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CHAPTER FOUR

Yvette Saavedra

CERVANTES UNDERGRADUATE RECIPIENT

Chicana Schism: The Relationship Betweem Chicana Feminist and Chicana Feminist Lesbians

> We are civil rights workers and activists, and we have joined coalitions to defend human rights on an international level. As lesbians, however, we have just started to come together. Our energy is divided along many issues that demand we repress part of our identity in order to be accepted. This is where the struggle really begins, and we need each other to withstand the pressure.
>
> —JUANITA RAMOS, *COMPAÑERAS: LATINA LESBIANS AN ANTHOLOGY (1994)*

The marginalization and oppression of Chicana lesbians, by heterosexual Chicana feminists, was produced using re-adaptations of the heterosexual and militant imperatives of Chicanismo. As seen in

the previous chapter, heterosexual Chicana feminists were not inclusive of all women, particularly Chicana lesbians. The two part-commitment of Chicana feminists did not allow superficial acknowledgement of the plight of Chicana lesbians, much less support in issues of sexuality. The end result of lesbian-baiting, along with charges of being a *Malinchista*, did not provide for active resistance to the oppression and repression of Chicana lesbians.[1]

Next, I will discuss the elements in the development of Chicana lesbian feminist discourse and ideology. First, I look at the development of a lesbian identity within Chicano culture, by deconstructing the identity defined by Chicano culture and showing how Chicana lesbians develop their own identity amidst negative perceptions and circumstances. Second, I will discuss the reconciling of sexual and racial identity, and cultural dissonance. The intertwining of lesbian identity with racial identity to represent the new experience of Chicana lesbians, and the rejection of this *experience* by Chicano culture will also be discussed. I argue that while Chicana feminists did challenge gender roles and confront sexism, the exclusion of lesbians is representative of limiting gender ideals carried over from the Chicano movement. These were created and adapted to keep lesbians quiet and in the margins. In allowing for the repression of the lesbian voice within the Chicana movement, heterosexual feminists were creating the same environment men had created for them within the Chicano movement They replaced a sexist environment with highly heterosexist and homophobic conditions. Perhaps they were indeed powerless, in the sense of institutional power or privilege. But they were public intellectuals as well, and leaders. Thus, they can be criticized from that standpoint.[2]

Lastly, I will discuss the Modification of Chicana feminism and the creation of Chicana lesbian feminism. By reaffirming their existence and experiences Chicana lesbians expanded Chicana feminism to include their oppression. This expansion resulted in the creation of an actual Chicana lesbian feminism, discourse, and a new language of resistance.

Chicana lesbians are seen as a threat to the structure of Chicano culture. The heterosexual imperative and compulsory heterosexuality do not allow for an identity that deviates from set gender roles and expectations. The virgin / whore dichotomy is the basis for the label of "deviant" which is given to Chicana lesbians. Their deviation from these ascribed roles produces a negative perception, and results homophobia within Chicano culture. Homophobia and negative ideas are then internalized and causes the denial of lesbian identity, and existence. As a result of the lack of definition in the culture, Chicana lesbians are forced to define and create their own identities. While grappling with the search for identity, lesbians find themselves in opposition to the familial, cultural, religious, and, many times, personal beliefs regarding gender and sexuality. The confusion results in separation from their family and culture. Separation and isolation as a theme in developing a lesbian identity is described in the work of Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) and illustrated by the work of Cherríe Moraga (1983), and serves as a means of lesbians finding and shaping their identity. For example the following passage from Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* illustrates the complexities of identity and homeland:

> To this day I'm not sure where I found the strength to leave the source, the mother, disengage from my family, *mi tierra, mi gente*, and all that picture stood for. I had to leave home so I could find myself, find my own intrinsic nature buried under the personality that had been imposed on me…Being a lesbian and raised Catholic, indoctrinated as straight, I made the choice to bequeer (for some it is genetically inherent).[3]

In this passage, Anzaldúa presents the complexities that lesbians face prior to the process of self-identification and acceptance. It is also representative of lesbians being forced to distance themselves from a culture that is not open to them. In the passage, Anzaldúa makes a

direct reference to the virgin / whore dichotomy. The use of the word 'mother' is a direct reference to the good, pure mother—in this case her culture—the goodness that this represents is directly connected to the virgin ideal. In the phrase 'my own intrinsic nature buried under the personality that had been imposed on me' refers to the lesbian identity that had been suppressed by the virgin ideal imposed on her by her family and culture. Anzaldúa feels that by leaving her mother, to find her intrinsic nature, she is rejecting the goodness of the virgin ideal, while embracing the evil of the whore ideal. This feeling is also expressed in Moraga's "A Long Line of Vendidas" in *Loving In The War Years*:

> I did not move away from other Chicanos because I did not lovemy people. I gradually became anglocized because I thought it was the only option available to me toward gaining autonomy as a person without being sexually stigmatized.[4]

In this passage, Moraga tells of not having left her people and culture out of dislike, rather, like Anzaldúa, she had to leave to find her 'intrinsic nature.' These two examples reaffirm that heterosexuality is compulsory in Chicano culture and that to detour from normal expectations is to reject the culture temporarily, in an attempt to remove oneself from the cultural expectations that stifle individual development. Once distance from the culturally-determined gender restrictions is achieved, the Chicana lesbian is able to see herself as an autonomous person in control of her sexuality.[5]

By "coming out" Chicana lesbians are giving voice to the resistance that their existence represents. The verbal and physical objection to male dominance represents a threat to the structure of Chicano culture by usurping male control, and signifies the willingness of lesbians to confront and reclaim Chicana sexuality and, as a result, define themselves. Carla Trujillo, in "Chicana Lesbians: Fear and Loathing in The Chicano Community," discusses the importance of reclaiming Chicana sexuality in order redress the negative portrayals of lesbians,

> A Chicana lesbian must learn to love herself, before she can love another. Loving that other woman not only validates one's sexuality, but also that of the other woman, by the very act of loving…
> The effort to consciously reclaim our sexual selves forces Chicanas to either confront their own sexuality or, in refusing, castigate lesbians as vendidas to the race, blasphemers to the church. atrocities against nature,or some combination.[6]

This view touches on various issues of Chicana sexuality that are pertinent to the discussion of Chicana lesbian identity. In Chicano culture, women are taught to dislike, and even fear their bodies. They are taught that sex for any purpose other than reproduction is wrong. Trujillo states that in order for a Chicana lesbian to love another woman she must first overcome the negative issues related to sexuality. This statement show the choices Chicana lesbians have in creating their identities; they either verbalize their resistance, or are forever oppressed by the compulsory heterosexuality of their culture. They love themselves, or do not. Similarly, the body becomes the site of their expressions of love, cultural as well as physical. They "embody" culture in this way.

RECONCILING RACE AND SEXUALITY: DOES ONE PRECLUDE THE OTHER?

In the last paragraph of Moraga's *Loving In The War Years*, the interconnectedness of racial and sexual identity is apparent, "I am a lesbian. And I am Chicana. These are two inseparable facts of my life. I can't talk or write about one without the other."[7] The connection between these two identities is a recurrent theme in the writings of Chicana lesbians. The majority of writings in anthologies of Chicana / Latina lesbians point to the difficulty experienced in connecting lesbian identity with racial identity. The difficulties are a result of the Chicano culture's appropriation of lesbianism to Anglo culture. The belief that lesbianism is a white disease, and the resistance of

lesbians to patriarchal views results in the invisibility of lesbians in Chicano culture. Lesbians then reach out to Anglo culture for a space to exist, as seen in Moraga's autobiography:

> I gradually became anglicized because I thought it was the only option available to me toward gaining autonomy as a person without being really stigmatized.[8]

Many times Chicanas find that they are not accepted because of their race. The rejection that is experienced by Chicana lesbians places them in two worlds that do not want them. I argue that this rejection produces a diaspora and "border culture" based on sexuality and race, rather than on race and migration.[9]

The diaspora experienced by Chicana lesbians is similar to the "doubled relationship or dual loyalties that migrants, exiles, and refugees have; their connections to the space they currently occupy and their continuing involvement with 'back home."[10] The parallel between these groups and lesbians is that while Chicana lesbians' racial identity is that of an oppressed people, they are seen as outsiders within their culture because of their sexuality. This leads to a double oppression. The conflict of loyalties is comparable to the experience of Chicanos in the United States. In this situation, Chicanos feel that they are a culture within a culture, and are faced with the dilemma of loyalty.[11] The situation applies to Chicana lesbians as well; in Chicano culture they are regarded as vendidas for being lesbians, and in American culture they are seen as the racial "other" by Anglo American lesbians. As a result, they are placed in the position of choosing which identity dominates:

> It's an interesting path, one that continually slips in and out of the white, the catholic, the Mexican, the indigenous, the instincts. In and out of my head. It makes for loquería, the crazies.[12]

This decision is difficult because the two worlds blur together and soon become difficult to discern. This is seen in the preceding passage from Anzaldúa's work.

Diaspora is not the only way to characterize the experiences of Chicana lesbians. Their difficulty to live in one culture results in the development of a border culture. Anzaldúa in describing the border, states, in what has been her most quoted passage:

> The U.S - Mexican border es una herida abierta where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country— a border culture. Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them. A border is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants.[13]

This description obviously parallels how Chicano culture's compulsory heterosexuality is a border set up to keep Chicano's safe and distinguish between them and the Anglo's sexually-deviant ways. Therefore Chicana lesbians are the inhabitants of the area between Chicano culture and Anglo culture, or what Anzaldúa calls the borderlands. The experience of being trapped between two worlds is not only applicable to the cultural experience of Chicanos/ as in the U.S, but also applies to the relationship between race and sexuality. For example, when Chicanos have successfully migrated to the U.S., a cultural border is set up going the other way because it is perceived that Anglo culture lacks morals, especially with regards to sexuality. Since lesbians, according to Chicanos, have given in to their desires, they have crossed this border and therefore are forced to reconcile their sexuality and culture.

Each day Chicana lesbians cross borders merely by living both of their identities. Rather than choosing one identity Chicana lesbians have chosen both, as exemplified in Natashia López's "Trying to be Dyke and Chicana":

call me Chicana
walking with whiteness
into more whiteness
feeling my darkness
call me Chicana
annoyed with being called Spanish
wishing whiteness would understand
call me Chicana
call me Dyke
Chyk-ana[14]

The poem represents the confusion experienced while trying to bridge both Anglo and Chicano culture. In the line, 'walking with whiteness' López is referring to her sexuality. Since lesbianism is seen as something from Anglo culture, she is equating walking with whiteness; she is walking with the whiteness that is in her. While she feels submerged in white culture she still feels her 'darkness', the darkness of her culture propels her to identify as Chicana. With the line 'wishing whiteness would understand' López indicates the racism she experiences in Anglo culture because of her race. The poem narrates the process of the author attempting to develop her identity—finally she decides that the only way to accurately represent herself is to compromise using the label, Chyk-ana, like Dyk-ana. Jaqueline Martínez, in "Speaking as a Chicana," says that coming out as a lesbian allowed her the space necessary to make connections between her ethnic identity and her sexuality. Martínez state that she now understands the oppression she faced as both a Chicana within Chicano culture, as lesbian within Anglo culture. She has made connections between the invisibility she has suffered in both. By making themselves visible Chicana lesbians have tried to eradicate social injustice. However, Chicano culture is not willing to accept them. While Chicano culture has become more open to the existence of lesbian sexuality is has not made strides to change homophobic and heterosexist ideologies. It is this unyielding, traditional, homophobic ideology that made it difficult for Chicana lesbian feminist activists to intergrate into the Chicana feminist movement.

Heterosexual Chicana feminists did not readily accept the move of lesbians into the feminist movement. The Chicana feminists were successful in challenging and confronting sexism and gender inequality within the Chicano movement; however, they never fully separated from its patriarchal roots and developed their own ideologies. The ideologies that they developed were replicas of those in the male movement, but they were changed to incorporate gender. The ideology's major weakness was the assumption of homogeneity amongst Chicanas: the limited view that Chicana meant heterosexual. The ideologies of the heterosexual and militant imperatives were re-created and adapted to keep women quiet and in the margins. By using the same ideologies, heterosexual feminists were allowing for the repression of the lesbian voice within the Chicana movement, and were guilty of creating highly heterosexist and homophobic conditions. They were in actuality redirecting the gender oppression and sexism to which men had subjected them in the Chicano movement, and allowing for the oppression of women who were different from them.

In interviews conducted thus far, I have found that the attitudes of Chicana feminists towards lesbians were "for the most part homophobic,[16]" non-accepting and unsupportive of the needs of Chicana lesbians as represented in the following personal account,

> I never joined any white women's organizations and immediately joined an organization called Lesbians of Color (LOC) in 1979. Although we shared similar oppressions with African American women, the Latinas in the group decided to form a separate organization, Lesbians Latinamericans. As a group we did go to some Chicana conferences to make our presence and issues known. Women were usually very friendly until they found out we were lesbians. I remember we attended a conference in Long

> Beach, CA in 1980. One of us stood up in the plenary and read a manifesto that strongly stated our lesbianism and right to be at the conference, that we were part of every family, etc. She even shed tears. Yet, I remember not one person approached us, we were shunned. That experience alerted me to the ingrained homophobia in the Chicano/a community. Even Chicanas were not our allies. Thus I committed my activism to people of color and lesbian and gay issues.[17]

The environment described by the interviewee reflects one of marginalization and invisibility of lesbians, at the height of what many describe as an "activist" moment. This is the same environment that limited heterosexual Chicanas to the sphere of domesticity and a supporting role in the Chicano movement.[18] If Chicana women faced the same struggles why would they replicate their oppression and use it to silence others who desired the same freedom? The answer lies within the ideology of Chicana feminism; since the foundation for such an ideology was based on the inherently homophobic, heterosexual and militant imperatives the outcome was bound to be the repression of a group regarded lower on the social scale—lesbians. Perhaps only children and animals remained lower.

Unfortunately, Chicana lesbians did not find the links and support they had expected from the different feminist groups. After having experienced the homophobic attitude of the men of the Chicano movement, lesbians assumed that the common societal oppression that Chicanas experienced would be enough to unite the two groups. The statements of a Chicana lesbian activist, taken during an interview, portray the disappointment at having realized that the homophobia had not declined among the feminists:

Q. How was the Chicana movement similar to the male dominated movement?

A. Well, I think that some of the het [heterosexual] women had their own homophobia to deal with and mirrored the men's homophobia so

that some of the movements, Chicana/o were very het family oriented in their nationalism.[19]

Q. Would you say that the homophobia was worse in the women's group or in Chicano Movement?

A. It felt worse when the het [heterosexual] women were homophobic because we expected thier feminism to make links, but some were threatened initially and didn't want lesbians to be too noisy.[20]

As indicated by these statements, lesbians and their concerns were not a top priority. This was evident by their marginalization and silencing of the lesbian and gay issue. The heterosexual Chicanas did not discuss lesbianism unless lesbians initiated it, and if a woman was found out to be a lesbian she experienced harassment, such as name calling, and was excluded from decisions having to do with the group.[21] After lesbians participated in the Chicana movement, and found imposed silence and marginalization, the "out" lesbians developed their own form of socialization—*they* socialized to it and they also remained apart from *it*. They worked towards a movement and discourse that would recognize their longtime contributions to the Chicano people, but would also allow them to continue working for their own liberation.

CHICANA LESBIAN FEMINISM

The social involvement of Chicana lesbians in a variety of causes is summed up in a quote from the "Introduction" in Juanita Ramos' *Compañeras: Latina Lesbians Anthology*, which was one of the first to gather Latina lesbian perspectives:

> There are times in which we are forced to prioritize oppressions. It's a survival strategy Latina lesbians use. If you want to do a certain type of political work, and the group you work with isn't open yet to who you are, and what you want to do, then sometimes you say, 'Well, okay, in this group I'm just going to be this part of me.' Later on, as you get stronger about being a lesbian and become

> clearer about lesbian oppression and how important it is to come out and be who you are, you become less willing to put up with those kinds of compromises.[22]

This quote by Mariana Romo-Carmona, obtained in an interview she conducted in the early 1970's with a Latina lesbian activist, exemplifies the way lesbians have put their interests aside and worked for a variety of causes. When the oppression became too overt, lesbians began to be more assertive and raised their voices when they were silenced. Similar to the tradition of heterosexual activism, Chicana lesbians have been at the forefront of feminist politics. The term Chicana feminist lesbian is not new; they have been around for a long time. What has occurred is the "erasure of the lesbians project or voice," from the historical accounts.[23] As a result of this erasure the activist work of Chicana lesbians is not recognized and they are mistakenly seen as a new group of the 1980's. After a long period of oppression lesbians began to collectively organize into their own groups and design their own feminism, discourse, and language of resistance.

Where heterosexual Chicanas failed to separate from Chicanismo, Chicana lesbians did so without looking back. In the development of Chicana lesbian discourse all the different goals of Chicana feminism were incorporated into the forming ideology, minus the homophobia and gender limitations of the heterosexual and militant imperatives.[24] The incorporation of the multiple approaches to forming Chicana lesbian ideologies provided space for the heterogeneity of Chicana lesbian activists. Unlike the heterosexual feminists who did not account for the different identities of the activists, lesbians allowed for difference in not only individual characteristics but also for the differences in oppression each woman faced. Some for example addressed classism, understanding that not all Chicanas lesbians were working-class, which was an assumption that Chicanismo demanded. Some addressed physical challenges. Some argued for inclusion of many types of sexual expression—overt, covert, and including celibacy. What Chicana lesbians achieved in allowing for the differences among

the women was a more complete kind of feminism that unlike heterosexual feminists, incorporated more than just gender oppression.

The various kinds of oppression that Chicana lesbian feminists tried to address is seen in the works of women like the writers Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, and graduate student E.D Hernández. Each of these women reflects an oppression they have faced in their life, such as homophobia, heterosexism, racism, classism, or a combination of these. The Chicana lesbian feminist approach kept in mind that not all women experienced oppression within the same context. For example, the following passage from Cherríe Moraga's *Loving In War Years* emphasizes:

> It wasn't until I confronted my own lesbianism in the flesh, that my heartfelt identification with and empathy for my mother's oppression—due to being poor, uneducated, and Chicana— was realized. My lesbianism is the avenue through which I have learned the most about silence and oppression… In this country lesbianism is a poverty— as is being brown, as is being a woman, as is being just plain poor. The danger lies in ranking the oppression.
>
> The danger lies in failing to acknowledge the specificity of the oppression.[25]

The oppression that Moraga describes is that of race, class, gender and sexuality blended together to represent the formation of her Chicana lesbian identity. It allowed her not only to see her own oppressions but those of her mother as well. It was individuated, to a certain extent, but also linked critically through her mother, to community. Gloria Anzaldúa's "To Queer the Writer- Loca, escritora y Chicana," reflects the way in which her identity was formed:

> Soy una puta mala, a phrase coined by Ariban, a tejana tortillera. 'Lesbian' doesn't name anything in my homeland. Unlike the word 'queer,' 'lesbian' came late into some of our lives. Call me de las otras. Call me loquita, jotita, marimacha, pajuelona,

> lambisona, culera— these words I grew up hearing…these are the terms my community uses. I identify most closely with the Nahuatl term patlache. These terms situate me in South Texas Chicano/mexicano culture and in my experiences and recuerdos. These Spanish / Chicano words resonate in my head and evoke gut feeling and meanings.[26]

The excerpt from Anzaldúa shows that her identity was influenced by dynamics of the geography—*where* she grew up. By emphasizing that no English term applied to her because lesbianism was something that had no name in her, she is indicating how language and identity are joined together.

E.D Hernández takes the discussion in a different direction in from "Discussion, Discourse, and Direction: The Dilemmas of a Chicana Lesbian," which shows yet another approach to understanding lesbian identity:

> And as I grow older, the presence of sexism and its Third World compadre, machismo, are defecating on chicanas. The stench of their misogyny reeks through the cracks of cantina, carne asada, and Catolicismo. Y lo que arde más es que those who recognize the wrong in this behavior are threatened by expulsion in the community or are pushed asunder by economic persecution.[27]

This excerpt reflects the fact that Hernández's identity is situated or marked by gender oppression and sexism than race, and class. While I am sure that other factors were involved her text reflects the mistreatment of women more than any other factor.

These three excerpts illustrate some of the different types of women that were Chicana lesbians. They provide evidence that the multiple approaches taken by Chicana lesbian feminists were more inclusive than those of their heterosexual counterparts, because they allowed for difference in approach, stance, and viewpoint.

While Chicana lesbians did use the various approaches of heterosexual feminists to develop their ideologies, it is important to point out that they did not rely on the heterosexual imperative. As stated in the previous chapter, the heterosexual imperative was used to keep women in the Chicano movement in their prescribed roles. When the imperative was used by Chicana feminists it put in place a heterosexual privilege, they felt would support unity with Chicano males. The unity that they sought came at the expense of Chicana lesbians' voice and representation. When Chicana lesbians came together as a collective group and raised their voices against oppression within Chicanismo, they did away with the heterosexual imperative. The resistance that the presence and the existence of Chicana lesbians posed to the heterosexual imperative disrupted the historic and continued oppression of the virgin / whore complex.

While the heterosexual imperative was not a factor in the development of Chicana lesbian discourse, the militant imperative was present. Chicanos had used this imperative to impose limitations on Chicanas's activist causes by stating that women could only be active in causes that would benefit the cause of the Chicano community as a whole. Later Chicana feminists re-adapted this to include the eradication of gender oppression; women could now work towards gender equality but had to be inclusive of the social injustice of all Chicanos as well. The way in which Chicana lesbians employed this imperative was different than its previous uses. Chicana lesbians' incorporated gender and a type of nationalism to work for the liberation of Chicanas.[28] The militancy that was used by Chicana lesbians was to reflect the pride in having bridged their two identities—Chicana and lesbian. Instead of fighting exclusively for rights of lesbians or the rights of Chicanas, the militant imperative of Chicana lesbian feminism re-affirmed and gave voice to the identity of the Chicana lesbian feminists thereby allowing them to fight for both and more.

The development of lesbian identity, the reconciling of sexual and racial identity, the socialization of lesbians into the Chicana movement, and the development of Chicana lesbian discourse implies

that there is a long history of Chicana lesbian activism that has been negated. In the course of my research on this topic, there is a vast amount of writing on Chicana feminism, while very rarely any of these mention the activism of Chicana feminist lesbians. The explanation for the lack of writings on lesbians and their marginalization is that first, heterosexual Chicanas simply do not recognize the role played by lesbians; or second, the large anti-lesbian sentiment in the Chicano movement and among the feminists did not allow women to "come out" as lesbians. The former explanation was given as a response during an interview I conducted with a Chicana feminist lesbian activist:

> I think that many heterosexual women cannibalize from Chicana lesbians and other lesbians of color without any real recognition that Chicana lesbians have always been at the forefront of feminist politics. Now what you see in many publications or anthologies by heterosexual feminists is an erasure of the lesbian voice at the same time that our ideas concepts, or politics are infused into their writings.[29]

This explanation is representative of the way in which Chicana feminist were terrified of being identified as lesbians. By not giving recognition to the work, or as the interviewee refers to them "ideas, concepts, or politics", of Chicana lesbians, there would be nothing to sustain the charge that all the feminists are man-hating lesbians. While feminists' presented these ideas and concepts as their own, they pushed Chicana lesbians further and further to the margins of the movement.

The latter explanation was given by the critic, Dionne Espinoza in her dissertation, "Pedagogies of Nationalism and Gender: Cultural Resistance in Selected Representational Practices Of Chicana/o Movement Activists, 1967-1972." The work assesses and discusses female Brown Berets, a militant mostly Marxist, radical, urban group who promoted Chicanismo rather like the Black Panthers promoted African Americans. In her research, Espinoza found that none of the

female Berets, or activists she interviewed, had identified as being lesbian. Espinoza states:

> I do not want to gloss over the experiences of women who identify explicitly as lesbians—a number whom could not be "out" during the movement because they rightly feared the condemnation of a homophobic community.[30]

I concur with Espinoza's conclusion that the environment did not allow for lesbian activists to be out. But it would be wrong not to acknowledge that the fear of being labeled a lesbian, kept Chicana feminists from disclosing their sexuality. This homophobia and the worry of being found guilty by association, is what kept Chicana feminists from acknowledging the contributions of Chicana lesbian activists.

The continued criticism of the homophobia and exclusionary tactics of heterosexual Chicana feminists has provided the opportunity necessary to put together an important, if fragmented, history of Chicana feminist lesbians' involvement in Chicano/a activism. The fragmented history of Chicana feminist lesbians has provided a new way of looking at oppression; no longer do the intersections of race, class and gender represent the full spectrum of oppression. In order to produce a thorough understanding of oppression we must deconstruct the *triple oppression* approach and construct a theory that is inclusive of sexuality. In reconstructing this approach we avoid, as Moraga states, "ranking the oppression," and making a group invisible because they do not fit the convenient paradigms.

The deconstruction of the *triple oppression* approach has yielded several Chicano Studies scholars that account for sexuality. This deconstructionist approach is the result of several, highly respected, academics involved in the fight for recognition of lesbian and gay Chicano/as. It is through this generation of activists that change will come. The next generation of Chicano/a scholars are reaping the rewards of the knowledge that came out of the previous generation.

Scholars such as literary critic, Rita Cano Alcalá, and critic Dionne Espinoza are examples of the next generation of Chicano/a scholars. Their work is inclusive of all Chicanas, and they work towards a more complete representation of oppression.

The work of Chicana feminist lesbians has provided an open door to progress. The answer lies in replicating their more inclusive approach of studying race, class, gender and sexuality in combination that will lead us closer to social justice.

Footnotes

[1] Deena González, "Malinche As Lesbian: A Reconfiguration Of 500 Years Of Resistance," *California Sociologist* 14, no. 1-2 (1991): 95.

[2] Historian Deena J. González, in criticizing the women who opposed other women does not deploy that they were public intellectuals and thus "open" to review. But they were.

[3] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987). 16-19

[4] Cherríe Moraga, *Loving in the War Years: Lo Que Nunca Pasó Por Sus Labios*, (Berkeley: South End Press, 1983). 99.

[5] Tómas Almaguer, "Chicano Men: A Cartography of Homosexual Identity and Behavior" in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Abelove (New York: Routledge, 1993), 267.

[6] Carla Trujillo, "Chicana Lesbians Fear and Loathing In The Chicano Community", in *Chicana Lesbians*, Carla Trujillo ed. (Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 1991), 187.

[7] Cherríe Moraga, *Loving in the War Years: Lo Que Nunca Pasó Por Sus Labios*, (Berkeley: South End Press, 1983). 142.

[8] Moraga, Loving, 142.

[9] Jóse David Saldivar. *Criticism In The Borderlands: Studies in Chicano Literature, Culture, And Ideology*. Héctor Calderón and José David Saldívar, ed., Durham : Duke University Press, 1991.

[10] Smadar Lavie and Ted Swedenburg, "Introduction" in *Displacement, Diaspora, and Geographies of Identity*, Smadar Lavie and Ted Swedenburg ed., (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1996), 15.

[11] Anzaldúa, Borderlands. 78-79.

[12] Anzaldúa. *Borderlands*. 16-19

[13] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*. 3.

[14] Natashia López, "Trying to be Dyke and Chicana" in *Chicana Lesbians: The Girls Our Mothers Warned Us About*, Carla Trujillo ed. (Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 1991), 84.

[15] Jaqueline Martínez, "Speaking As A Chicana" in *Speaking Chicana: Voice, Power, And Identity*, Lettica Galindo, and María Dolores Gonzales ed. (Tucson: University Of Arizona Press, 1999), 63-79

[16] Personal, e-mail interview, Subject 1 November 1, 2000

[17] Personal e-mail interview, Subject 2 November 22, 2000

[18] Elvira Saragoza, "La Mujer in the Chicano Movement" in *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writing*. Alma García. ed. (New York: Routledge, 1997) 77-78

[19] Personal, e-mail interview, Subject 1, November 1, 2000

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid

[22] Mariana Romo-Carmona, "Introduction" in *Compañeras: Latina Lesbians Anthology* , Juanita Ramos ed. (New York: Routledge, 1994) xxvii.

[23] Personal e-mail interview, Subject 1, November 1, 2000

[24] Alma García, "Introduction" in *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writings*. Alma García ed. (New York: Routledge, 1997), 11.

[25] Cherríe Moraga, *Loving In the War Years: Lo Que Nunca Pasó Por Sus Labios*, (Berkeley: South End Press, 1983), 52.

[26] Gloria Anzaldúa, "To(o) Queer the Writer- Loca, escritora y chicana" in *Living Chicana Theory*, Carla Trujillo. ed. (Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 1998) 263.

[27] E.D Hernádez, "Discussion, Discourse and Direction: The Dilemmas of a Chicana Lesbian" in *Chicana Lesbians: The Girls Our Mothers Warned Us About*, Carla Trujillo. ed. (Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 1991), 139.

[28] Here, I use the term nationalism to imply a sense of pride in being Chicana, nationalism void of the heterosexist ideals of Chicano culture.

[29] Personal e-mail interview, Subject 1, November 1, 2000.

[30] Dionne Elaine Espinoza. "Pedagogies of Nationalism and Gender: Cultural Resistance in Selected Representational Practices Of Chicana/o Movement Activists, 1967-1972," PhD. Diss. Cornell University. 1996), 196.