrant laborers” and/or “Chicanos are colonized workers.”

In this category, all is reduced to “work.” While the dicta are similar in that they both highlight laborers/workers, they are also each other’s opposites. To be an “immigrant” and to be “colonized” are conditions that are in tension, yet complementary. In other words, to be an immigrant and to emerge from a history of colonization in the United States are predicates that are opposite sides of the same coin. Both operate at once. This is precisely why the history of Chicanos/as is unique in comparison with the histories of other immigrants in the U.S.

Euroamerican studies such as Carey McWilliams’s *North from Mexico*, published in 1949, set the stage for a singular understanding of migrant workers, a diaspora traveling from Mexico to the United States. The assumption, of course, was that Mexicans were immigrants. Distinctions between European and Mexican immigrants were superficial, if they were made at all. Not until Acuña’s controversial *Occupied America* did a
Chicano historian theorize a conceptual framework that implicitly disputed the historiography of immigration. Acuña's was not a popular treatise among traditionalists, but for many Chicanos/as, he and other scholars opened a site for a different discourse privileging "colonized" over "immigrant." Chicano historians debated coloniality in the Southwest after 1848, many agreed, and many found discrepancies with the internal colonial model. Regardless of the debates, however, the idea of an America "occupied" made a lasting imprint in the formation of Chicano history by naming a new discursive field. Monographs by Chicanos/Chicanas emphasized upon embedded colonial social relations in the Southwest, including one of the most regularly cited, Mario Barrera's *Race and Class in the Southwest*, in which he applied the paradigm to the Southwest labor market to argue how a two-tier wage system sustained "internal," regional, colonization.

As a racial group, Chicanos/as have been constructed by a "legacy of conquest" in a homeland where a political border divided a community accustomed to crossing the Rio Bravo north and then south again as easily as easterners found themselves crossing the Mississippi River, yet able to retain their rights, their language, and their culture. But after the political boundary divided northern Mexico from the south, moving back and forth was not so simple anymore. Sixty years after annexation, Mexicans south of the Rio Bravo found themselves crossing again to escape the carnage of the Mexican Revolution.

As immigrants became laborers, "work" became the privileged site for scholars who wrote "labor history." Mexicans and Chicanos/as became laborers, with little mention of their lives beyond the fields or factories. In an anthology edited by Rosaura Sánchez, published in 1976, Chicanas were workers who suffered under a capitalist economy precisely because they were workers. These early immigrant/labor studies accentuated the worker's condition, a genderless, sexless, social condition. Mark Reisler, Laura Arroyo, Anna Nieto-Gómez, Rosaura Sánchez, Lawrence Cardoso, David Montejano, and Emilio Zamora, for example, cultivated the immigrant labor/colonized worker paradigm more closely; but at this juncture, women were mostly perceived as exploited workers, along with men, in the labor market. Perhaps the only work that hinted at women's exploitation beyond "surplus value" was not addressed. Monographs by historian Vicki Ruiz and Camille Guerín-González contest gender ideologies, perhaps even "sexing" the labor market, by sifting through family labor dynamics to locate women's exploitation in the labor market and within the family.

While immigration is clearly an issue with which to contend for the Mexican community in the Southwest, does the literature express difference? Is European immigration conflated with Mexican immigration to blur differences? Is similarity assumed precisely because the category "immigrant" is not interrogated? While similarities may be exposed when groups are compared, if one invokes a decolonial imaginary, how would the similarities change for different immigrant groups in the U.S.? Moreover, wouldn't different types of questions be posed? Would a new paradigm in which racialized diasporas were examined bring new insights to Mexicans as immigrants? Would diaspora studies transform the focus of immigration studies, and would we find within diaspora studies the racialization of immigrants, thereby distinguishing "ethnic white" from "ethnic people of color" migrations and dispersions? Perhaps the use of "ethnic" is its own political intervention. These questions, perhaps naive ones, could be tested only by scholars who engage in studies of migrations and dispersions. My question, however, is, Does the signifying term "immigrant" remain static where gender is concerned? I am inclined to believe that gender as a category of analysis remains constricted when it is examined under the condition of "immigrant." There is nowhere to go, there are no new questions to ask, and perhaps the most problematic issue is that gender is erased except in the anecdotal stories about women's lives, with no analysis of their concerns. In chapter 4, I attempt an interrogation of "immigrant" women and put forth "diaspora" as a transformative and oppositional subjectivity for women specifically.

**Social History of the Other (as History of the Same)**

"Chicanos/as are also social beings, not just workers."

When we employ social history methodology, we eagerly trace social change from the bottom up, seeking common people by digging through census manuscripts, city directories, tax records, deeds, wills, police and criminal records, and other primary sources that reconstruct communities. For many, social history is the grand design, the essence around which we catalogue history. The scheme integrates all other schemes. Family history, labor history, immigration history, women's history, intellectual history, urban history—all harmonize, conjoin, and synthesize under the rubric of the "new" social history. Social historian Albert M. Camarillo, in his essay "The 'New' Chicano History: Historiography of Chicanos of the 1970s," prophetically identifies the coming of a method around which all others will coalesce.

Social history of the other as history of the same is the only category with respect to which a movement from column one to column two can be witnessed in published works. Since the work of social historians in the late seventies and early eighties, a history of the other has magically been
conflated with a history of the other as the same. Conclusions in the studies lead to the erasure of differences so that the “other” becomes not unlike the majority “same.” In an effort to document racism, as well as economic and gender inequalities, the social historian theorizes that tangible means such as quantification—for example, comparing numbers and tables—will cause people to become alarmed at social injustices, and to decide that everyone deserves equal treatment. Reforms will remedy injustices. The racial, social, gendered group being oppressed will receive equal treatment under the law because they are the same as the dominant group in their difference.

With the ascent of social history’s quantifying orderliness, Chicano historiography entered the reformist malady of “sameness.” Those who opposed its assimilationist imperative infused conflict and contradiction into the narrative, but the move toward “sameness” seemed like a teleological inevitability with an inherently liberal, reformist thrust. Can we salvage history from sameness, from an assimilationist course, when the argument for the other as the same is what allows for necessary social reforms? Can we adapt social history methods to reconstruct communities that are “not predicated on transcendental becoming”? It is within this Hegelian notion of becoming that Mexicans in the United States have been placed to achieve “equality,” hence sameness with white ethnic groups. But Chicano/a history is caught in a time lag between the colonial and the postcolonial, the modern and the postmodern, the national and the postnational. What remains is the ontological wish to become that which would allow a liberatory future promised by the postcolonial, postmodern, and postnational. The historical inheritance, discursive and non-discursive, of the colonial imaginary in the United States has not permitted that ontological wish to come true. It is almost as if we are doomed to repeat the past, to move, not ahead, and certainly not dialectically, but in circles, over and over, as our communities “become” another kind of colonized/colonizer with the colonial imaginary overshadowing movements. Perhaps our only hope is to move in many directions and knowingly “occupy” an interstitial space where we practice third space feminism to write a history that decolonizes the imaginary. But where will the future of social history as a history of the same, but rather extrapolating how humans are engineered by their material conditions. Once the history of neglected social, racial, gendered groups was dug up through quantitative methods, however, all would be equal in the “becoming” of the same. In other words, historians must create order from chaos, and quantitative method organizes and classifies people and their lives to reconstruct communities in a manner that reduces differences into sameness. Differences are quantified and tabulated into a grid to showcase, for example, inequities between women and men, brown and white, poor and rich. By comparing grids and tables, a social historian unveils how societies are unequal. Equality, however, must be secured for all people; hence, equality—a sameness in difference—becomes the privileged signifier in social history.

Stephen Thernstrom, employing the Annales methods, opened up another world for U.S. historians when he excavated the lives of common men who could be found only in city directories and the like. In The Other Bostonians (already the other is claimed as the history that will be told), Thernstrom sifted through the names of blue-collar and white-collar workers who did not figure prominently in Boston’s elite society. The common citizen, the other, is finally valued, but only men received attention in the study. Thernstrom’s work was tailored by Chicano/a historians to fit the Chicano/a population. In Chicanos in a Changing Society, Albert Camarillo clarified the pertinence of Thernstrom’s methods, and even borrowed from him the occupational categories under which to list Chicano workers. Other prominent social histories by Mario Garcia, Richard Griswold del Castillo, Ricardo Romo, Pedro Castillo, Arnoldo De León, and others utilized quantitative methods to uncover the history of the other as more than just workers. Life at home, in churches, with community clubs and organizations filled social and cultural gaps in knowledge about a population whose lives had been discerned only in fields and factories.

When conflict and contradiction are reassessed within social history, they seem to impugn a binarism which categorically unifies all Euro-Americans as oppressors and all Mexican Americans as their victims. David Montejano reflects upon the racial tension and class conflict that shaped Texas in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries without privileging the binaries of “us versus them.” Ramon Gutiérrez elucidates how gender differences and conflicts designed a unique native society in pre-colonial and colonial New Mexico. Lisbeth Haas traces colonial California’s history from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries to locate the impression of space upon identities. George J. Sánchez probes the cultural complexities of Mexican immigrants as they “became” Mexican American in Los Angeles during the first four decades of the twentieth century.

Forthcoming monographs by Antonia Castañeda and Deena González
identify multiple conflicts in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century California and New Mexico, where women lived persistent contradictions. Finally, Vicki Ruiz’s text provides a comprehensive history of Chicanas.

Historically, Chicano/a communities have been split by class, by generational differences, by gender. Multiple conflicts between and among racial, ethnic, and gendered categories have been an important element of a method which began as the history of the other.

Gendered History

“Chicanos are also women, Chicanas.”

Gendered history appeared to be an irony, a universal joke on a tradition that had negated half its population. A reversal of methods, theories, narratives was to be the new order. All would have to be rethought, revised, rewritten. The negation of woman paralleled Marx’s dialectics as a contrast to Hegel’s; that is, feminists writing history had found that which would turn everything on its head by (en)gendering history.

Chicana history, or Chicana studies, constructed, theorized, enunciated, and redirected the questions asked by Chicano/a historians in the 1970s and 1980s. Inside each of the overlapping categories I have listed—intellectual/ideological, immigrant/labor, and social history—women have been relegated to silences, which are measured differently by Chicanas/os (en)gendering history. The historiographic questions challenged an implicitly phallocentric field. Feminism, as a methodological tool, would unleash systems of thought from restrictive categories, the categories of modernity in which Chicana history had been trapped. However, although historians of women questioned traditional history that excluded women, the question the gendered history—women of color historians questioned how feminism, too, had its flaws; hence the early studies in my first three categories feared that feminism would neglect race. The gendered history that many women of color contemplated, however, claimed that one could not study women of color without reflecting upon the intersections of race and class with gender.

Gendered history transpired with a distinct intent in the 1980s. The anthologies Mexican Women in the U.S. and Between Borders, both edited by Adelaida del Castillo, still displayed a Marxist analysis in which class underscored women’s exploitation, but gender was brought to the forefront and the patriarchy became a category to devalue. Chicana Voices, first published in 1986 and reprinted in 1990, is a compilation of the proceedings to the conference for the National Association for Chicano Studies held in Austin in 1984. The anthology characterizes an interstitial move from an orthodox Marxist critique to a firm feminist position unafraid to earmark feminism as a paradigm that could locate the “intersections of class, race, and gender.”

The collection Building with Our Hands, published in 1993, further enunciates feminist visions. In the introduction and conclusion, Chicana scholars articulate cultural feminisms patterned by racial and social questions.

Essays that track feminisms through the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s were written by Chicana feminists who berated the “madness” in Chicano studies for negating mostly heterosexual Chicana voices. Anna Nieto-Gómez was often the lone feminist voice in the early Chicano male-centered nationalism of the 1970s. Teresa Córdova’s comprehensive, thorough thought-piece on Chicana feminism from the 1970s to the 1990s is one of the few essays from a consciously heterosexual perspective that do not relegate Chicana lesbians to the margins, but rather integrate and acknowledge the contributions by Chicana lesbians to a more radical feminism. Gloria Anzaldúa, Alicia Gaspar de Alba, Deena González, Cherríe Moraga, Carla Trujillo, and Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano, however, were the first to dare to broach the topic of Chicana lesbians within Chicana/o studies.

Alma García, in “Studying Chicanas: Bringing Women into the Frame of Chicano Studies,” argues that integration of Chicanas into Chicano studies requires more than merely a topical addition of “woman.” This “tacked-on” approach does not integrate gender with race and class, but rather leaves women outside of the main topic. García schematically traces how works in Chicana studies have fit the following three categories: “Chicanas as Great Women,” “Chicanas as Workers,” and “Chicanas as Women.” She pleads for a leap into her fourth category, “Toward an Incorporation of Women into Chicano Studies.” Interestingly, García and I have charted similar rules of formation, but our conclusions do not coincide. She conflates studies on women as workers with studies on women as social beings. Many of the social history texts, for example, which I place in category 3, she classes as studies on work. Her category “Toward an Incorporation of Women into Chicano Studies” is similar to what I classify as “Gendered History.” However, I contend that this category is also limited, and a leap toward technologies of desire/sexualities/gender may be the point of departure for new studies on Chicanas/women of color/queers. Her fourth category is her liberatory signifier for Chicano/a studies, but I would contend that it is another of modernity’s entrapments, while a jump toward technologies of desire/sexualities/gender would allow for a third space feminist analysis implementing the decolonial imaginary to move beyond woman as an essentialist category.

CHICANA HISTORY: MYTHS AND METAPHORS

I have discussed within each of my taxonomies how Chicanas have been assigned secondary status, either as heroines who are idealized, as
workers who are exploited along with men, or, as in social history, as women who are only members of a family. But how has Chicana history fared within the gendered history of Euroamerican women historians? The apparent historiographic literature would be that of the American West and how Chicanas have been written about within that scope. Works by Vicki Ruiz, Antonia Castañeda, Deena González, and Sarah Deutsch, to name a few, have scrutinized traditional writings in the American West to engender its history.

I turn, however, to historian Joan Kelly, who asked, "Did women have a Renaissance?" as an example of Euroamerican women's historiography to probe how Chicana history has been marked and pushed aside within European constructs. Kelly inverted meanings, inviting us to place at the center those on the margins, in this case European women in history. For a consideration of the question "Did women have a Renaissance?" for Chicanas, certain claims within that historical construct were possible. But the system of thought had to be disputed. That is not to say that I dismiss the topic simply because it is a European construct. The question can be shifted and redesigned to address Chicana history. Kelly's question intrigued me, but I was similarly intrigued with Mexicanist Anna Macias, who did not ask, but pointedly stated, "The Mexican Revolution was No Revolution for Women." Macias and Kelly reached identical conclusions about male-centralist paradigms that did not include women's voices. Both confronted and inverted traditional systems of thought.

If I remained within the temporal and spatial epoch historically unified and defined as the Renaissance, then I would be restricted to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries of Spain's own Renaissance. These centuries of Spanish history are pertinent to Chicana history. The Spanish Renaissance explorers/discovers were also the conquerors/colonizers who invaded the Americas searching for wealth, only to stumble upon the "other," the indigenous population. Historians of Spain's empire have argued that el siglo de oro, the Golden Age, was possible precisely because the Americas provided the wealth from gold and silver mines in Mexico and Peru. Joan Kelly's question opened the historiographic space to scrutinize the Renaissance as a historical moment that further privileged those already privileged. European men who were writers, artists, and intellectuals embraced the conquests and invasions, which brought them gold and silver. Some elite women benefited from the empire's wealth, but not in the same way as men. If I shift the question, as a historian of Chicanas/Mexicanas, and replace "Renaissance" with "Revolution" to follow Kelly's example of inverting traditionalist historiographic questions, then the space of the "other" is relocated. Chicana history, then, is the history of the other within Euroamerican women's historiography.

Perhaps one of the most astute renderings of Chicanas as the other to appear as an intervention in Chicano studies and women's studies was Anzaldúa's Borderlands/La Frontera. Fifteen years after the publication of Acuña's Occupied America, Anzaldúa published a book which would influence not only the developing transdisciplinary area of cultural studies, but also historiography. Anzaldúa's book was to be the progression toward postmodern, postnational identities for Chicanas/mestizas. Borderlands/La Frontera became the keywords, the cohesive metaphoric linchpins for many late-twentieth-century writings. The Chicana feminist theoretician intervened with a treatise that presented history as only another literary genre. Debates circulated about the book's historical errors, but many historians simply missed the metaphor and read too literally. Anzaldúa's conscious myth-making, like José Vasconcelos's "raza cósmica," opened a site for gendered discourse about la nueva mestiza.

Both Acuña and Anzaldúa wrote the "other" without making the "other" the same or placing the "other" within the same. Both texts "marked out a new domain of inquiry"; both were "a new conceptualization of consciousness's relation to the world." Both texts brought an untried, cutting-edge perspective to Chicana/o studies, and both have been held suspect by the academy because they venture beyond the confines of the academy's authorized debates. They move into unexpected territory, daring to risk a distinct line of inquiry. Both interrogate existing discursive fields. Acuña's, as I have mentioned, belongs in the first column, where the Chicano/a historical imagination has been construed by a form of opposition to the colonial imaginary since the 1970s. Unlike Anzaldúa's feminist approach, he places woman, the concept-metaphor, as laborer and commodity subsumed under a nationalist domain. While Acuña offers a counter-appropriation of a nationalist project, Anzaldúa writes oppositionally to Acuña, issuing a "new" postnationalist project in which la nueva mestiza, the mixed-race woman, is the privileged subject of an interstitial space that was formerly a nation, and is now without borders, without boundaries. The concept-metaphor woman, formerly known as "worker" in Chicano nationalist discourse, is challenged by Anzaldúa, who critiques that discursive "nation" as a space that negates, dismisses, and occludes feminists, queers (jotas y jotos), and anyone who is not of "pure" Chicano blood and lineage. Mestizaje, for Anzaldúa, is redefined and remixed into an open consciousness: "it is a consciousness of the Borderlands" where a "hybrid progeny" conflates "racial, ideological, cultural and biological cross-pollination."

The work of mestiza consciousness is to break down the subject-object duality that keeps her a prisoner and to show in the flesh and through the images in her work how duality is transcended.

In the same paragraph, Anzaldúa attempts to reconcile the dualities male-female and white—people of color by introducing a postcolonial conscious-
ness, a consciousness of hope in which "queerness" is in the forefront. For me, the borderlands are also the interstices where the decolonial imaginary glides to introduce the possibility of a postcolonial, postnational consciousness.

To juxtapose these two texts, *Occupied America* and *Borderlands/La Frontera*, at the end of this essay is to take a diachronic leap from categories 1 to 4, where the theoretical conditions of both texts coexist. In other words, a specific Chicano nationalist discourse that negates "woman" still lives and breathes, at the same time that a wave of Chicana/o consciousness ruptures old models to build upon new technologies in which identities are not bound to a rigid, schematic past.

The postmodern imperative has already configured Chicana/o cultural studies. Some cultural and literary critics dabble in historicism, prodding Chicano/a history in fresh directions beyond restricted borders toward transdisciplinarity. But I can already hear "purists" denouncing theory, denouncing a move away from "objective science." In the following abridged quote, familiar to many, Foucault asserts how a history that defies order, privileging ideas and knowledge, is still repudiated by traditionalists who cannot acknowledge their own ideological trappings.

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The cry goes up that one is murdering history whenever, in a historical analysis—and especially if it is concerned with thought, ideas, or knowledge—one is seen to be using in too obvious a way the categories of discontinuity and difference, the notions of threshold, rupture, and transformation, the description of series and limits. One will be denounced for attacking the inalienable rights of history. But one must not be deceived. What is being bewailed, is that ideological use of history by which one tries to restore to man everything that has unceasingly eluded him for over a hundred years.

That which has eluded “man” for centuries is the ideological use and abuse of history. In the nineteenth century, government discourse was constructed by the state historian, who could rationalize a narrative that would uplift the government in power. A patriotic story would be told and passed down to new generations to advance a nationalist cause.

Has Chicano/a history mimicked a patriotic story so much that a nationalist cause, in the name of decoloniality, has become the privileged history project? Or has Chicano/a history become the history of the other as the same to guarantee equal political and social rights to those historically excluded from the center’s privileges? Or perhaps history is moving too far away from “science” and empiricism, onto the threshold of postmodernity and postcoloniality. Ashis Nandy, writing about coloniality in *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*, may offer Chicana/o historians insight when he says, “If the past does not bind social consciousness and the future begins here, the present is the ‘historical’ moment, the permanent yet shifting point of crisis and time for choice.”

How will we choose to describe our past, now, at this moment, as an enunciation in the present? If “history shows that everything that has been thought will be thought again by a thought that does not yet exist,” then what will we choose to think again as our history, the history that we want to survive as we decolonize a historical imaginary that veils our thoughts, our words, our languages?

In part two, I will discuss the shaping of Chicano/a consciousness by the discourse of the Mexican Revolution. I believe that Chicano/a historical consciousness has been constructed by the choices we historians have made, political choices that often occluded a gendered history, but I will do my best to pull that history into the forefront as part of the consciousness of a historical moment. Part two of this book offers case studies situated in and around the Mexican Revolution. I am, in a sense, exposing how historians have participated in a politics of historical writing in which erasure—the erasure of race, gender, sexualities, and especially differences—was not intentional, but rather a symptom of the type of narrative emplotment unconsciously chosen by historians. I am wondering what will happen if emplotment becomes a conscious act as we write the events that become our official stories. In the following section, I will submit case studies, but I, too, am emplotting by choosing specific narrative techniques. I arrange the events and make arguments that suit me, arguments that I am pleased to excavate from the text of the documents as I create a Chicana history in which I can believe.
Part Two

FROM ARCHAEOLOGY TO GENEALOGY:
DISCURSIVE EVENTS AND THEIR CASE STUDIES
Chapter 2

FEMINISM-IN-NATIONALISM

THIRD SPACE FEMINISM IN YUCATÁN'S SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

Feminism causes divorce, feminine associations against marriage, and the vice of Lesbianism, which, by an immense misfortune assumes large proportions in the cities.

—Ignacio Gamboa, *La Mujer Moderna* (Yucatán, 1906)

Mexican essayist Ignacio Gamboa wrote *La Mujer Moderna* to publicize convictions profoundly critical of feminism. Pamphlets such as his circulated in middle- and upper-class homes, where women like those who attended Yucatán’s feminist congresses, the pedagogic congresses, or any political or social event during Yucatán’s socialist era may have praised Gamboa, criticized him, or just ignored him.

Tracking “things said” about feminism by the intellectuals and leaders of a historical event—in this instance, the Mexican Revolution—can make clear the production of discursive formations. Often, what is recovered in such a Foucauldian “archaeology” of “things said” is not “genesis, continuity, or totalization,” but instead repetition. “Things said” are repeated without any kind of evolutionary or revolutionary transformation. It is as if the dialectic has failed women’s voices. But has it? If indeed we consider rhetoric about feminism within nationalistic movements, we seem doomed to repetition over the centuries. How often have feminists been accused of lesbianism and anti-marriage sentiments (as if either is an insult) because they claim feminist identities? Almost a century later, Gamboa’s accusations are still hurled at feminists; however, social and political movements through the decades have opened up spaces for feminists who no longer
fear being silenced or censored by ideologues who essentialize women’s voices.

While the repetition of “things said” is engaging, the modicum of social change that can be traced—if, that is, we want to trace change—is also fundamental. Change can always be unveiled across the centuries, just as continuity can be hailed. Both are inherent tools for the historian; both are differential by degrees. My interest remains social change, but my focus is to probe change as it is formed discursively, in the past, by the present.

As a historian, I have been trained to locate origins, to trace continuities and changes, and to unify that which seems out of synchronicity, to categorize facts and words which seem to be “lost in space,” lingering alone, anxious for a historian who will assign categories to these “things said.” On the other hand, if one studies history only from a Foucauldian stance, to rupture totalities and dispute origins, one can become disillusioned; yet disillusionment may be essential in order to interrogate differences and subjectivities in different ways, perhaps by crossing disciplines. The historian’s subjectivity imagines and produces historiography, even when it is revisionist. The language of historiography is enunciated and repeated, authorizing systems of thought, which are not tested; nor do they interrogate the subject who utters privilege and authority. As Spivak reminds us, “the production of historical accounts is the discursive narrativization of events,” the assumption that the historian will tell “what really happened” in “value-neutral prose,” if theory is disregarded, is itself a subject position which contributes to the discursive formation of a historiography that claims purity, the purity of knowledge, as if the documents speak for themselves.

In this essay, I am concerned with tracking discursive formations of feminism during a nationalist moment, acknowledging my own subject position as a Chicana feminist historian with historical materialist tendencies. I want to contrast women’s voices with men’s voices as both articulated a nationalist revolution in Mexico from 1910 to 1920, but more specifically I want to address the gendered narratives constructed at the pedagogic congresses, the Yucatán Feminist Congresses of 1916, and also want to scrutinize the ways in which working women contested the revolution’s reforms through their voiced grievances. This is all a way of querying systems of thought. As the Yucatecan women spoke, a kind of “dialectics of doubling” yielded a politics of contradiction, a contradiction to and with male-centered policies, which, I argue, articulated third space feminism, within and between dominant male discourses. It is as if women and men became each other’s doubles, “doubling” or even repeating each other’s rhetoric, especially as both were confronted with neo-colonial political dynamics in their nation. The Mexican Revolution, as it was imported into Yucatán by General Salvador Alvarado, became the space for interstitial feminist acts under the eyes of male leaders whose nationalist vision for women was quite specialized. Aware of male discourses as they dominate nationalist rhetoric, cultural critic R. Radhakrishnan asks, “Why does the advent of nationalism lead to the subjugation or the demise of women’s politics?” In a sense, he is conceding that women should create a new and different space inside nationalisms. Historical events such as the Mexican Revolution show that women’s politics may have been subordinated under a nationalist paradigm, but women as agents have always constructed their own spaces interstitially, within nationalisms, nationalisms that often miss women’s subtle interventions. I would like to refer to the intervention as third space feminism-in-nationalism, where “doubling” is the performative act.

Within this “doubling,” this “double signifier,” theorizes Homi Bhabha, a particular politics of the postcolonial is created. For my purposes here, I believe that the postcolonial remains a hopeful utopian project. The time lag between the colonial and postcolonial during this historical moment—the Mexican Revolution—can be informed by the decolonial imaginary. Through the decolonial imaginary, the silent gain their agency. To locate these women’s voices, I argue that the decolonial imaginary becomes the tool that will write these feminists into history. Third space feminism, then, becomes the practice that implements the decolonial imaginary. For Mexico, one might argue that neo-colonial socioeconomic conditions were in place. In other words, Mexico had not entered its postcolonial moment. While Mexico had won its independence from Spain in 1821, two years later the United States made it known to the world that Mexico was within the U.S. “sphere of influence.” A few decades later, Mexico’s dictator Porfirio Díaz welcomed the United States’ corporate giants, selling them land at ten cents an acre. Minerals such as copper, silver, and oil were extracted from the land, and trains were built to transport these riches to the United States. Many Mexicans protested this neo-colonial relationship; hence, toppling the dictator Díaz would excise neo-colonial compromises with the United States. The women and men of Mexico who protested Díaz’s nearly thirty-five-year regime conceded that they wanted Mexico for Mexicans.

A kind of doubling was in play for women and men in this specific nationalist movement as they allied politically, yet even within that “doubling,” women’s purpose was discursively constructed as they became symbolic representations for a nationalist cause. Women were left out and could speak only within and from interstitial spaces. There was no space for fusion or integration. Instead, feminism-in-nationalism would have to be articulated as the “intervention of the Third Space.” It is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation, and it was in that third space that the women of Yucatán found themselves reiterating, reassigning, and rehistoricizing their symbolic place in the revolution.
Elite male ideologues of the nation, such as Gamboa, spread rumor and anti-feminism in Mexico just as revolution began to stir. How was feminism going to be reconciled with the nation that would forge a new constitutionalist government? Would women’s “femininity” become a symbol foregrounded in the construction of the new nation? Would women be relegated to traditional, gender-specific roles? How would women be included in the nationalist agenda? As an addendum? The Mexican Revolution, after all, was a constitutionalist revolution, in which feminist activities were by no means promoted. Women, such as those in Yucatán, may have attempted to reconfigure the nation-state, but they were restricted by the structures of the male-centralist itineraries for the revolution. In other words, the male leaders of the revolution envisioned a discursive order that bound women to “femininity.” That is not to say women held back or were passive. Women spoke, even if they were regulated and impeded by systems of thought enunciated by male revolutionaries. Could women have done more to disrupt these discursive formations? Were they not also part of a social design that provided a forum like the feminist congresses to them? And how about the working women who filed grievances against a revolution’s government which still neglected women’s needs?

The women who attended the feminist and pedagogic congresses were, for the most part, middle-class like the leaders of the revolution, but the domestic servants, the workers, were anything but middle-class. While the male leaders generated women’s arenas, women’s agency cannot be ignored. Yucatecan women created their own discursive agenda within that reconstructed domain. And given the political complexities of Mexico’s history, its postcolonial relation to Spain since 1821 and its neo-colonial relation to the United States since 1823, with the advent of the Monroe Doctrine, perhaps there were interstitial spaces in which the women and men of the nation met, concurred, and spawned a new constitutionalist government. But again, despite the interstices of agreement, women, for the most part, were excluded from the nation’s strategies except where men such as Governor Salvador Alvarado sought their backing. What were his words? How did he represent women and their duty to their nation? First, I’d like to present a brief sketch of Mexican feminist historiography.

In her study on the feminist movement in Mexico, Anna Macías posited that “feminism as it developed in Mexico from approximately 1870 to 1940, had a character all its own and bore only a faint resemblance to the feminist movement in the United States or northern Europe.” This resemblance was based on two characteristics: First, an international feminist movement in the late nineteenth century had made its way to some third world countries by the beginning of the twentieth century. Mexico was such an example. The word “feminista” appeared in Mexico by the early part of the century. Mexican women, however, did not become aware of gender-specific issues only through their contact with European feminists. Mexican feminism has always taken its own cultural forms. *Mexicanismo*, as a form of feminism, empowered women in the household in much the same way that domestic feminism gave women power in U.S. homes in the mid-nineteenth century. Second, the feminism of the era was linked structurally to the Mexican Revolution, a revolution overtly expressed as a nationalist, constitutionalist movement. Despite its socialist proclivities, Governor Salvador Alvarado’s nationalist revolution sustained a capitalist economy in Yucatán during his tenure from 1915 to 1918. The feminist movement, led primarily by middle-class teachers, upheld reforms under that economy. The most obvious similarity between Mexican, North American, and European feminism was the shared interest in reforming gender inequalities in a socioeconomic system that bred inequalities. Feminism in Yucatán was inextricably linked to an economy which sought reforms that excluded the voices of those marginalized. This was a modernist feminism with its international scope, while entrenched in a liberal revolution’s reforms.

Liberal feminism defined the activities of the feminists of Yucatán, while a governor who called himself socialist enunciated the discursive formations of that activism. In this instance, the nation’s ideologues restricted and controlled gendered agendas. Yucatecan women were heard from only under particular institutional circumstances in which they performed liberal, modernist, feminist discourse. What was women’s potential for influencing leaders of the revolution who already knew what women should say and do, and how they should react to the revolution? Yucatecan feminists were in a precarious position. While the predominantly middle-class teachers at the congresses disputed the injustices that women experienced in society, the poor, mostly illiterate female population was kept from engaging in the discussion. They found their own discursive arena, however, by filing grievances in government offices which had previously ignored the state’s working class. While Alvarado wanted only literate women to attend the congresses, the Mayas and mestizas who worked as domestic servants were not represented, but instead represented themselves in cases filed against landowners, employers, husbands, and even the Catholic Church. This is not to say that the feminists did not debate vital issues for women. They were indeed acting in her gender’s best interest when they advocated education, the vote, divorce laws, and even property rights. Alvarado’s moderate socialism braced the middle-class women’s measures, and for women he charted a scheme, an order, in which women’s rights would be mapped out. He set the stage, building a particular discourse within a specific site, but he also passed reforms that allowed working-class women to voice their own needs. The nationalist movement, bent on liberal reforms, prohibited deeper probes into the country’s contradictions, but were they really contradictions? Alvarado’s stance, in a way, because it was a modernist
stance, did not necessarily contradict his policy to protect women. He had an interest in the protective legislative reforms of a modernist revolution.

In addition to tracking feminist discourse, this chapter reviews Salvador Alvarado’s discursive reforms to ask whether the initiatives did improve women’s lives. Was the governor’s rhetoric about women’s traditional place as mothers and teachers restricting them or providing them with more opportunities? His education reforms singled out the female population to encourage them to support his revolution in Yucatán. Did these reforms single out women for the same reason? Did the discursive practices of the revolution serve only to silence women? How did women speak interstitially within the confines of the new laws, the legal reforms that were to liberate them?

**ALVARADO’S SOCIALIST ORIGINS**

Born in Cúilacán in September 1880, the general later moved to Guaymas and then to Sonora, where he worked in commerce. In 1906 he became a staunch supporter of the Partido Liberal Mexicano (the Mexican Liberal Party) when it was still a reform-minded organization whose sole purpose was to topple the dictator Porfirio Díaz. The PLM seems to have provided Alvarado with an ideology that shaped his convictions about revolution. Ricardo Flores Magón, the guiding visionary of the PLM, influenced Alvarado’s early doctrines. Through Flores Magón, Alvarado recognized the importance of examining class relations and making distinctions between the working, middle, and upper classes. He learned from the PLM that workers suffered exploitation under capitalism.

Alvarado joined Mexico’s Partido Antirrecciónista in 1916, and later endorsed Carranza after General Victoriano Huerta staged a coup and assassinated President Madero in 1913. Carranza sent Alvarado to Yucatán to quell an uprising that had further divided plantation owners and their workers. When Alvarado arrived, neither the working nor the middle class welcomed him. Landowners resisted his policies because the revolution promised agrarian reform, which threatened to upset the hacienda system that had made them wealthy. Alvarado’s agrarian reforms, however, demonstrate that he had no intention of redistributing land to the peasants who wanted to live on it communally. Instead, he hoped to create a class of small property owners, pequeños propietarios, and sustain rural workers on the plantations. The difference was that the landed oligarchy would find themselves owning less land.

The only groups that might be expected to tolerate Alvarado were exploited peasants, hence Mayas, and disgruntled women, mostly of lower and middle income. It is not surprising, then, that the governor wooed the female population. He targeted women when he initiated many of his social reforms in Yucatán. Although Alvarado, like his socialist contemporaries, understood that capitalism robbed laborers, he condemned socialism for Yucatán only in rhetoric. In practice, he sustained an economic system that was rooted in capitalism, and he sought to improve workers’ conditions by reforming the plantation economy. This is not to say that the reforms did not help the disadvantaged. Alvarado experimented by instituting bourgeois reforms for a modernist, nationalist revolution.

But even before Alvarado’s arrival in Yucatán, the governor in 1910 initiated legislation on prostitution that reveals a certain discursive production of women’s bodies as bodies which, under the law, would be under persistent surveillance. While I do not know how women responded to this law, its discourse exemplified the effort to regulate women—poor women, of course—during the advent of the Mexican Revolution, a revolution which had not yet officially reached Yucatán in 1910.

**DISCOURSE ON THE MONITORING OF WOMEN’S BODIES**

**Prostitution: Article 222 of the Sanitation Code**

The regulation of women’s bodies became a worldwide cause with the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. Syphilis took so many lives throughout Europe that the Contagious Diseases Acts, passed as early as the 1870s in England, were the first attempts to regulate sexual activity in a confused and panic-stricken society. The acts purposely regulated carriers, as well as those in high-risk categories, such as prostitutes.

On 22 December 1910, Governor Enrique Muñoz Arístegui signed Article 222 of the Sanitation Code for the Regulation of Prostitution. The sixteen-page document outlined everything from the registration of prostitutes to their weekly health exams. What is most intriguing about the document is that on page after page, the government regulated women’s bodies and monitored their behavior; hence surveillance was discursively justified. And if women chose to be prostitutes, they apparently relinquished any freedom. After they registered with the secretary of the health department, they were required to carry an identification book with biographical details. The notebooks, or “personal passbooks,” assured the government that these “public women” had regular checkups. A prostitute’s passbook could not be issued until after a medical doctor had examined her. She paid for these regular checkups herself, and if she didn’t have them, the health department would not allow her to practice her profession.

The decree also kept prostitutes under heavy surveillance in Mérida. Aside from always carrying her notebook, a prostitute had to turn it over to anyone who asked to see it. The law prohibited her from greeting people
in public places unless they greeted her first. She could not leave the brothel in "showy" or immoral dresses. What was immoral, however, was not defined.

If a woman wanted to retire from prostitution, she had to register with the health department, which kept her under surveillance for three months to ensure that she was not practicing clandestinely. If she was working again, she was required to register with the health department.

The document stated, "This surveillance will be performed in a way that will not harm or impair the woman, and which will not give away her past condition." How the health department conducted the surveillance remains unclear. One might wonder if the officials enforced surveillance; if so, did they harass or blackmail women, thinking they could make extra money from those who had no legal rights? The regulations in Article 222 consistently demonstrate that women who practiced prostitution were public charges, and they remained under surveillance whether or not they continued in the profession.

Governor Muñoz Aristegui's office made outrageous demands upon women practicing prostitution in Yucatán, but no more than the politicians and moralists of other countries. The regulations monitored and controlled women's bodies, keeping them under constant surveillance. Many of the rules, such as prohibiting prostitutes from greeting people on the street or from wearing "showy" clothing, spoke to the officials' enforced notions of morality. These stipulations hardly protected people from contracting social diseases. When a woman carried an identification notebook, she did so for the benefit of male clients who wanted to protect themselves. They more than likely checked her medical history, which was noted by an examining doctor. If a male client was infected with a contagious disease, she had no way of knowing. Men with syphilis were not required to register with the health department; nor were they expected to carry notebooks that tracked the progress of their health. The social double standard practiced in this case implied that prostitutes were held liable because they were in a profession that constituted a health risk. The administrators of Yucatán—male, of course—protected Yucatán's population from contagious diseases by placing the burden on women. Neither prostitutes nor wives of male carriers were protected, however. Instead, discursive moralizing was imposed through a law that benefited the men who had made it.

Governor Alvarado immediately amended Article 222, devised under former Governor Muñoz Aristegui, by eradicating the more exploitative precepts in Article 222. He eliminated the financial abuses imposed upon prostitutes when he voided their taxes and debts. He separated sanitation policies from the municipal government; thus a prostitute's fees for medical exams and registration went to departments that could no longer collude with each other. Alvarado separated the health department from the police department, both of which earned profits by monitoring women's bodies in the name of social hygiene. The new governor determined that the former government officials had taken advantage of the women they policed. He declared a radical stance when he said, "Prostitutes are given sole freedom under the condition that they protect themselves from venereal disease." To prevent the spread of syphilis without constantly peering into the women's lives and bodies as Governor Muñoz Aristegui's officials had done, Alvarado decreed, "A major punishment is established that will penalize men and women who purposely transmit venereal disease." The difference, again, was that Alvarado did not point to women, policing their bodies as if they were the sole carriers of sexually transmitted diseases. Men, too, were held liable, by being penalized if they knowingly spread the spirochete. Could this have been the new governor's own third space, his interstitial political stance? Was his feminism in the gaps that sought to hold men socially responsible as women's bodies were being discursively monitored for men's benefit? In a sense, the decree was a harbinger of Alvarado's political movement, in which he opened a space that made women's interstitial feminism a feminism that could be voiced, even heard.

**SALVADOR ALVARADO: RECONSTRUCTING "FEMININITY"**

Less judgmental of women than Ignacio Canó or Governor Muñoz Aristegui before him, Alvarado seemed to want to grant women a space in the revolution, a space which I believe became women's seemingly silent third space as a feminism-in-nationalism. During his administration, moderate socialist governor Salvador Alvarado championed women's rights. From 1915 to 1918, the general convened feminist and pedagogic congresses, at which issues such as suffrage, literacy, and higher education for women were debated.

To Governor Alvarado, education symbolized achievement, growth, and advancement for Yucatán's population. His gubernatorial career focused on a variety of reforms, but public education was in the forefront. Throughout the nation, the Mexican Revolution had pushed education reforms forward. Antonio Manero, a member of Constituentalist leader Venustiano Carranza's administration, initiated rhetoric about women that leaders such as Alvarado appropriated. Manero stated, "Woman is the best educator of childhood and for that veritable ministry she ought also be instructed and prepared." He charged that "education should commence, then, in the good constitution of the home" to fulfill the "general temperament of the races which form a nation." In essence, the Mexican revolutionaries expected women to be the moral guides of the nation.

Salvador Alvarado's education policies fill the pages of his study _The_
Reconstruction of Mexico. He published the volumes in 1919, just as the violent phase of the Mexican Revolution was coming to an end. Having just stepped down from office, the former governor had used his position to shape ideas and experiment with them in the state. In the first volume, Alvarado outlined concepts for a renewed Mexico. In volume two, the governor concluded, along with Antonio Manero, that “It is necessary to elevate the Mexican woman for the reconstruction of the country.” He further insisted that the country’s national pride rested in the “civilization” of the home. Classroom guidance, therefore, could serve to improve women’s skills as homemakers, mothers, wives, and even teachers—all for the good of the country. An emphasis on women’s femininity in the reconstruction of the nation apparently guided the former governor’s vision for Mexican women and their future.

Alvarado’s philosophy about women’s “emancipation, independence, and citizenship” was a liberatory discourse which foregrounded his core beliefs—that educating women would, in turn, make them better homemakers. “We live in an epoch of women’s emancipation,” he began. “If a woman is to complete her responsibilities, and if she is to exercise her rights, then, SHE MUST BE EDUCATED.” With that education, she was destined to achieve two social functions: “To be the foundation of the family as she unites with a man to make a home. To be a producer and a worker before she unites with a man to make a family.” The first function was the more important of the two, he claimed, because at home her true personality was revealed.

In a section entitled “The Homemaker,” his male-centered discourse burdens the wife to sustain romance in marriage while she fulfills multiple roles to suit her husband’s needs:

The bride ceases to be a bride the day after the wedding. However, if the bride is sustained in the wife, if the lover, the friend, the companion, the partner, the sister, mother, and daughter are cultivated, then all that is feminine, everything sweet and beautiful in a woman, will also be part of the wife. She and she alone will be her husband’s mistress, absolutely and unquestionably.

How did Alvarado intend to cultivate the ideal wife and the perfect marriage? He proposed that a man’s home would not and could not be complete unless his wife could achieve equality with him—a radical proposition for an early-twentieth-century thinker and leader. But equality, marked by Alvarado and his cohorts, assigned women to gender-specific roles. For example, Alvarado professed that it was a husband’s prerogative to look elsewhere if his home was not in order and if his wife did not stimulate him intellectually. Education was Alvarado’s remedy. Education would improve a wife morally and intellectually for her husband and the nation. More important, the home was the first school for children; therefore, a mother must learn the rudiments of domestic economy. She would be responsible for sending sons into society who would make good citizens and countrymen.

This plea for women’s education reduced women to only one space in the revolution’s new society: heterosexual marriage. Within that space, a woman was free to embrace multiple identities: wife, mother, companion, sister, lover, mistress, friend, partner, and daughter to her husband. With so many possible mobile categoric identities, how could women request much more from the revolution?

As Alvarado reiterated throughout his two volumes, “We will educate the woman, then, so she can rise to the level of her proper mission, which is conferred by EMANCIPATION, INDEPENDENCE, AND CITIZENSHIP.” Education for Alvarado might guarantee some civil rights for women, but heterosexual marriage, his nation’s thread, would continue to weave specific gender roles at home.

BACKGROUND: EDUCATION

When Governor Salvador Alvarado spoke at the Second Pedagogic Conference in Yucatán, he resolved to educate women. Educating women meant forcing them to break from the influence of the Catholic Church. It meant exposing them to rationalist ideas—ideas that promoted the Mexican Revolution. To the governor, women served a purpose. Both he and the Constitutional leader Venustiano Carranza agreed that women should be routed into teaching. The leaders sought to impress women with the rhetoric of the revolution. Teachers would then indoctrinate children in the classroom. Reforms, before and during Alvarado’s government, shaped teachers’ lives in Yucatán. Did the education reforms improve women’s lives? Did the rhetoric restrict women?

Throughout Mexico, before Alvarado’s governorship in Yucatán, leaders and philosophers had already written their opinions and proposed plans about the kind of education that best suited women. One such writer, Agustín Rivera y Sanroman, echoed the nation’s sentiments when he asked, “What should women be taught?” Taking the question from a North American newspaper, he addressed the theme in an essay.

Rivera described duties that bound women to the home. “First, give them a good solid elementary education,” he noted, “then show them how to sew, wash, iron, embroider, make dresses, and cook well.” Economizing—that is, showing them how to spend less money—was a priority, he thought. After a woman had mastered housework and cooking, she could then devote herself to piano, painting, and the arts. These skills were only “secondary to her education.”

He resolved that women needed instruction in hygiene, domestic medicine, and literary, intellectual, and moral education to provide them with “faith, hope, and charity.” Rivera expounded that a woman must “dismiss vanity and hate lies.” So “when it is time to marry, she will
realize happiness is more important than the fortune or social position of her husband.  

In his writing, Rivera quoted European philosophers and prominent Latin American thinkers who were also influenced by Europeans.  

Rivera's ideas typified the era. These philosophers extolled motherhood and marriage, believing that education prepared women for these institutions. The bourgeois thinkers of Mexico restricted women to traditional roles. Alvarado and Carranza were no exception. By encouraging women to become teachers, they coerced them into a gender-specific profession. It is fitting, then, that the majority of women who attended the feminist congresses were, in fact, teachers. 

Statistically, Yucatán had not fared well in training women to be teachers. In the Republic of Mexico, more than 9,000 women held jobs as primary school teachers. Since the Porfiriato, women had been routed into primary school education. The census reported that in Mérida, 312 of the 470 public school teachers were women, and only 158 were men. These numbers differed from the state's average, according to which men outnumbered women, at least in primary schools. In 1910, the primary schools employed 257 men and 197 women in the entire state of Yucatán. 

Statistics also showed that the state boasted 363 public schools in 1910, 148 of which were schools for girls. Private schools numbered only 54, split evenly between those for girls and those for boys. Seven private schools were coeducational, a rarity in 1910. No coeducational schools existed in Yucatán from 1910 to 1915. Alvarado intended to change that. The public schools enrolled more than 18,000 students, of whom more than 7,000 were girls. More than 4,000 students were enrolled in the private schools, one-third of whom were females. In 1913, the average annual income of a teacher in a public school was 720 pesos. In rural teachers and evening school teachers earned considerably less, while instructors in small towns made only 360 pesos a year. According to the report by the General Treasury of Yucatán, women and men in teaching received equal pay. Women held fewer posts as administrators and directors, however. Directors earned 1,200 pesos yearly, while assistant directors earned 960 pesos. Women were more likely to be the administrators at girls' schools, and men at boys' schools. In the surrounding towns, directors averaged 480 pesos. One small town listed an income of 780 pesos for a male director and only 600 pesos for a female director assigned to similar tasks. Unequal wages between men and women clearly existed. 

As a point of comparison, the governor of Yucatán in 1913, Nicolás Cámara Vales, was being paid 12,000 pesos a year. His officials could earn as much as 2,100 pesos, twice the income of a public school administrator, and more than twice what a teacher received. 

Alvarado's administration brought the most prominent changes in education since 1910. The census confirms the dramatic increase in women educators. From 1910 to 1920, the number of female teachers in Yucatán's primary schools more than doubled, from 197 to 579. The number of male teachers nearly doubled, increasing from 257 to 474. In private schools, the numbers did not rise by much at all. The schools were most often Catholic, and they separated boys from girls in classrooms. Alvarado discouraged teachers from working at private schools, not only because he criticized Catholicism, but also because he was a proponent of coeducation. 

One of his military commanders took advantage of the governor's stance when he prompted Alvarado to use a church under construction as a public school for girls because the one in the city required too much renovation. The anti-clerical governor surely consented. To demonstrate further the disapproval of private, Catholic education, from 1910 to 1920, the number of women teaching in Yucatán's private schools rose only from 31 to 56. This was considerably less than the number of women pushed into public schools. 

The number of public schools also increased between 1910 and 1920. While the number of schools for boys decreased, public schools for girls were eliminated. Instead, the number of coeducational public institutions rose from zero to 421. 

Governor Alvarado kept the promise he had made at the Second Pedagogic Congress when he opened the doors to coeducation. The statistics firmly attest to his commitment, despite disgruntled parents frightened of permitting their girls and boys to learn in classrooms together. But the issues of coeducation and sex education ignited the controversy that challenged feminist Hermila Galindo at the feminist congresses, and it was the teachers from Yucatán who overwhelmingly disputed her position.

**HERMILA GALINDO, “LA MUJER MODERNA”**

Mexican feminist Hermila Galindo was exposed primarily to European feminists, less so to North American. Curiously, the title of her magazine, *La Mujer Moderna* (The Modern Woman), which published essays applauding vociferous feminists from these continents, echoed the title of Ignacio Gamboa's scathing essay about feminists. Could she have been aware of Gamboa's essay? Was hers a refutation? Probably not, but the construction of the "modern woman" attracted society's attention, and while Gamboa sketched stereotypes about feminists, Galindo was, in her own way, constructing the "modern woman's" feminism by publishing such a magazine. Before the journal is examined, more about Galindo must be disclosed. 

Hermila Galindo was born in Durango. In 1911 she moved to Mexico City, where she joined a liberal club. The liberal clubs were organized strictly to oppose Porfirio Díaz. As her club's orator, Galindo delivered a
welcoming speech to Venustiano Carranza when he arrived in the capital after General Victoriano Huerta’s fall. Impressed with her oratorical skills, Carranza asked Galindo to join his constituents in Veracruz, where he stationed himself before solidifying his presidency in 1917. Galindo’s career took an interesting turn. She became the private secretary and propagandist to the liberal, reform-minded Carranza. Having won his trust, she proceeded to lobby for the rights of Mexican women.37

Before her involvement in both feminist congresses of 1916, Galindo’s career with Carranza proved to be rewarding. With his assistance, she published her magazine, La Mujer Moderna, in 1915. The magazine’s content ranged from literary essays to Paris’s latest fashions. An essay on kissing hygiene appeared on the same page as the editors’ endorsement of female suffrage, a politically volatile issue. The article exemplified Galindo’s and other middle-class women’s position on suffrage. The writer, Clarisa Pacheco De Torres, asserted that in the North American states where women could vote, they had demanded and won legal reforms. With the vote, Mexican women could do the same. The magazine’s collaborators were women who captivated an audience like themselves: literate, fashion-minded professionals who attended the opera, read Plato and Aristotle, and, most important, sought women’s suffrage.38

Galindo’s convictions must have become known throughout Mexico when Carranza instructed state governors to subscribe to the magazine. The governors responded dutifully and requested fifty subscriptions for each of their respective states. Governors from the northern states of Sonora and Chihuahua, to the coastal areas of Guerrero and Veracruz, and throughout the interior of the country bought this magazine, which published essays promoting women’s rights, especially their right to vote.39 By this time, Galindo and Carranza had established a mutual understanding. A doubling of sorts was being negotiated.

THE FEMINIST CONGRESSES, 1916:
THIRD SPACE FEMINISM

A year before the congresses in Yucatán, while studying in the United States, Professor María Martínez had declared to a Boston journalist that women in Mexico were not interested in pursuing the franchise for themselves; instead, they wanted to improve upon their education.40 At the first and second feminist congresses, the women of Yucatán determined that some were prepared to demand voting rights for women, at least in local elections. Although interested in the contribution of women to the country, Carranza’s government was not prepared to recognize that contribution by granting them suffrage.

Governor Alvarado, on the other hand, a promoter of women’s rights, called the feminist congresses in Mérida to provide women a stage for debating issues as controversial as the franchise. Alvarado intended to muster a population who would favor his reforms. He turned to the middle-class teachers of the region, ordering Profesora Consuelo Zavala and some other female educators to organize the first congress in Mérida. Held from 13 to 16 January, the conference restricted attendance, at Alvarado’s instructions, to literate women with a grade-school education. Since illiterate women were not welcome, the attendance narrowed to middle-class teachers.

The governor also faced obstacles when he introduced socialist ideals such as rationalist schools to a middle-class population. The majority of women at the congresses disagreed with Alvarado’s extreme proposals. Many held moderate beliefs, while some preferred conservative measures. The governor’s discursive impositions served only to disappoint him later.41

Amid confusion, three political factions emerged at the First Feminist Congress. Hermila Galindo, who did not attend, represented the most radical faction. Her controversial statement, read by one of Carranza’s education administrators, Cesar González, recommended sex education for women, divorce, and anti-clericalism, topics that pleased the governor. Galindo, perhaps going beyond the boundaries that Alvarado or other women dared to tread, interrogated the male double standard as practiced in Mexican society for centuries:

When a woman, mesmerized, surrenders herself to her lover, compelled by the ineluctable sexual instinct, the man stands before society as a kind of daredevil. . . . But the wretched woman who has done no more than comply with one of the demands of her instinct, not denied to the lowest of females, is flung into society’s scorn: her future cut off, she is tossed into the abyss of despair, misery, madness, or suicide.42

The response was anything but favorable. A conservative group of women mobilized immediately to ban her speech from the congress records.43 Francisca García Ortiz, representing the conservatives, confronted Galindo’s stance:

Let us pay slight attention to women’s education, but a lot, a great deal of attention, to the education of men, and above all to their enlightenment. . . . Let us never forget that the woman should always be the delight of the home, the gentle, mate of man; she may indeed overcome him through her love and sweetness. But let her not dominate him with her intellect or with her learning.44

Also a teacher, García Ortiz expressed a sentiment that the attending educators defended. Her political stance had its own rationale. She asked,
"What social means should be employed to emancipate women from the yoke of tradition?" She answered her own question and maintained that twentieth-century women did not have to embrace nineteenth-century images. "That yoke is disappearing, and we can make it vanish completely, by educating society." Challenging the participants further, she asked, "Who forms society? Men. Well, then, let us educate men." And finally, she concluded that by educating men, women too would be educated, because society on the whole would begin to change. She also summoned men to accept a new enlightenment:

Today many men are afraid of the intellectual woman. Why? Because they understand that she improves herself every day; that each day her mind advances. Should men be afraid? No. Men should make sure they are not at a disadvantage. And to do this a man must be more and more enlightened.

How did García Ortiz intend to educate men? Like Antonio Manero, Carranza's administrator who idealized women as pillars of society, she also claimed that mothers should educate children, beginning in the home. The professor proposed that the mother could most influence her sons' education. "She will see to it that her sons respect women's advancement, that they look favorably on a woman's being intellectual." A feminist blueprint, such as it was.

Not a mother herself, García Ortiz called upon the mothers at the convention to assist the "young idealist ladies," including herself. She concluded, "May men become worthier and better men." She hoped to educate women, who would in turn educate men so as to improve society for women—an indirect means to equality, and perhaps a futile one. Again, women are the social signifiers placed in binary opposition to men, yet representing, for men, the women men need. Woman is the sign that will construct "enlightened" men.

According to historian Anna Macías, Consuelo Zavala held a more moderate position than either García Ortiz's or Galindo's. Zavala did not quarrel about ideological injustices; rather, she posed solutions to the inequalities that women experienced in Yucatán. She was, in fact, a practitioner. She pushed for civil code reforms and property rights, tangible requests that the convention could take to the governor. Zavala did not overstep boundaries by demanding the vote. She took small steps, assuaged of what women could win.

The governor trusted Zavala. He appointed her to organize the January meetings at the Peón Contreras Theater. To her credit, Zavala recruited 620 delegates to the first meeting. During the congressional debates, the teacher vowed to improve education for young women. Women were visibly absent from professions in medicine, law, and engineering, for example. In 1910, less than 1 percent of the female population in Yucatán held jobs in such occupations.

Zavala united the moderate and radical factions to reform the 1884 Civil Code, which deprived women of their legal and property rights. Macías points out that this reform led to President Carranza's Law of Family Relations in 1917. This new law allowed women to make contracts and file legal suits. They were also given the same rights that their husbands had over their children.

Perhaps the most extreme demand at the congress was made by the radicals, who, unlike the conservatives or moderates, asked that women be allowed to vote in municipal and local elections. Despite protest from many women, a petition passed, pleasing Governor Alvarado, who called for a second congress. Alvarado, however, wanted women to vote in national elections. He aspired to be president of Mexico, and therefore needed his female constituents.

The Second Feminist Congress, held from 23 November to 2 December, was not as well attended as the first. Consuelo Zavala failed to appear, and Hermila Galindo again could not make her way from Mexico City. The radical group took over the Second Congress, but unfortunately for Galindo, she was not present to lead the group with whom she was most in agreement. She sent a representative to submit a twenty-five-page essay, a rejoinder defending her first speech, "The Woman of the Future." The second speech was titled "A Study by Hermila Galindo with Themes That Should Be Resolved at the Second Feminist Congress of Yucatán." In the essay, Galindo asked,

My work is immoral? And how? Because I dare to expose the problems in our society...? Is it immoral because as a perfectly intelligent and scientific woman, I have challenged men by demonstrating the intelligence of my sex, therefore showing that we too have equal rights with men?

She insisted that her studies reflected those of the European philosophers August Bebel and Immanuel Kant, both of whom justified sex education as one of women's rights. She was not, therefore, the originator of such thoughts about women. Galindo firmly believed that this alone should have proven to her female audience that she was a "scientific woman" making rational assessments about the female gender.

Galindo recommended Carranza's revolution, and she wrote almost as Governor Alvarado would have. We are left to wonder only what went unsaid by Galindo herself. Her speeches at the feminist congresses demonstrate, once again, how the interior of Mexico attempted to administer in every region of the country. Was this revolution only from above, and not at all a grassroots movement? That the Yucatecan feminists denounced Galindo certainly shows a grassroots insider response to outsiders. Moreover, this was not a national feminist congress. Most of the women who attended were from Yucatán. A few came from Mexico City, but only those from Yucatán would decide what they would do for women of Yucatán.
Even the radical faction at the second congress had its own issues to promote in the interests of Yucatecan women. But again, these predominantly middle-class women negotiated on their own behalf. Property rights, the right to legal suits, and education benefited a small group of elite women. The majority of the female population could not exercise such rights.

Yucatán was split between the wealthy and the poor. Alvarado's revolution hoped to create a larger middle-income group, especially after initiating agrarian reforms and nationalizing the henequen industry. Perhaps Alvarado expected too much from such a small group of middle-class women. Given their circumstances, they did debate critical issues, but they failed to mention the Maya women blocked from the congresses, a marginalized group, as I will show later, could contest the government only by filing grievances with the Departments of Justice and Labor. But at the feminist congresses, there were no resolutions to address the needs of women who were, for the most part, domestic servants, while some were surely prostitutes. In 1910, 57 percent of Yucatán's female population worked as domestic servants. They were neither present nor represented.

Hermila Galindo, an outsider like Alvarado, wanted to use the congresses to recontextualize equality between women and men—equality that reached into the classrooms to teach young girls the same subjects offered to boys, equality that gave women the franchise reserved for men, equality that defied sexual double standards. Galindo continued her career as a propagandist for President Carranza, and she even published a book in 1919 in support of a politician whose career was almost over in Mexico. She wrote La doctrina Carranza at a time when the leader's diplomatic relations with the United States were disintegrating. In the book she proclaimed that if Mexico was to be successful, it had to break its ties with its northern neighbor. Politically, she took a stand against the United States when she deconstructed the Monroe Doctrine to accuse the United States of racial arrogance for instituting a doctrine that benefited only Mexico's neighbor to the north. Carranza's willingness to sever relations with the United States impressed Galindo, who argued that Carranza's doctrine was "the doctrine of the future, the one for humanity." The Monroe Doctrine, on the other hand, had given the United States a neocolonial stranglehold on Mexico. A woman such as Galindo, familiar with politics from a young age, was aware of Mexico's precarious relationship with the United States.

In her writings, Galindo expressed her confidence in Carranza's Constitution of 1917, which in itself promised social revolution only on paper. She wrote that suffrage was ineffective as long as workers and the bourgeois remained divided; for her, Porfirio Díaz's regime had made that grave mistake. Galindo recognized that the vote alone would not free the people of Mexico. Like so many other Mexicans, she believed that Carranza would make the most revolutionary articles of the constitution a reality, such as redistributing land to the peasants. Of course, he disappointed even his most avid advisers. By the time he escaped with the nation's treasury, later to be assassinated in his sleep by men he trusted, Carranza had become the nemesis of the revolution.

In 1919 Hermila Galindo published Un presidencial, endorsing General Pablo González, Carranza's choice for president. When Álvaro Obregón was elected in 1920, not only had she promoted the wrong man, but the new administration had no more use for her. She married in 1923 and fell silent. Her career in politics ended.

A radical feminist for her era, Galindo was not heard from again. She lived out the rest of her life without publicly voicing her political views. She surely was disillusioned with her country and its nationalist agenda, which in the end made limited inroads for women, whether middle-class or poor. But Galindo's political interests found her backing a presidential candidate who was Carranza's choice. The corruption in Carranza's cabinet was already obvious to most. What could his candidate possibly have offered Mexican women in their own country? Galindo, however, wrote a pamphlet endorsing Carranza's man, an essay which had little or no impact, but significant in that it was written by her, a woman who dared to go beyond traditional boundaries to embrace politics usually reserved for male nationalists. Women, after all, could lecture about education for themselves and their children, but they could not decide who should be a political candidate for president—at least not until they won the franchise.

But while Hermila Galindo and the Yucatán feminists Francisca García Ortiz and Consuelo Zavala were debating the franchise for women, working-class women, domestic, Mayas, and poor women were speaking their own kind of revolution—one that did not necessarily transform their lives, but one in which they spoke, whether invited or not.

INTERSTITIAL SUBJECTIVITIES: WOMEN SPEAK "IN TONGUES"

The grievances brought before the Departments of Justice and Labor from 1915 to 1918 exposed social and cultural prejudices that had been brewing for centuries in a remote region far from the center of Mexico City. In a case I will discuss below, a Maya woman confronted a government official who could not speak her language, and so she protested against a system that had held her people linguistically captive for centuries. Complaints such as this confirm "interstitial subjectivities" in which "women speak in tongues, from a space in-between each other." Here, in that interstitial space, women did not passively accept injustices, but instead filed grievances against men and upper-income women who, the women
believed, wronged them. The following are only a few examples of women’s “interstitial subjectivities” in a revolution that had not been prepared to appease so many women. Women spoke among the nationalist revolutionaries for women’s own urgent needs. The manner in which these grievances were settled shows how the revolution responded and reacted to an otherwise silent population. But from the gaps and silences, we can know only that which the women chose to say; and we are also limited by what the officials recording their words chose to record.

In a case involving a Maya against a Ladino, the Maya woman failed to win against the “white” landowner. She filed her grievance with the Department of Justice in 1915. That the Department of Justice may have handed down more rigorous decisions than the Department of Labor, and that this case was filed early on in the revolution’s government, may account for its failure. Perhaps Alvarado’s administrators felt more self-assured by 1918 when deciding on behalf of Mayas, laborers, and poor women against the ruling landowners. In any case, the revolution did not act on this woman’s behalf. The Maya woman who filed the case was Casmiria Palma, a widow from Tekax, who professed that the military commander of that town had ruled against her in a grievance against Señora Manzanilla. She said, “He reprimanded me and accused me of not being able to speak his language, Castellano. But he cannot speak Maya which is my language.” Before the governor, Palma alleged that Severiana Manzanilla had stolen Palma’s jewelry and pawned it without permission. “The military commander will not give me justice. Well, the poor people of this town can only turn to the authorities for help.” She requested that the governor require the military commander of Tekax to reopen the investigation regarding her jewelry.

The Department of Justice examined her quarrel against the official, but after carefully analyzing her case, it ruled that she did not have enough proof against the military commander. Palma lost in both instances—in her case against the woman who had allegedly stolen her jewelry, and in her complaint against a government official who had reprimanded her for speaking in her native tongue. Ordinarily, translators were hired to ease tensions between the Mayas and “white” Ladinos who faced language barriers. For a government official to reprimand an Indian because she did not speak Spanish reveals the injustices suffered by Mayas in Yucatán even at a time when the revolution was supposed to alleviate differences. Palma, on the other hand, was not silenced, even though she was not really heard. Whether or not she won her case is inconsequential. She promptly pointed out the new government’s shortcomings and expressed pride in her language when she defended herself.

Cases involving marriage or divorce settlements demonstrated how working-class women reproached their husbands, or men who might have been husbands. Señora Benigna Gám, for example, alerted the governor that she was disenchanted with her husband, Señor Tomás F. Velasco. Señora Gám could neither read nor write, so a government official drafted the letter. She testified that she had married Señor Velasco on 8 August 1914, and that “he abandoned me after two months without even saying good-bye.” Exactly one year after their marriage, Gám argued, “I do not wish that he return for me. I only want my honor to be restored.” The governor’s office responded that it would investigate the matter further and resolve it on Gám’s behalf. While Señora Gám did not seek reconciliation or a divorce, she did demand honor for her name. As a woman abandoned after only two months of marriage, she may have felt unwelcome in a community where only married women and widows won respect. She fit neither of the categories.

A divorce case evinced how some women manipulated the revolution to their advantage. Cornelia Padron, who was suing her husband for divorce, also complained because he had kept her sewing machine. Padrón alleged that her husband, Zacarias López, had abandoned her and their three children. He “threw us out on a rainy night,” causing her one-year-old daughter to die of pneumonia. This case was filed in January of 1916, the same month the first feminist congress was held. But the congress could not have made any difference to Padrón, who asserted that her husband had abused her and their children, and she also made it known that “he lives publicly with another woman.” The estranged wife demanded her sewing machine from their house. It was her only livelihood. Arguing on behalf of the husband, López, Silvero Santos testified that “the sewing machine was not the property of either husband or wife.” López’s father had purchased it, so if it belonged to anyone, it belonged to López’s mother. Cornelia Padrón did not gain possession of the machine, but the government ordered López to pay her 25 pesos monthly until the divorce was final. This amount may have been just enough to feed and clothe her and her two children. After the divorce, Padrón’s income remained uncertain.

In another case, Demetria Centeno, a widowed domestic servant, demanded justice from the father of her sons, Camilo Zavala, to whom she was not married. A widow for seven years, Centeno argued that her children, aged one and four, deserved “to enjoy all of the rights and privileges that the laws provide for someone of his class.” As a domestic worker, she obviously considered Zavala, a single thirty-one-year-old who worked in a harness shop, to be from a class above her own. He was more than likely a skilled artisan who may or may not have owned his own saddler shop. She wanted him held responsible for his sons despite the fact that he was not legally bound to her. He complied without resistance, and when the thirty-six-year-old domestic servant hired tutors for the children, he also complied. Why Zavala and Centeno did not marry is neither mentioned nor clarified.
Another widow wrote to the governor demanding justice for her sons who had lost their father to the revolution. Inez Manzanilla declared in a letter to Governor Alvarado that her two sons, José Fernando and Aquiles Herculano, seven and six years old, cried for their father, who had courageously fought for the governor’s cause. She said, “Poor children, they are left without a father, without a home and without bread.” In her letter, the thirty-eight-year-old widow acknowledged that the immortal men of the revolution, “Madero, Carranza, yourself, and Paredes Esquina,” her husband, had dedicated themselves for love of their country. Women like herself, she argued, were left with the responsibility of raising and educating fatherless children for the cause. Finally, she requested an unverified sum of money for her sons’ education and their living expenses. How the governor’s office settled the case is unknown, but significantly, this widow argued on behalf of the mothers of the revolution who had not received compensation after their husbands’ deaths.

In a peculiar family squabble, a twenty-two-year-old woman sued her brother-in-law for 2,000 pesos. Engracia Avila insisted that Ramón Moguel Bolio owed her the inheritance from her deceased father’s estate. Her father, Ambrosio Avila, had died in 1900, leaving behind his widow, Maria Nieves San Miguel, and seven children, one of whom was Ramón’s wife. The military commander from the nearby town of Maxcanú ruled that Ramón owed Engracia the money she requested. Ramón appealed the decision and urged the governor to overturn the ruling, on the basis that the plantation laborer had been named the executor of his father-in-law’s estate. Ramón contended that when Don Ambrosio died, he left only two houses and a number of debts. He professed, “I don’t know where I’ll get such money with my family responsibilities.” He further implored, “Governor, I ask for your justice. Resolve that I am not obligated to pay her for the simple reason that I have never owed any of Don Ambrosio’s debts.”

Unfortunately for the brother-in-law, the governor’s office certified that he owed Engracia Avila the debt. He was incarcerated for three days until he could pay her. His mother-in-law, Señora San Miguel, also mother to Engracia, paid her daughter the 2,250 pesos on behalf of Ramón. The governor’s office acknowledged that the debt was paid and released him from his legal obligations. Why Señora San Miguel elected to clear her son-in-law by paying her own daughter is unclear. Perhaps she had kept the inheritance that belonged to Engracia, or perhaps she did not want to see her other daughter’s husband in jail and incapable of supporting his family. This is yet another instance in which women’s actions speak to us historically and interstitially, between and among the ironies of a revolution that promised so much. In any case, the family finally settled the dispute.

The grievances filed by women, many of whom were poor, show how they intervened in a revolution that often promised much more than it delivered. The cases are examples of women’s interstitial subjectivities. These women may not have been avowed feminists, but their spoken language seemed feminist enough as they complained against a governor and his socialist agenda.

From 1915 to 1918, women protested their social reality by contesting a revolution which claimed that it would take them seriously. They tested its seriousness through the Departments of Justice and Labor. Women, whether domestics, Mayas, estranged wives, or widows, complained to the governor when they felt wronged. Some won and some lost, but the women asserted themselves and coaxed the revolution’s government into addressing gender issues for these working-class Mayas and mestizas. These grievances exposed inequalities between women and men. The new government did not drastically change gender, race, and class relations, but it did expose discursive practices unfair to the underclass. The feminist congresses, on the other hand, provided a forum for middle-class women.

Avowed feminist Hermila Galindo enunciated from an interstitial space in which the congresses became the discursive territory. She voiced differences as a woman who had lived in Mexico City most of her life and was genuinely interested in social change for women, even though women of her class would benefit most from the reforms. Who was this subaltern voice who spoke between and among the elite, the middle classes, the socialist men, the counterrevolutionaries, and the Yucatecan feminists? Can we really know? Does it matter that we have only a few of her speeches and scant information about her life? It is unfair to characterize her as merely a carrancista with bourgeois ideals. She was incriminated at the feminist congresses for challenging a sexual double standard, but she was probably feared because she dared to throw sex into the discursive arena.

Galindo represents much more at a moment in the nation’s history when few women were orators and few women wrote and published essays about their country’s international policies. Her outsider/insider status in Yucatán created enormous tension between the spokeswomen and the Yucatecan feminists. Perhaps the Yucatecan women were annoyed that Galindo did not show herself at either conference, instead sending a representative to read her position papers. Her stance was not so far removed from those of the Yucatecan feminists. She believed in women’s education, but perhaps it was education for women that so disturbed the conservative faction—an education for women that did not emphasize their femininity or their relegated roles as wives to the “nation,” but instead an education that finally probed women’s sexual conditioning.
However, three years later, in *La doctrina Carranza*, she acquiesced, echoing García Ortiz, that women were the moral guides of the nation, destined to educate their children at home. Perhaps Galindo tempered her earlier stance to recruit women to champion Carranza’s doctrine. How much of his doctrine was her own? How much was she speaking, again, from and within an interstitial space?

The Yucatecan women’s construction of a feminism-in-nationalism during the Mexican Revolution seemed to mimic the nationalist leaders’ hegemonic discourse. What Carranza and Alvarado outlined was reiterated by Galindo and the teachers of the Yucatán congresses even when the factions disagreed. Only Galindo stands alone in the end, daring to invite women’s sexuality into discourse. However, “the rhetoric of repetition or doubling” constructs the political discourse of feminism-in-nationalism. Although “things said” were a “sameness-in-difference,” by whom these things were said makes some “difference” in retrospect. As Teresa de Lauretis points out,

> The movement in and out of gender as ideological representation, which I propose characterizes the subject of feminism, is a movement back and forth between the representation of gender (in its male-centered frame of reference) and what that representation leaves out or more pointedly, makes unrepresentable. It is a movement between (the represented) discursive space of the positions made available by the hegemonic discourses.

In this instance the feminist congresses and the filed grievances were the spaces made available for women.

Those other spaces both discursive and social that exist, since feminist practices have (re)constructed them, in the margins (or between the lines, or against the grain) of hegemonic discourses . . . coexist concurrently and in contradiction.

No fusion, no integration for such third space feminism.

Voices were seemingly identical, yet at odds. Alvarado’s hegemonic narratives represented women in a particular way; feminists such as Galindo, García Ortiz, and Zavala (who did implement reforms) moved in and out of the male-defined representations, interstitially, congruently, yet often at variance with a seemingly identical discourse or women’s rights. After all, women had something to gain if they voiced discrepancies from the margins, if only to disrupt hegemonic discourse interstitially. The nationalist agenda did not do much to improve or change women’s social conditions; women’s grievances are testimony to that. The changes were differential by degrees, but a forum was held, grievances were filed, and the women voiced a third space feminism-in-nationalism.

Chapter 3

THE POETICS OF AN (INTER)NATIONALIST REVOLUTION

EL PARTIDO LIBERAL MEXICANO, THIRD SPACE FEMINISM IN THE UNITED STATES

Marx doesn’t exist.

Foucault no existe.

If the colonial imaginary hides something, then the decolonial imaginary teetering in a third space recognizes what is left out. To locate third space feminism, I will broach the Partido Liberal Mexicano, an anarchosyndicalist, transnationalist organization, and subsequently evaluate how the women in the PLM practiced third space feminism. Archaeology asks that disciplines and their categories be exploded, confronted, inverted, and subverted; genealogy, on the other hand, recognizes how history has been written upon the body. In this chapter, “things said” will be reconstructed as an exercise to show how words are practice; hence, the women practiced the words of third space feminism. I have chosen that practice to import the decolonial imaginary, a critical apparatus that transcends the colonial to sit somewhere in that time lag between the colonial and the postcolonial.

First, what is the relevance of the Mexican Revolution to Chicana history? What is the revolution’s significance to Chicana identities, Chicana feminisms, Chicana voices? Apart from the socialist experiment in Yucatán that opened a space for women to voice a feminism-in-national-