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Identity, Decolonialism, and Digital Archives

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In April, I was the keynote speaker at the University of Texas at El Paso's Spring Symposium, an annual event hosted by Frontera Rétorica, the graduate student chapter of Rhetoric Society of America. In my talk, "Decolonizing Digital Platforms," I cited a 2017 Hispanic Pew Research report that provided exigency for my call to decolonize digital habits of mind in the context of the U.S./Mexico border. The Pew Report found that 54% of Latinxs felt confident about their place in the U.S. under the new presidential administration (Hugo Lopez and Rohal). These findings suggest disparities among Latinx in the U.S. in the levels of critical awareness about issues of race, class, citizenship, and language. Many Latinx rhetoric and composition scholars resist and counteract these disparities through a spectrum of emerging research foci, such as the decolonial potential of theory and practices for the field (Baca, *Mestiz@*; Ruiz and Sánchez), digital rhetoric and writing (Cedillo; Gonzales; Medina and Pimentel), feminist filmmaking methodologies (Hidalgo), critical race theory (Martinez; Sanchez and Branson) as well as issues that have traditionally been associated with Latinx research like immigrant rights and activism (Arellano; Ribero); multilingual literacy (Alvarez); service-learning (Baca, *Service*) and culturally relevant pedagogy (Mejía; Serna). In this spectrum of emerging and established research, Latinx scholars engage in historiography, theoretical articulation, and analysis of local practices, contributing to a growing body of knowledge that resists dominant narratives that delegitimize through deficit rhetoric and logic of the colonial imaginary.

My book *Reclaiming Poch@ Pop* looks at the popular culture producers who self-identify as pocha/o and resist anti-Latinx legislation in California and Arizona rooted in colonial paradigms. In my book, I cite a 2012 Hispanic Pew Research study that found about half of Latinx had no preference when it came to identifying as "Hispanic" or "Latino" (Taylor, Hugo Lopez, Martínez and Velasco). This report served to highlight how many Latinx do not recognize the need for rhetorical sovereignty (King) and provide context for the skeletons of colonialism that came out of our collective familial closets during the lead up and aftermath of the presidential election.

In Iris Ruiz and Raúl Sánchez's edited collection, *Decolonizing Rhetoric and Composition Studies: New Latinx Keywords for Theory and Pedagogy*, contributors articulate how familiar terms within and beyond the Latinx community can be critically re-read against colonial narratives. Decolonial theory provides a generative, intersectional method for bringing to light historically significant knowledge that has been ignored by history. Following indigenous scholar

Angela Haas' work on wampum belts as technology, there is a great deal of potential for examining existing multimodal and digital practices from Latinx rhetorical traditions that contribute to a fuller discussion of technology with regard to people of color who "hack and yack" about issues other than the digital divide and access. Octavio Pimentel and I are currently co-editing a collection for Computer and Composition Digital Press called *Racial Shorthand: Coded Discrimination Contested in Social Media*, wherein contributors critique mischaracterizations of people of color in online media and offer examples of multimodal productions that draw on the rhetorical traditions of these misrepresented communities.

In July, I was elected co-chair of the NCTE/CCCC Latinx caucus and I feel hopeful about the important scholarship coming from members of the caucus, which is evidenced by the NCTE Latinx Caucus Publications Google Doc. I first circulated the Google Doc in 2014[1] to create a collaborative archive for members to consult when embarking on new projects and to raise awareness of shared research interests. Currently, the doc includes more than 160 works, the vast majority of which have been published in the last ten years, from more than 30 caucus members whose professional levels range from graduate students to full professors. With current concerns regarding cuts to National Endowment for the Humanities, plans to erect border walls, and attacks on professors speaking publically on issues of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and disability, we are in a moment when more Latinx resist the neoliberal passivity of "wait and see" by participating in professional leadership positions, serving on the boards of new and established publications, and collaborating with one another to build and curate a growing body of knowledge about our communities from within our communities.

Notes

1. To access the Latinx Caucus Works Cited from July 14, 2017, visit https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MekJxC1cb4qoPzJvuFsEqV1tcjwov4XXVzkhY_4COZQ/edit?usp=sharing.

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