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Borderlands Critical Subjectivity in Recent Chicana Art

JUDITH L. HUACUJA

Graphic expressions of gender politics can be found in the most recent efforts of Chicana artist groups such as L.A. Coyotas, Mujeres de Maíz, and Las Comadres Artistas. While many of these artists' prints and posters illustrate shared experiences of racial and gendered oppression, their mutual emphasis on women's bodies—veiled, masked, shrouded, or denuded—makes this body of work distinctive. The works' focus on the surface of bodies is meant to particularize the effects of hegemonic powers as they literally wear their difference on their persons. The artists' work represents the forging of an activist consciousness rooted in the lived cultural experiences of marginalized people. As border region artists, they work to re-member their bodies and to depict assertive active subjects reclaiming personal and public terrains.

Turbulent public spaces and the changing social context of living Latino, Mexican American, and Chicano realities within the major border state of California include, in the words of Chicana scholar Antonia Darder, "social marginalization, exploitation, cultural invasion, powerlessness, systemic violence . . . and the experience of having been driven out of the dominant political spaces and relegated to a subordinate position."¹ The ongoing political and artistic activism of Chicanos throughout the past four decades has been waged in the face of overwhelming social inequities in education, labor practices, and political representation. Recent studies on race relations indicate that throughout most of U.S. history, subordinate cultures have received little political legitimacy in governmental structures and in cultural discourses. The authors of one major study find, "However democratic the United States may have been in other respects, with respect to racial and cultural minorities it may be characterized as having been to varying degrees despotic for much of its history."²

The Chicana artistic groups discussed in this essay have formed specifically in order to educate and activate themselves and other women on methods of overcoming systemic structures of oppression. They struggle against cultural imperialism, racism, and sexism. As they become politically organized, these women use art as a means of making visible what they have come to call the strategies of cultural imperialism. In the words of one of the artists, Patricia Valencia, “We make visible the tactics that disempower us: the usurpation of natural resources and land, the destruction of economic and agricultural self-sufficiency, the irrelevant and foreign educational environments, the interference with generational transmission of spiritual knowledge, the devaluing of language, of labor, of women and of youth.”³ Community and social justice constitutes the thesis of their art.

For example, community justice concerns are well represented in Yolanda Lopez’s *Woman’s Work is Never Done: Dolores Huerta*, 1995 (fig. 1). The poster commemorates the efforts of Dolores Huerta, cofounder and first vice president of The United Farm Workers Union (UFW), and the efforts of other female laborers to organize in protest against unsafe working conditions and unjust wages in California’s abundant agricultural regions. Huerta’s work with the self-help group known as the Community Service Organization represents a legacy of Latina/Chicana social activism that reaches back to the 1950s. Yolanda Lopez’s art pictures a class of women at risk for being marginalized, women who because of their migrant-labor status are relegated to a borderlands means of existence. Fearful of detection by immigration authorities, the women are forced to maintain a nearly-invisible profile while working in the United States. This profile of seclusion allows U.S. agricultural industries to benefit from migrant labor while dishonoring wage, labor, and health laws.

In Yolanda Lopez’s print, female agricultural workers wear heavy veils, gloves, and masks in a futile effort to protect their bodies from harsh and even lethal chemicals used in agriculture. The shrouds render these women anonymous. The risk is that we, the viewers, read the images of these women as unidentifiable, insignificant, or as nonentities. However, in the background of the poster we see Huerta raising a banner for workers’ rights. One of the workers, in solidarity with all the women, raises her arm to signify that all are in support of the union. On hats and shirtsleeves, they bear the UFW logo. In this instance, women work to resist the capitalist tendency to employ bodies as machine parts, useful only for the maximization of commodity production. In

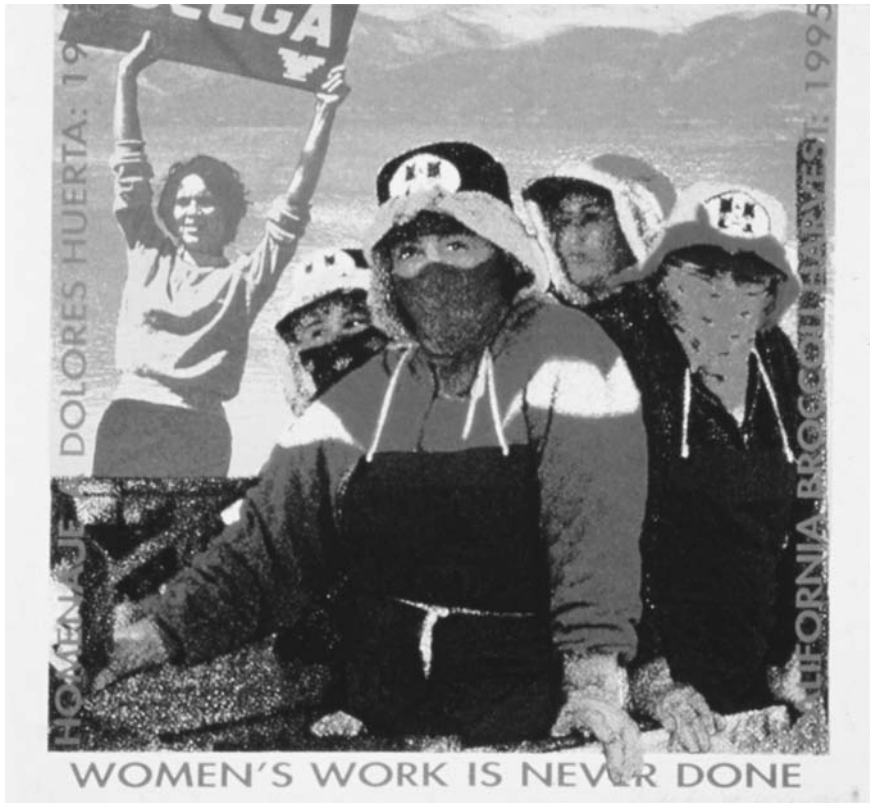


Figure 1: Yolanda Lopez, *Homenaje a Dolores Huerta: Woman's Work is Never Done*, 1995, silkscreen print.

their fight for justice in the workplace, the women transform burdensome protective attire into proof of the atrocities visited upon their bodies.

Theorist Michel Foucault points to the ways in which institutions such as corporate agriculture and mass media craft positions of strength or of disempowerment through representations, pictures, and stories that human subjects occupy. More recently, social scientists have also argued that representations, stories, and works of art are discursive objects that carry with them the possibility of upsetting subject positions. They argue that representations have the power to convey “efficacy beliefs,” that is, beliefs that “shape expectations about one’s own actions, the affective and unconscious dimensions to our sense of agency.”⁴

Following the maxim that “agency is a feminist belief about human fulfillment,” Yolanda Lopez presents women as agents of change who by wearing

their union logos become the advance guard in promoting women's and workers' rights.⁵ In Lopez's print depicting women with heavy scarves over their mouths, the women might be perceived as being gagged, for they appear at institutional sites that control who may and may not participate in serious acts of speech. However, Lopez, Huerta, and the women in this poster engage in activism that "encourages women to believe they can act in the collective best interest exactly because it is collective. . . . The individual and the collective are implicated in one another, and therefore the personal becomes political."⁶

Yolanda Lopez's art identifies the specific and collectivist efforts of Chicana women. Often, these images do more than picture bodies; they work to engage audiences in creating social change. To bring about change within the community, one must involve community. Many Chicana artists/activists ensure that audiences participate in the design, implementation, and analysis of the art project. Some of these artists model their activism through community-based collectives, such as L.A. Coyotes, Mujeres de Maíz, and Las Comadres Artistas. These collectives organized collaborative workshops to deal with issues of relevance within the neighborhood (such as economic development, toxic waste, and the effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), as well as to initiate cultural projects such as music, dance, street theater, and art programs. Gaining the input of community participants serves to broaden the perspectives represented in the artwork and to ensure the fullest expression of community needs.

Collective needs and community issues are well represented in Alma Lopez's *California Fashions Slaves*, 1997 (fig. 2). The print depicts a lineage of workers who also have contributed significantly to California's productivity and wealth. These are women who labor in Los Angeles sweatshops, and who—as time permits—struggle to organize themselves toward better working conditions. A common definition of a sweatshop is a workplace where workers are subject to extreme exploitation, including the absence of a living wage or benefits, poor working conditions, and arbitrary discipline, such as verbal and physical abuse. In the United States these conditions exist in many low-wage industries that employ immigrants, such as the garment industry.⁷ In a sense, these laborers put together the clothes that mask any common humanity; clothes that often segregate wearers into identifiable class distinctions. In her print, Lopez portrays fashions as both enslaving and exemplifying the borders and separations experienced by Mexican American and immigrant women. Fashions also help perpetuate economically and socially unjust conditions. In Los Angeles, the affluent fashion capital, generations of immigrant women labor for unconscionably low wages under unsafe circumstances.

In *California Fashions Slaves* the artist points to border issues exemplified by



Figure 2: Alma Lopez, *California Fashions Slaves*, 1997, digital print.

the notion of Manifest Destiny, the nineteenth-century belief in a divine right of Euroamerican settlers to take land from earlier groups. A map of the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo reminds viewers of the broken guarantee of full citizenship rights made by U.S. officials to the original Mexican occupants of lands from Texas to California. Manifest Destiny usurps not only land, but continues today to claim low-wage labor from disenfranchised bodies as one of global capitalism's assumed economic rights. When translated out of an economic perspective of low-wage labor, the worker's body is criminalized by governing agencies—witness the mass media-sponsored aerial photograph of the *migra* chase scene in the lower left field of the digital image.⁸ A border patrol vehicle pursues a dark-skinned individual as she is made to flee from the vibrant urban domain that is Los Angeles toward the remote parched south that is Mexico's border region. Alma Lopez's composite image illustrates the many interventions and ruptures suffered, yet also the generational legacy of activism forged by Latina women.

In their efforts to resist the cultural problem of racism and patriarchy, contemporary Chicana artists have developed their own specific strategies for an engaged art practice. Their socially-engaged cultural practices work to offset the effects of racism that denigrate individuals and stimulate self-hatred and alienation for both perpetrator and victim. Against the influences of racism, the artists use their art to help build a shared sense of an empowered identity

bent on stamping out internalized oppression and domination. In response to the oppressions of patriarchy, these Chicana artists use the power of cultural forms to reproduce themselves—to make visible—their bodies and their surrounding social structures. This visibility is crucial to a politics of affirmation because it is, in Gail Pheterson's words, an opportunity of "being oneself fully, openly, undefensively and expressively. . . . [Such] visibility for an oppressed group contradicts self-concealment, isolation, subservience, and dominant denial or avoidance of oppressed persons."⁹

The strategies these artists have developed to broaden an activist base include decolonizing the female subject by supplying knowledge that is rooted in the lived cultural experiences of the marginalized community and denaturalizing an oppressive visual culture by picturing "othered" Chicano subjectivities, such as gay and lesbian bodies.¹⁰ These artists blend histories in order to picture a mestizo-, hybrid-, or border-consciousness. Borderlands artists work to re-member their bodies and to embody an activist presence that claims political spaces. Through their work these artists cross-reference and transgress multiple ethnicities.

Alma Lopez's *Ixta*, 1999 (fig. 3) explores the power of the gaze—its readiness to perceive criminal acts in Chicana and Latina bodies and dress. Chicana cultural activism and commitment to equal political legitimacy at times require a contravention across hermetic gender and sexual boundaries as well as borders enforced by patriarchal and ethnic-based nationalisms. Lopez's images reflect the multiple, complex political and personal realities of Chicana feminists today while forcing such transgressions. Audience reception of her poster *Ixta* has been diverse. Viewers have read this as a tragic display of gang violence or as a sorrowful lament on the criminalization of *chola* (urban Chicano) culture. For the artist who made this work, the romantic story of Ixta and Popo as doomed Mexican lovers is translated to endow a sense of heroic love for the much-disparaged Chicana lesbian lovers adorned in their late-twentieth-century garb.

The issue of the gaze, desire, and disavowal are made visible in *Ixta* and her partner as they wear the transgressive signs of lesbian youthful beauty, *chola* makeup, dark skin, and other Indigenous physical traits. Alma Lopez's attempt to tell many different, at times conflicting, stories—the social ostracizing of lesbian love, the physical endangerment faced by Chicano youth, and the criminalization of youth culture based on attire and skin color—asserts that Chicano culture is neither monolithic nor essentialist in nature. There are, in fact, many Chicana cultures with a multiplicity of concerns that speak out for a diversity of issues and that negotiate varied relations of power within, as well as across, communities.

It is important to note that Alma Lopez stages the sacrificial pieta across the ancient Aztec stone sculpture that depicts the goddess Coyolxauhqui.¹¹ Since



Figure 3: Alma Lopez, *Ixta*, 1999, digital print.

the 1980s, Chicana artists, writers, and critics have emphasized Coyolxauhqui as the symbol of identity reclamation. For feminists, she represents recovery of the physical and intellectual body, earlier mutilated by sexist attitudes against women's pleasure and power. For Mexicanas and Chicanas, she embodies the Indigenous concept of spirituality dismembered by colonizing powers. Ac-

ording to ancient Aztec mythology, Coyolxauhqui was daughter of the earth goddess Coatlique and sister of Huitzilopochtli, the sun warrior with whom she was to share power. Unwilling to share his power, Huitzilopochtli mutilated his sister Coyolxauhqui and threw her body to the base of Coatlique's temple at Coatepec. As depicted in the Mexica sculpture, Coyolxauhqui's body has been mutilated by her brother and torn asunder. In Lopez's image, her body becomes a space re-membered as a site for the testing of desire's limits, a terrain for sacrifice and re-making, a place of empathetic engagement.

Alma Lopez and the other artists of the collective known as L.A. Coyotas developed from their collective research an in-depth understanding of Chicana theorist Gloria Anzaldúa's call to re-member the body. Anzaldúa's symbolic reconstitution of the female body seeks to heal the wounds of degradation wrought by racist and sexist actions. In numerous writings, Anzaldúa urges Chicanas to bring forth the memory of the fragmented body of Coyolxauhqui, which serves as a metaphor for the historical *indigena/mestiza* body. Anzaldúa refers to personal struggles undertaken through the creative process of self-reflection as a kind of dismemberment, or fragmentation of the body that can prompt new introspection and renewed awareness. The writer asserts that only after a stage of breaking apart or of alienation can the artist enter into a new consciousness and experience life differently. Empathy, an empowering tool for social change, can be wrought out of experiences of marginalization. Anzaldúa "urges us to piece together the corpse and give it life, to demand that the 'exiled body and exiled emotions be re-membered.'" ¹²

Decolonizing the borderlands has forced a rejection of assimilation. Across the borderlands, artists are reconstituting Indigenous symbols and belief systems, visioning syncretic icons that speak of diaspora, exile, and gender struggles. For example, Margaret Alarcon's *Virgin Liberada*, 1997 (fig. 4) alludes to the Virgin Mary in a fashion similar to Ester Hernandez's widely popular print titled *The Virgin de Guadalupe defendiendo los derechos de la gente* (*The Virgin of Guadalupe Defending the Rights of the People*). Hernandez's Virgin depicts a warrior saint engaged in martial arts who physically challenges oppression, thereby rejecting a demure posture or a humble position. However, Alarcon's version of Guadalupe goes beyond breaking out of the physical constraints of saintliness. She entirely disrobes herself of Catholic propriety. Denuding herself of Western-European conventions, this Virgin's liberation from the Spanish Roman Catholic manifestation represents a decolonizing of the Indigenous and Chicana mind and spirit.

Alarcon's Virgin reveals the ancient goddess of central Mexico suppressed by Spanish colonizers during the sixteenth century. Tonantzin, one of the most significant of the Indigenous goddesses, reclaims her sacred aureole from Mary. Tonantzin also recovers her ancient Aztec place-sign that designates her

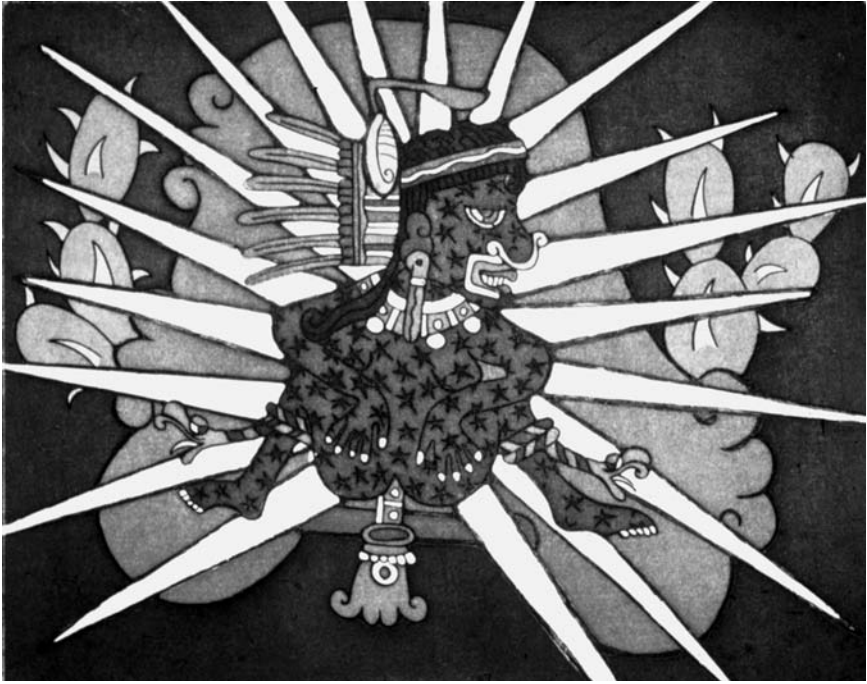


Figure 4: Margaret Alarcon, *Virgin Liberada*, 1997, digital print.

temple site at Tepeyac, previously obscured by the Catholic story describing Mary's appearance on this hill of Tepeyac. Through the Catholic stories, Tonantzin "Mother of Our People, Mother of the Gods" had become subsumed by the appearance of Mary. However, it was Tonantzin who first wore the garb of the Mexican heaven, a blue mantle dotted with golden stars.

Tonantzin, as with many Aztec deities, manifests numerous aspects and personages, including that of Metzli. In pre-Christian Mexico, the moon was an Indian emblem of Metzli, goddess of agriculture. The goddess was originally patroness of fertility, sexuality, and well-being. Mary's veil of stars conceals her sexuality in a highly codified structure of modesty and purity. However, Tonantzin's stars become synonymous with, indeed a structural part of, her very being. She is nude, powerful, and in the birthing position (Indigenous texts describe childbirth in this squatting position).¹³ By raising the vibrancy of Tonantzin, Alarcon's image reinvoles a heritage of power and sexuality suppressed since the time of the conquest.

Much recent Chicana art references the effects of cultural mixing that has occurred since the conquest. The graphic art of Patricia Valencia titled *There are Basic Demands*, 1999 (fig. 5) is one page from a series of graphics that are

THERE ARE BASIC DEMANDS.

"...work, land, housing,
education, independence,
freedom, democracy, justice,
and peace..."

Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle,
General Command of the EZLN, 1993

so where do i fit? secreta agent #1492. i am part of
the movement. doing what i can to create a culture of re-
sistance, fighting the evil powers of the CCS (capitalist
consumer syndrome). you know that urge to indulge in the
latest fashions by versace. well what can i say, between
going up against the consul general of mexico or debating
the chicano intelligentsia on the "yo quiero taco bell"
dog, i have to look good. well, really i just blend. a suc-
cessful overthrow of the bourgeoisie depends upon a sat-
isfatory analysis of how this class holds power.

Figure 5: Patricia Valencia, *There are Basic Demands*, 1999, digital print.

distributed throughout barrio streets in Los Angeles. This particular image portrays the artist as “agent 1492.” 1492 refers to the year colonialism first enacted *mestizaje* (European and Indigenous ethnic mixing) in the Americas. As agent 1492, she is a *mestiza* cultural hybrid, reacting against assimilation by producing a culture of resistance against global capitalism and its consumerist effects upon her body. Fashions subvert her priorities. Text incorporated in the graphic art testifies to her struggle to resist the objectification of women’s bodies. Indeed, this poster reads, “The urge to indulge in the latest fashions [is intimately related to the] analysis of how this class holds power.”¹⁴

Valencia depicts the bold, direct gaze of the eyes. She images the power of the intellect to behold. The background she views has been digitally disrupted. She gives foregrounded clarity only to the object of her intent—a bit of text juxtaposed over Zapatista fighters that proclaims “work, land, housing, independence, freedom, democracy, justice, and peace.” The text signals her allegiance with the Zapatista movement, the struggle for land and social justice being waged in Chiapas, Mexico. The effects of global capitalism have rendered communication instantaneous between the Zapatista leaders and supporters across the globe. Valencia celebrates their cause as an internationally viable movement towards human rights.

Valencia is part of the artists’ collective known as *Mujeres de Maíz* (Women of the Corn).¹⁵ With the primary goal of forging bonds among creative women of color, *Mujeres de Maíz* is an open collective that serves the local community of Los Angeles. It participates in a global network of solidarity with Latin American and Mexican women. *Mujeres de Maíz* taps the local by producing a quarterly grassroots magazine and by staging multimedia performances, visual art exhibits, and poetry readings throughout various neighborhoods in Los Angeles. It maintains global connections via Internet communiqués, email newsgroups, and alliances with groups such as the Zapatista women’s contingent in Chiapas, Mexico.¹⁶

Nicole Limon’s *Sangre de Maíz: Bullet Rituals in Chiapas*, 1999 (fig. 6) also signifies solidarity with Zapatista resistance. Limon is affiliated with the *Comadres Artistas* and with *El Teatro Espejo* (Theater of Hope), both of Sacramento, California. Her poster announces the performance she cowrote with Andrea Porras, a theater piece that documents death and oppression ongoing to this day in Mexico. Her performance and the poster propose an international activist alliance in solidarity with the women of Mexico. For more than three decades, such international alliances have worked to support the emancipatory struggles of oppressed groups around the world. Intervention from solidarity groups, such as Limon’s, includes education about the subordinate culture, as well as publication of military abuses within the offending

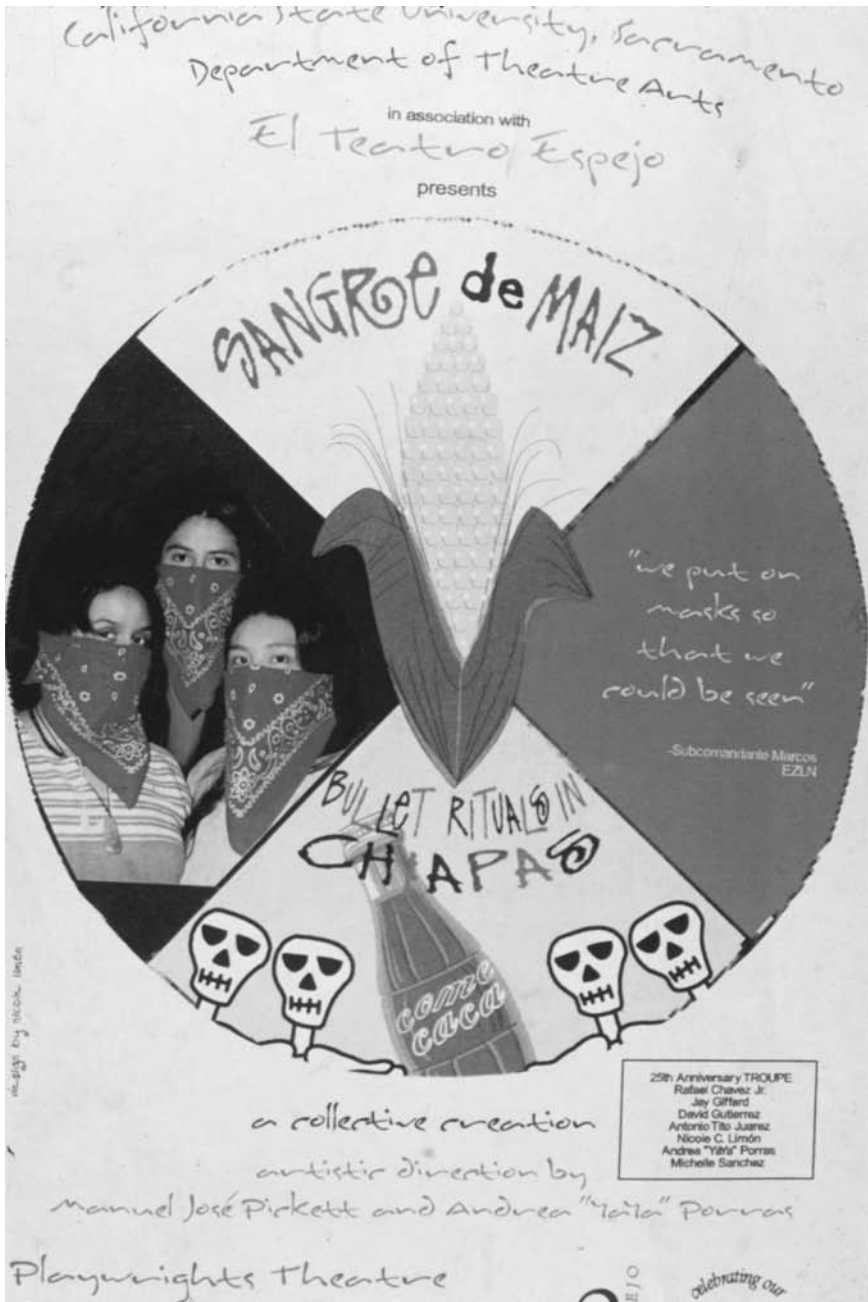


Figure 6: Nicole Limon, *Sangre de Maiz: Bullet Rituals in Chiapas*, 1999, digital print.

country. The Mexican Indigenous peoples' call for liberation has resulted in a vast movement of solidarity in Europe and in North and South America that puts pressure on the Mexican government to end human-rights and land-ownership abuses.

The women of *Mujeres de Maíz*, as the name refers, emphasize ancestral connections to the Indigenous peoples of the Mesoamerican region today called Guatemala and Mexico. In Valencia's more specific terms, "This path we see as a blood line, a connection to women who have resisted and struggled for what they believed in, whether that was their family or a revolution."¹⁷ For Limon's group, *Sangre de Maíz* (Blood of the Corn) signifies the sanctity of life represented by the precious body fluid and the spilling of that blood at the hands of the military.

L.A. Coyotas and *Mujeres de Maíz* have traveled to and studied with women's *comunidades* in Chiapas. The women make these trips in order to "create a deeper understanding of the causes and effects of colonization, imperialism, racism and sexism as it develops even across cultures and borders."¹⁸ Both groups, through their art, allude to the colonizing powers of global capitalism. The women point to the strident materialism in which they find themselves implicated. However, as Chandra Mohanty argues, it is the "daily strategies and ideologies of global capitalism [that] make visible the common interests of Third World women workers [and that] can serve as the basis for organizing across racial and ethnic differences and national boundaries."¹⁹

These study groups also interrogate body-related issues such as self-image, sexuality, addiction, and physical abuse. Through the dialogue fostered by the collective, the women found they lived a veiled reality. They were conscious of their attempts to deflect the power of the gaze that objectifies and limits their activities as women. In Limon's case, the veil protects the identity of the individual, thereby allowing her to freely take part in the revolutionary cause. The veil symbolizes her solidarity with the Chiapas movement. In representing herself as a fighter (through the simple use of a red bandanna), Limon exemplifies Cherrie Moraga's assertion that "women of color are more like urban guerrillas trained through everyday battle with the state apparatus."²⁰ Here, women display the power of the returned gaze, as fully active agents.

In many of the selected illustrations, women have chosen the veil as a means of focusing attention on their power. No longer simply objects to be gazed upon, they take up strong subject positions, challenging who speaks and what gets said about the subject. If these artists are sensitive to colonizing strategies that usurp power by speaking for subordinated subjects, how is it that they, as privileged U.S. citizens, might speak for disempowered populations in Mexico? This raises the question of who authorizes another as a legitimate speak-

ing subject. Stuart Hall has pointed out that identity is neither transparent nor unproblematic, that “we should think of identity as a production which is never complete, which is constituted inside, not outside representation, and which can stake no claim of authenticity.”²¹

Hall goes on to argue the distinction between political identity that fights to end injustice and the many nuanced cultural identities in between. It is political identity that requires conscious, specific commitments. Angie Chabram, quoting Hall, asserts, “It may be necessary to momentarily abandon the multiplicity of cultural identities for ‘more simple ones around which political lines have been drawn.’”²² These women forego rigid territorial identities in support of a broad-based and politically relevant human-rights alliance. They seek new identities appropriate for their political practice.

The art-making practices of the women of *Mujeres de Maíz*, *Las Comadres Artistas*, and *L.A. Coyotas* are informed by third-world feminist theory. Their understanding of new “subject configurations” is well explained by theorist Chela Sandoval’s statement:

What U.S. third world feminism demands is a new subjectivity, a political revision that denies any one ideology as the final answer, while instead positing a tactical, indeed a performative, subjectivity with the capacity to de- and re-center depending upon the kinds of oppression to be confronted, depending upon the history of the moment. This is what is required in the shift from enacting a hegemonic oppositional theory and practice to engaging in differential social movement, as performed, however unrecognized, over the last thirty years under U. S. third world feminist praxis.²³

A tactical subjectivity repositions itself regarding individual and collective identities in order to perform multi-ethnic coalitions. White laborers, Latina lesbians, and Chicana intellectuals re-position their work at times to locate a tactical unity—especially around issues of the body and its shared experiences of oppression. Many Chicana artists do this by answering Anzaldúa’s calls for woman’s exiled body and exiled emotions to be re-membered, as Margaret Alarcon does in her poster titled *Tezcatlipoca*, 1998 (fig. 7). Here, the Aztec god/goddess of smoke, fire, and water is depicted. Attention is focused on the ancient Mesoamerican deity’s eyes as a means to know this subject. He/she cannot be fully known because no physical body is manifest, yet fire, passion, and light emanate from within a deeply textured surface that veils *Tezcatlipoca*. Layers of thick felt create the actual material; *amate* (fig bark) paper resembles luscious wool that provide warmth and healing to the entity behind the fabrics.²⁴

Tezcatlipoca’s eyes and brilliant glow denote an active agent who, in her



Figure 7: Margaret Alarcon, *Tezcatlipoca*, 1998, pastel and acrylic on bark paper, offset prints.

craftiness, is darkly subversive, political, and revolutionary. She is embodied, yet disembodied. She wears a mask as the sign of a tactical subjectivity, fully present and grounded in the material, historical realities of the late-twentieth century. Iconographically, Tezcatlipoca is identified in part by the banded eyes. The eyes connote looking inward, self-scrutiny, and knowing one's self. She follows her gaze inward; she travels a path toward enlightenment and transformation. For contemporary Chicanas, Tezcatlipoca enacts Chela Sandoval's call for a "commitment to the process of metamorphosis itself: the activity of the trickster who practices subjectivity-as-masquerade."²⁵ The Chicana feminist/artist/activist/trickster knows well this kind of activity that "allows movement through and over dominant systems of resistance, identity, race, gender, sex, and national meanings."²⁶

These Chicana artists are forging new analyses and political strategies that are, in effect, reinventing progressive feminist and ethnic-based movements in more inclusive and relevant ways. These groups bring together lesbians, American Indian, Asian American, Latina, white, and African American women, and working-class, academic, and grassroots-activist women who are discussing and sharing the intimate connections of their everyday lives. For these Chicana artists, group processes always link art-making with education and political activism. In so doing, their work performs new notions of cultural citizenship defined as "a range of social practices which, taken together, claim and establish a distinct social space for Latinos in this country," a space where difference is seen as a vital resource producing new cultural forms.²⁷ This coming full circle becomes praxis that forges community action and social change. Their rich encounters continue a legacy of community activism by educating others about successful struggles for social and economic justice.

NOTES

1. Antonia Darder, "Introduction," in *Culture and Difference: Critical Perspectives on the Bicultural Experience in the United States*, ed. Antonia Darder (Westport, Conn.: Bergin & Garvey, 1995), 3.

2. Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1980s* (New York: Routledge, 1986), 55.

3. Patricia Valencia, interview with the author, August 9, 1999, Los Angeles, Calif.

4. Daniel Miller and Christopher Tilley, "Introduction," in *Ideology, Power, and Prehistory*, ed. Daniel Miller and Christopher Tilley (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 14.

5. Judith Kegan Gardiner, "Introduction," in *Provoking Agents: Gender and Agency in Theory and Practice*, ed. Judith Kegan Gardiner (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 13.

6. Gardiner, "Introduction," 6.
7. Recent studies conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor found that 67 percent of Los Angeles garment factories and 63 percent of New York garment factories violate minimum-wage and overtime laws. Ninety-eight percent of Los Angeles garment factories have workplace health and safety problems serious enough to lead to severe injuries or death. In the United States, the 1990 Census showed that garment workers in Los Angeles earned about \$7,200 annually (figures from Sweat Shop Organizing web site, <http://www.sweatshopwatch.org/swatch/questions.html#sweatshops>, September 2001).
8. *La migra* translates as immigration police.
9. Gail Pheterson, "Alliance Between Women: Overcoming Internalized Oppression and Internalized Domination," in *Bridges of Power: Women's Multicultural Alliances*, ed. Lisa Albrecht and Rose M. Brewer (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1990), 35.
10. See Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute Books, 1987); and Nilda Peraza, Marcia Tucker, and Kinshasha Conwill, eds., *The Decade Show: Frameworks of Identity in the 1980s* (New York: Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, New Museum of Contemporary Art, The Studio Museum of Harlem, 1990).
11. "The Coyolxauhqui Stone" (1400 A.D.), a giant monolith found at the Great Temple of Tenochtitlan, is currently located at the Museo del Templo Mayor, Mexico.
12. Alma Lopez, interview with the author, August 9, 1999, Los Angeles, Calif. Lopez quotes Gloria Anzaldúa.
13. Catha Paquette, Latin American art historian, identified the image borrowed by the artist as Metzli in a conversation with the author, September 1999, Santa Barbara, Calif.
14. Text on Patricia Valencía's graphic *There are Basic Demands*, 1999.
15. The group was "born out of the need for women of color to communicate collectively for empowerment; to bridge the communication gap among women and men, younger and older generations, academia and the community" (Patricia Valencía, "Mujeres de Maíz," unpublished paper written for a presentation at the University of California, Los Angeles, 1997, 1).
16. Valencía, "Mujeres de Maíz," 2.
17. Valencía, "Mujeres de Maíz," 1.
18. Valencía, "Mujeres de Maíz," 1.
19. Jacqui M. Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Introduction: Genealogies, Legacies, Movements," in *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*, ed. Jacqui M. Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (New York: Routledge, 1997), 13.
20. Chela Sandoval, quoting Cherrie Moraga, in "Feminist Forms of Agency and

Oppositional Consciousness: U. S. Third World Feminist Criticism,” in Gardiner, *Provoking Agents*,” 217.

21. Stuart Hall, “Speaking for the Subject,” lecture delivered at University of California, Santa Barbara, May 26, 1989, quoted by Angie Chabram and Rosalinda Fregoso in “Chicana/o Cultural Representations: Reframing Alternative Critical Discourses,” *Cultural Studies* 4:3 (1990): 210.

22. Chabram and Fregoso, quoting Hall, “Chicana/o Cultural Representations,” 210.

23. Sandoval, “Feminist Forms of Agency and Oppositional Consciousness,” 218.

24. The artist reproduced this art as a series of posters for distribution at various feminist art events in L.A. The events brought together a wide range of social justice organizations committed to feminist change.

25. Sandoval, “Feminist Forms of Agency and Oppositional Consciousness,” 218.

26. Sandoval, “Feminist Forms of Agency and Oppositional Consciousness,” 218.

27. William V. Flores and Rita Benmayor, “Introduction: Constructing Cultural Citizenship,” in *Latino Cultural Citizenship: Claiming Identity, Space, and Rights*, ed. William V. Flores and Rita Benmayor (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997), 1.