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Printed in the United States of America
First edition, 2011

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Earlier versions of chapter 3 were published as "Bearing Bandoleras: Transfigurative Liberation and the Iconography of la Nueva Chicana," in *Beyond the Frame: Women of Color and Visual Representations*, eds. Neferti X. M. Tadiar and Angela Y. Davis (New York: Palgrave, 2005), 171–196, reprinted with permission of Palgrave Macmillan, and "Contested Histories: la Hijas de Cuauhtémoc, Chicana Feminisms and Print Culture in the Chicano Movement, 1968–1973," in *Chicana Feminisms: A Critical Reader*, eds. Gabriela Arredondo, Aída Hurtado, Norma Klahn, Olga Nájera-Ramírez, and Patricia Zavella (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 59–89, reprinted with permission.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Blackwell, Maylei, 1969–
Chicana power! : contested histories of gender and feminism in the Chicano
movement / by Maylei Blackwell. — 1st ed.
p. cm. — (Chicana matters series)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-292-72588-1 (cloth : alk. paper) —
ISBN 978-0-292-72690-1 (pbk. : alk. paper)
1. Mexican American women. 2. Feminism—United States. 3. Women political
activists—United States. I. Title.
E184.M5B55 2011
305.48'86872073—dc22 2011006831

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments vii

INTRODUCTION. The Telling Is Political	1
CHAPTER ONE. Spinning the Record: Historical Writing and Righting	14
CHAPTER TWO. Chicana Insurgencies: Stories of Transformation, Youth Rebellion, and Campus Organizing	43
CHAPTER THREE. Retrofitted Memory: Chicana Historical Subjectivities between and beyond Nationalist Imaginaries	91
CHAPTER FOUR. Engendering Print Cultures and Chicana Feminist Counterpublics in the Chicano Movement	133
CHAPTER FIVE. Interpretive Dilemmas, Multiple Meanings: Convergence and Disjuncture at the 1971 Conferencia de Mujeres por la Raza	160
CHAPTER SIX. Chicanas in Movement: Activist and Scholar Legacies in the Making	192

Appendix. Narrator Biographies 215

Notes 219

Bibliography 257

Index 287

INTRODUCTION

THE TELLING IS POLITICAL

THIS BOOK DOCUMENTS how a generation of Chicana activists of the 1960s and 1970s created a multifaceted vision of liberation that continues to reverberate today as contemporary activists, artists, and intellectuals, both grassroots and academic, struggle for, revise, and rework the political legacy of Chicana feminism they inspired. *Chicana Power!* Illuminates how Chicana organizers were influenced not only by the awakening of racial consciousness and cultural renewal generated by the Chicano movement but also by the struggles over gender and sexuality within it, which together ultimately produced a new Chicana political identity. Based on the culmination of many years of archival research and the rich oral histories I conducted with the pioneering Chicana activist and theorist Anna NietoGomez and the members of the *Hijas de Cuauhtémoc*, one of the first and arguably most influential Latina feminist organizations, this book builds an analysis of the interplay of social and political factors that gave rise to Chicana feminism within the regional and national development of the Chicano movement in the late 1960s and 1970s.¹ Excavating the local histories of Chicana political organizing in Southern California, I examine how NietoGomez and the *Hijas de Cuauhtémoc* forged an autonomous space for women's political participation and challenged the gendered confines of Chicano cultural nationalism within campus and community politics and later in the formation of the field of Chicana studies.² This project builds a critical genealogy of the *Hijas de Cuauhtémoc*, who, along with other early Chicana feminists, are historically significant because this group of young women was one of the first to mobilize Chicanas around the gendered and sexual experience of racial and economic marginalization. Further, their elaboration of an early analysis of the interrelated nature of gender, racial, sexual, and class power—a hallmark of women of color feminism—provides us with a lasting and important political legacy for combating multiple oppressions and creating multi-issue organizations even

today.³ In fact, many of the theoretical innovations attributed to women of color feminisms of the 1980s, such as the concept of intersectionality or interventions regarding multiple subjectivity ascribed to the postmodern turn in feminist theory, in fact have their roots in the political views of women of color activists in social movements of the 1960s and 1970s.

Coming together to address the repudiation of women's leadership and the marginalization of women's issues in the Chicano student movement, this group began organizing in 1968 and published one of the first Chicana newspapers in 1971. *Las Hijas de Cuauhtémoc* was named for the Mexican feminist organization that demanded women's civil and political rights and an end to the Díaz dictatorship at the turn of the twentieth century.⁴ Reclaiming an alternative tradition of women's resistance, the Hijas de Cuauhtémoc shifted the gendered political terrain as well as the historical imaginary of the Chicano movement by deploying what I call "retrofitted memory."⁵ I use the concept of retrofitted memory to theorize how new gendered political identities are produced *through* history and how those historical narratives engender new contestatory identities and political practices.

RETROFITTED MEMORY: NEW STRUCTURES OF REMEMBRANCE

Retrofitted memory is a form of counter-memory that uses fragments of older histories that have been disjunctured by colonial practices of organizing historical knowledge or by masculinist renderings of history that disappear women's political involvement in order to create space for women in historical traditions that erase them. It draws from other Chicano cultural practices, such as the *maguache* aesthetic, or customizing of cars, that use older parts (or what is spit out as junk in global capitalist forms of production and waste) to refine existing bodies or frameworks.⁶ By drawing from both discarded and suppressed forms of knowledge, retrofitted memory creates new forms of consciousness customized to embodied material realities, political visions, and creative desires for societal transformation.

Retrofitted memory assumes that the project of hegemony is never complete and must be constantly resolidified and renarrated in history. It is precisely within the gaps, interstices, silences, and crevices of the uneven narratives of domination that possibilities lie for fracturing dominant narratives and creating spaces for new historical subjects to emerge. Fragments of historical knowledge and memory are not merely recuperated, then, but retrofitted into new forms of political subjectivity that may draw from one historical or geographic context to be refashioned in another. For emergent political

subjects, retrofitted memory creates alternative registers of meaning and authority, both moral and political.

Chicana Power! not only recovers histories that have been erased and excavates new feminist genealogies of resistance; it also transforms the ways we understand these historical narratives and the political nature of the knowledge practices that produce them. More than a book of history, this historiographic intervention asks us to consider why, despite the clear emergence of Chicana feminism throughout the late 1960s and 1970s, the history of Chicana feminisms in the movement is still largely an untold story? Histories of the Chicano and feminist movements have failed to fully record the vital forms of Chicana political consciousness and organizing that existed in this period. As the first book-length study of women in the Chicano movement, this project contributes to the growing scholarship that is beginning to historicize Chicana activism of the second half of the twentieth century.⁶ It extends a conversation about the roots of Chicana feminism in Mexico, primarily women's involvement in the radical tradition of anarchism and socialism, which has informed labor and civil rights movements by Latinas/os north of the border. While there are many other sources of Chicana feminist consciousness and organizing projects that need to be more fully documented, the story of Anna Nieto-Gomez and members of Las Hijas de Cuauhtémoc is a significant thread in the multilayered struggle around gender and sexuality in *el movimiento*. Although they were a small organization, their impact as one of the first organizations to explicitly call for and theorize Chicana feminism was paramount. Their ideas informed the terrain of struggle across movement sectors, reached into gendered discussions in other regions, and gave other women and men who believed in gender equity within the broader project of Chicano liberation a vehicle for speaking out. While their work was vital within the student movement, they were also part of a broader mobilization of movement women in the greater Los Angeles region that included the East Los Angeles Chicana Welfare Rights Organization and the Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional.

While this history bursts with telling, it has also been a challenging one to tell because it makes us reconsider the limited (and limiting) conventions of writing history. Drawing on Foucault's notion of genealogy, I examine the social movement spaces in which Chicana feminist knowledges were produced as well as the "mechanics of erasure" that have obscured them.⁷ This means looking at the conditions in which a story/history is told, interrogating the erasures, and listening to the gaps and interstices to reveal the workings of power, as suggested by the Haitian scholar Michel-Rolph Trouillot's two sides of historicity. He argues that we engage "simultaneously in the sociohis-

torical process and in narrative constructions about that process."⁸ Further, he argues:

What matters most are the process and conditions of production of such narratives. Only a focus on that process can uncover the ways in which the two sides of historicity intertwine in a particular context. Only through the overlap can we discover the differential exercise of power that makes some narratives possible and silences others.⁹

Rather than an expansive history of the participation of all women in the Chicano movement, *Ichicana Power!* is guided by the strategy of genealogy in its in-depth excavation of historical knowledge produced by Chicana activists like the Hijias de Cuauhtémoc, which can serve as an alternative analytics through which to understand both Chicano and feminist histories. By focusing on what I call the mechanics of erasure in historical writings, this study attempts to undermine, instead of replicate, the power relations and regime of truth that hold these mechanics in place. It is not enough to say, "The women were there, too." To subvert the ideologies of these official histories, we must overturn the epistemological register that licenses them.

Because the add-and-stir method is not sufficient, this project proposes an alternative historiographic framework for understanding women's social movements: Illustrating that history is more than just a narrative of the past, it examines how memory circulates in popular culture and produces and maintains political identities and the boundaries of what is politically possible today.

While other Chicano movement histories give a sweeping, epic portrayal of a political movement and link historical significance to the problematic of why movements emerge and decline, this narrative is organized around historicizing the genesis of feminist consciousness and understanding gender and sexual politics during the Chicano movement. It locates the contributions of the Hijias de Cuauhtémoc within the development of Chicana feminism in relation to other organizations and contextualizes their interventions in regional, cross-regional, and national developments. And it reveals the unprecedented shifts in gendered consciousness and political subjectivity that resulted from women's participation in the Chicano movement.

PRELUDE

The architecture of this book builds on the historical importance of the women I interviewed and the knowledge collectively produced in their oral histories.

I begin to introduce them to you here in this prelude so that through their stories you can hear the distortions in the historical record. As in music, this prelude functions as more than just an introduction to the historical record. It sets the soundscape and signals the major riffs and musical samples of those narratives of the Chicano movement. It signals to you, the reader, how the knowledge and contestatory histories generated by these women's voices challenge us to think not only about who has been erased, but why. Elucidating the political investments of "telling" history, this prelude presents the testimonial strategy of life story that shifts established epistemologies and the historical paradigms that have dominated sixties social movement histories.

The telling of this history begins at a kitchen table over a cup of steaming *canela* (cinnamon tea) in the Norwalk apartment of Anna Nieto Gomez in April 1991. Before we settled deeply into her history, Anna moved to the sink to wash dishes while being interviewed, so we propped the recorder on the windowsill. With her hands in hot, soapy water, her story began to unfold. I dried the dishes and listened. Our interview was the first she had granted since the movement days.

When I arrived at Anna's kitchen table, to my surprise, she began to interview *me*. She asked many questions, beginning with why I was still in school. As a full-time student with a double major and a minor who worked as a waitress full-time (I was on the six-year plan), I had to admit I had not really thought of graduating. My time was consumed with activism against U.S. intervention in Central America. Students for Peace and Justice, the women of color feminist coalition, and civil disobedience at ACT UP demonstrations protesting the fact that the county had only five beds for HIV/AIDS patients as the health crisis became a pandemic. After listening to me patiently, Anna impressed on me the need to move on from California State University, Long Beach, based on her experience as a student activist there twenty years earlier. She told me that many women of her generation, despite being advocates for education, did not complete their studies because, in addition to the hostile university climate, their purpose became activism instead of education. I began to see the broader arch of social justice work through the invisible legacy of those who had struggled to open the way to the university. The cost of this invisibility was discovering with disbelief that as women of color student activists we were struggling with some of the same issues, despite the groundbreaking work of the Hijias de Cuauhtémoc more than two decades earlier. This lent new urgency to my oral history project.

After that day in April I spent the next month interviewing Anna, indexing our interviews, and returning with more questions. We conducted more than ten hours of recorded oral history during this first round of interviews. And

we spent much more time talking over tea or sitting on the ground in front of her file cabinets pouring over movement documents. From there a relationship began that has spanned two decades. What we could not have anticipated was how the power of being witnessed helped Anna on a path of healing and how listening to her story changed me in ways that were immediate and immeasurable. Within a year of meeting Anna I completed my coursework, graduated, and applied to Ph.D. programs. Over the next decade I went on to interview other members of the Hijas de Cuauhtémoc and women active in the Chicano student movement.¹⁰ This story interweaves the rich oral histories of Chicana activists and organizers and is deeply rooted in the oral history of Anna NietoGomez.

The group of Chicanas whose lives are at the center of this project were born between 1946 and 1952 and form part of a postwar Mexican American generation. Many of their families were displaced by the massive waves of migration brought on by the Mexican Revolution or were shaped by labor histories and the busts and booms of U.S. capitalism that have circumscribed the life chances of Mexicanas/os in the United States. Yet, over time, their families had all located to the greater Los Angeles area to the neighborhoods of Boyle Heights, San Bernardino, Long Beach, Hawaiian Gardens, and Lakewood, among other places.¹¹ Shaped by cyclical labor and structural displacement, their working-class families labored in the railroad and aircraft industries, among others, or ran small businesses.

Many histories of women of color are often told through, and thus structured by, the historiographic practices that have created silences about them. In contrast, this prelude provides the context to understand how these histories are contested and how the telling of history is political.¹² It situates the Hijas de Cuauhtémoc as knowledge producers who give us new tools to “read” the structures of telling that have produced silences about early Chicana feminisms.

LAS HIJAS DE CUAUHTÉMOC

We recognize that we are oppressed as Raza and as women. We believe that the struggle is not with the male but with the existing system of oppression. But the Chicano must also be educated to the problems and oppression of La Chicana so that he may not be used as a tool to divide by keeping man against woman.

“OUR PHILOSOPHY,” LAS HIJAS DE CUAUHTÉMOC (1971)

As one of the first explicitly feminist Chicana political groups in the Chicano movement, the Hijas de Cuauhtémoc emerged within the ranks of the

United Mexican American Students (UMAS) at California State University, Long Beach, in 1968. After the historic 1969 *Plan de Santa Barbara* UMAS, along with other youth organizations and student groups, united under the name el Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA). From 1968 to 1971 Chicana activists at Long Beach State met as an informal group under such names as Las Mujeres de Longo and Las Chicanas de Aztlán.¹³ As Chicana student activists they were asked by movement leaders to meet with new female members to educate them politically because male leaders had concluded that the women lacked the appropriate skills in political analysis. Ironically, the focus of these educational meetings quickly shifted from imparting political knowledge to addressing issues that were emerging from the women’s experience in the movement. Eventually these meetings provided a vehicle for discussing internal sexual politics, as well as a space for naming the issues affecting working-class Chicanas that were not being addressed in Chicano student movement organizations. Chicana activists began to speak about the conditions of their lives; to analyze how they were positioned by multiple and interlocking oppressions of race, class, and gender; and to understand the collective issues faced by women entering the university for the first time.

A growing critique emerged that centered on the gap between the movement’s rhetoric on equal rights and the ways in which women were treated not as equal social and political actors but as secretaries and cooks. Although women were the backbone of the student movement, providing much of the labor, they were not seen as public leaders and yet they rarely stayed in their designated place. From the very inception of the Chicano student movement in the late 1960s, there were Chicana leaders, both formal and informal and specific women’s agendas. The role of women and gender ideology were hotly debated—a fact that has been left out of most movement histories. This erasure normalizes a masculine hegemony within the Chicano movement that was much more contested at the time.

It was a dispute regarding the nomination of Anna NietoGomez for the presidency of MEChA that transformed the informal women’s discussion group into an autonomous women’s organization. Many women, however, continued as members of MEChA, engaging in what Latin American feminists have called *double militancia*, or double activism. Although NietoGomez was democratically elected by the many students with whom she worked, her leadership was consistently undermined by a few male leaders of MEChA who stated openly that they did not want to be represented by a woman. They criticized Chicanas who demanded that women’s rights be respected, arguing that they were playing into the dominant culture’s attempt to divide the movement. Ironically, however, it was actually the chauvinism, discrimination, and sexual harassment of those male leaders that in part led to the rise

of feminism among Chicanas in the youth movement. Women throughout the Chicano movement were no longer willing to tolerate internal organizational practices and masculinist political culture, which were exclusionary, undemocratic, and unfair. They fought the suppression of women's leadership and the sexual politics and double standards they experienced by holding their comrades accountable, organizing women's caucuses, and, after much negotiation, forming their own organizations.

Along with their campus-based activism, members of the women's group worked cooperatively with community groups such as the Long Beach Raza Center, *Cardicos por la Raza*, the United Farm Workers (UFW) boycott, a Hawaiian Gardens' community group, and a Norwalk *mutualista* (mutual aid) society and with incarcerated Chicanas/os or those recently released from prison (*pinins/pintos*). Their local campus and community organizing was linked to other Chicana organizing in Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado, as well as in San Diego/Tijuana, the San Francisco Bay Area, and the Central Valley of California.

Working together, Chicana activists in the greater Los Angeles area organized the first regional Chicana conference, held at Cal State Los Angeles on May 8, 1971. An estimated 250 Chicanas gathered to formulate agendas for the national conference scheduled for later that month.¹⁴ Enough successful fund-raisers were organized to send a Southern California delegation, many of whom were Hijas de Cuauhtémoc members, to the May 28–30 *Conferencia de Mujeres por la Raza*, held in Houston, Texas, at the YWCA. It was decided at the Houston conference that the *Hijas de Cuauhtémoc* newspaper would be published nationally.¹⁵

Unfortunately, this vision of a national Chicana newspaper was not realized. The conference ended in a walkout that characterized the tensions that surrounded Chicana feminism at the time.¹⁶ Las Hijas de Cuauhtémoc overcame the feelings of disappointment, and some members went on to found the first Chicana feminist scholarly journal, *Encuentro Femenil*, in 1973.

Hijas de Cuauhtémoc and *Encuentro Femenil* created a vital Chicana feminist print culture in which new political identities, discourses, and strategies were constructed and debated. This print culture forged a Chicana feminist counterpublic that opened up spaces for Chicana dialogue across regions, social movement sectors, activist generations, and social differences. Moreover, it provided a space for women to contest the limiting masculinist politics embedded in the gendered project of Chicano nationalism that articulated the subject-citizen of Aztlán as male. While not all sectors of the Chicano movement espoused nationalism as a political strategy, it was the primary ideological and political project that united several divergent political move-

ments, especially within youth organizing and the student movement. This book pays particular attention to the gendered project of Chicano nationalism and how gender issues and women were figured in other ideological threads that made up the broader philosophical weave of the Chicano movement.

While this book is not the history of all women in the Chicano movement or even the full story of the emergence of all forms of Chicana feminisms, it accesses a genealogy of Chicana feminism articulated through community making, collective mobilization, and creative reimagining. By tracing this significant group of activists and telling the story of the emergence of this strain of Chicana *feminismo*, I hope to lay the groundwork for uncovering many other untold stories of individuals, organizations, and political formations that will add to our understanding of a political tradition of Chicana feminism. Such stories might include women who articulated a spectrum of Chicana feminist ideas in mixed organizations, women who did not necessarily call themselves feminists, and a number of men who struggled to include gender and sexual justice in the broader agenda of liberation. This telling is an invitation and a call to action to continue the historical excavation and analysis, to chart the underground stories, and to develop a better understanding of the actors who have already been recognized. More than a chronological span of dates and an ordering of facts, these archaeologies of memory not only tell a different story but also engage in a different mode of telling.

THE ARCHIVE AND THE REPERTOIRE OF ORAL HISTORY

This book draws on two different ways of knowing and telling. One site of knowledge production is the alternative archive—what I call Chicana print cultures—that forged a Chicana counterpublic during the 1960s and 1970s. In addition to this rich archive, there is a vast body of living memory and embodied knowledge that Diana Taylor refers to as a nonarchival system of transfer she calls the repertoire, “a form of knowing as well as a system of storing and transmitting knowledge.”¹⁷ Taylor distinguishes the repertoire from archival memory that functions across time and space because “archival memory succeeds in separating the source of ‘knowledge’ from the knower—in time and/or space”—and can be recaptured years later by a researcher. She argues, “The repertoire, on the other hand, enacts embodied memory: performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing—in short, all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, non-reproducible knowledge. The repertoire requires presence: people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by ‘being there,’ being a part of the transmission.”¹⁸

I approach oral history as a memory performance and part of the repertoire

because it “both keeps and transforms choreographies of meaning.” Taylor’s notion of repertoire, as embodied knowledge/practice, is useful for understanding oral history as a form of “embodied memory, because it is live, and exceeds the archive’s ability to capture it.”¹⁹ Critically, Taylor argues that like the archive, the repertoire is also mediated. The use of oral history is also a mediated process of dissemination rather than a direct representation of the subaltern, disrupting what Gayatri Spivak calls an alibi of authenticity.²⁰ Like practitioners of performance studies, oral historians represent and discuss these transmissions through writing or via the archive.

Unlike performance studies, in oral history the “oral” is burdened by the “history,” which bears the traces of the weightiness of officiality, rules of evidence, and the pressures of positivism. Perhaps oral history is a hybrid that fits somewhere in between the archive and the repertoire, depending on how the narrator narrates, how the listener listens, and how the researcher wields the apparatus of objectivity that records or captures this performance. Ultimately, it may come down to how much we listen to the embodied practice of memory and the shifting conditions under which knowledge can be shared rather than reduce that memory performance only to a transcript to be studied. Exceeding the archive in its embodied enactment of memory, oral history can be reduced to an object of the archive if we understand it only as textual evidence or a primary source of history because the archival apparatus frames the object of knowledge as well as the ways it is knowable.²¹

I am attracted to Taylor’s beautiful conceptualization of the repertoire because it represents the gestures, tones, and sighs—the literal performance of memory, how narrators rock themselves when they talk of difficult memories, how we stop the tape when tears flow. The repertoire reflects the many conversations that occur “off tape” that create an embodied knowledge that I reference in my telling here but that do not fit easily into the realm of documentary evidence since that knowledge and way of knowing is not textual (and its traces do not appear in the transcripts). In this way oral history as performance is part of the repertoire (and its transcript belongs to the archive).

An added dimension of the word *repertoire* is that it is used by social movement scholars to refer to the range of strategies and tactics that social movement actors use to create and contest meaning, power, and representation. I argue that memory is also part of the repertoire of the excluded, politically marginalized, and specifically the colonized. The central role of imagination and a cultural life-world created beyond the reach of the state has been documented by historians such as Emma Pérez in her theorization of the decolonial imaginary and Robin D. G. Kelley’s attention to the black radical imagination.²² Part of the repertoire of resistance to colonialism, injustice,

and oppression is what I am calling retrofitted memory. It is a radical act of re-membering, becoming whole in ways that honor alternative or non-normative ways of being.²³ I call attention to how exclusionary historical narratives do not merely *represent* historical realities but help to produce those realities by enforcing the boundaries of legitimate political memory and then subjectivities they authorize. Structures of remembrance construct an archive of knowledge as well as a Chicana/o structure of feeling that narrate belonging and create a sense of legacy that shapes the horizon of political possibilities. Re-membering is a vital act in creating political subjectivity, and Chicana feminists have developed a significant repertoire of remembrance.²⁴ Their strategies include re-membering themselves in time and place, being whole under erasure, creating new terrains of memory in which to forge a vision of a history in which Chicanas and their communities have a central role in creating a better world. Oral history is part of this repertoire of remembrance and shares a political tradition with Latin American *testimonio*. It is never the same twice, it is specific to time and place, and it relies on the alchemy between oral historian and narrator.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

Archaeology seeks to uncover discursive practices by unmasking them.

EMMA PÉREZ, *THE DECOLONIAL IMAGINARY*

Chapter I disentangles various historiographies to interrogate how Chicana feminist genealogies have been rendered silent through the existing modes of telling history. Following Pérez, I use Foucault’s archaeology of knowledge to understand the ways in which Chicanas have been omitted from the social histories of the Chicano and women’s movements. Pérez argues “that for historians, revitalizing Foucault’s archaeology, the precursor to his genealogical method, can help us examine where in the discourse the gaps, the interstitial moments of history, reappear to be seen or heard as that third space.”²⁵ For this reason, I dedicate a chapter to investigating the mechanics of erasure that make Chicanas “eccentric subjects” to their own history.²⁶

Within second wave feminist historiography, the failure to read, interpret, and analyze the multiple sources, sites, and practices of women of color feminisms has obscured and overwritten these diverse feminist traditions. Chicano movement historiography often denies the historical importance of women’s autonomous agency within the movement because it periodizes the emergence of Chicana feminism within the decline of *el movimiento* Chicano and situates Chicana organizing and feminism as occurring “after” the height of

the Chicano movement, usually during the 1980s. Others have gone even further to suggest that feminism and struggles over sexuality are among the reasons for the demobilization of the Chicano movement.²⁷ The additive logic where questions of gender or sexuality are added on only peripherally (and at a later point) fails to depict accurately the complexity of these interwoven struggles and replicates the hierarchy of oppressions, which continues in movement histories that rely on a singular lens of analysis based on race. Thus the primary of race and narratives that center and naturalize male dominance remain the dominant historical and theoretical models we use to teach in the field of Chicana/o Studies, thereby institutionalizing this erasure of early Chicana feminisms in the curriculum. Both historical narratives and typologies of feminism still struggle to uproot similar issues surrounding how the category of gender is seen as an unmarked racial category (read: "white"), reflecting what I call the politics of periodization, a historiographic device that erases the historical agency of Chicanas or women of color in social transformation by consistently depicting their role or their importance as occurring *after* the "real revolution."²⁸

Chapter 2 focuses on the gendered, racial, and class experiences of young Chicanas in the late 1960s as they entered college in large numbers for the first time in U.S. history. It explores the gendered expectations and norms that were constructed through the political scripts emanating from Chicano nationalism, which often measured a woman's dedication to the movement by her loyalty to male leaders. Because family was used as both a guiding metaphor and a mobilizing strategy of Chicano politics, political familism often played a role in reinforcing patriarchal structures as an unspoken organizing principle. Women involved in the movement participated in constructing, contesting, and negotiating this set of gendered norms.

Chapter 3, through a close textual analysis of archival documents, illustrates that Chicano nationalism was not just a political project of racial/ethnic pride but a gendered project as well. It theorizes the concept of retrofitted memory by exploring how the Hijias de Cuauhtémoc of the 1960s and 1970s chose their name as a way to reclaim an earlier Mexican feminist political tradition. While building political legitimacy within Chicano nationalism, ultimately the Hijias de Cuauhtémoc not only moved between Mexican and Chicano nationalist imaginaries, but also beyond them. In addition, this chapter maps the iconography of la Nueva Chicana through the rich array of photographs and images published in movement newspapers between 1969 and 1976, paying close attention to the representational struggles waged around gender roles and leadership.

Chapter 4 examines the formation of a Chicana print community across

regions, social movement actors, and activist generations. Early Chicana feminists not only engendered movement print culture; they built an alternative print community in which they articulated a new Chicana feminist political imaginary and social subjectivity. The subaltern counterpublic constituted by Chicana feminist print culture is a crucial site of historical inquiry and provides a window onto the development of Chicana feminist ideology, discourse, and political praxis in a way that accounts for how ideas traveled locally as well as circulated nationally.²⁸ Further, I argue that this political pedagogy became an underlying impulse for the practice of anthologizing that was central to early women of color feminisms.

Chapter 5 examines the cross-regional tensions and collaborations among Chicana feminists who converged on the historic 1971 Conferencia de Mujeres por la Raza, the first-ever national gathering of Chicanas, which attracted six hundred participants from over twenty-three states. The resolutions passed at the conference were revolutionary and centered on issues of employment discrimination and racism, gender oppression, abortion, birth control, child care, Chicana political leadership, sexuality, motherhood, economic justice, and reproductive and educational rights, as well as the repressive role of the Catholic Church and a condemnation of the Vietnam War. This conference is often seen as the height of early Chicana feminism. Yet it was marked by deep tensions over the role women's issues would play in movement agendas and what the primary struggle and mode of organizing of a Chicana movement should be. Drawing from archival research and oral histories with organizers and participants from both sides of the split that led to a walkout, I map the political fault lines that fractured early Chicana feminism. I use the 1971 Houston conference as a genealogical map of the growing number of Chicana feminist organizations and the causes of this political conflict and its reverberations and historical implications. I demonstrate how the conflicts at the Houston conference were the result of differences within regional political cultures, gendered movement discourses, and organizational tactics that ultimately disrupted the development of a national Chicana movement in the 1970s.

Chapter 6 follows the narrative thread of organizing and maps out the various political trajectories members of the Hijias de Cuauhtémoc created as their activism moved beyond campus organizing throughout the 1970s. It elucidates how the Hijias de Cuauhtémoc, inspired by third world liberation struggles, ultimately moved beyond narrow forms of nationalism to form coalitions with other women of color in the United States and to help build community organizations in the greater Los Angeles area that focused on welfare rights, employment, health, and ending violence.