

Book Review: Movements, Movimientos, and Movidas: Alternative Archives and Technologies of Struggle Chicana Movidas: New Narratives of Activism and Feminism in the Movement Era Edited by Dionne Espinoza, Maria Eugenia Cotera and Maylei Blackwell

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Chicana Movidas excavates the quotidian yet revolutionary strategies of subversion that mark Chicana feminism. In ways similar to Kelly (2002) and Davis (2016) who centralize the role of third world women in the Black freedom struggle and counteracting the representation of historical agents as powerful individuals- the editors of this anthology deliberately pull together critical and embodied knowledge from a range of contributors who are not ‘celebrities’ and who resist the depiction of history as the work of heroic individuals. So while a stated goal of the project is to rescue Chicana feminists from the margin to the center, the project is not meant as worship or a denial of the import of solidarity particularly among Black, Indigenous, and other maligned populations.

Using Michele-Rolph Triollout’s theoretical framework of silencing as their anchor, the contributors reconstruct the history of the Chicana Feminist movement via a critique of the archive as a site of knowledge production offering an alternative way of re-membering, reading and listening against established theoretical and methodological frameworks. This follows from their understanding that power begins at the source- where ‘facts’ are created. Thus, they collectively argue, commensurate with his views that silencing and absences are present at the

inception of the production of history, regardless of the moment, throughout its development and solidified in its retelling.

Thus a key intervention that the project makes is situating the erasure of Chicana feminism from the archive within the context of racialization and how the history of feminisms is invariably shaped by relations of power. Several of the essays, for example, *Forging a Brown-Black Movement*, *La Raza en Canada* and *Unpacking Our Mothers' Libraries* gestured toward deliberate attempts to invisibilize critical strategies deployed by Chicana feminist for social change; silencing them whether by failure to “cast” their stories or by ignoring them altogether in institutional and non-institutional archives. The failures to narrate these stories have functioned to perpetuate cycles of violence and oppression and to maintain hegemonic white supremacy.

The second significant intervention then is to actively construct and have the audience witness the creation of this alternative archive- a journey through the under-theorized spaces of backrooms, bedrooms, hallways, kitchens, classrooms and various art forms; giving room for non-celebrities to powerfully account for themselves and their communities - the development of *extrainstitutional memory*. The book is divided into four sections with a theme of contestation running throughout. That is, contestations of patriarchy (specifically cis-heteronormativity (section 1)), contestations of racial capitalism and heteropatriarchy (section 2), contestations of spatialization (section 3) and contestation of the Archive (section 4). And while I mark these themes as being dominant in specific sections, given the constitutive nature of race, gender and sexuality it makes sense that there are no clear lines of demarcation in the text, that these themes emerge and re-emerge throughout.

One of the most useful examples of how one might develop a counter-memory or rework the submerged and fractured historical narrative appear in Marisela Chavez' *Refocusing Chicana International Feminism: Photographs, Postmemory and Political Trauma*. Not only does Chavez skillfully map the entanglements of various technologies of power to ensure 'truth' about Chicana involvement in the conference remain elusive but she speaks to the trauma that is produced by such erasures. What makes Chavez piece inspiring is that it does not stop there, even without being able to fully place the women captured in each recovered photo Chavez projects restores presence- the presence of a community not meant to survive (to invoke Lorde in *Sister Outsider*). Her analysis of photos is exemplary of what Espiritu (2014) regards as looking at and for fragmentary testimonies, barely distinguishable testimonies, to testimonies that never really reach us (p.19-20) as ways to fill gaps in understandings of the historically marginalized and presently dispossessed. These photographs reveal something about the circumstances that would have brought Chicana feminists to the point of this capture- about how they claimed their rights as citizens, their freedom to move or their refusal to stay in place. Or as Chavez notes in her closing *these photographs that were in suitcases and are now having their debut allow us to refocus on the complex nature of the ways in which Chicanas are represented and concealed in both the past and the present and to continue the project of developing a new image and a new memory for the future* (326).