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Linda Garcia Merchant

American Quarterly, Volume 70, Number 3, September 2018, pp. 605-607
(Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2018.0040>



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Chicana Diasporic: A Nomadic Journey of the Activist Exiled **chicanadiasporic.org**

C*hicana Diasporic: A Nomadic Journey of the Activist Exiled* is a multimodal, media-rich, literary exploration of the political-ideological journey of the women of the Chicana Caucus of the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) from 1973 to 1979. The museum collection format of this interdisciplinary experience of the NWPC Chicana Caucus includes hybrid-text with personal narrative and annotations of speeches, correspondence, event posters, photographs, filmed interview clips, an introductory narrative and timeline that defines the Caucus's history, structure and purpose, and its national impact on 1970s second-wave feminism. *Chicana Diasporic* analyzes the character, motivation, and origins of the political-cultural work of hundreds of Chicanas over this six-year period, across the US and Mexico and through often simultaneous events. It joins American studies and digital humanities methods and themes to imbricate the temporal and geographic connections of the Chicana political movement; transforms the study of multilingual and multicultural artifacts and persons through the lens of gender and geography; and offers the visitor multiple points of transdisciplinary entry.

In 1973 the Chicana Caucus was officially sanctioned as a special interest caucus at the NWPC conference in Houston, Texas, and continued through the 1979 NWPC conference in Cincinnati, Ohio, when the last Chicana Caucus chair was elected. The ideological diaspora for Chicanas is required as a need to create a cultural and political space to work, forced on them as a result of their expulsion from two ideological communities because of gender (the Chicano movement) and race (the white feminist movement). The expulsion presents itself as blacklisting, underfunding, exclusion from leadership, and access to membership with agency within organizations. These Chicana/Latina women created an ideological space between both worlds, in the Venn diagram of the women's and Chicano movements.

Chicana Diasporic offers the visitor multiple entries to the experience of this group of highly motivated and prolific women—in the traditional Scalar book/chapter narrative, and as a nonlinear material curiosity, through access to a collection of digital objects brought over from the Chicana por mi Raza Digital Memory Collective (CPMR). *Chicana Diasporic* is a presentation of a Chicana history with an identity formation rooted in Mexico, Europe, and, the United States, developed within a community and over time, as Martha Cotera describes in the seminal 1977 collection of essays, *The Chicana Feminist*, as a “process of refinement” with a goal of social responsibility.¹ Using the author’s personal narrative as the main thread, *Chicana Diasporic* is an interdisciplinary witness and articulation of Chicana process, an organic methodology—lived and applied. The goal is to present a public discourse on second-wave Chicana feminism alongside artifacts from CPMR’s private collection that houses the supporting documents, thereby presenting a research model that educates and fills the gap of resources on second-wave Chicana/Latina feminist thought, production, and outcome.

Materials provided for *Chicana Diasporic* come from several sources, with most from the Chicana por mi Raza Digital Memory Collective (www.chicanapormiraza.org), the ongoing recovery project that is one of the largest resources of material on second-wave Chicana/Latina feminist production and experience, housing over 7,000 digital assets and 125 filmed oral history interviews. The original Scalar artwork and site design were created by Jessica Thomas, a graphic designer, who describes her work as a visual representation of “history and documentation as well as a connection between the different images and events.”² Original photographs produced by an iconic feminist photographer, Diana Mara Henry, are displayed with the photographer’s permission. The original content, and performance work on “A Chola-fied Remix,” is created by Garcia Merchant, Juay Roybal Kastl, and two Chicana graduate students, Bernice Olivas and Belinda Acosta, who have both since earned their PhDs in the English department at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Additional materials come from several private collections within the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection at the University of Texas at Austin, along with the personal collections of Martha Cotera, Rose Marie Roybal, Ruth “Rhea” Mojica Hammer, Margaret Cruz, Andrea Cano, Evey Chapa, Lupe Anguiano, Carmen Tafolla, Alicia Escalante, Sally Andrade, Domingo Nick Reyes, and Julian Samora. All contributions and uses on the *Chicana Diasporic* site occur with the express permission of the Chicana por mi Raza Digital Memory Collective.

Chicana Diasporic was produced in part through the Digital Scholarship Incubator (DSI) Fellowship program in 2017, a program funded by the University Libraries and in collaboration with the Center for Digital Research in the Humanities at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. DSI is a twelve-week summer fellowship focused on creating student-led digital research and scholarship and includes exercises in 2-D and 3-D concept modeling and ideation.

Notes

I would like to thank my adviser, Amelia María de la Luz Montes, for the suggestion that I attend the University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL) English department because it is a great place to be a doctoral student producing a DH scholarship on Chicana feminist identity formation. I would also like to thank Elizabeth Lorang, Andy Jewell, and Adrian Wisnicki, along with the Center for Research on the Digital Humanities, the Digital Scholarship Incubator, the Institute for Ethnic Studies, and the UNL librarians for all they do to keep graduate students exceptionally resourced in the area of digital humanities. There are many others who contributed to the work of this site, and those acknowledgments can be found at chicanadiasporic.org/journey/chicana/acknowledgements-and-thank-yous.

1. The full quote offers the idea that identity consciousness grows organically, occurring in moments of clarity, stored and remembered; “I don’t think you have to search for your identity. You identify with one kind of feeling at one point, then another and another, in the process of refinement. If you have a *conciencia social*, you finally get to the point where you’re either socially responsible or not—you are a vegetable” (Martha Cotera, *The Chicana Feminist* [Austin, TX: Information Systems Development, 1977], 26).
2. Jessica Thomas’s artist statement interpreting the vision of *Chicana Diasporic* refers to the ongoing relationship the designer has with Chicana *por mi Raza*. Thomas was a research production assistant on two research trips—2012 to San Diego and 2014 in Pasadena (Linda Garcia Merchant, “About Us,” *Chicana Diasporic: A Nomadic Journey of the Activist Exiled*, January 17, 2018, chicanadiasporic.org/journey/chicana/about-us).