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# Claiming the Discursive Self: Mestiza Rhetoric of Mexican Women Jouranalists, 1876-1924

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Claiming the Discursive Self: Mestiza Rhetorics of  
Mexican Women Journalists, 1876-1924

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By

Cristina Victoria Devereaux Ramírez

Claiming the Discursive Self: Mestiza Rhetorics of  
Mexican Women Journalists, 1876-1924

by

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DISSERTATION

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## Abstract

In the last two decades, scholars in rhetoric and writing studies have been calling for a greater representation of voices of those from other cultures who participated in rhetorical practices. As Jacqueline Jones Royster contends, rhetoric has been framed as a mostly white, male, and elite, and that these positions distort the democratic perspective of our discipline. *Claiming the Discursive Self: Mestiza Rhetoric of Mexican Women Journalists, 1876-1940* presents women rhetors who were participating in not only creating a national identity, but constructing a public identity to insure women's input and participation for future generations. It closely examines the rhetorical strategies they employed to claim a discursive identity, and it provides a rhetorical analysis positing a strong historical, cultural, colonial, political, and feminist impact of their writings at that time.

Each chapter foregrounds women's writings through a feminist theoretical lens against those of the dominant discourse of the time. The women this study considers are Laureana Wright de Kleinhans (1846-1896), Hermila Galindo (1885-1954), la mujeres de Zitácuaro (1900), and Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza (1875-1942). Through their writings, I argue for a mestiza rhetoric, a hybrid rhetoric of Mexican and indigenous cultures representative of our growing national populations. More specifically, these Mexican women journalists wrote in order to contribute to a national identity situated in indigenous, Mexican, and European sensibilities which resisted any one dominate discourse; and secondly, they wrote to counter the repression of women's voices and representation in the public sphere. The multiple directions in their discourse created a mestiza rhetoric.

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## Forging a Mestiza Rhetoric: Mexican Women Journalists' Role in the Construction of a National Identity

In Mexico, the people as a  
collective had an integral  
awakening at the dawning of this  
present century, and the women  
brought to the national stage their  
own actions and orientations.

– Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza <sup>1</sup>

Damían Baca's theoretical projections in *Mestiz@ Scripts, Digital Migrations, and the Territories of Writing* offer rhetoric and composition the prospect of what Jacqueline Jones Royster calls "standing in other places" (150). Rhetoric has been situated in a Euroamerican perspective of theory and history for centuries (Abbott, 1996; Villanueva, 1999; Baca, 2008; Royster, 2003; Wu, 2002; Mignolo, 2000). Baca's theory on mestiza rhetoric shifts our gaze from the dominant theoretical and narrative perspective to a "mestiza consciousness that offers the possibility of 'thinking and writing from the intersection of Mesoamerican and Western perspective, where their collective expressions merge'" (5). In this article, I will investigate Mexican women journalists' writing during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. These journalists were at the center of the Latin American transnational experience as female pioneers in the creation of a new mestiza rhetoric that reflected writing from the stand point of inclusion that was resistant to oppressive ideologies.

These Mexican women's discourse is situated in a pseudo-Greco Roman historical tradition of Mexico. The writings they produced had dual rhetorical purposes. One, these Mexican women journalists wrote in order to contribute to a national identity situated in

indigenous, Mexican, and European sensibilities which resisted any one dominant discourse; and two, they wrote to counter the repression of women's voices in public. The two directions in their discourse created a mestiza rhetoric. A mestiza rhetoric is a discourse that emerges from a cultural background that recognizes its multiple subjectivities, adapts ideas and logics from various cultures, and "creates a symbolic space beyond the mere coming together of two halves" (Baca 5). Mestiza discourse can represent this symbolic space by calling on indigenous cultural symbols, but my perception of mestiza rhetoric does not necessarily depend upon the explicit discursive recognition of indigenous roots. It represents an intertextuality of cultures and ideas while resisting assimilation to a linear articulation of logic, thereby resulting in divergent, subversive texts. Mestiza rhetoric emerges from a place of suspension between cultural worlds, a mestiza consciousness, which does not necessarily mean that the writer considers herself to be from an indigenous background, but that she is able to conceptualize a different reality of herself and her behavior, making for an ontological shift.<sup>2</sup>

From the first publication of *Las Hijas del Anáhuac* [The Daughters of Anáhuac], Mexican women journalists, such as Laureana Wright de Kleinhans, Hermila Galindo, and Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza, created a mestiza rhetoric centered on women involved in building a national identity and on the creation of a distinctive discursive space. Mexican women journalists writing between 1870 and 1920 began articulating *mestizaje* as a rhetorical trope by using the names of ancient Aztec locations in the titles of journals, incorporating indigenous pseudonyms in published works, integrating European theories to form their own nationalistic vision, and claiming and supporting indigenous identities and cultures long before *mestizaje* came into vogue with the elite culture in the 1920's. The concept of *mestizaje*, the mixing of different cultures and races, was made popular through Jose Vasconcelo's 1925 articulation in *La*

*Raza Cósmica*.<sup>3</sup> John Francis Burke in *Mestizo Democracy: The Politics of Crossing Borders* argues that Vasconcelos's outlook on mestizaje sought a transnationalism that was not imperialist nor centered on any one dominant culture; rather it was "a form of transnationalism anchored in the belief that the Latin American experience with the mixing of races offers a deep experiential basis for realizing an international politics oriented by mutuality, not dominance" (60). Mestiza rhetoric is rhetoric and composition's new theoretical approach.

In looking at these women's rhetoric, then, this study intends to respond to the different calls which have sounded from within the discipline of rhetoric. First, many feminist scholars have called for a greater investigation into women's rhetorics (Glenn, Royster, Wu, Jarratt, Johnson), with Wu specifically calling for more studies into women from Third World backgrounds. Victor Villanueva has been voicing consistently that our discipline should look toward scholars and rhetors from our own hemisphere, and Damían Baca now has coupled Villanueva's call with his position of mestiz@ rhetorics which actively searches for a non-Greco representation of rhetoric.<sup>4</sup> My analysis of Mexican women journalists and their mestiza rhetorics follows suit. In recovering these mestiza rhetorics, this study subverts, adapts, and revises historical narratives of assimilation (Baca 5). The claim that Mexican women participated in rhetorical practices complements Royster's argument for rhetoric to turn away from a totalizing Western, white, elite conception of what accounts for rhetoric, and who has the cultural capital to participate. Most significantly, monolithic and stereotypical representations of Mexican women do not hold in the face of my analysis, which reframes them as intellectuals who countered the patriarchal and colonial powers that sought to inscribe them.

In order to situate the women within the junctures of discourse and power, I first provide a brief history of the time and traditions these women's writings interrogated. The analysis of

Mexican women rhetors highlights their contributions to the creation of a Mexican national identity and how their writings were framed within a mestiza rhetoric.

### **National Consciousness, Mestizo/a Consciousness**

By 1876 the Mexican people had expelled the Spanish and French and were attempting to represent themselves to the world as an independent nation. This era in Mexican history is marked by the beginning of Porfirio Diaz's thirty plus year rule as dictator, known as the Porfiriato, which ended in 1911 with the beginning of the Mexican Revolution. A debate about the nation's collective modern identity emerged in newspapers and journals, with the discussion picking up momentum through the 1920's and 1930's. The Mexican people were asking whether they should lean their collective consciousness more toward a European identity or recognize the pre-conquest civilizations as the basis of their shared nature. They understood that the European conquest was not detached from their identity, but neither could they deny their indigenous history. Baca has labeled writings that carried a consciousness of more than one world "mestiz@" rhetorics, one that "is a distinct enunciation, grounded in the lived experiences of the peripheral colonial world that expresses new potentials that surpass the hierarchical logic of assimilation" (30). As an epistemic art, rhetoric played a key role in the negotiation and representation of the Mexican people because it always already framed people's collective realities, identifying them within the prescribed societal structure (Baca, 2008; Omi and Winant, 2002; Gilyard and Nunley, 2004; Stromberg 2006; Villanueva, 1993; Lundsford and Ouzgane, 2004; Vitanza, 1997). The Porfiriato then emerges as a rhetorical maelstrom not only because of the identity formation taking place, but also because of the explosive discourse that would eventually lead to revolution.<sup>5</sup>

One of many answers to the Mexican people's question about identity came in 1884-1889 in a multi-volume publication titled *México a través de los siglos* [Mexico through the centuries], the first comprehensive synthesis of Mexico's past, written by various liberal writers and edited by Vicente Riva Palacio. The collection represented the conquest as a "painful and inevitable defeat of a great nation at the hands of a still more advanced civilization" (Tenorio-Trillo 68). Riva Palacio introduced *mestizaje*, the coming together of the Spanish and indigenous peoples, as a possible national identity.<sup>6</sup> All over Latin America a collective sensibility toward the nation's pre-Columbian past was emerging, and writings began to surface in which the European linguistic form of writing, which was a high and almost baroque form of Spanish, mixed with an indigenous essence of the people.<sup>7</sup> The style mixed with the content and vice versa to create a discursive *mestizaje*. Alfredo Chavero's section of the volume, "Historia Antigua y de la Conquista" [Early History of the Conquest], focused on pre-Hispanic Mexico and strove to bring Aztec characters such as Tlaloc, Centeotl, and Chalchiutlicue to the historical stage. Riva Palacio and others brought a new strategy to the stage of the nation which "included the intersection of old and new means of expression: the neoclassical liberal rhetoric—a legacy of late colonial times and liberal republicanism—and the emerging professional language fostered by various sciences" (Tenorio-Trillo 70). Mestizo/a consciousness was made more acceptable through Riva Palacio's publication, but his history of Mexico did what many histories written from a patriarchal perspective do: forget women's role. Women journalists recognized this void as an opportunity to speak up, claim a place in history, and secure a voice in the public discourse on modernity.

Mexican women began searching for a voice to define themselves as citizens of a nation they loved and served—and as humans with the capacity to exercise their intelligence outside the

boundaries of the home. Ironically, women did not have a place in Mexican history, yet they represented the nation. A women's place was at home taking care of the children along with domestic duties to fulfill the calling of the new national system of "order and progress." As Julia Tuñón states in "Femininity, '*Indigenismo*,' and Nation," in order for women to realize the nation's expectations of their identity, they were forced to "forgo [their] own projects in order to symbolically fulfill [their] function of alterity" (87). As a result, their identity and agency as individuals were severely lessened. A few women from the Mexican colonial period and era of independence avoided this strict conditioning and gained access to the public through their husbands' press. Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1651-1695) was the most venerated writer from the colonial era, but little else is heard about women writers until the early twentieth century. María Fernández de Juárez inherited *El Semanario Económico* [The Economics Weekly] (1808-1809) from her deceased husband and Leona Vicario de Quintana Roo published political journals independently and collaboratively with her husband, Andrés Quintana Roo, a hero of the 1810 war for Mexican Independence. Women, however, did not begin to claim their own discursive identities in greater numbers until the late 1880's.

### **Claiming History, Claiming Voice**

During the historic liberal upheaval in Mexico known as la Reforma (1857–1876), the promise of the formation of a nation-state independent of European rule became possible. Some of the liberal ideas instituted in the 1857 Constitution were the separation of church and state, a division of political responsibilities, and a system of political checks and balances. Some proponents of liberal ideas also saw the movement's potential to provide an equal education for the women of Mexico, while also integrating them into the nation (Tuñón 61). Policies, newspapers, and intellectual essays from the time period emphasize the discursive roadblocks

that Mexican women faced, which simultaneously highlight the rhetorical strategies men used to shape a nation's identity. For example, the Civil Code of 1870 legally bound women to remain subservient to their husbands, required that they receive permission to work, and took away any property rights. These policies relegated upper, middle, and lower class women to domestic life. Justo Sierra, a Mexican congressman and educational policy writer in the 1880's, addressed Mexican women who were studying to become teachers, "Niña querida [Beloved child], do not turn feminist in our midst...Let the man struggle with political questions and write the laws; you struggle the good struggle, that of the sentiments and forming souls, which is better than forming laws" (Vaughan 139). Women's intellectual jobs were limited to that of elementary school teachers, which kept them in a similar domestic motherly role that did not threaten the patriarchal-based political system. Women, however, began demanding training in other fields such as journalism, law, and medicine.

During the period of the Restored Republic (1867-1876), people were again optimistic of the future and saw education as the key to progress and to a stable society.<sup>8</sup> Women's education was still a controversial issue but gained momentum. In 1869 the Law of Educational Reform led to the establishment of several schools such as one led by Rita Cetina Gutiérrez de Mendoza and Cristina Farfán in Mérida, Yucatan in 1870. Gutiérrez de Mendoza and Farfán were revolutionaries as seen through their activism and publications which pioneered women's rights. Other schools were established in Mexico City such as the Escuela Femenina de Artes y Oficios (Women's School of Arts and Vocation) in 1871 (Pouwels 21); Escuela Normal para Señoritas (Women's Normal School) was opened in 1890, and in 1903 the Escuela Mercantil (School of Mercantile) Miguel Lerdo de Tejada opened (Tuñón 75). These early schools mostly trained women to become teachers because the nation needed them to fulfill the goal of a

national primary education. As primary educators that made up more than half of the public teaching force, women certainly took part in shaping a national identity. Tuñón states that as teachers, women gained a much greater sense of dignity as contributors to society, which led teachers to raise “a series of fundamental questions regarding women’s condition” (79). Literacy then took on an increasingly important role in Mexico and a record number of women began to learn to read and write.

An increase in literacy among Mexican women highlighted for them the void of female voices in public discourse. The women in the typesetting program of the Women’s School of Arts and Vocations started a journal in 1873 called *Las Hijas del Anáhuac: Ensayo Literario* [The Daughter’s of Anáhuac: Literary Essay] (Pouwels 23). It initiated Mexican women’s contributions to mestiza rhetoric in the nineteenth century, which represented a multi-layered symbolic act of resistance. On the one hand, the women were participating in a forum reserved for men, and they were also resistant to an exclusive European identification. The student contributors to the journal demonstrated a mestiza consciousness, which Anzaldúa states is a “constant state of *nepantlism*, an Aztec word meaning torn between ways” (Anzaldúa 25). The women, as well as the Mexican nation, were torn between their European cultural sensitivities and their pre-Columbian understandings of Mexico. On another level, they were torn between traversing the cultural gendered ideology forbidding them to speak in public or following societal tradition. Their discursive articulations illustrate that they combined the former with the latter. The title the women chose, *Las Hijas del Anáhuac*, represents an early mestiza consciousness because it articulates an understanding of their indigenous identity. Anáhuac, the Aztec name for the Valley of Mexico, now the location of Mexico City, places the women within what would appear to be a culture in conflict, one of tradition and another of modernization. The



late nineteenth century brought about a Latin American modernist movement which paradoxically pushed progress in the sense of instrumental rationality and technological innovation, but which was also infused with articulations of historical renewals, such as the indigenous histories and sentiments. The women's discursive ancestral claim of mestizaje predates Mexican philosophers such as Riva Palacio whose articulation of these modernist sentiments would not fully emerge in Mexico until the next decade.

On a level of heritage and ancestral lineage, claiming to be "hijas," the daughters of Anáhuac and not "las mujeres" (the women) or mere citizens of Anáhuac, they asserted a direct lineage to the once great kingdom of the Aztecs. Tace Hedrick in *Mestizo Modernism: Race, Nation, and Identity in Latin American Culture, 1900 - 1940* argues that Latin American artists, writers, poets, and journalists of this time reflected "embodied mixtures of the indigenous and the modern, figured forth in the very mixture of the white European with indigenous blood in the veins" (7). The journal's title entangled the women in a rhetorical conundrum of gender and national identification. On the one hand, Mexican women wanted to be like their French and American sisters who took part in an emerging feminist movement, but on the other, they wanted their own identification as Mexican women, which at the time was still being negotiated. The first issue's editorial titled, "A Nuestras Lectoras" [To Our Readers] and written by a student using the Nahuatl pseudonym of Ilancuetl claimed an emergent intellectual space for women and illustrates the mental *napantlism* they endured.

It is no longer frowned upon for the woman to write and express her feelings with the pen, and nothing could be fairer...Besides, why, if a man can show the glories of his intelligence publicly, should the woman

be deprived of doing so..since there are women whose talents equal those of men (Pouwels 23).

The tone in this claim seems confident and forthright; however, the women might not have had enough confidence to identify themselves in public as writers. As Katherine Bliss notes in her article “Theater of Operations,” the male intellectuals of the Porfirian-era felt that women who “might read, form opinions about contemporary politics, debate current issues...[was] completely outrageous” (128). They were crossing discursive boundaries that were still firmly implanted within Mexican society.

In keeping with the pre-Columbian theme of the journal’s title, the contributors used pseudonyms from the Aztec Nahuatl language such as Ilancuetl, Papantzin, Cuatlicue, and Miahuaxochitl (Pouwels 23).<sup>9</sup> This rhetorical move of identification shows the women’s apprehension in making their individual names public, or it could mean that the women tried to represent more writers than were actually contributing (Pouwels). Whatever the reason, their use of pseudonyms represents a mestiza consciousness resistant to a totalizing European identification. In *Mexico at the World’s Fair: Crafting a Modern Nation* Tenorio-Trillo states that the creation of a nation state “and perhaps its ontological raison d’être—were theatrical: to invent, re-create, and manage the national mythology” (31). By invoking Anáhuac, and identifying themselves with early Aztec women, the women were aligning themselves with the mythology and traditions of the Aztec indigenous peoples. This was a powerful symbolic act, a resistance toward European national identification, which also flew in the face of the belief that women, especially indigenous or Mexican women, should remain in the private sphere. By venturing into the public discursive domain, the women writers could have been considered saboteurs of the household and of Mexican patriarchy. The first attempt of *Las Hijas del*

*Anáhuac* was not well received by the public or other newspapers. Pouwels states that the women hypothesized that their “lack of recognition might be because their articles were boring and contained errors” but that they would “do their best as lowly students to foment the regeneration and emancipation of women” (24). Their audience may have caught on to their rhetorical contradictions of dual impulses of identification, and a possible lack of confidence of their true identity.

### **Another Attempt at Anáhuac**

Thirteen years after the last publication of *Las Hijas de Anáhuac*, another women’s journal with the same title appeared in Mexico City, directed by Ignacio Pujol and edited by Laureana Wright de Kleinhans. After the fifth issue of the publication, and having realized that another newspaper years earlier had carried the same name, they changed the journal’s title to *Violetas del Anáhuac: Periódico Literario Redactado por Señoras* [Violets of Anáhuac: A Literary Periodical Edited by Ladies] (1887-1889).<sup>10</sup> Through the publication of this journal, Wright de Kleinhans emerged as one of the most prominent writers and women’s rights activists of the era. Her life, as well as her writings, took on the essence of mestiza consciousness. Born in 1846 to wealthy parents, a Mexican mother and an American father, she later married a German, Sebastián Kleinhans. Although she received an elite education, she carried with her the sensibilities of a nation evolving toward its own identity, which involved recognition of its indigenous past. The modernist idea of a historical past melding with the present and progressive future had gained acceptance in Mexico which could have allowed Wright de Kleinhans’s newspaper more opportunity to flourish. Contemporary and influential writers who expressed these modernist ideas in the late 1880’s were Cuban poet, writer, and revolutionary José Martí and Peruvian writer, philosopher, and modernist Manuel González Prada. These

writers were widely read in Latin America and possibly influenced the modernist and feminist claims of Wright de Kleinhans.

Unlike the women writers from the first journal, Wright de Kleinhans, along with other contributors to *Violetas de Anáhuac*, like María del Alba, Ignacia Padilla de Piña, and Dolores Correa y Zapata, included their names on the broadsheet. They contributed weekly to the journal, writing in a florid European style that demonstrated the mestiza quality of the publication. They were mixing an indigenous sentiment with European linguistic structure. The eloquent European style they adopted emulated the men's writing style used to articulate a progressive national identity.

The opening 1887 editorial introduces the women writers and articulates its purpose and goals. Most likely written by Wright de Kleinhans, it exemplifies the tone and vocabulary used at the time. The three main goals of the magazine were to include women's voices in the world of journalism, contribute to the construction of a national identity and encourage an early form of Mexican feminism. Mixed Western European and indigenous sensibilities appear with the symbol of the olive branch corresponding to the former, and the reference to "pure teachings of time past" and "the Mexican Homeland" with the latter.

Greetings: With the olive branch in its hands as a token of women's intellectual regeneration, vivified with the pure teachings of times past, the modest Newspaper, "The Daughters of Anáhuac" introduces itself today to the public and reverently directs its cordial greeting to all classes of Society, to the Press of all political shadings, and to the Men of Power and to those of the State; powerful trilogy that with its magnificent trappings has been able to evolve victoriously for the sake of peace, order, and culture, of the Mexican Homeland.<sup>11</sup>

Such eloquent language was more than a rhetorical accessory; it was “an intrinsic component of the ideals [of] political reconciliation, nationalism, and scientism,” says Tenorio-Trillo. “For the idea of a modern nation could hardly be conceived without its rhetorical style. In constructing a nationalist ideology, the distinctions between form and content vanished (32). By introducing themselves with such pageantry, Wright de Kleinhans and the others were fully aware that their ideas intersected with other powerful discourses. The Mexican women, who did not have an established voice in society, were forced to talk back in the dominant language in order to be heard.

As a form of mimicry, Wright de Kleinhans’s rhetorical approach illustrates Berlin’s theory on histories of rhetoric, and bell hooks’ theory of marginalized discourses. Berlin states that “rhetorics never answer only to themselves: They reflect and, of equal importance, refract the conditions of their creation and functioning. . . . [Rhetorics] are constructed at the junctions of discourse and power, at the point at which economic, social and political battles are waged in public discourse” (116-117). *Violetas de Anáhuac* intersected at the apex of power, “the Press of all political shadings, and to the Men of Power and to those of the State,” by appealing to the Mexican elite’s sense of nation construction, while encouraging women to be involved in intellectual pursuits. At this time in Mexico, there was a perceived peace and stability throughout the nation, yet looking just below the surface of the society, subversive voices such as *Violetas* emerge. In “Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness,” bell hooks contends that language is a place of struggle, and that “words are not without meaning, they are an action, a resistance” (236). If the writings in *Violetas* are examined through the theoretical lens of bell hooks, they take on a hint of radicalness that at first is not seen. The Mexican women writers, although from the elite classes, stood on the margins of their culture speaking to the center. The

contextuality of their writings speaks to the dominant power. Wright de Kleinhans and the other women journalists were standing outside the circle of political influence, a marginalized space, and their rhetorics surface as we look within the interstices of history.

Early Mexican women journalists' rhetorical approaches blurred the magazine's first two purposes: that of contributing to Mexican national progress and that of constructing a national identity with another purpose, the early advancement of a form feminism. Mexico's feminist wave, one not solely based in the ideals of the home, did not appear until the 1901 publication of a feminist monthly journal, *La Mujer Mexicana* (Macías 13).<sup>12</sup> But Wright de Kleinhans was at the forefront of securing greater agency and constructing a Mexican feminism: *marianismo*. *Marianismo* empowered women in the household, claiming that their work in raising children and establishing a home contributed to the strength and identity of the nation. In 1887 Wright de Kleinhans wrote of the importance of the mother's role in the Mexican home in the guidance of her children in the right direction.

Mothers everywhere are the ultimate expression of affection and tenderness; but we can declare without fear of making a mistake, that among Mexican women this sentiment is doubly powerful and dominating, which is why it is not strange that severity and rectitude in the guidance of children, are also more scarce than in other countries where habits live on that, we, Mexican mothers, would not be able to bear, as is the one of sending the children to the countryside during nursing, delivering them into mercenary hands (14).<sup>13</sup>

Wright de Kleinhans continues in the vein that a woman's most important job is to raise and educate their children to be "useful to themselves and the society in which they will live." She combines her ideas of the importance of being a mother with the strengthening of the nation.

Mestiza rhetoric flourishes in these mixed discursive representations, such as Wright de Kleinhans's. Her complex strategy of nation building coupled with a strong feminine ideology shows that Mexican women were not only capable of emulating the complex and lofty tone of the Mexican language, but could also incorporate their own identity into their writing.

The articles in *Violetas* emphasized that a women's highest achievement was that of becoming a mother, yet they also celebrated and encouraged women's intellectual advancement. According to Wright de Kleinhans, the expectation of mothering in Mexico was one of "abnegation and sacrifice; before the satisfaction of our intimate feelings, we should search what is beneficial for our children" (15). Yet, the journal encouraged and praised women who found themselves outside the domestic role. Ontologically, the journal was fraught with ambiguity, which is another part of being mestiza. The women had their feet in two worlds, one in a Mexican patriarchal society that framed them in the trope of domestication, and the other in a world of feminist emancipation. The contributors, at times, found it difficult to decide which ideology to embrace. In one publication from December 11, 1887, María de la Luz Murguía warns her readers who "live in the clubs and circles of women that proclaim emancipation of their sex," to understand "that deep down she [the reader] is good and understands that her duties are in the home, where she is the ruling queen" (7). On the next page an anonymous contributor extols women from around the world who have achieved success in the public realm in a section titled "Mujeres de nuestra epoca" [Women of our era].<sup>14</sup> The contributor writes:

And Mexico, that marches with a sure step along civilization's advancing path, thanks to the order and the peace that it enjoys, offers us an obvious example of its advances our dear columnist, Srita. Matilde Montoya, who has recently received her Doctor's degree from Medical School, after performing

brilliantly on her exam (7).<sup>15</sup>

The women were caught between keeping tradition and wanting a sense of entitlement by taking part in “civilization’s advancing path.” They advanced these ideas carefully. The mixed ideas of women’s place in society represent recognition of their multiple subjectivities, and are also a significant part of the mestiza rhetoric they were forging. Mexican women writers, especially Wright de Kleinhans, were aware of these contradictory discursive stances. In *Educación y superación femenina en el siglo XIX: dos ensayos de Laureana Wright de Kleinhans* (2005), Lourdes Alvarado states that *Violetas del Anáhuac* “always fluctuated between preserving and transforming the feminine stereotype” (20), which demonstrates that Wright de Kleinhans was well aware of the dissonance between articles like Murguía’s and the anonymous “Mujeres de nuestra epoca.”

Their cautious approach toward their audience succeeded. Newspaper publications and journals in Mexico engaged in the practice of acknowledging one another in their papers, approving or disapproving of the different journals’ and newspapers’ discursive stances. This practice signaled to the public which newspapers were supported by certain political factions. In a section titled “Impresiones de la prensa” (Impressions from the press) *Violetas* published the reactions of its audience. One of the impressions published came from Manuel Romero in a newspaper titled *El Monitor del Pueblo* [The Leader of the People]: “See them passing by, they are Anáhuac’s Daughters that break the chains that at one time had women’s intelligence subjugated; they call to their sisters affectionately and they invite them to take part in that noble tournament of intelligence; What can we say about that publication! That we desire prosperity and long life for it” (36).<sup>16</sup> It is possible that Manuel Romero and other Mexican male writers of the time accepted the newspaper because of its domestic leanings and subtle feminist appeals



which created a tone appropriate for a society on the cusp of modernity.

Wright de Kleinhans and the contributors to *Violetas* consciously adopted a rhetorical strategy that was meant to encourage women to speak out in public, but not to radicalize their voice. These Mexican women were writing in Mexico when all identities were in flux: racial, gender, social, and political. They demonstrated an ability to strategically situate themselves linguistically and rhetorically with the most intellectual men of the time, argue for an identity of their nation through the incorporation of indigenous sentiments, and declare the beginning of a new identity for women in the public space as intellectual beings.

### **Making Foreign Discourses Relevant to Communal Truths**

One of the most consistent pieces of advice for the readers of *Violetas* was the importance of educating their children at home and enrolling them in school. A large part of Mexico's mestizo/a identity formation rested on the education of the children by the state. Marta Eva Rocha in her article "The Faces of Rebellion" notes that "education was also part of the modernizing dream that would bring [Mexico] progress. Thus, educational expansion was an important project of Porfirio Díaz's administration" (18). The education system in Mexico embraced the European system of learning (Bazant), which in turn gave Mexican students access to radical European theorists such as Peter Kropotkin, Jean Grave, Enrico Malatesta, and Leo Tolstoy (Cockcroft 85). Mexican rhetors, such as Hermila Galindo, who grew up during the Porfiriato, were exposed to this new literature, and took examples of European theories to create a discourse relative to their nation's reality. Access to this radical literature opened many people's eyes to the injustices of the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, which would eventually lead to the Mexican Revolution. Galindo's revolutionary discourse introduced an intertextuality of cultures and ideas that she used to resist assimilation into the old governmental and societal

regime. The cultural confluence of these writings points to a mestiza rhetoric, whose political agenda was feminism in nationalism, a radically new perspective for Mexican women, which gave them a more important role in society, one they did not have before.

Born in 1886 in Lerdo, Durango, Galindo received a modern education in the state of Chihuahua, which exposed her to thinkers from around the world (Trinidad 24). Her social theories regarding education, the nature of women in society, and on government were heavily influenced by German Marxist, August Bebel, and his writings, *Society of the Future*. In her book, *Hermila Galindo: una mujer moderna*, Laura Orellana Trinidad states that through Galindo's interpretation of Bebel "she substitutes the socialism of the future, which the German philosopher forwards, for the Mexican constitutionalism of her present reality, through which men as well as women would be given their full rights" (49). Galindo pulled ideas from all around her to create the new and radical sense of feminism that she first expressed in Mexico in her 1915 newspaper *La Mujer Moderna* [The Modern Woman].<sup>17</sup> Her strategies were similar to those of other women activists and writers of the time in that she blurred nationalist issues with those of a feminist agenda.<sup>18</sup>

The release of *La Mujer Moderna* marked more than four years of the Mexican Revolution, which from the onset opened windows of opportunity for women to become involved in politics as never before. Women labored in posts such as public relations, nursing, information gatherers, and secretaries (Rocha). While the Mexican Revolution blazed on, Galindo strategically released *La Mujer Moderna* on September 16 in commemoration of Mexico's Independence from Spain, and it coincided with the anticipation of the First Feminine Congress to be held January 13-16 of the next year in Mérida, Yucatán (Trinidad 34). The revolution had introduced women to spaces and experiences outside the home, and they were

hungry for a discourse that recognized their new order. In the introduction of her newspaper she acknowledged this new feminine spirit.

We wish to honor this anniversary of redemption, by inaugurating our journalistic task, with the ones that we wish to collaborate with toward the redemption of our country, the redemption of the saving principles and the redemption of women, by stirring the feminine spirit to rebellion to the height of their duty and their right, so that it will not remain unmoved any longer before the solution of the most transcendental socio-political disturbances, that affect as much men as women, who are their companions and equals (Trinidad 35 ).<sup>19</sup>

In Galindo's writings, there is a strong connection between the emancipation of Mexico from Díaz's regime and the redemption of women. Many others along with Galindo believed that the constitutionalist revolution would solve Mexico's problems, such as the accumulation of wealth by the few, exploitation of three quarters of the population (mostly indigenous, factory workers, and women), and believed that for Mexico to progress, the new 1917 Constitution had to be passed. At the time Galindo started her newspaper in 1915, feminism was so intertwined with nationalist and revolutionary issues that it was difficult for Mexican women to understand a feminism not framed in this political and social construction. As a feminist and a mestiza, Galindo was at the forefront of blurring the lines between the personal and the political, the intimate and the social.

Galindo's newspaper was greeted with great demand and received subscription requests from all over Mexico. *La Mujer Moderna* covered various topics from literary essays to fashion, but more important, it planted in women's minds that they could win the right to vote. Emma Pérez in the *Decolonial Imaginary* states that "[t]he magazine's collaborators were women who

captivated an audience like themselves: literate, fashion-minded professionals who attended the opera, read Plato and Aristotle, and, most important, sought women's suffrage" (44). With Galindo's rhetoric in high visibility, she was creating a distinct discursive feminist agenda and directing her appeals to powerful government officials, such as the governor of Yucatán, Salvador Alvarado. Galindo's rhetorical strategy underscores Anzaldúa's theory that those with a mestiza conscious create their own paths that lead to divergent thinking which is not always accepted. In spite of Galindo's popularity, the radical rhetorical expressions and strategies she borrowed from Bebel placed her on the fringes of a society that held to traditional beliefs.

Galindo had direct connections with Governor Alvarado, whom she influenced to convene Mexico's First Feminist Congress to be held in Mérida, Yucatán, in January of 1916 (Pouwels), yet she was not part of the organizing committee. Alvarado had extended to Galindo the invitation to present the inaugural speech, but for unknown reasons, Galindo did not attend, and her speech at the First Feminist Congress was delivered by Cesar González, one of President Carranza's education administrators. Pouwels notes that "because she was not present to clarify part of the speech that referred rather directly to women's sexuality, her detractors accused her of immorality, and of advocating free love" (97). An immediate protest led by a conservative group of women moved to expunge her speech from the congressional record (Pérez 45). In spite of this harsh protest, she was invited again to speak at the Second Feminist Congress of Yucatán where she would present her speech titled "A Study by Hermila Galindo with Themes That Should Be Resolved at the Second Feminist Congress of Yucatán."<sup>20</sup> Again, however, she was not able to attend, but in her speech she reiterated that her ideas were influenced by European philosophers Bebel and Kant (Pérez 47), and that she did not wish to impose her ideas on the participants, only to start a dialogue among the women. Galindo's desires to discuss alternative

ways of conceiving women's realities place her in the frame of the new mestiza. Anzaldúa where she had "discovered that she [couldn't] hold concepts or ideas in rigid boundaries. The borders and walls that are supposed to keep the undesirable ideas out are entrenched habits and patterns of behavior; these habits and patterns are the enemy within. Rigidity means death" (Anzaldúa 79).

As part of the national race toward progress, the sciences were valued as the crowning glory of intellectual advancement. Some Mexican men wanted to keep women ignorant in regard to their biology and hygiene, which only perpetuated women's dependency on men, secured their lack of social mobility, and increased their likelihood of falling into prostitution. One of the radical ideas for the time that Galindo proposed in her First Feminist Congress speech and later in her newspaper was sex education for young girls. In Mexico's cultural and societal system, women were viewed as asexual beings meant to serve male sexual desires, and above all to procreate. And so to speak about sex in public, as Galindo did, was an affront to tradition and the rigid boundaries of patriarchy. She envisioned the Western ancients' mores, radical even today, as a possible way for Mexico to escape its rigid ideals about sexuality.

Sparta, whose virtue and lofty prestige nobody questions, kept their little children, men and women, entirely naked until the age of puberty, for the purpose of having the skin become accustomed to all weather conditions in order to strengthen the young physically, and with the aim of taking precautions against malice and curiosity of adolescents, which are the worst inducements of the sexual instinct. Nowadays, that wise habit could and should be substituted by concepts, widespread in the sciences that we have indicated (this makes reference to physiology and anatomy), and also with the prudent advice of

mothers (54).<sup>21</sup>

Galindo's ideas for women's equal rights were not only grounded in Bebel's socialist ideas, but also in the scientific principles of natural selection. Pouwels summarizes her reasoning: "[u]ntil women are equal before the nation's law, they will be unequal participants in the process of natural selection, and the evolution of the species will be stunted" (99). Galindo was not interested in a slow reformation of society's structure, and her rhetoric signaled a total rejection of the old regime and countered it with ideas from outside the established system of government.

Another entrenched cultural pattern of behavior Galindo sought to break was a blind reliance on the Catholic Church. During the Reform Movement in Mexico, liberals asserted that society's strict religious piety contributed not only to its stagnation, but also to women's intellectual backwardness. Because of religion's pervasiveness in the Mexican people's everyday life, references and comparisons to religion were a common rhetorical trope. Galindo employed examples of society's strong religious beliefs in her book *La Doctrina Carranza y el acercamiento indolatino* [The Carranza Doctrine and the indolatino approach] to persuade the people that President Carranza's constitutionalist politics would emancipate them.<sup>22</sup> Carranza was known as the Constitutionalist President. He came into power in 1914, and ruled Mexico as if he were the sole leader to guide Mexico into a new era with a new constitution. In one paragraph she compares Carranza's adoption of the constitutionalist ideas to Jesus Christ waiting and fasting in the desert, and parallels constitutionalist support to *la santa causa*, the sacred cause (Trinidad).

I certainly do not commit the sin of hyperbole if, while refreshing my soul in the limpid doctrines postulated by Mr. Carranza, whom I regard as the Redeemer of America and as the author of a moral revolution that seems

to repeat the divine words of Christ: 'Come to me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give ye rest.

In effect, the Carranza Doctrine is the saving doctrine of the weak, it is the redemptive doctrine of the oppressed, it is the propitious doctrine of the abused, it is the dignifying doctrine of those that are poor in spirit, it is the doctrine that will glorify those who are hungry and that thirst for justice. (Trinidad 48).<sup>23</sup>

She writes in an exaggerated religious rhetorical appeal, blurring the lines of the people's religious zeal and that of the revolutionary government as the people's salvation. Galindo did not espouse a religious affiliation. Mexican revolutionaries were more inclined toward a secular belief, but here we see Galindo using the intimate knowledge of her culture as a rhetorical strategy for identification.

Galindo's mestiza sensibility, a "crossing between comparative and conflicting elements," did not long for preservation or even recreation of a cultural past. Her mestiza rhetoric highlighted what Baca calls "inventing between." She was able to traverse gender lines, inventing between the patriarchy of the revolution and her own feminist nationalist sentiments. Because of her close relationship with Carranza, she traveled as his emissary to Cuba and other Latin American nations to expound upon the Mexican Revolution. Alongside her elucidation of the revolution, she expressed her strong feminist ideas abroad. By bringing together ideas from two cultures and two ideologies, she created a symbolic space for her nation's new social realities.<sup>24</sup>

### ***Su Alma, Su Trabajo / Her Soul, Her Work***

Of all the Mexican women journalists at the turn of the twentieth century, one stands out not only for the vast amount of writing she left behind, but for the cultural, gendered, political,

and rhetorical borders she traversed and blurred. Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza, born in 1875 in San Juan del Río, Durango (the same pueblo where General Pancho Villa was born), steadily climbed the ladder of political influence. From selling her goat, Sancha, to buying her printing press, to being imprisoned in Mexico City, to dealing with some of the most influential politicians and revolutionaries of her time, she never lost sight of who and what she was fighting for: the indigenous people. Gutiérrez de Mendoza embraced the Mexican revolutionary ideology of *zapatismo* which purported to uphold the 1857 Mexican Constitution of the Reform era, but more importantly for her, it sought a sweeping land reform for the *campesinos*, the land workers and farmers, many of whom were the indigenous people who had been dispossessed of their land by wealthy *caciques and caudillos* (Brunk). Mexico was in the throes of establishing its identity, and Gutiérrez de Mendoza was at the center of the discursive battle. At every turn, she resisted colonial and political powers.

Ironically, Gutiérrez de Mendoza may have rejected the term “mestiza” as an identifier because at the time in which she was writing (1897-1940), mestizaje meant assimilation into the dominant culture, and she resisted conforming to a society that denied the Indian. Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s writings and sentiments that looked toward the indigenous culture as the true base of identity for the Mexican people were becoming more common with the revolution, but were still marginalized ideas. Alicia Villaneda, author of Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s biography *Justicia y Libertad*, notes that she was at the forefront of the idea of cultural mestizaje:

Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza believed that the indigenous natives really preserved and represented "Mexicanidad" [true Mexican identity]. Later on this idea would become more or less common among the intellectual vanguard of the twenties; it would be an important factor of self identification and reaffirmation of



the national spirit that took place during the years immediately following the Mexican Revolution (73).<sup>25</sup>

Although this quote may refer to *indigenismo*, Mexican society mixed their ideas and identities of *indigenismo* with the Mexican and European aspects of their society. Her writing, then, reflected a contemporary mestiza rhetoric, that which constantly negotiates the cultural differences between an indigenous side and a Mexican side. As a strategy of invention, Baca argues that mestiza consciousness is “a borderland articulation that emerges specifically from the underside of colonial relations of power” (25). Unlike Wright de Kleinhaus’s strategy of using indigenous names and symbols that to some extent can represent a merely symbolic solidarity with her past, Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s rhetoric was meant to confront the issue of trampled rights of the indigenous. Originating from a deep colonial struggle, her early writings helped to encourage the Mexican Revolution and other political movements.

Gutiérrez de Mendoza took the dangerous rhetorical road and directed political threats directly to the dictator, Díaz. After the following lines were printed and distributed from her newspaper *Vesper: Justicia y Libertad* in 1903, her press was confiscated and she, along with Elisa Acuña y Rosete, her main contributor, were thrown into Belén prison in Mexico City. She wrote:

And we do not come to demand of you [Díaz] respect for the principles from which you have separated yourself by trampling on them, we no longer come to demand from you fulfillment of duties that you do not recognize, we come simply to demand of you that you retire. [...]  
General, you have been spoken to. Honest men have shown you your errors and in order to not hear them you have put them in jail or you have

silenced them forever. [...] Withdraw from a post which you keep  
against every right and do not oblige us to turn our ideal into brute force,  
as you have done. [...] Step down, General Díaz, step down! Move away,  
withdraw from a position which we claim for an honest man, for a  
sincere patriot. General, Sir, Retire!<sup>26</sup>

Few journalists took such a politically loaded tone directed specifically at Díaz. Most of the criticisms directed at his regime was done through the safer trope of humor. Tenorio-Trillo notes that as an alternative to explicit critique “visual, poetic, and humorous expression communicated abundant irony and discontent in such an evasive and ambiguous way that repression was difficult” (162). Although her writing may have landed her in jail, or even killed her, she spoke her mind against the injustices she saw.

Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s indignant tone likely arose from her liberal subaltern memories, memories that she carried of indigenous slaves being mistreated in the mines, the memory of her indigenous grandmother who voluntarily stopped talking after being kidnapped by a Spaniard, and the 1857 Constitutional promises Díaz broke in the name of “order and progress.” Within seven months before the outbreak of the revolution, one can imagine her words being read aloud to a group of campesinos listening to the daily reading of the newspaper. As a direct result, their desires for emancipation were stirred.

And the usurpers, the tyrants, the oppressors, the ones that made a slave of  
sovereignty, the ones that made of the citizen a pariah, the ones that made of man  
a thing, the ones that made of the proletarian a beggar, the ones that made of the  
nation a cripple that crawls pleading for charity, justice, the ones that made out of  
the beautiful ANAHUAC a scarlet stain on the universal map, they look with

horror at the rising of those freedoms, those rights, those nations that accuse them. They look with panic and terror at that glorious resurrection of their victims; and while the supreme judgment, the national conscience, pronounces its sentence without appeal, there in the distance one hears a victorious bugle call playing  
REDEMPTION (Alatorre 140-141)! <sup>27</sup>

Situated in a time of national political tumult, Gutiérrez de Mendoza's rhetoric can even be labeled as revolutionary or confrontation rhetoric. Robert Cathcart in "Movements: Confrontation as Rhetorical Form" describes rhetorics such as Gutiérrez's as containing the rhetoric of "corrosion" and of "impiety." "The dramatic enactment of this rhetoric reveals persons who have become so alienated that they reject 'the mystery' and cease to identify with the prevailing hierarchy...they stand alone, divided from the existing order" (99), dreaming of a better reality in which there is salvation.

Like many liberals of the time, Gutiérrez de Mendoza had the same negative sentiments toward the Catholic Church because she felt its teachings provided fodder for the mistreatment of the poor or indigenous people. As in Galindo's writing, Gutiérrez de Mendoza employed religious tropes, which reflected her knowledge of Mexican culture. But unlike Galindo's, Gutiérrez de Mendoza's use of the Gospel was not a positive depiction of the Mexican government. Playing to the belief many elite Mexican citizens held of Díaz as savior, Gutiérrez de Mendoza uses metonymy, which "foregrounds resemblances based on juxtaposed associations, thus foregrounding both commonalities and differences" (Ratcliffe 68), replacing Christ with the figure of the dictator. From another 1903 article in *Vesper*, the title "¡Ecce Homo!" conjures up the Biblical scene of Pontius Pilot presenting a scourged Jesus Christ to a hostile crowd in Jerusalem shortly before his crucifixion.

In war, a mutineer; in peace, a schemer. As a man, a monster, as a politician, a coward. Here is Porfirio Díaz. Flatterers! There is your man. In the fictitious peace that we enjoy, everyone has seen him scheme, lacking in the most rudimentary duties of a governor and a friend. [...] Poor Mexico, my poor Homeland! You would be the first nation where they put women in prison for the crime of writing in support of the common people. [...] Flatterers! Here is your man just as he is. ECCE HOMO! Flatterers (Alatore 131).<sup>28</sup>

In her early writing, such as this example, there appears a hint of feminist leanings, but Gutiérrez de Mendoza's main rhetorical purpose was to depose Díaz. He still managed to garner supporters when this was published, and Mexico was still seven years short of the revolution. Yet the strong, cutting language employed in her rhetorical appeal contributed to her 1903 jail sentence.

Gutiérrez de Mendoza never lost the spirit of her mestiza consciousness even in the face of war, deception, and prison time. Her supposed failures of imprisonment translated into a deeper resolve to have her voice heard and to take part in the formation of a nation that recognized all people. At the end of the revolution, she recouped her strengths, even offering self-critique as a rhetorical strategy. For example, after several severe disappointments, such as the 1913 assassination of Francisco Madero, the President of Mexico, the passing of the 1917 Constitution, which failed to bring quick reform for her people to fruition, and Emiliano Zapata's assassination in 1919, Gutiérrez de Mendoza realized that the name of her first newspaper *Vesper: Justicia y Libertad* was too rhetorically naïve.<sup>29</sup> In the introduction to her other newspaper, *El Desmonte* [The Leveling], published June 15, 1919, Gutiérrez de Mendoza claimed that *Vesper* was "overly dreamy, overly idealistic" and that now her latest newspaper

reflected this shifted perspective. “*El Desmonte* says that I don’t dream as before, that I feel a strong desire to clear the land that bristles with old tree trunks [that is, false heroes and corrupt institutions]; it is time to level [the fields]... El DESMONTE will be written with ax blows, and the axe sometimes decapitates.”<sup>30</sup> Gutiérrez de Mendoza lived the “mestiza way” before it was seen as a path. She continued writing and participating civilly until she fell ill in the early 1940’s. Her rhetoric did not falter in the face of the government’s contradictions and broken promises, but “put history through a sieve, winnow[ed] out the lies, look[ed] at the forces that we [Mexicans] as women, have been part of” (Anzaldúa 82), and created her own way of interpreting the historical events unfolding before her.

### **Making Space for Mestiza Rhetoric**

It is difficult to truly gauge the level of influence these women might have had on the formation of Mexico as a nation. The liberals and revolutionaries called on women to join in the movement, but after their services were no longer needed, they were expected to return to the hearth. Women’s voices in Mexico have been suppressed, silenced, and challenged in the past, and they continue to be. When they did speak, they were not taken seriously. Their words were relegated to the discursive margins. Still, I propose that these women did have a considerable amount of influence. Laureana Wright de Kleinhans cleared the discursive space for women and created the building blocks for other journalists like Hermila Galindo and Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza. Further, by recognizing both aspects of their cultural reality, the European and the indigenous, they created a rhetorical strategy that resisted both colonial and patriarchal power. These female journalists were engaging in a multi-layered symbolic act of resistance leading to identity construction. They resisted the strict boundaries imposed by the ruling patriarchal society by creating their own discursive space and they saw themselves within a greater

collective consciousness which was also struggling with an identity to present to the world.

James Berlin reminds us that “the most recent victors of historical battles will continue to sponsor histories from their point of view, framing master narratives that authorize their continual power and privilege” (124). An enormous amount of history has been written and recovered about the men, such as Vicente Riva Palacio, Ricardo Flores Magón, Justo Sierra and many others, but Mexican women’s history has remained, until recently, conspicuously suppressed. Is it possible that these women journalists had such a considerable impact on the creation of Mexico’s nation state that their histories were silenced to keep Mexican history from losing its masculine mystique? Could it be that their writings achieved a significant level of currency, and that they were eclipsed in order to quell their influence? With these contradictory ideological positions toward women’s writing, they found it difficult to claim a definitive discursive space. Many women ignored the contradictions and ascended the discursive walls within which they were trapped and began writing their own realities. They also enacted the creation of a new language, a mestiza rhetoric.

In 2004, in another *College English* special issue, Malea D. Powell called for writings from other cultures to be considered as critically important instead of mere anomalies. The history of Mexican national identity formation touches upon another call Powell made. She said, “We need a new language, one that doesn’t convince us of our unutterable and ongoing differences, one that doesn’t force us to see one another as competitors. We need a language that allows us to imagine respectful and reciprocal relationships that acknowledge the degree to which we need one another (have needed one another) in order to survive” (41). The language of *mestizaje*, the language and identity that the men and women of Mexico were using to construct a national identity, emphasizes a respectful and reciprocal relationship. Mexican women

journalists who engaged in mestiza discourses knew that they were not purely European, but that their historical memory was alive with the conquest. They engaged in mestiza rhetoric that recognized both cultures as contributing to their identity.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> This and all subsequent translations were completed by Neil J. Devereaux, Ph.D. En México, la colectividad tuvo un íntegro despertar en la alborada del presente siglo y la mujer trajo a la vida nacional su propia acción y sus propias orientaciones. Segments of Gutiérrez de Mendozade Mendoza's autobiography were published in Angeles Mendieta Alatorre's book, *Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendozade Mendoza (1875-1942): Extraordinaria precursora de la Revolución Mexicana*. The full autobiography has yet to be published.

<sup>2</sup> For more on the mestiza and the representation of indigenous women in the Americas see Suzanne Bost's *Mulattas and Mestizas: Representing Mixed Identities in the American, 1850-1920*.

<sup>3</sup> There are various critiques surrounding José Vasconelos's *La Raza Cósmica*. Although his work recognizes the indigenous aspect of one's identity, it also has the tendency to essentialize through claiming that racial mixing can improve the indigenous culture. But for this paper, I look toward the positive aspect of the theory that calls for a acceptance of many cultures. For critiques and analysis on mestizaje see chapter 2 of J.F. Burke's *Mestizo Democracy: The Politics of Crossing Borders*.

<sup>4</sup> Damían Baca uses the typographic logogram "@" as marker of communal subjectivity among Mestiz@ cultures to represent gender inclusion. I use the feminine "a" because my analysis is centered on women writers.

<sup>5</sup> Mexico wanted to represent itself as an elite country with economic advantages to offer the world. Not everyone, though, agreed with this point of view. Not only did the construction of identity take place in the discourse of this era, but as Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo argues in *Mexico at the World' Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation*, we see that the nation-building discourse takes the form of architectural design in the Aztec palace that was presented at various World Fairs, most notably, the 1889 Paris Universal Exhibition.

<sup>6</sup> I understand that many Mexican mestizos, especially the elite, acknowledged the Indians of Mexico in their writing, but many times had no real concern for their well being as a people. Mendieta Alatorre comments on the majority of Mexican people at the turn of the century, "The Porfiriato thought in French and imitated the French culture, perhaps with an ingenuous attempt of finding the new way there; for they denied the Indian. They did not persecute him; they simply ignored him, keeping him hidden so he would not be seen" (51).

<sup>7</sup> See Tace Hedrick's *Mestizo Modernism: Race, Nation, and Identity in Latin American Culture, 1900-1940*.

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<sup>8</sup> The period is called the Restored Republic because the French Empire was overthrown during this time. The resistance to the French occupation was led by Benito Juárez, the first full-blooded indigenous national to become president of Mexico.

<sup>9</sup> Papantzin was an Aztec Princess and sister to Moctezuma; Cuatlícue or Coatlicue is the Aztec goddess of birth and death, Miahuaxochitl was the Princess of Tula, the last of women favored by Motecuhzoma II. I was unable to locate the identity of Ilancuētl. Information from *Mujeres notables Mexicanas* (1910) by Laureana Wright de Kleinhans.

<sup>10</sup> In order to avoid confusion of the two journals, in the rest of the essay I will refer to Laureana Wright de Kleinhans first title *Las Hijas del Anáhuac* as *Violetas de Anáhuac*, even though at times its referencing predates the new name.

<sup>11</sup> Con el ramo de oliva entre las manos como muestra de la regeneración intelectual de la mujer, vivificadas con las puras enseñanzas de la antigüedad, se presenta hoy al público el modesto Periódico *Las Hijas del Anáhuac* y reverentemente dirige su cordial saludo a todas las clases de la Sociedad, a la Prensa de todos los matices políticos, y a los Hombres del Poder y del Estado; trilogía poderosa que con sus magníficos arneses ha podido evolucionar victoriosamente en beneficio de la paz, el orden, y la cultura de la Patria mexicana

<sup>12</sup> The idea of feminism in Mexico becomes a complex discussion of when it officially emerged, what were the different types of feminism, etc. For a full investigation of feminism in Mexico, see Anna Macías's *Against All Odds: The Feminist Movement in Mexico to 1940* and Shirlene Soto's *Immersion of the Modern Mexican Woman: Her Participation and Struggle for Equality, 1910-1940*.

<sup>13</sup> Las madres en todas partes son la última expresión del cariño y la ternura; pero podemos asegurar sin temor de equivocarnos, que entre las mexicanas este sentimiento es doblemente poderoso y dominador, por lo que no es extraño que la severidad y la rectitud en la dirección de la niñez, sean también más escasas que en otros países donde subsisten costumbres que, nosotras, las madres mexicanas, no podríamos soportar, como es la de mandar a los niños al campo durante la lactancia, entregándolos a manos mercenarias...(14).

<sup>14</sup> This paper is not a comparative analysis of American and Mexican women's suffrage; however, it is significant to point out that the two countries' struggles to accept women in the discursive public sphere were very similar. Nan Johnson in *Gender and Rhetorical Space in American Life* (1866 – 1910) notes that in postbellum America there were mixed feelings of whether women should continue speaking in their roles at the pulpit. Many women blurred their efforts toward the abolition of slavery by claiming a public voice. See chapter one, "Parlor Rhetoric and the Performance of Gender."

<sup>15</sup> Y México, que marcha con paso firme por la senda progresiva de la civilización, merced al orden y a la paz de que disfruta, nos ofrece como evidente muestra de sus adelantos a nuestra querida redactora, la Srita. Matilde Montoya, que ha recibido últimamente el grado de Doctora en la Escuela de Medicina, después de sustentar un brillante examen.

<sup>16</sup> Vedlas pasar, son Las Hijas del Anáhuac que rompen las cadenas con que en un tiempo estuvo sujeta la inteligencia de la mujer; llaman cariñosamente a sus hermanas y las convidan a tomar parte en ese noble torneo de la inteligencia...¿Que diremos de esa publicación? Que le deseamos prosperidad y larga vida.



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<sup>17</sup> In 1906, Ignacio Gamboa released a book titled *La Mujer Moderna* with very different orientations than Galindo's. He proposed that the idea of feminism would be a degrading and ruinous factor in women's lives, and that they did not have the mental or physical capacities to participate in politics.

<sup>18</sup> Emma Pérez's *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History* provides an in-depth analysis of Mexican nationalism tied to feminism.

<sup>19</sup> Deseamos honrar este aniversario de redención, inaugurando nuestras tarea periodísticas, con las que deseamos coadyudar [sic] a la redención de la Patria, la redención de los principios salvadores y la redención de la mujer, levantando el espíritu femenino a la altura de su deber y su derecho, para que no permanezca por más tiempo impacible [sic] ante la solución de los más trascendentales problemas sociales políticos, que afectan tanto al hombre como a la mujer, que es su compañero e igual.

<sup>20</sup> Galindo did not attend the Second Feminist Congress for health reasons, but Elena Torres, an active educator and feminist in Yucatán, read her speech (Orellana Trinidad (40).

<sup>21</sup> The author Laura Orellana Trinidad does not indicate specifically from which of Galindo's writings this is taken. Esparta cuya virtud y elevado prestigio nadie pone en duda, mantenía sus hijos pequeños, hombre y mujeres, enteramente desnudos hasta la edad de la pubertad, con el objeto de que la piel se acostumbrara a todas las intemperies para fortalecer a la juventud físicamente, y con el fin de precaver a la adolescencia contra la malicia y la curiosidad que son los peores incentivos del instinto sexual. Es nuestros días, aquella sabia costumbre puede y debe suplirse por medio de nociones, amplias en las ciencias que hemos señalado [se refiere a la fisiología y anatomía] y también con el prudente consejo de las madres.

<sup>22</sup> Venustiano Carranza was Mexico's president from 1917 until his assassination in 1920. He espoused reforms for Mexico's 1917 Constitution in regard to land and employer worker reform.

<sup>23</sup> No peco seguramente de hipérbole si, al abreviar mi alma en las límpidas doctrinas postuladas por el señor Carranza, considero a éste como el redentor de América y como el autor de un revolución moral que parece repetir nuevamente las divinas palabra de Cristo: 'Venid a mí los que estéis cansados y oprimidos y yo os aliviaré.

Efectivamente, la Doctrina Carranza es la doctrina salvadora de los débiles, es la doctrina redentora de los oprimidos, es la doctrina propicia de los vejados, la doctrina dignificadora [sic] de los pobre de espíritu, es la doctrina que glorificará losque han hambre y sed de justicia.

<sup>24</sup> This short section about Hermila Galindo only touches upon her influences and experiences as a political writer in Mexico. From a rhetorical perspective, much work still needs to be done in reference to her writings. See *Against All Odds: The Feminist Movement in Mexico to 1940* by Anna Macias, and Laura Orellana Trinidad's *Hermila Galindo: una mujer moderna* for more background on Hermila Galindo.

<sup>25</sup> Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza creía que los indígenas resguardaban y representaban realmente la mexicanidad. Esta idea se haría luego más o menos común entre la vanguardia intelectual de los años veinte; sería factor importante en la autoidentificación y reafirmación del espíritu nacional que se llevó a cabo en los años inmediatamente posteriores a la Revolución Mexicana.

<sup>26</sup> Y no venimos a exigir de Ud. [Díaz] respeto a los principios de que se ha desligado pisoteándolos, ya no venimos a exigir de Ud. cumplimiento de deberes que desconoce, venimos sencillamente a exigir de Ud. que se retire. [...] Se le ha hablado a Ud. Gral. Los hombres honrados le han marcado sus errores y para no oírlos Ud. los ha hecho encerrar o los ha hecho callar para siempre. [...] Retírese Ud. de un puesto que conserva contra todo derecho y no

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nos obligue a convertir nuestro ideal en fuerza bruta, como Ud. lo ha hecho. [...] ¡Paso, Sr. Gral. Díaz, paso! Apártese Ud., retírese de un puesto que reclamamos para un hombre honrado, para un patriota sincero. Sr. Gral. RETIRESE USTED.

<sup>27</sup> Y los usurpadores, los tiraos, los opresores, los que hicieron de la soberanía una esclava, los que hicieron del ciudadano una paria, los que hicieron del hombre una cosa, los que hicieron del proletario un mendigo, los que hicieron del pueblo un mutilado que se arrastra implorando, por caridad, justicia, los que hicieron de la bella ANAHUAC un mancha escarlata sobre el mapa universal, ven con espanto alzarse esas libertades, esos derechos, esos pueblos que los acusa; ven con pánico terror esa gloriosa resurrección de sus víctimas y mientras que el juicio supremo, la conciencia nacional pronuncia sus sentencia inapelable, allá distante se oye como una victoriosa clarinada tocando a REDENCION!...

<sup>28</sup> En la Guerra, un motinero; en la paz, un intrigante. Como hombre, un monstruo, como político, un cobarde. He aquí a Porfirio Díaz. ¡Aduladores! Hé allí a vuestro hombre. [...] En la paz ficticia de que disfrutamos, todos lo han visto intrigar, faltando a los más redimentarios deberes como gobernante y como amigo. [...] ¡Pobre México, pobre Patria mía! Serías la primera nación donde se encarcelan mujeres por el delito de escribir en defensa del pueblo. [...] ¡Aduladores! Aquí está vuestro hombre tal como es. ¡ECCE HOMO! Aduladores.

<sup>29</sup> The word *vésper* in Spanish means evening star, which Gutiérrez de Mendoza took as part of the newspaper's title because her deceased son, Santiago, loved looking up at the star studded sky at their home in Durango. This title carried a hopeful tone which she still had, but was no longer willing to emphasize.

<sup>30</sup> “‘El Desmonte’ dice que ya no sueño como entonces, ‘el Desmonte’ dice lo que siento...un vivo deseo de desmontar...el campo [que] está erizado de troncos viejos [los falsos héroes y las instituciones corruptas]; hay que desmontar...EL DESMONTE estará escrito a golpes de hacha, y el hacha a veces decapita.”

*La Hija del Anáhuac: The Rhetoric of Laureana Wright de Kleinhans*

Those of us who, in our souls, harbor a  
holy zeal for our nation's greatness, and  
treasure in our hearts the ineffable love of a  
daughter, we cannot renounce the pleasant  
hope of seeing, shining on the brow of  
Mexico, this new conquest of liberty, and  
shining on the brow of our [female]  
descendents, this new conquest of progress.

- Laureana Wright de Kleinhans, "The Emancipation of Women through Education"

Laureana Wright de Kleinhans's declaration from "The Emancipation of Women through Education" echoed the political sentiments of Mexico in the late nineteenth century. After expelling the Spanish and the French, Mexico had embarked on a post-colonial path to independence, and Wright de Kleinhans believed women should also reap the rewards of this new conquest of liberty and progress. Wright de Kleinhans was among the first Mexican women writers of the nineteenth century to express the need for women to be educated and to make their voices public. She wrote various papers on the issues of women, most notably *La emancipación de la mujer por medio del estudio* and *Educación errónea de la mujer y medios practicas para corregirla*, published in 1891 as a complete book (Alvarado 11).<sup>1</sup> The main premise of *La emancipación* is that women had been kept ignorant of the complexities of the world, education, medicine, politics, and history, which in turn, converted women into chattel, not people. The topics she considered were not limited to progressive ideas about women. They extended into historical writings, philosophical accounts of the Spanish Conquest and Mexican Independence, and most significant, the biographies of Mexican women titled *Mujeres notables mexicanas*, with segments of the book appearing from 1887-1889 in *Violetas del Anáhuac*, the journal she headed

as literary director.

Wright de Kleinhans's historical moment, situated within an independent Mexico that wanted its own international identity separate from Spain and France, while at the same time wanting to be accepted as an international power, created an exigency for writers, historians, artists, and architects to conform to European discursive traditions while breaking new historical ground in order to keep up with the universal march toward progress.<sup>2</sup> Mexico was behind Europe on the feminist progressive goals. Women were still fixed in the traditional views of gender, and Wright de Kleinhans centered her discourse on changing those roles by reporting on women from around the world who were working as independent entities. *Violetas* was a stark contrast to nineteenth century etiquette journals, such as *La semana de las señoritas mexicanas* (1851) that dedicated their discourse to the instruction of women on what women "should do."<sup>3</sup> *La semana de las señoritas* focused on Eurocentric ways of being for women, such as the nineteenth century "angel of the home," and the contributors to the journal were mostly men, such as Manuel Payno and Francisco Zarco, important writers of the period and experts in dispensing advice to women (Tuñón 49). Depending on the contributor, the women's writings of *Las violetas* fluctuated from these traditional stances to more liberal representations of women as independent thinkers (Alvarado 21), and to that of a nation searching for its roots.

Wright de Kleinhans and the other women writers crafted a space of mestizaje in the title of their magazine, *Violetas del Anáhuac*. Anáhuac is the Aztec term for the Valley of Mexico, now modern day Mexico City, once populated by ancient civilizations such as the Aztec and Toltecs. The title, *Violetas de Anáhuac*, may situate the women writers in the memory of the ancient cultures of their land, but the journal used and promoted the language of the Spanish and Latin American elite, Castilian Spanish. *Violetas del Anáhuac* also included historical writings

about the Conquest and the War of Independence of 1810, which focused on various leaders of the time. The purpose of the journal was to educate Mexican women on more than just proper behavior in public. The poetry written by members of the staff and audience that Wright de Kleinhans chose to include reframed women as individuals who took public and historical roles.

These dual expressions of ideas in *Violetas*, from the confluence of the cultures of Mesoamerica and Europe to that of placing women in the realm of history as more than matrons of the home, situate Wright de Kleinhans's writings as mestiza rhetoric. Mestiza rhetoric does not mean the writer necessarily considers herself to have, in part, an indigenous background, but that she is able to conceptualize a different reality of herself and her behavior, thereby creating an ontological shift. Wright de Kleinhans was prolific and, in addition to journal articles, compiled the histories of 29 indigenous women, which reflects her mestiza understanding of the importance of Mexico's indigenous past. Her act of writing these histories defied patriarchal society's push for total domination of history, and defied the European definition of pre-Columbian people as barbaric. It argued instead that they were active, intelligent, and inclined toward the use of language.<sup>4</sup> In this chapter, I posit that Wright de Kleinhans and the female contributors to her journal wrote as traditional Mexican middle class-women who struggled between conformity to traditional ideologies and their desire to move away from conventional values. They presented their views in philosophical essays and poetry, and were careful to avoid discourse that was openly political. Wright de Kleinhans, in particular, challenged the status quo by touching upon topics reserved only for men, and contested what had been written about Mexican women through her research, which entailed the use of neglected sources. These aspects of her writing align it with the theory of mestiza rhetoric.

In order to tease out the strategies of mestiza rhetoric, this chapter frames Wright de Kleinmans's rhetoric in the theoretical template Karlyn Kohrs Campbell proposes in "Theory Emergent from Practice: The Rhetorical Theory of Frances Wright." This framework looks at women's rhetorical writings based on three philosophical perspectives: ontological, epistemological, and axiological. Campbell recommends this approach to study women writers "who were among the first to enter the public sphere. Because their rhetoric often did not fit the categories of or assumptions underlying traditional theory, it may be deemed unworthy of attention or study or be denigrated as atheoretical" (126). Wright de Kleinmans's writing clearly falls under this condition. I base my definitions of ontology, epistemology, and axiology on Campbell's representations, with slight variations. Ontology is the understanding of being, or the nature of it, and is also often part of a theorist's definition of rhetoric; it additionally "explains how and why we are open to and capable of influence (126)." Epistemology refers to *logos* and "determines what constitutes expertise and how differing views of what is 'true' can be resolved" (126). And axiology refers to a "system of values [which] provide warrants or premises for arguments or the assumption underlying dominant narratives" (126). Some of Wright de Kleinmans's works, for example, did fall under the traditional definition of rhetoric in such segments as "La Mentira" [The Lie], published in *Las violetas*, "La Lectura" [Literature] and "La Mujer Perfecta" [The Perfect Woman], published in *Educación errónea de la mujer*. These included pedagogical, moral, and discursive directions, which functioned to shape the knowledge of women and encouraged self-reflection and social action.

Mestiza rhetoric, also a sophistic rhetorical approach, strives to shift ideology that does not respect women. Gloria Anzaldúa writes that the "mestiza way," a path that Wright de Kleinmans and the other women writers were following a hundred years ago, is a "rupture with

all oppressive traditions of all cultures and religions. She [the mestiza] communicates that rupture and documents the struggle. She reinterprets history and, using new symbols, she shapes new myths” (82). The literary director’s extant writings on the nature of women, such as *Educación errónea de la mujer*, and the history of Mexican women, *Mujeres notables mexicanas*, reveal these same strategies of mestiza rhetoric, which firmly intersect with entrenched epistemological, ontological and axiological beliefs. Valuable historical writings, such as those of Wright de Kleinhans, are lost through a totalizing framework of traditional rhetoric, but through a sophistic historiographic lens, non-traditional rhetorics can be analyzed for rhetorical value. In Susan Jarratt’s *Rereading the Sophists: Classical Rhetoric Refigured*, she shows Gorgias, the sophist, engaged in the retelling of historical narratives, such as the *Encomium of Helen* and the “Great Speech” of “Protagoras.” Jarratt clearly illustrates the way in which Gorgias’s account “disrupts the continuity of the given historical narrative” (17). It provides space for speculation, which redefines rather than affirms pre-existing notions of history.

Wright de Kleinhans, like Gorgias in the *Encomium*, occupied herself in the reinterpretation of historical accounts. However, unlike Gorgias, who seemed content to play with language, Wright de Kleinhans’s narratives contested historical conclusions not through mere conjecture or feminine fancy, but through careful analysis and academic representation of historical documents. On several notable occasions, she completely discounted and went on to reinterpret historical writings of illustrious Spanish historians, such as Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdez, Manuel Orozco y Berra, and Francisco Sosa. Throughout her life, Porfirio Díaz’s government employed historians to write a comprehensive history of Mexico. The five volume series of *Mexico através de los siglos*, segments of which were authored by Vicente Riva

Palacio, was firmly situated within a patriarchal framework. It completely excluded women. The literary director of *Violetas* responded to the *kairos* of the moment, meaning that the moment was opportune, and reacted to Mexico's lack of feminine inclusion with an historical account of Mexican women which started with pre-Columbian times in a book titled *Mujeres mexicanas notables*. As a rhetorical strategy, she reinterpreted historical accounts from respected historians. This approach adopted new perspectives toward indigenous and modern women and created a space for women to take possession of and share their knowledge. From these writings, it is possible to extrapolate rhetorical theories and/or strategies of Mexican women writers.

### **Historical Foreground**

Wright de Kleinhans's discourse in *Violetas* was framed in the heavily European influenced cosmopolitan community of Mexico City. It identified with women's struggle from a mostly middle and upper class perspective, which straddled the fence between tradition and reform. European influence on Mexican culture could be seen in many places, including the architecture of heavily ornate building façades; women's long, elaborate dresses; and in the baroque-like language, identified by long, complicated sentences infused with the phraseology of a complex vocabulary. While Mexicans accepted some aspects of European culture, they did not acquiesce to everything.

Many women of Mexico wanted to incorporate feminist French ideals of personal freedom, such as the privilege of speaking out in public, but Mexican culture was firmly entrenched in the Catholic Church's ideals on women, which had repressed them for centuries. For this reason, Wright de Kleinhans and her contributors' rhetorical mission for *Violetas* was to convince Mexican society that women, in general, possessed an innate capacity for writing, and



secondly, to teach women about the scientific, cultural, and historical advancements taking place in the world. The women writers of *Violetas* were on the cusp of an ideological shift from a slow social reform for women to an explosion of revolutionary ideals, which would emerge in the next two decades. Striking a balance for one's audience between these merging ideologies was a tricky rhetorical act, one which Wright de Kleinhans mastered.

### **A Discriminating Audience**

To change Mexico's societal perceptions of women was a monumental challenge. The deep seated axiological beliefs of female intellectual and rational inferiority were touted in "scientific" terms. Change in terms of women's acceptance into a discursive public domain had to start at the top of the class hierarchy because of the reprehensible low levels of literacy in Mexico at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> As noted by Silva Marina Arrom in *The Women of Mexico City, 1790 – 1857*, the legal status of Mexican women living in the nineteenth century had changed little from the colonial era with its antiquated laws, which "granted women little authority over others in either the public or private sphere. Women may in practice have influenced other people, of course, but only men were formally given the right to command as community leaders...; the law did not sanction women's imposing their will" (Arrom 81). These laws, which were now imbedded in society's consciousness, demanded that Wright de Kleinhans accomplish two goals: first, not to be perceived as being politically inclined, and secondly, not to present ideas outside of acceptable norms for women.

In order to combat the culture's axiological stance, Wright de Kleinhans and her contributors adopted a highly eloquent, neo-Baroque style of writing. This mode of writing is marked with long complex sentences extended by phrases and clauses that separate the main verb from its object, and also with the use of various semi-colons that extend the end of the

sentence. Some critics would say that this language distanced them from the general public, but it had a purpose. The language was meant to do more than appeal to an elite, educated audience; its purpose could also have been to elevate women's public discourse from a marginalized sentimental voice to that of an educated, respected member of society.

In late nineteenth century Mexico, Castilian Spanish, the dominant language of central Spain, was beginning to claim scientific legitimacy through the study of linguistics. If the women of *Violetas* had presented their voices in a colloquial language instead of the preferred intellectual voice of Castilian Spanish, their writing would have been discarded as overly sentimental or uneducated. This is what possibly happened with the first women who founded the journal, *Las hijas del Anáhuac* in 1873. Their journal failed. Fifteen years later, the women had to adapt to society's epistemological belief that this high, traditional language is what would give them the credibility they needed. A deliberate attempt to appeal to an elite audience through the use of language provided Wright de Kleinhans with agency, yet simultaneously constrained it. Michael Leff, in "Tradition and Agency in Humanistic Rhetoric," argues that the power of the humanist orator rests in complying with the audience's sentiments. "The audience necessarily constrains the orator's intellectual horizons, modes of expression, and even representation of self, and so, if orators are to exert influence, they must yield to the people they seek to influence" (138). Hence, their audience looked toward the language individuals used as defining factors in national identity and legitimacy.

During the late nineteenth century the main international powers relied heavily on the sciences, and scholars began to infuse science into languages by introducing them in standardized forms. Jose del Valle notes in "Spanish, Spain, and the Hispanic Community" that "after 1880, a new type of nationalism emerged. In this new strand, the threshold principle was

given up and language and ethnicity were placed at the very basis of the claims for nationality” (144). Ironically, Mexico was struggling for an identity of its own, but its national language was inextricably tied to the colonization of Spain. With the superiority of a standardized language in the sciences of Europe and Latin America, the Spanish language grew in academic prestige among liberal intellectuals. Wright de Kleinhans and her writing staff were fully aware of these nationalistic claims to language, and knew that in order to persuade an elite audience, their writing had to equal, if not surpass, that of their contemporary intellectuals. I contend that a deep understanding of her audience’s epistemological and axiological roots in politics, language, literature, and societal norms, provided Wright de Kleinhans with the greatest tools to discursively redefine women and to shift the ontological stance of her audience from one that viewed women as passive and unaware of the world around them, to one that perceived women as contributors to public discourse. Coupled with the constraints of language, the women understood they were limited by the genres they could use.

### **Literal and Literary Beginnings**

The driving force of *Violetas* focused on providing women a discursive space in which they could express their ideas. Wright de Kleinhans encouraged the female audience to submit their literary writings for publication. In order to establish a common ground and establish women as writers and progressive thinkers, she invoked female muses, such as Santa Teresa de Avila from Spain and Isabel Prieto from Mexico, and encouraged women to write on topics they were familiar with. Many of the poems published in *Violetas* relied on sentimentalities concerning their children, spouses, friends, or religion. For women, poetry was seen as a “safe” literary genre that did not cross into the political realm. However, when read through a rhetorical lens, the poems Wright de Kleinhans wrote and published by other women take on an epideictic

rhetorical nature, or discourse that is geared toward ceremony commemoration, declamation, and demonstration. It focuses on virtues such as honor, nobility, goodness, beauty and more. Wright de Kleinhans never explicitly addressed current political topics, but she did breach current public issues in the form of civic-oriented epideictic discourse. In her article “The Public Value of Epideictic Rhetoric,” Cynthia Miecznikowski Sheard points out that epideictic rhetoric has been revisited by contemporary scholars, but claims that it has been overlooked for its importance in modern rhetoric. Sheard claims that epideictic rhetoric has the potential to be “an instrument for addressing private and public ‘dis-ease,’ discomfort with the status quo” allowing “speakers and audience to envision possible, new, or at least different worlds” (766, 770). The articles and poems Wright de Kleinhans published in *Violetas* penned by other women, such as Ignacia Padilla de Piña, Dolores Correa Zapata, María de la Luz Murguía, fall under the umbrella of epideictic rhetoric because they introduce women as writers and readers and not merely as actors in the domestic realm. Epideictic rhetoric, then, had the power to *shift* the beliefs of the people, such as those of the Mexican people who held firmly to Catholic beliefs of women’s place in the home, which in turn, informed the patriarchal belief in the secular society that women were not to voice their opinions in public.

*Violetas* relied on this form of persuasion through poetry. The topics and themes weaving through the women’s writings may have reinforced women in traditional spaces, but because the writings appeared in a public space, they simultaneously redefined women within a traditionally male oral culture. The women’s writing were intersecting with a literary tradition that was dominated by men such as Justo Sierra (1848-1912), Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera (1859-1895), Guillermo Prieto (1818-1897), Ignacio Montes de Oca y Obregón (1840-1921), Vicente Riva Palacio (1832-1896), and Ignacio Manuel Altamirano (1834-1893). These men, and many

others, had found literary autonomy after the political independence of Mexico allowed free expression of ideas. They published their works and read them aloud in exclusive lyceums, such as *Liceo Hidalgo*, *Liceo Mexicano*, and *Liceo Altamirano*. Mexico closely mirrored the United States' rhetorical framing of women as seen in Nan Johnson's *Gender and Rhetorical Space in American Life, 1866 – 1910*. The United States' society also "overtly discourage[d] women from having strong voices, literally and culturally" (49). As a woman, Wright de Kleinhans became the exception to the rule and was admitted into various societies or *sociedades* of bellas letras. Some of these *sociedades* included "Netzahualcoyotl," admitted in by Gerardo Silva and Manuel Acuña, the *Liceo Hidalgo*, admitted in 1873 by Ignacio Ramírez and Francisco Pimental, the *Liceo Mexicano*, admitted in 1885, and *Liceo Altamirano* (Murguía de Aveleyra 314). She was also admitted into institutions of learning such as the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria, the Escuela Normal de Profesoras, and the Conservatorio de Música y las academias de Bellas Artes y de Artes y Oficios (Alvarado 25). Her membership into these *sociedades* is evidence of Wright de Kleinhans's literary abilities.

Like in the United States, Mexico's discourse framed women as overly sentimental and frivolous, but, ironically, also perceived of them as superior beings when seen through the domestic lens. This contradictory identity may have discouraged some women from attempting to write. Many had never had a formal education and would have been extremely apprehensive about submitting their work to a literary journal. As literary director, Wright de Kleinhans assuaged their fears of appearing unintelligent or foolish, stating that their work "would be thoroughly revised" before it would be presented to an audience. Moreover, Wright de Kleinhans connected the journal's progressive feminine goal to Mexican patriotism, an acceptable public expression. The liberal tenet of Mexico asserted that women should be entitled

to education opportunity, but Wright de Kleinhans took these ideas a step further. She combined the promise of women's literary productivity with patriotic values, which assumed that the success and progress of former meant the same for latter.

The poetry in *Violetas* did not focus on the strict logic of a male-dominated discourse such as essays on politics, but they did fluctuate from accepted feminine domestic tropes to public praise for personal virtues and civic deeds. In a manner of speaking, the women's poetry provided an alternative frame of reference on the nature of women's lives, and implicitly asserted that they could express themselves through discursive means. Some verses which achieved these ends were poems, such as "La Oración Matinal" [Morning Prayer] by María del Refugio Argumedo, Viuda de Ortiz, dedicated to Presidential First Lady, Carmen Romero Rubio de Díaz (10), "Cuauhtemoc," (21) also by María del Refugio Argumedo, Viuda de Ortiz , "Charada" [Charade], dedicated to Wright de Kleinhans by Ignacia De Piña (45), and "La Mujer" [Woman], dedicated to Matilde Montoya, the first Mexican female physician (47). These literary writings were the rhetorical tools which Wright de Kleinhans's staff used to shape knowledge and effect social action associated with women as writers. The majority of Mexican women did not have access to public space, like the lyceums, in which to deliver speeches or read poems, and consequently, the pages of *Violetas* came to serve as a feminized discursive space.

Poetry, in Mexican newspapers during the 1880's and before, typically took on a trope of flattery or high praise. Directly linked to the practice of Mexico's oral culture, poetry was an important and entrenched part of political and societal discursive practice, which included the grandiose adulation of political and church officials, war heroes, writers, artists, and patriotic sentiments. These poems were often infused with deep-seated emotions which were articulated

many times through complex metaphors and similes. As a common cultural practice, poems were read at public gatherings to commemorate special occasions, and they regularly appeared in Mexican newspapers praising and sometimes criticizing historical and current political figures. The women of *Violetas* followed this common poetic/rhetorical trope by writing poems which complimented their female friends' accomplishments and lauded courageous women from Mexico's past. As discussed in several articles in *Violetas* (I.27), the staff felt that envy among women proved to be a major obstacle to their collective lack of progress. Through the praise of one another's intellectual and literary accomplishments, new discursive standards were set on how women should engage each other. It also created a value system that framed women outside the boundaries of their biology and supposed affective temperament. For instance, one of the first volumes from December 11, 1887, dedicated the poem "Poesia" [Poetry] to First Lady Carmen Romero Rubio de Díaz (22). The poem was read aloud by the author, María del Refugio Argumendo Viuda de Ortiz, at the inauguration of *Casa de Amiga de la Obrera* [Home of the Friend of the Woman Worker], part daycare and health center for women. Part three, stanza four of the poem situates Mexico within the world community. It states that if Germany and Spain, as respected nations, had compassion enough for children and working mothers for them to build daycare centers, then Mexico was also equal to them because of their First Lady's efforts to procure funding and for the establishment of a childcare center.

If Germany in its longing builds  
Temples for the unfortunate children,  
And with love his sorrow weakens  
Kissing his immaculate head;  
If in Spain a queen pure and saintly

Establishes a nursery with a sacred emotion

Here we have a virtuous example,

An angel that lovingly opens this temple (23).

These lines fall under the traditional definition of epideictic rhetoric, but they do more than praise Sra. Rubio de Díaz. As Sheard points out, epideictic rhetoric brings “together images of both the real – what *is* or at least *appears to be* – and the fictive or imaginary – what *might be*” (770 italics in original). Through Porfirio Díaz’s political efforts, Mexico was beginning to be considered a respectable nation, and this poem puts Mexico on an equal footing with Germany and Spain through the social works of Rubio de Díaz, “an angel that lovingly opens this temple.” It commemorated the historic moment of the opening of the first nursery for working women in Mexico, and it created the possibility of a “new world,” one that considered Mexico as a admirable nation, and which included women in Mexican history. This type of laudatory poetry, appeared many times in *Violetas* and contributed to the shifting of values, and the epistemology of those who were empowered to create knowledge.

Numerous poems in *Violetas* praised ordinary Mexican women for their education and accomplishments and framed them as models for others to live a wholesome and moral life. Remaining within the traditional genres of literature, these poems did not threaten the patriarchal or political status quo; however, they did have the potential to incite their audience to reconsider Mexican women as creators of knowledge. Wright de Kleinhans included at least three to four poems in each volume. In several 1888 editions the following titles of poems appeared: “Hogar” [Home] by Maria del Refugio Argumedo, Viuda de Ortiz (47), “La Astronomia” [Astronomy] by Rosales (120), “Á mi amiguita la niña María Estein y Murguía” [To my young



girl friend, Maria Estein y Murguía], “Charada” by Ignacia Padilla de Piña (178), “Soñado” [Dream] by Sensitiva (216), and “El Recuerdo. Á mi querida Prima Aurelia Zapata de Pinal” [The Memory. Dedicated to my beloved cousin Aurelia Zapata de Pinal] by Dolores Correa Zapata (238). In May of 1888, a set of poems was constructed as a conversation between two poets. The first was titled, “Dedicada a la distinguida Señora Laureana Wright de Kleinhans” written by Dolores Mijares, and as an answer to Mijares’ poetic generosity, Wright wrote “A la inspirada y elegante poetisa Miss Dolores Mijares” (247-249). The poems, long and elegant complementary verses and praises for one another, represented a public display of respect and admiration for successful women not yet seen in Mexico. They demonstrated a wide array of interests to women, which included history, science, social issues, and friendly sentiments. Including these topics in a women’s journal exhibited a greater sophistication than their audience may have expected.

The event of women writing about other women accomplished much more than mere flattery or as practice in verse; it provided Mexican women a chance to express laudatory sentiments similar to those of men active in political and academic public arenas. It reinforced the axiological belief that women were valued, not just as mothers, but as literary and public figures. The poems also framed women outside the boundaries of *exclusive* sentimentality, and placed them in the Aristotelian topoi of virtue and nobility. Their poetry, which set the stage for Mexican women’s presence in public discourse, may have been marginalized in the face of strict, logical and political rhetoric of men, but when viewed through a sophistic lens, the importance of their writings “playfully disrupts Aristotelian laws of genre” (Jarratt 70). Their poetic emotions were not merely sentiments of the heart; they functioned to provide women with an authentic public space and a discursive self.

For Mexican women in the 1880's, seeing their writing published and distributed in public provided them with cultural legitimacy, which would ultimately challenge the epistemology of public discourse and the unspoken rules of who was allowed within its sphere. While we can't definitively claim that collectively these poems had a great influence on women's societal acceptance, their writings, however, did receive numerous praises from some of the most important newspapers and intellects of the time. In an untitled section found on the last page of the first few volumes, *Violetas* published the comments made about their work and endeavors from several important Mexican newspapers: *El Imparcial* (132), *La Palabra de Oaxaca* (108), *El Nacional* (48), *El Monitor de Pueblo* (48), *El Correo de la Se oras* (48). These newspapers and individual patrons sent political and historical books to them as gifts, such as *La Gran Novela*, *Las minas y los mineros* sent by the author, Pedro Castera, and *Observaciones historic-pol ticas sobre Ju rez y su  poca* sent by the author, D. Marcial Aznar. The fact that the women were receiving the latest academic and political writings acted as a strong indication that their writings were being taken seriously. The poetry could also have played a role in softening the public's surprise at reading articles dealing with a taboo topic: female personal hygiene.

### **Mexican Hygiene and Morality as Rhetorical Stance**

As literary director of the journal, Wright de Kleinhans instructed the contributors to write on topics relevant to the audience. Modern thought, such as scientific discoveries, was of societal importance, and served as the impetus for innovation in the push for order and progress. For this reason, the issue of morality and personal hygiene attracted much attention. Consequently, the question of hygiene and intellectual or personal morality appeared in almost every volume. Hygiene's axiological position was quickly shifting in Europe and Latin

American into one of international concern, and it came to be broadly considered in the preservation of overall human health. Pursued as a societal ideal, hygiene was geared toward the creation of a clean environment as a means to prevent diseases and to ensure the health of future generations. It also advocated personal care and morality, which encouraged that one be well dressed in public and strive to achieve a sound character. For the educated, cosmopolitan thinker of Europe in the 1880's, one's personal hygiene was prescribed as the standard for social progress (Lavrin 98). Hygiene had successfully acquired "a scientific configuration, surpassing utopian quasi-philanthropic emphasis in favor of a more clearly defined scientific and political role" (Tenorio Trillo 145). Morality and virtue, a staple of the image of the ideal Victorian woman, was also at the core of the Mexican woman's identity.<sup>6</sup> In general, the idea of hygiene and moral cleanliness took on a much larger purpose; it created and fortified the nation as an international power in the cultural movement toward modernization.

Elite, educated Mexicans, such as Wright de Kleinhans, looked forward the 1889 World's Fair in Paris, France that presented the ideal, clean society. In response, the women of Mexico envisioned through public discourse how they wanted to be collectively perceived by the international community. Newspapers widely advertised that Mexico had recently opened a National Medical Institute, showing the nation's desire to be perceived as a progressive and healthy nation. Wright de Kleinhans's inclusion of hygienic discourse in each volume signals her as a contributor to the formation of Mexico's national hygienic identity. By writing and publishing articles about hygiene in 1888, she demonstrated that she was on the cutting edge of scientific and political issues. Tenorillo-Trillo notes that in 1889, "Mexican hygiene experts, headed by Dr. Eduardo Liceaga, the most distinguished hygienist of late-nineteenth century Mexico, were just beginning to decipher the scientific and political implications of hygiene and

sanitation in a modern fashion” (147). Wright de Kleinhans engaged this topic a year ahead of the main intellectuals, and thereby challenging the ruling epistemological framework that only men were considered knowledgeable in the emerging scientific fields.

Hygiene was a sensitive topic in Mexico because of its dealings with the female body and required the assistance of the press for the dissemination of the information about shifting medical views. Wright de Kleinhans, aware of the immediate need to disperse the latest discoveries of science and hygiene, seized the exigency to educate women and strategically included several segments on hygiene and morality in *Violetas* titled “Higiene. Dedicado á las madres de familia” [Hygiene: Dedicated to the Mothers of the Family” (29, 40, 99, 115). Appearing early in the publication of the journal, these sections dealt with the care of newborns in the first few days of birth. In order to build a bridge for acceptance, the introduction of the sections contained sentimental appeals about what makes mother and child happy in the first days together, which served to reframe the taboo topic of hygiene in a non-intrusive light.

There is nothing more pleasing for a new mother than to receive an angelic smile from her child who responds to loving kisses; nothing more beautiful than to think about a child making its first responses and taking within their delicate hands like a dream blushing at the toy he’s presented, this process slow and gradual can only happen under perfect health conditions of the child (40).<sup>7</sup>

These axiological appeals, alluding to the fact that a woman’s happiness with her child depends upon women’s compliance with the new scientific information, represents the shift Wright de Kleinhans was striving for in the culture’s epistemological base. Traditional mores of the Catholic Church, superstition, and personal experience dictated the way in which most people in Mexico dealt with their health. These scientific advancements sought to banish antiquated

practices and introduce Mexico into the modern era.

The columnist of the sections on hygiene used the pseudonym of *Madreselva*, or Honeysuckle, and the identity of the author of these sections remains unidentified.<sup>8</sup> A pseudonym was possibly assigned to these sections because the epistemic importance of the subject of personal woman's hygiene was framed exclusively for men. Tenorio-Trillo notes that in 1882, Mexico held a Pedagogical Hygienic Congress that met to discuss woman's anatomy, bodily functions, and public regulation; however, Mexican women were barred from the conversation by unanimous opposition from the Congress (150). The men claimed that "because hygiene in education involved the discussion of personal hygiene and sexual conduct, Mexican scientists, however advanced their scientific knowledge, did not want to break from *las buenas costumbres* or good manners, and speak to female teachers about these subjects. [...] A vote was taken, and women were not allowed to attend the session" (150).<sup>9</sup> Women in Mexico and in the rest of Latin America were legally kept ignorant about their reproductive, sanitary, and bodily functions until the early nineteenth century (Lavrin). With Wright de Kleinhans taking the initiative to publicly discuss feminine issues, the knowledge base of hygiene was restructured. Women were now educating women on issues of hygiene.

Alexa Linhard in *Fearless Women in the Mexican Revolution and Spanish Civil War* cites Gayatri Spivak when speaking of the "epistemic violence" that silenced Mexican women through non-threatening figures and conventions (62). The vote to keep women out of the discussion about hygiene, preferring that talk of women's bodies "remain at home," led to an epistemic violence against women. Openly discussing hygienic conditions of women in 1888, in the manner that Wright de Kleinhans did, was an attempt to shift the epistemic power governing women's bodies to women. Wright de Kleinhans disguised the rhetorical shift in the nineteenth

century trope of “*la buena madre*,” or the good mother.

Is it not true that you would be compensated and satisfied in our loving and excusable vanity, showing off a child full of life that owes its health to our care in the first months of its life? To the sacrifices that lactating costs us, giving of our own love, and with that you can confidently confess that you have completed the sublime mission that the good mother has toward her child (30).<sup>10</sup>

This passage suggested to the audience that if sacrifices were made during the months of breastfeeding, which for many upper-class women was traditionally left to wet-nurses, then women would reap the rewards of being “the good mother,” the preferred feminine view. In this rhetorical twist, the message of personal hygiene became more acceptable and less scientific. Wright de Kleinhans’s discourse also intersected with the development of *marianismo*, a type of feminism developing in Mexico and other parts of Latin America in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. *Marianismo* was the projection of the home into the public sphere, which sought to intersect motherhood with the politics of the construction of a nation-state.<sup>11</sup> These small rhetorical moves, such as the intersection of *marianismo* with science, made inroads in shifting Mexican women’s ontological stance. Passages such as these show Wright de Kleinhans as a feminine reformist, and when viewed in its cultural context, her rhetorical stance emboldens.

Hygienic discourse, commonplace to a twenty-first century audience, may have seemed vulgar and offensive to a nineteenth-century audience. For Wright de Kleinhans, society’s current axiological stance on hygiene did prevent her from writing about the topic. She meant to change it. Her goal was to champion the development of an ideal woman, such as the one she defined in one of her essays published in *Educación errónea de la mujer* under the chapter heading, “La mujer perfecta.”

The perfect woman in modern times is no longer a utopia, it is a probable hope that will come to pass in the future...that if man has opened up all the horizons of investigation, of exploration, the work of improving upon oneself out of the home, precisely to take home the elements of substance, of food and intelligence...there is no reason why this also can't be for women (Alvarado 119).

Public discourse on hygiene would bring Mexican women closer to Wright de Kleinhans's social goals for women. The articles which she published in 1891, framed her as a pioneer in issues that dealt with women throughout Latin America.<sup>12</sup> Contrasting her rhetorical stance to that of contemporaries like María Abella de Ramírez from Uruguay and Justa Burgos Meyer from Argentina, Wright de Kleinhans held her own as a leader among women writers (Lavrin 20-21). Her South American contemporaries did not broach the subject of hygienic discourse in their respective countries for another five to six years.

Included under the umbrella of public hygiene was women's morality, an important facet of women's life. For Mexican women, just as among Victorian women, morality and virtue were at the core of their public identity. According to Aristotle, morality informs a person's ethos, which enables him to maintain public respect and dignity. Wright de Kleinhans shared Aristotle's view, as noted in her writings in *Educación errónea de la mujer* under the chapter title, "La Coqueta," in which she noted that Mexican women were gravitating toward unbalanced ideas in life and lacked a discipline which led to a greater societal problems. She saw Mexican women's ontological and axiological perspectives as fundamentally flawed. Tuñón Pablos notes that a characteristic of the Porfiriato was its frivolity, "the flip side of 'order and progress'" (78), evident in society's following of high French fashion and oral discourse in the style of Molière.

Wright de Kleinhans commented on what she thought was the overly materialistic woman:

The coquet is unique in her ways of morality and physicality; her interior self is a hopeless lover of pretty clothes, luxurious objects, dressing room trinkets, dances and parties made up of a jumble of people following each other around; her exterior self is showcase of curls, of bows, of gaudery and jewelry that fly incessantly about her body, obligating her to the task of constantly changing her clothes (Alvarado 91).

Wright de Kleinhans claimed that women experienced an inward humiliation rather than public pride when too much attention was paid to material possessions (93). To encourage women to think differently about their public appearance and to modify their system of values and their propensity to be easily manipulated, Wright de Kleinhans included sections on morality and behavior in *Violetas*. These writings underscore the author's understanding that by the mere act of writing and publishing poetry, the public's perception in regard to the character of women would not readily change. According to Wright de Kleinhans, the women also needed to present themselves in a modest manner and with simple taste to be considered of sound character.

Wright de Kleinhans applied traditional rhetorical strategies to promote modest dress and discursive correctness in her message to the women of Mexico. In 1888, Wright de Kleinhans published Ignacia Padilla de Piña's "Lo Que Vale el Vestido" [What Dressing Well is Worth] in which she described how people treat those who are presented in appropriate attire.

Dressing well is a requirement that increases personal worth, and what one's attention focuses itself on with most pleasure. It is the letter of introduction at the rich person's palace, or at the minister's antechamber. Because of it, servants open doors, facilitate entrance, and give the one who presents himself all kinds of



considerations (56).

Padilla de Piña goes on to note that those who dressed appropriately, the opposite of dressing in the latest high fashions, were taken more seriously upon speaking. This statement alludes to the connection between one's appearance and discourse. She provided examples from history which illustrated how others have been characterized for their dress, such as Ana of Austria, the orators of Greece, and the Romans. "When Rome was the master of the world, imposing its laws, its customs and its vices, the Romans judged it a duty of good breeding, to present oneself in public dressed meticulously, according to one's age, status, and circumstances" (57). As noted by Wright's earlier comments, women wore big dresses, heavy adornments, and heavy make-up, which she felt detracted from their public credibility and sincerity. Padilla de Piña's focus on women's public presentation is meant to steer them away from the frivolous nature by which they were known.

A simple adornment, a flower placed elegantly, a neat dress, enhance more the charms of beauty than the profusion of a thousand accessories that fashion brings along with it, that not because it is, it does not stop from being notoriously ridiculous sometimes. To become a slave to it [fashion], is like wanting to show off a silly vanity when it really denotes meager talent. [...] It would be strange to want to change one's age by their manner of dressing, and to appear in the years of maturity, as if one were in one's springtime: No, my readers, make sure that your manner of dress always indicates your culture and civilization, if you want to preserve your husband's love and make your honeymoon eternal (56 – 57).

In the last line of this long epideictic section on dress, Padilla de Piña sneaks in a statement on women's traditional place in the home. The manner of one's dress, she says, is the key to a

happy marriage. It is important to note, that the statement, “if you want to preserve your husband’s love and make your honeymoon eternal,” appears at the very end, not the beginning, nor in the middle of the essay. The position of the statement indicates that it was not the thesis of the piece, and that it was not written to insure women’s traditional position, but to educate them in line with rhetorical appeals on public presentation. The axiological focus of Padilla de Piña’s essay, to appear well groomed in public for self-respect as an independent person and not necessarily on the arm of a man, is an indication of the tension Wright de Kleinhans and her staff may have felt at the time between the betterment of women as members of society or as followers of traditional roles. But *Violetas* was a reform journal, not a revolutionary one, and the writing never lost focus of women’s preferred role in society as mothers.

Wright de Kleinhans gave further instruction to her readers on morality, connecting its importance to women’s role as mother. One section titled, “La Mentira” [The Lie], targeted women’s everyday discursive practices. Defining when it is proper or improper to tell a lie, she called it a glorious and rare exception when it is proper to stretch the truth. In line with rhetorical instruction, a lie can damage personal credibility in the public’s eye.

Any person of honor cannot receive any greater indignity than to have his word doubted; the liar loses dignity to such a degree that constantly receiving this offense has no effect on him, because for him it is not, and he submits to suffer it without blush nor mortification. All those who deal with him have a right to question what he says, no matter how credible it might be, because coming from him, the truth itself takes on the character of deception (458).<sup>13</sup>

Wright de Kleinhans leveled the discursive consequences and contended that a lie will equally harm a man as a woman. But if caught in a lie, a woman would seem more foolish than ever

before. Wright de Kleinhans stresses the importance of watching one's words in public. And as with most of the writings of instruction in *Violetas*, the article brings the importance of daily discourse back to women's societal positions as mothers. She states that "in our positions as mothers, who do all we can to comply with the sacred duty that nature has taxed us with, there is nothing we have combated with more severity than this common defect of children, on which depend others of much greater importance" (458). Wright de Kleinhans felt that Mexican society depended on the sound rhetorical judgment of women.

Wright de Kleinhans's discourse on the subject of virtue was highly philosophical and spoke to the traditional rhetorical theme within Mexico's nineteenth-century motto of "order and progress." Women were expected to fall in line with their "natural" duty of mother and wife, as the men were expected to follow their natural path in public service. In the midst of a seemingly peaceful era in Mexico under Porfirio Díaz in the late 1880's, Wright de Kleinhans's discourse was limited. She challenged the status quo, but could have had an impact on society as would the revolution about twenty-two years later. The rhetoric on morality and virtue throughout *Violetas* was marked with the popular axiological frame that women's main duty in life was to comply with her domestic charge, but there were undertones in her writings contesting this ideological stand. In *Violetas* and in the historical writings from *Mujeres notables mexicanas*, Wright de Kleinhans alluded to a different epistemological and axiological model, which represented women as empowered by their own agency and not an agency which bound her to a dependence on men.

### **Feminizing Mexican History**

The last seven years of Wright de Kleinhans's life was spent compiling biographies of one hundred twenty-four Mexican women for her book, *Mujeres notables mexicanas*, published

in 1910, fourteen years after Wright de Kleinhans's death. This book underscores this female pioneer's understanding of the importance of her discursive endeavors.<sup>14</sup> She divided the text into four historical eras: Pre-Columbian/Conquest, Colonial Era, Heroines of the Independence, and Contemporaries. Other women writers, such as Spanish journalist Concepción Gimeno de Flaquer, were also writing histories which dealt with female accomplishments. Gimeno de Flaquer founded *El Álbum de la Mujer: Ilustración Hispano-Americana* [The Woman's Album: Hispano American Enlightenment], which ran for seven years between 1883 and 1890 (Pouwels 28). Her writings focused on Spanish and Mexican women, with a clear inclination, as Alvarado states, toward European women (26).<sup>15</sup> Unlike Gimeno de Flaquer's historical writings, Wright de Kleinhans's feminine historical accounts in *Mujeres notables mexicanas* focused solely on Mexican women. Through the biographies of these Mexican women in her journal and book, she implicitly argues for an epistemological, axiological, and ontological shift in Mexican society. She presents relatively unknown women, publishes their writings when they could be found, and most powerfully, contests and re/visions a feminine Mexican history.<sup>16</sup>

For example, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz is the only Mexican woman the literary world recognizes as a writer from the Mexican Colonial period. Few people reading *Mujeres notables mexicanas* in 1910, or even today, would have thought that there were so many other women who wrote and were active in Mexican Colonial society. Wright de Kleinhans did recognize Sor Juana's accomplishments and dedicated forty-four pages to her history, but she also included other women and nuns that Mexican history did not remember. The first woman highlighted from the Colonial era is a Maria Guerrero, who was born in Mexico in 1687. Wright de Kleinhans labeled each woman with her expertise or her social title. In Guerrero's life, she was known as a writer and as an orator. Some of the other nuns and women Wright de Kleinhans

included were Sor Antonia de la Madre de Dios, first secretary of the Santa Monica de Puebla Convent; Sor Maria de Jesus, religious teacher and who was considered a saint; Doña Juana Villaseñor Lomelin, second founder of the Convent of San Juan de la Penitencia; Sor Teresa de Santa Teresa de Jesus, an accountant who was well-known for her mathematical skills in Puebla; Doña Francisca de San Agustin, founder of the Monastery of Santa Clara, and many more. Not only were they included and written about in a historical context, but they were praised for their talents and accomplishments, instead of being perceived as anomalies. During the Colonial era, any woman who was educated or could write was labeled as a mystic. Reading and researching from Francisco Sosa's "Efemérides Históricas y Biográficas," a history of Mexico during the Colonial era first published in 1883, Wright de Kleinhans noted the following about Guerrero, the colonial woman who was known as writer and an orator:

Few are the details that are preserved about this educated speaker and literary personality. Her merit was noteworthy, however, in that she dedicated herself to nonreligious studies in an age in which women who, breaking free from the ordinary standard, acquired some extraordinary knowledge. They were subjected to the mystic set square, a measure that men could not surpass, and with even less right could women do so (75).<sup>17</sup>

She goes on to note that what was rarer still than Guerrero becoming a writer and orator was that her father supported her education in the languages of Latin and Spanish and also in the study of literature. On October 30, 1731, Guerrero publically recited a panegyric which she authored in Latin in the praise of Sor Juana. In 1747, she published an *Elegía Latina* for Felipe VI. The elegy was written in Latin, accompanied by the Spanish version, which attested to her knowledge of two languages. But to Wright de Kleinhans's deep dismay, these three pieces had been lost.

In various places throughout the text, she chided the careless archivists whose responsibility it was to preserve these artifacts. She gathered as many names as possible, though. Other Mexican women from the Colonial era Wright de Kleinhans included that possibly no one had heard of were Doña Josefa Vergara, philanthropist; Doña Maria Josefa Yermo de Yermo, philanthropist; Sor Agustina de Santa Teresa, religious teacher of the Convento de la Purísima Concepción and writer; La Venerable Francisca de San Jose, del Tercer Orden de Santo Domingo, writer; Sor María de la Encarnación, religious teacher of the Convento del Carmen de Puebla, writer, and Sor María Inés de los Dolores, a writer, whose verse “Romance” she published in its entirety. The addition of these women from the Colonial historical era added to women’s credibility as writers and thinkers, and also implicitly argued that Sor Juana was not an intellectual aberration.

To provide Mexico with a national identity and international legitimacy, the writing of Mexican history, as noted by Tenorillo-Trillo, became one of the focal points during the reign of Porfirio Díaz. Historical accounts written during the Porfiriato were controlled by the governmental bureaucratic group of men known as “the wizards of progress.” As a group of selected elite men, their charge was to direct the creation of a positive and progressive image of Mexico at the 1889 World’s Fair in Paris (Tenorio-Trillo 52). Many of these men formed the World’s Fair Exhibition Team. To help in the creation of a national identity, the wizards’ tasks were broadened to include the writing and distribution of propaganda in the form of pamphlets, books, statistics, and speeches. For example, the Mexican writer, Ireneo Paz, editor and director of Mexico City’s *La Patria*, was contracted by the government to write *Los hombres prominentes de México* [The Prominent Men of Mexico] (58). Those who wished to appear in this historical book, mostly those from the Mexican exhibition team and their male acquaintances, could pay fifty pesos for the privilege of being included. This type of insiders’

manipulation of history only added to the epistemic control men had over Mexico's discourse. Most distressingly, by offering only elite men the right to pay for their names to be included in the annals of history, the axiological and ontological control was most explicit and, as a result, contributed to the *total* exclusion of women.

Wright de Kleinhans saw this circulation of Mexico's contemporary history as a form of flagrant gendered inequality. Many Mexican men felt that if women were historicized, they would enter into the political realm and lose their place as "the angel of the home," or even risk the loss of their femininity. These are the same fears that would be voiced by men in newspaper publications in response to the resurgence of feminist ideas in the state of Yucatán in 1906 (Perez 32). In response to these sentiments, and as the first efforts to historicize women, Wright de Kleinhans published Manresa de Pérez's segment of "Mujeres de nuestra época" [Women of our Era] in *Violetas*. This piece was a collection of short discursive snapshots of women from Mexico and around the world who were participating in civic and entrepreneurial endeavors. Manresa de Pérez's introduction to the section in the first volume situated the women and men of their newspaper (the director of the paper was male, Señor Ignacio Pujol), and those of their audience in a system of social values that deviated from the norm. Manresa de Pérez writes in the first two paragraphs of the article:

[O]ur spirit is infinitely enraptured to consider the physical woman that yesterday lived in darkness and silence at the foot of the crib of her children, that could not gain an education because she lived to serve as a wet nurse, has today awakened to live a progressive life inspired by the modernist culture....

She was eternally drowned in the muffled preoccupation of the men from the past, that the educated woman was harmful to society, because her education

made her lose her character of loving mother and priestess of the home; the men of modern times, more practical and more scientific, more fair and less egotistical, rejecting the antiquated systems... (7)

Manresa de Pérez rejected the ontological and axiological stance that educated women would lose their feminine characteristics. Her position combines modern insight with traditional cultural views, giving women a new quality: that of the educated mother. The opening phrases of the first volume advocated for a greater acceptance of educated women and encouraged the tendency of modern men to be “more fair and less egotistical.” Rhetorical appeals such as that of Manresa de Pérez initiated an ontological shift in Mexican society in regard to modernist women. While it is certain that Mexican women found strength in the movement of *marianismo*, a home-based feminism which intersected with the development of a strong nation, Wright de Kleinhans and her staff were discursively challenging the ideology’s boundary. Those who appeared in “Mujeres de nuestra época” were noted for their accomplishments as people, not as mothers, wives, or angels of the home. A listing from the second publication in 1887 reads:

Mrs. Newton Crosland recently published in London a translation of *Hernani* by Victor Hugo. [...] Miss Grace Howard only 22 years of age, daughter of well known journalist, J. Howard, has left for Crow Cruk, Dakota, where she plans to establish a school among the Crow Indians, to teach the female Indians various domestic skills. [...] Mme. Abicot de Ragis is the first woman to have received Cross of the Legion of Honor. Napoleón III conferred the distinction upon her for an act of valor (19).

“Mujeres de nuestra época” ran for several volumes listing 12 to 20 different women in each publication. Catalogs of women’s international accomplishments could have had as great an



epistemological and axiological impact as that of Wright de Kleinhans's biographies due to the immediate contemporary connection that the outside world was beginning to have with Mexico.

As an educated Mexican woman, a rare combination in her time, Wright de Kleinhans was keenly aware of the marginalized status in which women were held by in the Mexican public, and most disturbing to her, in the pages of the nation's history. James Berlin argued in *Revisionary Histories of Rhetoric* that the discursive histories of those "unseen, unthought," should be actively uncovered. This process of history, he contended, would "involve looking for lost and neglected documents" which were marginalized rhetorics that were also often destroyed" (117). Contemporary historian, Emma Pérez, in *Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History*, argued that Mexican women have been "merely a backdrop to men's social and political activities...women's activities are unseen, unthought, merely a shadow in the background of the colonial mind" (7). Wright de Kleinhans presented a similar argument to that of Berlin and Pérez's statement.

If in order to achieve our objective of honoring our sex for their works, we would have kept to the official chronicles of this time, as in others, we would have obtained nothing at all; because unfortunately the history of our homeland, neglectful sometimes, slighted others, and more generally superficial and truncated, most of all in that which has to do with the civic exploits that women, regardless of their being restricted from the right of citizenship, have carried out; our history, we say, practically as a general rule, barely mentions such exploits if not that they are hushed up altogether (273).<sup>18</sup>

As the passage suggests, Wright de Kleinhans was witness to the historical silencing of Mexican women. Elite men were using history as a powerful rhetorical strategy to provide legitimacy and

international cultural capital for Mexico, and Wright de Kleinhans took up the cause to include women. As in her other discursive endeavors, these historical writings on women were shaping the epistemological and axiological stance of Mexican discourse.

Before *Mujeres notables mexicanas* appeared in 1910, the first of Wright de Kleinhans's feminine biographies appeared in various volumes of *Violetas*. As mentioned earlier, the first volume highlighted the First Lady of Mexico, Sra. Carmen Romero Rubio de Díaz. Some of the women that followed were well known women such as Doña Agustina Ramírez de Rodríguez, Isabel Prieto de Landázuri, and Señorita Matilde P. Montoya, and others not so well known, such as Señorita Micalla Hernández. These historical segments that Wright de Kleinhans published, although rhetorically persuasive, may have required a more direct argument of women's role in society due to the fact that their influence, on every level, had been systematically muted.

In 1887 Emilia Rimbló wrote a segment for *Violetas* titled, "Feminine Influence," which reinforced the historical commentary of Wright de Kleinhans. The first sentence of Rimbló's article alludes to the attitude of the audience toward women. She said, "It seems to be a lie, but it is very true: There is nothing as universal and efficient in the world, as the influence of a women" (38). Rimbló continues with a clarification of women's authority, "In the sphere of influence of religion, in morality, in politics, in the arts and sciences and even – who would think – in mercantile and industry (38). Rimbló's writing is yet another example of Wright de Kleinhans's introduction of an axiological frame of women outside the tropes of the "fair sex" or "the angel of the home." Rimbló's style, straight forward and incisive, as previously observed in *Violetas*, was indicative of what Karlyn Kohrs Campbell in *Man Cannot Speak for Her* referred to as consciousness-raising. A style connected to contemporary feminism and social movements, it is "an attractive communication style to people working for social change. [It]

invites audience members to participate in the persuasive process – it empowers them” (13). By including writing such as that of Rimbló’s in *Violetas*, Wright de Kleinhans’s biographic texts were strengthened and imbued with more credibility.

As a rhetorician and historian, Wright de Kleinhans understood that history could be misconstrued as a biased description of a multi-faceted event, and that any account could be contingent on the relationships and world views of those writing it. Writing in the 1880’s in Mexico, our Mexican female historian was practicing what the contemporary historian of rhetoric, Hans Keller, author of “After the Fall: Reflections on Histories of Rhetoric,” argued should dominate rhetoric’s revisionary history. He stated that historians should, “*devise new ways of reading*, which will look at the texts as texts, not merely as documents, which will look for the “other” sources of historical discourse in constant tension with the evidence” (Keller 32 *italics in original*). Through a careful reading of the credible historical accounts of Carlos María de Bustamante, Lucas Alamán, and others, Wright de Kleinhans contended that history is not always based on facts, but also a product of the historian’s consciousness.

Bustamante wrote a frank, personal account of the deterioration of Mexico’s conduct in war, and Alamán wrote of what he witnessed in war, such as the massacre of Spanish families in his home town of Guanajuato. Wright de Kleinhans’s thoughts on the very human and tragic events that Bustamante and Alamán suffered during the 1810 Revolution and how that must have influenced their interpretation of historical events, appear in her final historical segment in *Violetas* titled “Algo Sobre la Conquista y la Independencia de México” [Something about the Conquest and Independence]. Wright de Kleinhans claimed that these two historians must have “relinquished the cold indifference of historians to convert themselves into heroes of the rebellion and reality” (409). Her position toward these two great historians, possibly a dangerous

epistemological claim, arose at a time which favored objective logic and reason.

In order to write history, it must be written using one's head and not the heart.

Among the historians that recovered the historical data of Mexico, during this last era, these two could certainly not have subjected themselves to an impartiality demanded of justice and truth; and so each allowing their distinctive sentiments they found stimulated, they spoke in their works through the voice of passion more than with the voice of conscience (409).<sup>19</sup>

With the rhetorical foresight of the reading of history from various perspectives, Wright de Kleinhans read Bustamante and Alamán's accounts and considered their humanity important, while other historians may not have seen the validity in that perspective. With this statement, as with the rest of the essay, she questioned the objectivity of history, noting how the historian's emotions and subjectivity can easily interfere with historical documentation of events.

This rhetorical strategy of "reading into" a text can be redefined as rhetorical listening. In *Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, Whiteness*, Krista Ratcliffe states that rhetorical listening is a "trope for interpretive invention, that is, as a stance of openness that a person may choose to assume in relation to any person, text, or culture" (25). This interpretive stance challenges the *logos* of Western civilization, and "constructs a space wherein listeners may employ their agency" (26). Because Wright de Kleinhans applied this form of rhetorical listening to her historical writing, she consistently challenged the epistemology of the scientific methodology of writing history. A majority of her historical writings *did* conform to the scientific language of archival documentation, strict methodologies and the use of evidence and credible corroborations; however, scattered throughout her writing, there appear similar examples of rhetorical listening.

For example, the first section of *Mujeres notable mexicanas* validates Wright de Kleinhans's commitment to the writing of credible history and to the interpretation of a feminized historical account of an indigenous nation. As a historian who read and listened to the history of her homeland, she recognized that the greatest injustice leveled against indigenous women was their systematic erasure from history, even more so than that of mestizo women. The women highlighted in the section of Pre-Columbian era were writers, poets, historians, queens, princesses, and heroines, who held various positions of power or who interacted with the influential and powerful. Through the inclusion of some of these women in the historical record, she synthesized bits and pieces of stories from historians, such as Bernal Díaz, Suárez Peralta, Betancourt, and Orozco y Berra in order to aggregate the accounts of the indigenous women. Some of the indigenous women she included were Señora de Tula, an orator; Tlacayehuatzin, the last queen of Texcoco, who was equally as powerful as her husband, Netzahualpilli, the king of Texcoco; Tecuiloatzin, Tolquequetzaltzin, Zicuetzin, and Zacancozcatl, princesses who were given to Hernán Cortés; Doña Ana Motecuhzoma, daughter of Motecuhzoma given to Hernán Cortez to take as a wife and baptized as a Christian; Xochitl, Queen of Tolteca, who discovered pulque, a traditional alcoholic drink from the maguey plant; and Papantzin, who is said to have resurrected and prophesied the coming of the Spaniards. In some instances, such as in writing about Señora de Tula, Wright de Kleinhans applied the same controversial methodology rhetorical feminist historian Cheryl Glenn employed in writing of Aspasia. Glenn grants Aspasia great historical and rhetorical credibility based solely on secondary sources that spoke of Aspasia and her works, which has been heavily challenged and debated.<sup>20</sup> Like Glenn, Wright de Kleinhans wrote women like la Señora de Tula and Malinalxochitl into pre-Conquest history, which is an indication of two ideas she had about history. First, she trusted the accounts given

by the historians she quoted, even if some accounts were transcribed from hieroglyphics; and second, she believed that these women played a larger role in society than the historians had acknowledged.

The first woman Wright de Kleinhans introduced was La Señora de Tula, the principle wife of the many wives of Netzahualpilli. She quotes an unknown historical account. Whoever wrote this history believed La Señora de Tula to have been “so wise that she competed with the king and the wisest in the kingdom, and was an outstanding poet; through her natural graces and talents she had the king subject to her desires” (1). Wright de Kleinhans recounts the narrative in a matter-of-fact tone, with no discussion, commentary, or citation as to who wrote it, other than stating that the era in which La Señora de Tula lived was unknown. Strict historians may not have considered La Señora de Tula a valid historical figure, but would have seen her as a legend or myth at best. And so it is significant that Wright de Kleinhans chose to include her in the history; she believed the story to be credible.

The second indigenous woman’s history included was of Malinalxochitl, Ruler of the First Populated Tribes in Mexico (2). Wright de Kleinhans notes that her story was recounted by Fernando Alvarado Tezozomoc, a colonial Nahua noble and historian, whose history relied heavily on hieroglyphic interpretations. He told of Malinalxochitl’s “man like” valor, fighting alongside her brother, Huitziton, high priest and ruler of the tribes of Aztlán. After he died in battle, she was next in line to take his place, but “*algunos ancianos sacerdotes de la tribu*” [some old priests from the tribe], challenged her ascendancy to the throne. Instead of fighting for her rightful place, she left the tribe, but not without first persuading the “most wise and prudent” members to accompany her to the hills of Texaltepec, where she established a new settlement through the purchase of land from the Tezcaltepecas. She was said to have been respected as a

wise mother figure (2). In the telling of this history, Wright de Kleinhans first presents Tezozomoc's account, but then in the middle of the chronicle, she recounts what other historians interpreted from the hieroglyphs. "Other historians have interpreted from the Indian hieroglyphs that her leaving was not voluntary and in order to get rid of her, the high priests accused her of being a sorceress, and that she had turned to witchcraft" (2).<sup>21</sup> The high priests from her first settlement claimed she turned to sorcery intending to taint her credibility. From this other account, it is also believed that Huitziton, her deceased brother, appeared to the high priests speaking against Malinalxochitl and instructing them to abandon her and the other old settlers while they were asleep. Wright de Kleinhans agreed with the critics that these stories and legends that circulated about Malinalxochitl eventually elevated her to the level of tradition, then mythology, declaring her a goddess (2).

Wright de Kleinhans interpreted Malinalxochitl's mythical and legendary status, however, not as a discredit to her, but as an indication of her intelligence. Her mythical status, she said, "calls the attention to the fact that even in the distant past among savage tribes there were already women that proved through their actions equal intellect with men" (2). These first two examples from *Mujeres notables mexicanas* are only snapshot representations of Wright de Kleinhans's skills as a rhetorician and historian. Throughout the book, she went beyond the narrative presented and wrote against the grain of the male critics and historians. She wrote Malinalxochitl into history instead of discounting her existence and recognized the rhetorical skills the Aztec leader would have needed to confront the high priests of her tribe. Through Wright de Kleinhans's feminine representation of history, she created her own methodological approach that contested the cultural boundaries of Mexican women past and present.

Using the established histories of Mexico as her support, Wright de Kleinhans looked

within the interstices of historical accounts and located women who had been overlooked and forgotten. She did not accept the historical narratives and archived works as full, accurate, and unbiased accounts of history, because as she proved many times in her books by quoting from credible historians, so much of Mexican history had been lost. These findings led her to challenge many viewpoints held by the most respected historians whom she felt could have easily been misinformed, could have taken a biased perspective, or could have used incomplete sources. Scattered throughout the one hundred and twenty-four bibliographic entries in *Mujeres notables mexicanas*, she condemns past historians for losing, misplacing, or forgetting historical archives of women's histories and writings. For example, she comments on the loss of a seventeenth century historical text, *Vidas de religiosas ejemplares* [*Exemplary Religious Lives*], written by Sor Petronila de San Jose, the abbess of Jesús María de México in the seventeenth century (100). Wright de Kleinhans highlighted commentary by Carolos de Sigüenza y Góngora (1645-1700), a respected Colonial, which stated that Sor Petronila's writings had been cited as one of the "best histories of the time" (100). His quoted remarks on this loss reflect Wright de Kleinhans's views regarding the mishandling of historical records written by or about women, "...and for us, on our part, we condemn the negligence that allowed their disappearance from the national archives, the works of this illustrious nun, that should form a page of our other literaries" (100). Her condemnations of the carelessness of the national validate the claims of contemporary scholars of rhetoric who claim that history is not always an accurate representation of reality because so much has been silenced, lost, or discarded.



## Conclusion

Caught within the ideologies of positivism, modernism, and Victorian morality, Laureana Wright de Kleinhans's discourse is representative of two historical movements converging in Mexico in the late nineteenth-century; one which sought recognition as a respectable nation from the international community, and the other, which considered their indigenous roots in search of a national identity. To gain the respect of world powers, Mexican historians, journalists, architects, anthropologists, archeologists, and medical doctors interpreted Mexico as a modern and universal nation inhabited by a people descended from indigenous tribes (Tenorillo-Trillo 81). As well, Mexico wanted to incorporate European sensibilities, but they were simultaneously entrenched in traditional Mexican customs. Wright de Kleinhans's rhetoric struck a balance between these two views. She recognized the epistemological barriers which confronted women from every class and race, and which were strengthened through Mexican society's axiological and ontological beliefs that conformed to Europe's scientific perspective. On all levels, women were formally excluded from contributing to a national identity. But Wright de Kleinhans and the staff of *Violetas* ignored identity boundaries and transcended them through their writing. Their positions never conformed to one ideology or the other, and so the women had to build a tolerance to their ambiguity. As Anzaldúa writes of the nature of the mestiza: "She strengthens her tolerance (and intolerance) for ambiguity. She is willing to share, to make herself vulnerable to foreign ways of seeing and thinking" (82). On the surface, Wright de Kleinhans's discourse, and the articles she published by other women who wrote for *Violetas*, conforms to the traditional trope of "the angel of the home," displaying a positivistic bent. But as a rhetorician, Wright de Kleinhans wrote past the tropes, escaped the positivistic gaze, and created her own methodological approach to discourse: mestiza rhetoric.

Much of Wright de Kleinhans's writing challenged the accepted ontological, epistemological, and axiological societal frames by transferring the expertise from men to women on subjects such as public praise, hygiene, personal and public morality, and history. Poetry, a genre traditionally reserved for men, was appropriated by women in *Violetas*. This approach shifted axiological constructs that determined who was worthy of being commemorated or eulogized. More importantly, Wright de Kleinhans's writings not only lessened the immense rhetorical gap between Sor Juana Inéz de la Cruz and her Colonial contemporaries, and also among Mexico's more contemporary writers. Her insight into the understanding of racial constructs of the time influenced her to include the history of the indigenous women who had been theorized about, but pragmatically forgotten. Through Wright de Kleinhans's writings, we see that rhetoric among elite women was not only taught, but that it flourished in literary and journalistic circles. Beyond any doubt, many more female Mexican rhetorical figures emerge as potential subjects for further research by scholars interested in forging new paths into rhetorical territory.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Emancipation of Women through Education" and *Erroneous Education of Women and Practical Ways to Correct Them*

<sup>2</sup> See *Mexico at the World's Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation* by Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo for more on the development of a Mexican national identity

<sup>3</sup> *La semana de las señoritas* can be found in the Latin American Benson Collection at UT Austin.

<sup>4</sup> Although many of the Mexicans who were writing the history of Mexico's past, according to Enrique Krause, wanted nothing to do with the Indians of the present. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the indigenous people made up 50 to 75 percent of the population, and more than a hundred indigenous languages and dialects were spoken, but unfortunately, Wright de Kleinhans's contemporaries "cared little about studying or learning from the present, living Indian and even less about identifying with him" (32). Some of Wright de Kleinhans's writings on

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the Conquest correspond to the colonizing myth that the conquest was a necessary evil, but she did recognize that the continued oppression of the Indigenous people was also not the correct direction for Mexico.

<sup>5</sup> Out of the approximately 12.5 million people in Mexico in 1895, only 1.7 million people could read and write, and 323,336 people could read but not write. Statistics from a study by a lawyer with the last name Raigosa (no first name provided) published in 1901 in *La Bandera Roja*, a newspaper from Durango, Mexico.

<sup>6</sup> For more on women's morality in Mexico but connected to the workplace see Susie Porter's *Working Women in Mexico City: Public Discourse and Material Conditions, 1879-1931*.

<sup>7</sup> Nada más halagador para la tierna madre que recibir de su hijo la angelica sonrisa con que responde a los amantes besos; nada más bello que contemplar al niño hacienda sus primeros ensayos para tomar entre sus manecitas delicadas como lirio sonrosado el juguete que se le presenta...Este desarrollo lento y gradual sólo se efectúa en buenas condiciones cuando el bebé goza de perfecta salud" (40).

<sup>8</sup> One possible author could have been the first female doctor in Mexico, Matilde P. Montoya.

<sup>9</sup> A similar occurrence took place at The National Conference for the Protection of Childhood which was held in Chile in 1912. Although there were a growing number of women in the medical field, they were not invited to attend the conference. To read more on South American women's involvement in medical care for women, see Asunción Lavrin's *Women, Feminism, and Social Change in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay 1890 – 1940*.

<sup>10</sup> ¡No es cierto que después quedaréis bien compensadas y satisfechas en vuestra amorosa y disculpable vanidad, mostrando a un niño llena de vida y que debe su salud a vuestros cuidados en los primeros meses de su existencia! A los sacrificios que os cuesta la lactancia, agregad el del amor propio, y entonces con derecho podréis confesar ante vuestra conciencia que habéis cumplido con la sublime misión que tiene cerca de su hijo la madre buena (30).

<sup>11</sup> Elsa Chaney, *Supermadre: Women in Politics in Latin America*; Evelyn P. Stevens, "The Prospect of a Woman's Liberation Movement in Latin American," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 35, 2 (1973): 313-21

<sup>12</sup> Laureana Wright de Kleinhans's writings of *Educación errónea de la mujer* are written in a hierarchical order. For example, she begins with the an explanation of where women are in contemporary times with the Chapter, "La mujer contemporánea" in which she states that women *have* come a long way from the time that they were considered possessions, sold as slaves or treated however men wanted on a whim. But, she states, women have been dragged by men along the road to progress and have been forgotten and left behind. Chapter one states that contemporary women bear partial blame for their state of ignorance. Wright de Kleinhans ascends the hierarchy of the nature of women in Mexican society with twenty one chapters, with the second chapter being "The Ignorant Woman" progressing onto other characteristics such as indolence, counterproductive fanatic, the woman of the home, and the last two being the scientific woman and the perfect woman. She ends the book with Chapter XXI title "La Lectura," in which she speaks directly to the women of Mexico, whom she calls, Priestess of humanity," and urges them to not only make sure their children get an education, but that they also read to better themselves.

<sup>13</sup> A cualquiera persona de honor no puede hacerse mayor ultraje que el de dudar de su palabra; el mentiroso pierde á tal grado la dignidad, que no le afecta recibir constantemente este agravio, que para él no los es, y se somete á sufrirlo sin sonrojo ni mortificación. Todos los que le tratan, tienen derecho á poner en duda su dicho, por más verosímil que sea, porque viniendo de él, la verdad misma toma el carácter de impostura (458).

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<sup>14</sup> This book has survived in archives, unlike the original writings of *La emancipación de la mujer por medio del estudio* and *Educación errónea de la mujer y medio practicas para corregirla*, which Lourdes Alvarado notes appear in the catalog of Fondo reservado de la Biblioteca Nacional, but in reality are “lost.”

<sup>15</sup> El Album de la Mujer: Ilustración Hispano-Americana was founded and headed in 1883 by Spanish feminist and journalist, Gimeno de Flaquer, an experienced journalist with wealthy patrons. The journal ceased publication when Gimeno de Flaquer returned to Spain in 1890 (Pouwels 29).

<sup>16</sup> In *Violetas*, Wright de Kleinhans does include short entries on women from around the world, but foreign women do not receive the attention and space afforded women from Mexico.

<sup>17</sup> Pocos son los detalles que acerca de esta ilustrada oradora y literata se conservan. Notable fue, sin embargo, su mérito, por haberse dedicado á estudios profanos en una época en que las mujeres que saliéndose de la norma común adquirirían algunos conocimientos extraordinarios, los sujetaban al cartabón místico, medida que no podían sobrepasar los hombres, y con menos derecho las mujeres (75).

<sup>18</sup> Si para lograr nuestro objeto de enaltecer por sus obras a nuestro sexo, nos hubiéramos atenido a las crónicas oficiales en éste, como en otros tiempos, nada habríamos obtenido; pues desgraciadamente nuestra historia patria, omisa unas veces, descuidada otras, y más generalmente superficial y compendiada, sobre todo tratándose de las proezas cívicas que las mujeres no obstante hallarse privadas del derecho de ciudadanía han llevado a cabo; nuestra historia, decimos, casi por regla general apenas menciona tales proezas si no es que la calla por completo (273).

<sup>19</sup> Para formar la historia, debe escribirse con la cabeza y no con el corazón. Entre los historiadores que reconvilaron los datos de la historia de México, durante aquel último período, hay dos que absolutamente no pudieron sujetarse á esta imparcialidad prescrita por la justicia y la verdad; y dejándose dominar por los distintos sentimientos de que se hallaban animados, hablaron en sus obras más con la voz de su pasión que con la voz de su conciencia (409).

<sup>20</sup> Greek philosopher, Socrates, is touted as one of the founders of Western philosophy, and his existence is based solely on secondary sources. His writings do not exist; yet, Socrates' validity is not disputed.

<sup>21</sup> Otros historiadores han interpretado de los geroglíficos indios que su partida no fué voluntaria y que para deshacerse de ella los sacerdotes dijeron que era una maga, que se había entregado á la hechicería

## Recovering Lost Rhetorics: The Feminist Manifiesto of Las Mujeres de Zitácuaro

If it is true that women can and  
should take part in the general  
progress of the world, how can  
they be forbidden to take part in  
the progress of their country? If  
they are interested in the  
fortune of the world, why  
shouldn't the condition of their  
country be important to them?

- Las Mujeres de Zitácuaro

As part of the greater movement of Liberal Club development in Mexico at the turn of the twentieth century, a group of forty-five women led by Benita Amaya de Reyes and Guadalupe Colín V. de Colín formed a liberal club called “Josefa Ortiz de Dominguez y Francisca Carrillo.”<sup>1</sup> These group of women from Zitácuaro, Michoacán, also calling themselves *las mujeres de Zitácuaro*, came together in October of 1900 and initiated the club's establishment with a traditional Mexican *grito*, known as the cry for independence.<sup>2</sup> Two controversial events sparked the exigency of these women to speak out: the conciliatory policies of President Díaz toward the Catholic Church negated the strong anti-clerical laws of 1856-57, and a speech given by Bishop Igancio Montes de Oca y Obregón on June 6, 1900 in Paris, France that highlighted the Church's surge in power throughout Mexico. Bishop Montes de Oca had declared that the renewed success of the Church in Mexico was due in part to the support of Mexico's women.<sup>3</sup> His claim infuriated many Mexican women, such as *las mujeres de Zitácuaro*. After the formation of their feminine liberal club, they authored a manifesto published on December 21, 1900 in Durango's Communist leaning newspaper, *La Bandera Roja*, declaring that women

should join the ideological fight initiated months before by fierce anti-Díaz political figures such as Camilo Arriaga, Díaz Soto y Gama, and Juan Sarabia in San Luis Potosí, Mexico.<sup>4</sup> Emerging in the midst of a dictatorship and at the cusp of the movement toward revolution, the women's manifesto was a discursive ideological response against the Catholic Church's position on the revival of convents and religious servitude, but it was also a greater call for women's agency as human beings.

In *Manifiestos Políticos [1892 – 1912]*, a close study of Mexican manifestos by Manuel González Ramírez, the manifesto is defined as a political document that emerges at a pivotal historical moment with democratic, rebellious, and revolutionary intent, and expresses a group's philosophy, principles, future projections, and reasons for action. González Ramírez states that the manifesto “is an instrument of democracy that strives to attain it, or it expresses itself when there is freedom to think and to write” (VIII). It is a highly charged rhetorical structure that, according to González Ramírez, became an accessible and popular discursive political document for the masses. As a rhetorical document written by politically active Mexican women, this *Manifiesto* fills in a gap of scholarship that has only recognized manifestos written by men.

Las mujeres de Zitácuaro authored and co-authored a series of writings in *La Bandera Roja*. The first in the collection of publications presented in this paper is an article titled, “Actitud del partido liberal por las revelaciones del Obispo de San Luis. – Movimiento de indignación en todo la República. – Las Mujeres de Zitácuaro” [The attitude of the liberal party against the proclamation of the Bishop of San Luis – Movement of indignation in all of the Republic – The Women of Zitácuaro] published October 26, 1900.<sup>5</sup> (See Fig. 1) Another article in the collection, “La mujer se emancipa de las opresoras cadenas de clericalismo.” [The woman is emancipated from the oppressive chains of clericalism], which appeared in the December 7,

1900 volume and written by Ignacio Zaragosa, reads as an introduction and an open acceptance of las mujeres de Zitácuaro as active public discursive participants.<sup>6</sup> Zaragosa's overture speaks of the women's *grito de Zitácuaro*, historically placing it among other famous *gritos* such as the *grito de Dolores*. The *grito*, introduced by the priest, Miguel Hidalgo, at the beginning of the War of Independence in 1810, has since been adopted by the Mexican culture to mark the beginning of a movement of social resistance. The women used the *grito* to initiate and commemorate the signing of the *Manifiesto*. Immediately after Zaragoza's introduction, the full *Manifiesto* written by las mujeres de Zitácuaro appears.<sup>7</sup> This chapter explores the early rhetorical and political intervention of Mexican women in the liberal movement through these collective discursive efforts and examines the limited agency the women had in declaring their total emancipation or suffrage. More importantly, this chapter will demonstrate how through las mujeres de Zitácuaro's immediate reactions to the men's call for formation of liberal clubs, women were able to begin claiming their rhetorical space and identity. They created a symbolic space of resistance to the hegemonic structures of the Church, the patriarchy, and the belief that women were not politically active. This objective is in line with the spirit of mestiza rhetoric because the women were writing in-between societal spaces, the space of being confined to the home, which silenced them politically, and the space that they claimed in order speak out.

The theoretical claim throughout the chapters of this study is that mestiza rhetoric results in divergent, subversive texts by representing an intertextuality of cultures and ideas while resisting assimilation to a linear articulation of logic, showing that women writers were able to conceptualize a different reality for themselves beyond their prescribed roles. This aspect of mestiza rhetoric comes to the foreground in the declarations and political documents of las mujeres de Zitácuaro and their supporters because the women were redefining themselves as

political beings, a position denied on various levels to Mexican women. Rafael Pérez-Torres in “Chicano Ethnicity, Cultural Hybridity, and the Mestizo Voice” arrives at a richer understanding of this new political context the Mexican women writers were claiming. He says that mestizaje “represents a strategy by which audiences are gathered, fluid subjectivities enacted, political alliances forged, and ethnic identities affirmed” (155). Through strategies of mestiza rhetoric, la mujeres de Zitácuaro articulated a new discursive self, one supplanted in the Mexican tradition, but more importantly, a tradition of resistance to European assimilation. Their new identity did not hide behind the implicitness of literary genre and philosophical enumerations that the women writers before them were limited to. The historical moment, a time in which people were beginning to stand up to the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, afforded these women a new discursive freedom.

As part of the larger discursive historical continuum of this study, these documents fall between the two main rhetorical figures of this study, Laureana Wright de Kleinhans (1846 – 1896) and Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza (1875 – 1942). The writings of las mujeres de Zitácuaro mark the end of an era of reform writers, such as Wright de Kleinhans, Laura Méndez de Cuenca, and Concepción Gimeno de Flaquer, who were calling for gradual cultural negotiation of women’s rights. As Bollinger Pouwels notes, women writers from the late nineteenth century “were pioneers, but not revolutionaries” (35), with their main objective being “to raise women’s intellectual self-esteem, to provide education in subjects beyond the traditional domestic domain, and to advocate other choices for women besides marriage or the convent” (35). The article, “Actitud del partido liberal...,” the documented *grito*, and the *Manifiesto* signaled the end of Mexican women’s gradual reform movement, introduced an explicit political stance on women’s issues, and revealed the power struggle Mexican women



faced in the public domain as gendered and discursive subjects at the turn of the century.

### **Historical Significance and Rhetorical Intersections**

The newspaper article, “Actitud del partido liberal...,” published on October 26, 1900, marks the first of various artifacts that show las mujeres de Zitácuaro taking a discursive and political stance against Bishop Ignacio Montes de Oca’s June 6, 1900 speech.<sup>8</sup> The speech alluded to a clear reconciliation between the church and the Porfirian government, and the loosening of Mexican law that turned a blind eye to the activity of the monasteries and religious communities. Las mujeres de Zitácuaro’s first article foreshadowed the political *Manifiesto* that would be published several months later. The article introduced the group’s *grito* of independence, which would later appear in the *Manifiesto*, and publically announced the names of the women taking part in the movement. This short, yet biting article reflects Mexican women’s rhetorical astuteness and emerging rhetorical liberty and agency that they would slowly begin to claim during the decade leading to the Mexican Revolution. In an accusatory tone, they used words and phrases such as “the bishop has transgressed against the law,” “clericalism subjugates to the point of degradation, and exploits the influence and ascendancy of the woman over the man,” and “yes, it is true that many women have been seduced by the cleric,” which they claimed is nothing compared to “the history written of the terrifying domination of the church abundant in crimes and atrocities.”

The Catholic Church had framed Mexican women’s realities as silent subjects for over three centuries, and for the most part, Mexico still clung to those traditional ideologies.<sup>9</sup> The rhetorical actions of las mujeres de Zitácuaro, then, serve as discursive markers of social action that intersected with various political factions, the authority of the Church, and the patriarchal ideology that ruled Mexican society. Las mujeres de Zitácuaro’s writing denotes women’s

invitation to become involved in the liberal Precursor Movement. In the twelve articles of the *Manifiesto*, or the list of ideological commitments of their cause, the women claimed their agency through the act of creating and raising a family, which, as seen in chapter two, Mexican women were claiming as a service to the nation in *marianismo*. They also condemned the church and the Díaz government for opening up the possibility of religious servitude in the monasteries, which kept women from achieving their highest civic goal, motherhood. These claims establish the women as agents of social and political change and intersect with the laws, ideas, and politics of the time.

The group's anticlerical discourse confronted a long standing historical power structure within the Church. Since the Council of Trent of 1554, which gave the Church power over every aspect of societal life, the Catholic Church in Mexico had a history of clear authority. Marked by the War of Independence in 1810 against Spanish rule, Mexico's liberals had struggled to free the people from the bondage imposed by the Church. The long, bloody war for the approval of liberal ideas led to the Constitution of 1857, which ranged from the free expression of ideas in public to the freedom of association with groups of one's choice, which in turn, limited the authoritative hand of the Church. The passage of these liberal ideas broke with traditional theocracy and infuriated the Conservative groups comprised of the ruling class, aristocrats, and clerical officials. The War of the Reform between the conservative and liberal parties quickly erupted after the signing of the Constitution, which lasted from 1858 to 1861 (Krauze 169 -170). At the end of the war, the full application of the Laws of Reform completely altered the status of the church. Ecclesiastical properties were nationalized, convents and monasteries were appropriated, and priests were forbidden to wear their sacerdotal garb in public. Unfortunately, religious beliefs were denigrated and invaluable historical artifacts and myriad physical

depictions of saints located within many churches were destroyed. This social movement against the Church opened a space for women to speak publicly, but their positions were constrained by secular cultural ideology.

Considering González Ramírez's perspective of what inspires the people to author public manifestos, Bishop Montes de Oca's speech may have served as one of the "major event[s] that polarizes the attention of public opinion" (VIII), which in turn, spurred a flurry of anti-clerical newspaper articles, the establishment of liberal club formations, and the issuance of manifestos. With the Bishop's speech, the intellectual men of San Luis Potosí announced their political intentions to spur the people into action and to hold a national liberal convention in February of 1901 in San Luis Potosí (Cockcroft 93). The Bishop's statement infuriated many women who were aligning themselves with the progress of a secular nation declared in the Constitution of 1857.

### **A Plan Against Trampled Reform of the Church's Authority**

At this same time, a campaign to impede the reelection of President Porfirio Díaz was accompanied with loud, and sometimes violent, protests against the renewed strength of the Catholic Church in secular government. The Mexican newspapers echoed with calls from liberal groups for a newly elected president and advocated for a movement of renewed strength in the administration of the Reform Laws.<sup>10</sup> Women's participation in the liberal cause at the end of the nineteenth century was limited. As early as 1900, women were asked to join the liberal cause by Ricardo Flores Magón and the staff from *Regeneración*, Mexico's Independent Newspaper of Combat, which promulgated anarchist ideas, influenced heavily by the writings of Peter Kropotkin, a Russian anarchist. As noted by Emma Pérez, "*Regeneración* printed at least one essay on women, their rights, or their subjugation in almost every issue of the newspaper

from its initial publication” (63) of August 7, 1900 (Bufe and Cowen Verter). Flores Magón’s discourse was ripe with revolutionary action that may have encouraged women to push their husbands, sons, brothers, and fathers to take up arms against Mexico’s regime. The women from Zitácuaro, and others around the nation, were drawn to this kind of discourse and were reading and listening to Flores Magón’s strong rhetoric that critiqued the Church’s claim of renewed power in Bishop Montes de Oca’s claim. Certain phrases in *Regeneración*, such as the following, could have also been interpreted as being directed toward women:

Our struggle has been hard. It has all the characteristics of a fight between dwarves and giants; alone in the struggle, finding ourselves facing at every step the livid phantasm of political indifference, we have struggled while isolated, with no other arm than our democratic ideals, with no shield other than our profound convictions” (Flores Magón qtd. by Bufo and Cowen Verter 121).

These revolutionary words could have easily delineated women’s own aspirations. With politics and society at the turn of the century within the grip of a dictator, the women could not wait for a formal invitation to join in political activism, and so they embraced statements such as these which led to their involvement.

Certainly, it is difficult, if not impossible, to assess how many women were reading *Regeneración* or any other political newspaper, but las mujeres de Zitácuaro’s quick discursive response to Bishop Montes de Oca’s speech represents at least the forty-five women who signed the document as actively listening, reading, and analyzing political discourse. Bishop Montes de Oca’s speech, published in August 7, 1900 in an issue of *El Estandarte*, generated heated protests by the most vociferous liberals, such as Camilo Arriaga, who issued a manifesto which called for the formation of Liberal Clubs throughout Mexico and denounced the evils of

clericalism (Cockcroft 92). Las mujeres de Zitácuaro may have heard their names mixed in with the revolutionary interpellations from the likes of Camilo Arriaga and Antonio Díaz Soto y Gama to publicly speak up and oppose the ruling regime. Beginning with the first article in *La Bandera Roja*, women claimed their rhetorical space and persuasive power in the public domain through the utilization of private space in the home. By doing so, they asserted a discursive space, blurring the lines between the public and private sphere. Through *marianismo*, the role of the home for women was now more than a designated space of the Nation where future Mexican men and women were formed; it was a space of political action. Mexican women's writing was no longer a diary of anecdotes related to daily life or literary writings as seen in *Violetas del Anáhuac*, but a public announcement of their intention to form liberal clubs and protest the church's abuses. The women were taking historic political action. On October 26, 1900, only two months after the publication of Montes de Oca's speech, las mujeres de Zitácuaro co-authored their first public response to the speech through *La Bandera Roja* in an article titled "Actitud del partido liberal...." The first lines of the article read:

The national press in all the States has been overflowing with articles of varying intensity, indignantly condemning the clerical conduct revealed by the Bishop of San Luis at the General Assembly of Catholic Works, which took place in Paris.

The women's reaction alongside that of the men's points not only to their discursive rhetorical ability to respond publicly to political issues, but also to their rhetorical listening abilities. Krista Ratcliffe's definition of rhetorical listening emphasizes a trope often forgotten in rhetoric: listening. The close attention las mujeres de Zitácuaro paid to the publication of *Regeneración*, *El Estandarte*, and *El Observador Zacatecano* can be read as a "trope for interpretive invention, that is, as a stance of openness that a person may choose to assume in relation to any person, text,

or culture; its purpose is to cultivate conscious identification in ways that promote productive communication” (Ratcliffe 25). The women may have been on the political side-lines, but their reaction to the Bishop’s speech indicates that they were listening intently to the political discourse. Because they were listening so closely to the discourse, they knew they had to draw the line of protest at the church. It could not extend to the secular patriarchal system. At this historical moment, the women’s political discursive response to the speech declared freedom from the Catholic Church, but it didn’t go as far as to claim freedom from the larger patriarchal system that created the power structure of Mexico.

Las mujeres de Zitácuaro were aware of their cultural situatedness, the place where they could cultivate a conscious identification with their audience, and so they clearly articulated their resistance to the Bishop’s proclamation that women were the saving grace of the Church in the face of strong anti-clerical laws. The second paragraph of the article points to las mujeres de Zitácuaro’s understanding of historical references in the Bishop’s speech and to its contemporary political implications.

There, he [the Bishop] spoke with emphasis of his transgressions of the law, by counting, he said, on the virtuous man that governs the destinies of his country. He talked about his Christopher Columbus in nun’s wimples, whom he introduced in four "occupations" to establish convents that, he declares, are disguised as schools to win over - he should have said to corrupt – the Mexican woman, and thus dominate the country once more (“The attitude of the liberal party against the proclamation of the Bishop of San Luis”).

The women and newspaper staff make a reference to the Bishop’s metaphorical innuendo to the first three nuns from the French Order of the Sacred heart, “his Christopher Columbus in nun’s

wimples,” who were illegally brought to Mexico under Porfirio Díaz in order to establish convents and several girl’s schools. In his speech, the Bishop compared the voyage of these nuns to the voyage of Columbus and to the conquest of Cortez, which alluded to European dominance and superiority over the Mexicans (Pouwels). Their reaction towards this innuendo represents the women’s disdain for the European and Christian influence and dominance of Mexico.

The article recognized other newspapers that joined in the protest against the implied European dominance. The article cites the newspaper, *El Observador Zacatecano*, saying, “Both friends and opponents all recognize the sinister work of destruction, the deep, dark labor whose purpose is to gradually undermine the edifice of laws. And faced with such events, men of vision...have sounded the cry of alarm...and summoned *all* believers to a new and glorious crusade” (emphasis added). Las mujeres de Zitácuaro accepted that the writings from *Regeneración* and *El Observador Zacatecano* that “summoned *all* believers” in the liberal tenets were exhortations even to women. The women were careful to explain that their overt political actions in the founding of a liberal club were in fealty to the call from *El Observador Zacatecano*.

There, after the masculine sex in the most virile way protested against the abuses of the Bishop of San Luis, the queen of the home, the women, want to demonstrate to the instigative prelate that his poison has not reached to that patriotic people, and to demonstrate it in an eloquent way they have published the following document.

The women, although, were acting on their own, had to somehow connect their actions to the men’s invitation. The document the women mention is embedded in this article and is set off by

a new set of quotations. It reads as a brief reproduction of a Mexican document that closely resembles a manifiesto, a plan. According to González Ramírez in *Planes Políticos y otros documentos*, a Plan and a manifiesto are very similar. A plan “results in a commitment to revolutionary action that justifies or attempts to justify the brutality upon which the insurgent, the rebel, the revolutionary, embarks himself and his followers upon” (VIII). Through the plan, las mujeres de Zitácuaro provided reasons as to why they were acting upon the calls from San Luis Potosí, hoping that their rhetorical appeals would gain for them the support of a larger audience.

Verbal clues would have signaled to the audience that las mujeres de Zitácuaro were emulating the Mexican plan. John Hammerback and Richard Jensen argue in *Ethnic Heritage as Rhetorical Legacy: The Plan of Delano* that documents, such as the plan, are unique to Mexican culture. Its significance “become[s] clear only within the context of [its] own rhetorical tradition, a tradition anchored in Mexican history...” (305).<sup>11</sup> In *The Political Plans of Mexico*, Thomas B. Davis and Amado Ricon Virulegio also state that “Mexicans invented the Plan as a political document and no other country, not Spain nor the rest of Latin America, has used the Plan as an instrument of government” (13). Davis and Virulegio comment on the fervor of the plan stating that it “arose out of the politics of stagnation...it grew out of the Revolution for Independence” (1). The Mexican plan was born out of a true exigency people felt to have their voices heard. It originated with the men who were displaced from the cities during the chaos of the Revolution of 1810 and were being denied access to everyday channels of communication. They reduced their propaganda and demands to a one page document which could then be printed off the portable printing press they rolled around on ox carts (1). Las mujeres de Zitácuaro were claiming part of this early Mexican rhetorical tradition. In las mujeres de



Zitácuaro's short document embedded in the larger article of "Actitud del partido liberal..." several key words and phrases emulate other historic plans. Of the forty plans that González Ramírez published, many of the documents contain the phrase "*los que abajo suscribimos*" meaning that those who here undersign subscribe, or use a variation of the phrase that announced those who signed were in agreement to the content of the document. This phrase signals that the ideas presented in the document hold enormous power because more than one person agrees with or follows their ideas. Another familiar pattern found in the historic plans is a declaration marked by "*considerando*," meaning whereas. These phrases mark the explicit premise to the argument they were presenting. The points in the *Considerando* would make clear to the reader and to the opposition the political and social reasons the group had joined together to present its own solutions.

Each plan listed four or five premises, with the number varying for each document, and would take into consideration the current political climate or the injustices the group recognized. These documents, as González Ramírez points out, serve as rich historical sites, and by following this political genre, it gives further weight to las mujeres de Zitácuaro's argument of their presumed injustices.

Those of us who herein under subscribe, in representation of the modern school of women, divested of all servility, and ennobled by every exaltation to the completely free condition of humanity:

Whereas: clericalism enslaves even to degradation, and it exploits the influence and ascendancy of the woman over man, it exploits, we repeat, that influence in favor of religious fanatization, in favor of the loss of prestige of sublime figures

of freedom, and of civilization, has denigrated the great Father Hidalgo, the great reformer Melchor Ocampo, the incomparable Benito Juarez.<sup>12</sup>

Two more *Considerandos* followed and claimed that the time is now when women should support their husbands, brother, neighbors, and sons in the cause. This strength and participation is backed by their characters as women and by their signatures on the document. In these *Considerandos*, the women made their intentions clear. In *The Political Plans of Mexico*, Davis and Virulegio state that “the Considerandos elaborate, often at unconscionable length, upon a dead past yet unburied” (xv), but las mujeres de Zitácuaro did not carry out a long drawn out reflection of the past. Instead, before the appearance of their names, a total of forty-five, they end with a traditional *grito*, a common approach to ending these documents, and a Mexican ritual meant to rally the people to a cause. They pronounced, “Long live the liberal and anticlerical school of thought! Long live the modernist trend that will educate you for the homeland and not the convent! Honor and glory to Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez! Cheers to the initiators of San Luis Potosí!”<sup>13</sup> With this declaration, their movement had officially begun.<sup>14</sup>

### **Conferring Ethos on the Speaker: El Grito de Zitácuaro**

The newspaper staff of *La Bandera Roja* and las mujeres de Zitácuaro understood the negative public dynamics of women speaking in public, and more so, the general shock of women taking a political stance in public. Women’s public roles were limited to being primary teachers, skilled artisans, prostitutes, and factory workers. Their time for serious political influence was still far off in the future. Some women spoke out in public, but many times they were not given their due credit because, in general, women were framed within a domestic space, which was also a self-defined space, and seen as weak and in need of protection.

As discussed by various scholars, such as Patience Schell and Nichole Sanders, women

were able to claim a certain amount of agency and power within the domestic realm. At the turn of the century, women gravitated toward the notion of using the feminine subject as a bridge between private life and public activism. In *Women in Mexico: A Past Unveiled*, Julia Tuñón Pablos notes that during the Porfiriato that women were slowly beginning to attain educations; however, the implied purpose was to better prepare them for their roles as mothers. Tuñón Pablos cites Ignacio Ramírez, a liberal reformer from the 1860's, stated that Mexico should not view women as "machines of pleasure" or as "a positive piece of luxury furniture," but at the same time he did not want to consider them "equal to men in teaching posts, in tribunals, at the rostrum and possibly even in the battlefields." Ramírez continued, "we shall examine women just as today they illuminate our home, shine at banquets and at dances, descend from the altar to form a new family and are conclusively classified by divine and human laws" (Tuñón Pablos 62). Many women felt that if being mothers was their predestined role, then they would claim their personal and public agency through motherhood.

On this point, las mujeres de Zitácuaro accepted Ramírez's definition of women as the center of their homes. At the same time, though, this document supports that they stood firm against Ramírez's narrow definition of women. Their contradictory stances on the issue of women's freedom can be seen as a kind of practical complicity and practical resistance. From the evidence of ideas expressed in the *Manifiesto*, such as in the first article where the women claim the "right and even a duty to take part in progressive movements, and they can and must initiate them," they wanted to become leaders and initiators of political and social causes, not just followers of great causes. At the dawn of the twentieth century, some Mexican women wanted a chance to be heard and considered as people with thoughts and ideas, which could lead to the betterment of their nation and communities, not just as mothers. Yet before they could

speak and be taken seriously, society had to confer upon them the ethos they did not have.

Historically, many marginalized groups or individuals have lacked the agency within the dominant culture either to speak or be heard. For individuals to intervene on behalf of those lacking the credibility to speak is not an uncommon trope. For example, Frederick Douglass recalled the days before he entered the ranks as a speaker with his own people and the greater population of America, a mostly Anglo audience. In his autobiography, he remembered audiences looking on before his speech as if he were an aberration. Mr. Collins, the general agent of the Massachusetts anti-slavery society, urged him to become an agent as well as a speaker for the cause, and he agreed. Douglass recalled how he was presented to his audience early in his career.

I was generally introduced as a ‘*chattel*’ – a ‘*thing*’ – a piece of southern ‘*property*’ – the chairman assuring the audience that *it* could speak...Fugitive slaves, at that time, were not so plentiful as now; and as fugitive slave lecturer, I had the advantage of being a ‘*brand new fact*.’ [...] Up to that time, a colored man was deemed a fool who confessed himself a runaway slave (1077).

Unfortunately, many speakers, such as Frederick Douglass in his attempt to gain a speaking ethos, suffered deep humiliation and ridicule. Another writer who struggled for public credibility was Harriet Ann Jacobs. Born in 1813 into slavery like Douglass, she wrote her life’s story, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. In the Preface, she claimed herself to be “incompetent” to write about her life, and in the next few pages, the editor, Lydia Maria Child, introduces her as having had connections with a respected family. “During the last seventeen years, she has lived the greater part of the time with a distinguished family in New York, and has so deported herself as to be highly esteemed by them. This fact is sufficient without further credentials of her character” (7).

By mere association with respected citizens, ethos is conferred.

Like Jacobs and Douglas, las mujeres de Zitácuaro are granted credibility through the discourse of the dominant culture. Although these circumstances are a bit different, they point to the fact that marginalized groups encounter great obstacles to be heard. Las mujeres de Zitácuaro's introduction required the writers in *La Bandera Roja* to call upon the historical ethos of a renowned general, Ignacio Zaragoza, and the enactment of the most powerful and symbolic rhetorical structure of the Mexican people, *el grito de independencia*. Before the women's *Manifiesto*, an article which introduces them was published with the title, "La mujer se emancipa de la opresoras cadenas del clericalismo" [The woman is emancipated from the oppressive chains of clericalism]. The writer of this piece used the pseudonym Ignacio Zaragoza, a well-known general who fought against the French invasion of Mexico.<sup>15</sup> In the article's several short paragraphs, Zaragoza introduced the women of the liberal club, "Josefa Ortiz de Dominguez and Francisca Carrillo," as a part of the larger nationalist cause of liberalism and anticlericalism. This article can be read as a foreword to the *Manifiesto* to confer credibility and political clout on las mujeres de Zitácuaro, providing the women with rhetorical and historical ethos. Zaragoza gave justification for the women's cause:

Yes, because the cry of independence that resounded in heroic Zitácuaro on November 11 last, will continue on to posterities as the cry of Dolores has continued on after having torn into pieces the chains of our slavery; because that cry springs up from the immense heart of women oppressed for so many centuries; because that cry proclaims the most sacred rights of the fair sex and among them equality with other rational beings; and because that cry, impregnated by the sentiment that dwells in the pure heart of women, deafens the

airs in opportune moments, in which free thought extends its flight throughout the infinite regions of truth, and in which the audacious bishop of San Luis has insulted the Republic and women, declaring the theocracy as an accomplice to evade the laws of the reform.<sup>16</sup>

Zaragoza's introduction provides the Mexican women with an identity of their own, even though it is tainted by their connection to the men. It recognized women and men as having a common ground, an expressed desire to declare freedom from the church. This introduction to the women's document establishes a Burkean identification and consubstantiality with the audience (1326). Burke's perspective shows that "[i]dentification is affirmed with earnestness precisely because there is division. Identification is compensatory to division. If men [and women] were not apart from one another, there would be no need for the rhetorician to proclaim their unity" (1326). Using Zaragoza as a pseudonym, then, served as a rhetorical strategy to unite the two causes of liberalism and the women's position against the church. And paralleling the reasons for the women engaging in the ritualized cry for independence with that of the original *grito* in 1810 functioned as another powerful rhetorical gesture that brought the women into the realm of politics and patriarchy.

Much like the Plan, the symbolic act of the *grito* is unique to Mexico and the historical context of the time. For almost one hundred years prior to 1900, the *grito* had become a ritualized event used to incite the people to action. In 1810, at the dawn of the 16th of September, Miguel Hidalgo, a priest in a small town called Dolores, just south of Guanajuato, instituted the famous "Grito de Independencia" or "Grito de Dolores." Hidalgo's original *grito* summoned the Mexican people to fight for their independence from Spain, and while ringing the parish bell of Dolores, he exclaimed, "Mexicans: Death to the Gachupines!"<sup>17</sup> Death to the corrupt

government! Long live Fernando VII! Long live America the free! Long live the Virgin of Guadalupe (Serrano32)!<sup>18</sup> The original *grito* was an act of resistance to assimilation within the dominant culture of Europe. After the *grito* of 1810, each consecutive *grito* throughout Mexican history has taken on its own structure and content relative to the historical moment, and has been used repeatedly to call the people to national passion and political action for change. Taking on the form of a male-dominated, military, political, and cultural ritual over the years, the *grito* evolved into more than a call to arms; it carried within its structure the people's beliefs and ideologies of their cause. Most importantly, the *grito* carries with it the epistemological power to mark a moment as historical and memorable and significant.

As orators and speakers in a space that denied them visibility, these women required greater credence for their message than they alone could provide. To accomplish this, the women initiated their movement with a traditional Mexican *grito*. Considering the ritual's cultural efficacy, the *grito* provided the political and social ethos to champion the cause of their *Manifiesto*. For Foucault, communicative ritual, such as the Mexican *grito*, functions as a restriction under the positive figures of exchange and communication. "Ritual defines the qualification which must be possessed by individuals who speak...it defines the gestures, behavior, circumstances, and the whole set of signs which must accompany discourse" (1468). The women's *grito* signaled to their audience that they were part of dominant discourse, which in turn provided them with validity for their cause. More importantly, it shifted their gendered subjectivity which lacked the authority to launch a movement or to mark a moment in history or to mark a moment as historical into a subjectivity that could claim the power to do so.

As a culturally unique, historical, and rhetorical trope, the *grito* served the women's purpose allowing them to identify with their male audience. Utilizing a male genre to serve their

rhetorical needs can be seen as a doubling of the dominate discourse, a symbolic act predetermined as a form of resistance. Emma Pérez, speaking on other Mexican women writers, cites Homi Bhabha, who theorizes that doubling, a form of mimicry is “a discourse at the crossroad of what is known and permissible and that which though known must be kept concealed; a discourse uttered between the lines and as such both against the rules and with them” (118). Claiming the dominant discursive trope to serve the means of the marginalized group signals to audiences that those on the margins, like las mujeres de Zitácuaro, have claimed a degree of agency. The use of the grito, then, evokes a mestiza consciousness, which eludes the dichotomous category of male and female, and enters a symbolic space of inventing between. On the one hand, they are assimilating into their Mexican culture, but on the other, they are breaking from its traditions. The men centered in the liberal cause of the nation could not readily deny women’s participation in their quest for freedom if the women took part in the men’s own ritual of resistance. In the introductory article before the manifiesto, Zaragoza stated the reasons as to why the women’s cry of Zitácuaro is a valid rhetorical move.

The remarkable women from Zitácuaro are right. If the cry of Dolores, as it is declared in the manifiesto that we publish hereinafter, broke the national chains into pieces; if the cry of Calpulalpan crushed the chains of the reactionaries and the cry of the Cerro de las Campanas, killed the monarchy; why should not the cry, the thousand times glorious cry of Zitácuaro, destroy the pieces of the chains with which the clergy has shackled women for so many centuries, whose heart, so exceedingly great, is so much more heroic than men’s?

Through historical references to other *gritos*, the cry of Calpulalpan, and the cry of the Cerro de las Campanas, the women are conferred credibility. Zaragoza’s endorsement of them is so



fervent, that he upholds the women's rhetorical efforts as equal to, if not better than, those of the men. The final lines of the introduction read, "Beginning today, our newspaper will be sent to the heroic Assembly 'Josefa Ortiz de Dominguez,' and we salute those in the Junta with the profound respect that they deserve at the beginning of their project of such lofty thinking" (Zaragoza). Now that they had been formally accepted into the realm of political action, they were able to further their cause with their *Manifiesto*.

### **Nation, Liberty, and Civilization: Las Mujeres de Zitácuaro Speak**

Located to the bottom left of the page, and printed in big, bold, type, the liberal women's club announced their discursive intentions and the document's genre: "Propaganda liberal. Manifiesto." (See Figure 2) Immediately following the title, the introductory phrase of the manifesto declared in bold, capital letters "OIDNOS" (Hear us). As a political document written by women that intersects with various cultural powers, the outright expression of what the women wanted from their audience, to be heard, becomes a necessary and significant rhetorical stance. Furthermore, the *Manifiesto* carries stylistic nuances that also become important rhetorical devices, such as the high, formal tone of the Spanish language, the intertextual nature of the manifesto, the importance of signaling phrases, and gendered uses of the language.<sup>19</sup>

Several genre nuances make the Mexican manifesto a contextually rich historical document. González Ramírez presents several important historical and rhetorical features of the manifesto, and a survey of these elements will point to the significance of las mujeres de Zitácuaro's cultural participation. First, the authors of the manifestos were usually, but not always, military generals, high ranking officials, or educated public figures. This is true of the noteworthy manifestos that González Ramírez included in his survey such as Francisco Madero, who wrote *Manifiesto de Madero al pueblo Mexicano, dirigido desde la penitenciaría de*

*Monterrey, N.L.*, and *Manifiesto de los Flores Magón sobre su doctrina* written by Ricardo Flores Magón, Librado Rivera, Anselmo Figueroa, and Enrique Flores Magón. These men and their writings kindled ideas of revolution in the masses (González Ramírez 375). Second, the language mirrored their social positions and rang syntactically stiff, which Hammerback and Jensen note as a common tone in formal documents of the Mexican culture. The high level of education required to participate in the discourse of the manifesto acted as a boundary which omitted those on the margins of society such as the indigenous population and women, excluding them from the revolutionary conversation. The dialogic element of the manifesto would in effect call upon others to be written as a response, and many times, the proposals from those documents found their way into civil codes or laws, as evidenced by the Plan de Ayutla. Through the act of authoring a manifesto, the women were positioned as equals of the politicians and intellectuals and, thereby, entered into the realm of political conversation.

The observation that the *Manifiesto* carries elements from previous documents is indicative of a postmodern approach as opposed to a modernist notion of a text that views writing as a lone, singular process, distinctive to the individual author. As with many of these documents, the *Manifiesto* can be compared to that of patchwork quilt to which each individual involved in the creation of the document contributed her own ideas. The intertextual nature of this document places an emphasis on the social implication of the Mexican women's writing. In "Intertextuality and the Discourse Community," James E. Porter notes that by "identifying and stressing the intertextual nature of discourse, however, we shift our attention away from the writer as individual and focus more on the sources and social contexts from which the writer's discourse arises" (35). The manifesto, then, can be viewed as significant within its social context, having pulled bits and pieces from other texts with which to contextualize the meaning of the

document. Their document as well recognizes their male counterpart's efforts in the leftist cause gaining speed at that time in Mexico. They proclaim:

HEAR US:

The men of liberty and constitutionalism, are preparing themselves for a struggle begun during the glorious last days of the XIXth century that will be loyally and steadfastly accepted during the XXth century.

Let us help them in their labor (Propaganda Liberal Manifiesto).<sup>20</sup>

Through Porter we understand that intertextuality constrains writing; however, through a historical perspective, their words suggest that they must act as the men's comrades, possibly as helpmates to the movement. This was not a movement of their own. Although this is a feminist libratory manifesto, the women understood the constraints of their cultural milieu. They could declare their freedom from the Church, which the liberal movement had fought for initially; however, they could not declare themselves unfettered from the patriarchal constraints of men, as evidenced in the opening phrase of the manifesto.

A survey of the forty compiled manifestos from González Ramírez's *Manifiestos Políticos, 1892-1912* also reveals that the opening expression of the manifestos seems to identify an audience, and so, for this reason, the women's introductory phrase of "Hear Us" gains much significance. Of a myriad of manifestos penned by males, not one contains an introduction requesting that their audience lend them a rhetorical space. The manifestos such as those written by Madero, Díaz, or Flores Magón begin with appeals such as *Mexicanos*, *Concuidadanos* [Fellow Citizens], *Compatriotas*, among others. Or, no initial address appears such as observed in the *Manifiesto de Pascual Orozco al recibir el mando de fuerzas de Chihuahua* (166) and the *Manifiesto de Francisco I. Madero acerca del ataque a C. Juárez*

(198). These male writers wrote with an immediate certainty that there would be an attentive audience. Others contained no audience address, a further indication that they knew their audience was already listening. By proclaiming to their audience, “Hear Us,” the women recognized that they are entering into a public and social discourse that negated their voices and limited the scope of their proclamation. Instead of the formal *Ustedes* linguistic form of *oigan*, their understanding of this is apparent in their use of the form of *oír*, the Spanish verb, meaning to hear. They utilized the *vosotros* plural command of *oír*, *oidnos*, which is the informal form not typically used in Latin America. By using this grammatical device, they are transforming their readership into an instant brotherhood of Mexican *compañerismo*. Las mujeres de Zitácuaro used the *vosotros* plural form, *oidnos*, as a strategic rhetorical stylistic form which indicated inclusion; that they were a part of the movement along with the men.

The women were not ready to declare a total disconnect from the men because this was merely the first of many steps taken from the feminine perspective in the battle to gain a discursive identity. Secondly, liberal men were seen as helpful in achieving an alternative perspective of women. The women walked a fine line between a radical rhetorical approach and an approach where they negotiated their contested presence. So much of this document is about paradox, writing between the spaces of being. The laws of the land, which kept women from voting or holding office, prevented them from breaking completely free from the ideologies which constrained them. They ascended from these paradoxical frames of reference. Still, within the rationale of the document the women proclaim their alliance with the men.

Nor for what (any) reason should men be left alone, disastrously alone, in the struggle for constitutionality, when their triumphs and defeats both matter and affect us; their (periods of) servitude and emancipation; their manly and worthy,

or cowardly and abject, condition, as a father, as a husband, as a son, as a brother or simply as a fellow human.<sup>21</sup>

Ironically, understanding their limitations contributed to the strength of their message. The group's implied audience may have been the women of Mexico, but for their wider audience, the educated men who had the power to change the reality that the women were advocating, the women were forced to accommodate and adapt their message. Micheal Leff argues that "the power of the orator ironically implies humility before the audience...The audience necessarily constrains the orator's intellectual horizons, modes of expression, and even representation of self...they must yield to the people they seek to influence" (138). On this occasion, the women's humility served as a bargaining tool because it was a social and gendered characteristic of major importance to demonstrate. The women rhetors were balancing a tricky negotiation in their language. They were proclaiming freedom from one structural force, the church, but maintaining intact their subjugation to another, patriarchy and the Nation.

In the tradition of the manifiesto, after the introduction which addressed the women's concerns for their community, a number of articles appear as the body of the document. The manifestos were not consistent and each one was distinguished by the number of articles it contained. Some, like the *Manifiesto del Señor Madero proponiendo se formara el partido constitucional progresista* lacked articles. But las mujeres de Zitácuaro followed the more traditional pattern of the manifiesto. They included a list of twelve propositions advancing their cause. The first article is the most powerful in its humanistic and feminist position because it implicitly addresses their treatment as less than human, as objects. 1° In accordance with the enlightened teachings of modern wisdom, women are people and not things; therefore, they have a right and even a duty to take part in progressive movements, and they can and must initiate

them.<sup>22</sup> This document did not call for the abrogation of the government, or a call-to-arms. They state, “This is a movement ‘not by the arms of iron that kill, but by the arms of light that regenerate.’” The declaration contained opinions of women who had been silenced and hidden from the public for centuries. It called for a humble yet confident voice, one that declared their identities.

### **Paradoxes in Resistance**

The language used in any situation is always already value laden. Tucked within the text of the manifesto, an explosive language emerges in the choice of masculine and feminine suffixes which the writers used in their pronouns. The women exchanged the commonly used plural masculine pronoun “*nosotros*” for the feminine “*nosotras*” as a device to claim the Nation, the language, and discursive identities. They declared, “With respect to the Nation, you know that it is now our Republic; with respect to the (its) personality, it is necessary to tell you that we women are it” (Propoganda Liberal Manifesto).<sup>23</sup> The feminized aspects of the language declared ownership not only of their Nation, but also of a form of expression. Cixous sees feminized texts as “break[ing] out of the snare of silence” (1528). “A feminine text,” Cixous contends, “cannot fail to be more than subversive. It is volcanic; as it is written it brings about an upheaval of the old property crust, carrier of masculine investments; there’s no other way” (1532). I claim that the Mexican women were conscious of the subversive nature of their language. For example, even contemporary Latina and Chicana women will use the *nosotros* in a group comprised of only women, because they have been culturally programmed to speak in terms of the male perspective, which tends to neuter the assembly of women. Gloria Anzaldúa remarks how surprised she was to hear the feminine plural pronoun “*nosotras*” used for the first time.

The first time I heard two women, a Puerto Rican and a Cuban, say the word “*nosotras*,” I was shocked. I had not known the word existed. Chicanas use *nosotros* whether we’re male or female. We are robbed of our female being by the masculine plural. Language is a male discourse.” (54).

Las mujeres de Zitácuaro claimed their agency by resisting the conventions of the male discourse. Like the writers of *Violetas del Anáhuac*, these women were caught in a trap of oscillating rhetorical stances. Their words resisted male dominance, but hundreds of years of oppression, cloaked in cultural traditions, pulled them back. The paradox in the document speaks to the nature of mestiza rhetoric.

Several paradoxes in the nature of the women’s resistance have begun to take shape within the analysis of this text. The Mexican women embodied the Mexican language, yet as demonstrated earlier, they were also limited in the agency they could claim because of the constraints of the material condition of women in their historical situation. They were also constrained through the genre they chose because it was a male dominated document, yet the claims they made in the document for a humanitarian and feminine freedom helped them to claim an ownership. The paradox is also couched in the fact that the liberal movement of the time encouraged their feminine discursive transgressions. Las mujeres de Zitácuaro claim a dependent-independence with the men by also framing the men within the context of their same condition.

3° This being recognized, and satisfied such as we are, that it is not necessary for men to call us so we may join with them for the purpose of pursuing the ideals of progress, because even as a woman is incomplete without a man, he also lacks completeness without a woman, and therefore, his undertakings within the order

of the family and society, undertakings of ‘men and women’, are reciprocal and are carried out conjointly.<sup>24</sup>

Throughout the text, there appears to be a play of give and take, focused on their claims.

Ultimately, the women’s acceptance of the dominant discourse signaled a feminism that was subjugated to their historical moment. This can be seen in the mimetic use of lofty educated language conflated with insertions of the feminine suffix, in the use of a historically male dominated document for a feminist purpose, and in the declaration that men were as equally enslaved in society as women. This type of mimicry, as Bhabha contends, is a serious threat to those it mimics. “Its threat, I would add, comes from the prodigious and strategic production of conflictual, fantastic, discriminatory ‘identity effects’ in the play of a power that is elusive because it hides no essence, no ‘itself’” (119). The women claimed their agency in the symbolic spaces between the rituals, the *grito*, and the manifesto creating their own discursive identity.

Ultimately, they were also claiming a space within the identity of the nation, but found themselves in a third space where their agency was linked to the ideologies of the liberals’ movement. Las mujeres de Zitácuaro claimed their part of the long heritage of mestiza consciousness. They asserted their right to be part of Mexican society, but were still relegated to the margins.

## **Conclusion**

Davis and Virulegio lament in *The Political Plans of Mexico* that many of the documents they examined for their history on grassroot political documents have all too often been “ignored and now [they are] a curiosity to be found only in remote libraries” (x). Mexican Plans and manifestos, like the ones las mujeres de Zitácuaro penned, are a rich source for understanding the rhetorical strategies of a people and are more relevant to our current times than one might



first consider. They offer an insight into how those of a Latin American background dealt discursively with the hardships of their time, and that those with a mestizo/a background will revert to their own culture's genres and understanding of language to express themselves. As Patricia Bizzell states, "we must hear from rhetoricians who have struggled with culturally complex venues in which they were marginalized, if we are to live and work and function as responsible citizens in the American multicultural democracy" (117). But first these voices must be found. Looking in the fixed locations, such as university library shelves, will not yield new material.

Las mujeres de Zitácuaro published their writings in 1900, shortly before Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza founded her newspaper *Vésper: Justicia y Libertad* in Guanajuato, Mexico. Gutiérrez de Mendoza may have been inspired and motivated by the words of las mujeres de Zitácuaro which stated, "We should disregard and even reject all declarations and insults against us that take on the malicious liberty of staining our honor and our intentions, because we believe that the great clock of civilization and of justice has sounded the time for the emancipation of women!" It is certainly possible that Gutiérrez de Mendoza read these words by las mujeres de Zitácuaro.<sup>25</sup> A short time after she published her newspaper in Guanajuato in 1901, she sent a letter to the editorial staff of *La Bandera Roja* which was published on May 19 of the same year. Following the journalistic practice of the time, she sent greetings to the paper and their readers with the following, "Vésper sends its regards to the liberal national press with the following words to bolster you up: Greetings champions of progress! 'Vésper' sends its fraternal greeting to you who hold aloft the torches of ideas by shedding light upon the future, to the ones who climb the mountain of glory, to the ones that wave the flag of freedom!"<sup>26</sup> *La Bandera Roja* answered her greetings with just as much enthusiasm. "*La Bandera Roja* answers

your greeting by holding in high esteem the woman that brandishes the glorious banner of freedom in these critical moments of our history that rises above the mountain of worries and of fanaticism with which the clergy has the Mexican woman oppressed. Welcome noble woman!”<sup>27</sup>

Discursive exchanges such as those, among female and male journalists, show that women were slowly being admitted into public discourse. *Las mujeres de Zitácuaro*’s participation serves as a bridge from the nineteenth century. This was a time of gradual transition for the women of Mexico into the era of revolution, which opened doors of opportunity for women, such as Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza, who extended their influence into the public arena and radically changed their discursive identity. *Las mujeres de Zitácuaro* asked in the first lines of the manifesto to be heard: “OÍNDNOS.” The recovery of their writings necessitates that academics reexamine their words and re-vision the rhetorical identity of Mexican women in the discipline.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez, also known as La Corregidora, wife of the chief Magistrate, played a major role in Mexico’s independence from Spain in 1810. Her home became the center of the dialogue for patriots to plan for Mexico’s independence. I was unable to locate information on Francisca Carillo.

<sup>2</sup> During the Precursor Movement, hundreds of liberal clubs were created by ordinary citizens throughout Mexico to join in solidarity against Porfirio Díaz’s dictatorship. Many of the clubs produced manifestos announcing their political stance against the government. One of the main liberal clubs was San Luis Potosí’s Club Liberal “Ponacio Arriaga,” named after Camilo Arriaga’s uncle, who was a two time congressman, aide to Benito Juárez, and reform minded delegate to the 1857 Constitutional Convention (Cockcroft 64).

<sup>3</sup> The complete original text of the speech can be found in Manuel González Ramírez’s *Manifiestos Políticos, 1892 – 1912*, pages 107-111.

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<sup>4</sup> The primary document of the women's manifesto contains forty five names of women who affixed their names to the ideas and statements incorporated in the manifesto.

<sup>5</sup> During this time period in Mexico, newspaper articles did not always clarify where one voice began and the other ended. This article, however, does clarify a quote included from *El Observador Zacatecano* and then goes on to clarify the declaration from the group of women, las mujeres de Zitácuaro. Yet, it does not indicate who authored the first section of the article. The long title of this piece can offer insight into the different sections of this article. The title is broken into segments, punctuated by periods and hyphens, which could indicate the beginning of one section leading to the next. The first part of the title is "Actitud del partido liberal por las revelaciones del Obispo de San Luis.—" Note the period and the hyphen at the end of the title. The second part of the title after the hyphen is "Movimiento de indignación en toda la República.—" Again, note the period and the hyphen at the end of the title. This title seems to correspond to the section quoted from *El Observador Zacatecano*. The last part of the title, "Las mujeres de Zitácuaro,," also ending in a period, could indicate the publication of the women's official declaration against the Bishop, which in the original text, is set off by an introduction of the segment and quotes. There is no definitive claim of authorship for this text, and so for the sake of assigning authorship, I will indicate that this article was a joint publication of las mujeres de Zitácuaro and the staff of *La Bandera Roja*.

<sup>6</sup> No particular name stands out as sole author of any of the documents in this series except for the article "La mujer se emancipa de las opresoras cadenas del clericalism" authored by Ignacio Zaragoza, a pseudonym used by one of the writers for *La Bandera Roja*. Those reading *La Bandera Roja* would have recognized the name Ignacio Zaragoza as a general in the war against Maximilian, the French Emperor of Mexico. General Zaragoza was best known for his defeat of the French forces in the battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862, the antecedent for *Cinco de Mayo* celebrations.

<sup>7</sup> According to the *Manifiesto*, the document was signed on November 11, 1900 in Zitácuaro, Michoacán. The *grito*, which follows traditional Mexican custom, was officially proclaimed at the signing.

<sup>8</sup> The Bishop's speech delivered at the Paris General Assembly of the International Congress of Catholic Agencies was published for the Mexican public on August 30, and September 22, 1900 in the newspaper *El Estandarte*. In the speech, Montes de Oca asserted that "under the benevolent leadership of President Díaz and with the support of Mexico's women, the Church in Mexico had achieved the 'prosperity it enjoys today,' referring to the Reform Laws as dead wood (Cockcroft 92).

<sup>9</sup> See Silvia Marina Arrom's *The Women of Mexico City, 1790 -1857*

<sup>10</sup> The Reform Laws in Mexico have their roots in the War of Independence of 1810. Since 1810, the struggle between the Church and the more liberal, secular group had sparked controversy, leading many times to violent uprisings on both sides of the ideological camps.

<sup>11</sup> From her work in "Song to Speech: The Origins of Early Epitaphia in Ancient Near Eastern Women's Lamentations" Jan Swearingen would agree with Hammerback and Jensen on the importance of reading rhetorics of non-Western cultures on their own terms through the emic approach, and not always from one's own culturally limiting lens, the etic approach. In the analysis of this section, and one later in the chapter which discusses the manifesto, I take an emic approach, which teases out alternative understandings of the women's rhetorical position (Jarratt 213).

<sup>12</sup> Las que subscribimos, en representación de la escuela moderna para la mujer, despojado de todo servilismo, y enaltecida por toda exaltación a la libérrima condición de la humanidad: Considerando: que el clericalismo avasalla

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hasta la degradación, y explota el influjo y ascendiente de la mujer sobre el hombre, explota repetimos ese influjo a favor de la fanatización religiosa, a favor del desprestigio de excelsas figuras de la libertad, y de la civilización, denigrado al gran padre Hidalgo, al gran reformador Melchor Ocampo, al incomparable Benito Juárez.

<sup>13</sup> ¡Viva la escuela libre y anticlerical de la mujer! ¡Viva la tendencia moderna que la educará para la patria y no para el convento! ¡Honor y gloria a Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez! ¡Salud a los iniciadores de San Luis Potosí!

<sup>14</sup> Immediately after the *grito*, the date October 6, 1900 appears, along with the city's founding name of Heroica Zitácuaro. During the first declaration of Mexican Independence in 1810, Zitácuaro was at the center of great turbulence. The October 6<sup>th</sup> date was possibly the date that the women wrote and signed the document, which officially appeared several weeks later in *La Bandera Roja* on October 26.

<sup>15</sup> The newspaper writing staff of *La Bandera Roja* did not use their personal names on the broadsheet. Instead, they used the names of past generals and leaders of the liberal party as pseudonyms. These names were well known to the people of Mexico beginning with Francisco O. Arce, who was the director and founder of the newspaper, Melchor Ocampo, Miguel Cruz-Aedo, Ignacio Allende, Ignacio Zaragosa, and Ignacio Comonfort.

<sup>16</sup> Si: porque el grito de independencia que resonó en la heroica Zitácuaro el 11 de noviembre último, pasará á las posteridades como ha pasado el grito de Dolores después de haber despedazado las cadenas de nuestra esclavitud; porque ese grito brota del inmenso corazón de la mujer oprimida por tantos siglos; por que ese grito proclama los mas santos derechos del sexo bello y entre ellos la igualdad con los demás seres racionales; y porque ese grito impregnado del sentimiento que anida el puro corazón de la mujer, atruena los aires en momentos oportunos, en que el libre pensamiento extiende su vuelo por las regiones infinitos de la verdad, y en que el osado obispo de San Luis ha insultado la Republica y a la mujer, declarando la complice de la teocracia para burlar las leyes de la reforma

<sup>17</sup> There is no direct translation for the word *Gachupines* in the English language. The term is a derogatory word for Spaniards, specifically those who were born in Spain and who lived in Mexico.

<sup>18</sup> For an extensive history on the *grito de independencia*, and how Mexican society has continually changed the discourse of the *grito* to parallel the current politics, see *El grito de independencia: historia de una passion nacional* by Serrano Migallón, Fernando.

<sup>19</sup> In some parts of this chapter, stylistic and linguistic nuances that may seem like a new critical approach are examined because of the meaning that is lost in translation. Examining the document closely leads to an emic approach, meaning that an analysis considers the rhetorical strategies from within its own culture and does not bring in exterior theories in an attempt to make some sense of a piece.

<sup>20</sup> OÍDNOS: Los hombres de la libertad y del constitucionalismo, se aprestan á una lucha iniciada por las gloriosas postrimerías del siglo XIX y será leal y resueltamente aceptada por la centuria XX. Ayudémdosle en su labor.

<sup>21</sup> Ni por qué razón dejar al hombre solo, desastrosamente [sic] solo en la lid de la constitucionalidad, cuando nos importan y afectan sus triunfos y derrotas; sus enclavamientos y emancipaciones; su condición digna y viril o cobarde y abyecta, como padre, como esposo, como hijo, como hermano, ó simplemente como prójimo

<sup>22</sup> 1° Conforme a l s [sic] luminosas enseñanzas de la moderna sabiduría, la mujer es persona y no cosa; luego derecho tiene y hasta deber de tomar participio en los movimientos progresistas, y debe y puede iniciarlos.

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<sup>23</sup> Por cuanto á la Nación, sabeis ya que es nuestra Republica; por cuanto á la personalidad, es necesario deciros [sic] que somos nosotras: la mujer.

<sup>24</sup> 3º Satisfechas como estamos de que no es necesario que hombres nos llamen para asosiarnos con ellos, a fin de perseguir los ideales de progreso, porque así como la mujer está incompleta con el hombre, éste carece de integridad sin la mujer, y por consiguiente sus empresas en el orden de la familia y la sociedad empresas “y de ellos y de ellas” son reciproca y mancomunadamente.

<sup>25</sup> Another indication that Gutiérrez de Mendoza would have read the writings of las mujeres de Zitácuaro comes from historical evidence that a year later in July of 1902, this group of women voted Gutiérrez de Mendoza as honorary vice-president of *Club Liberal Ignacio Zaragoza* from Cuencamé, Durango. For the commemorative occasion, the members gathered to honor Melchor Ocampo and listen to a speak by Gutiérrez de Mendoza (Villaneda 19). This is one of the few documented moments in which a Mexican woman gave a speech in public.

<sup>26</sup> Vésper saluda a la prensa liberal nacional con las levantadas frases que siguen: ¡Saludos campeones del progreso! “Vésper” os envía su fraternal saludo a los que mantenéis en alto las teas del pensamiento iluminando el porvenir, a los que escaláis la montaña de gloria, a los que tremoláis la bandera de libertad! Hoy os saludamos y estad seguros de que no nos despediremos de vosotros, mientras la parca no lo disponga. Salud otra vez y honradnos con el canje.

<sup>27</sup> “La Bandera Roja” responde a vuestro saludo admirando a la mujer que empuña el glorioso estandarte de la libertad en estos momentos críticos de nuestra historia que se levanta sobre la montaña de preocupaciones y de fanatismo con que el clero tiene oprimida a la mujer Mexicana. [...] ¡Bien venida seáis noble dama!

Figure 3.1 – Digital image of “Actitud del partido liberal por las revelaciones del Obispo de San Luis. — Movimiento de indignación en toda la República. — Las mujeres de Zitácuaro.”

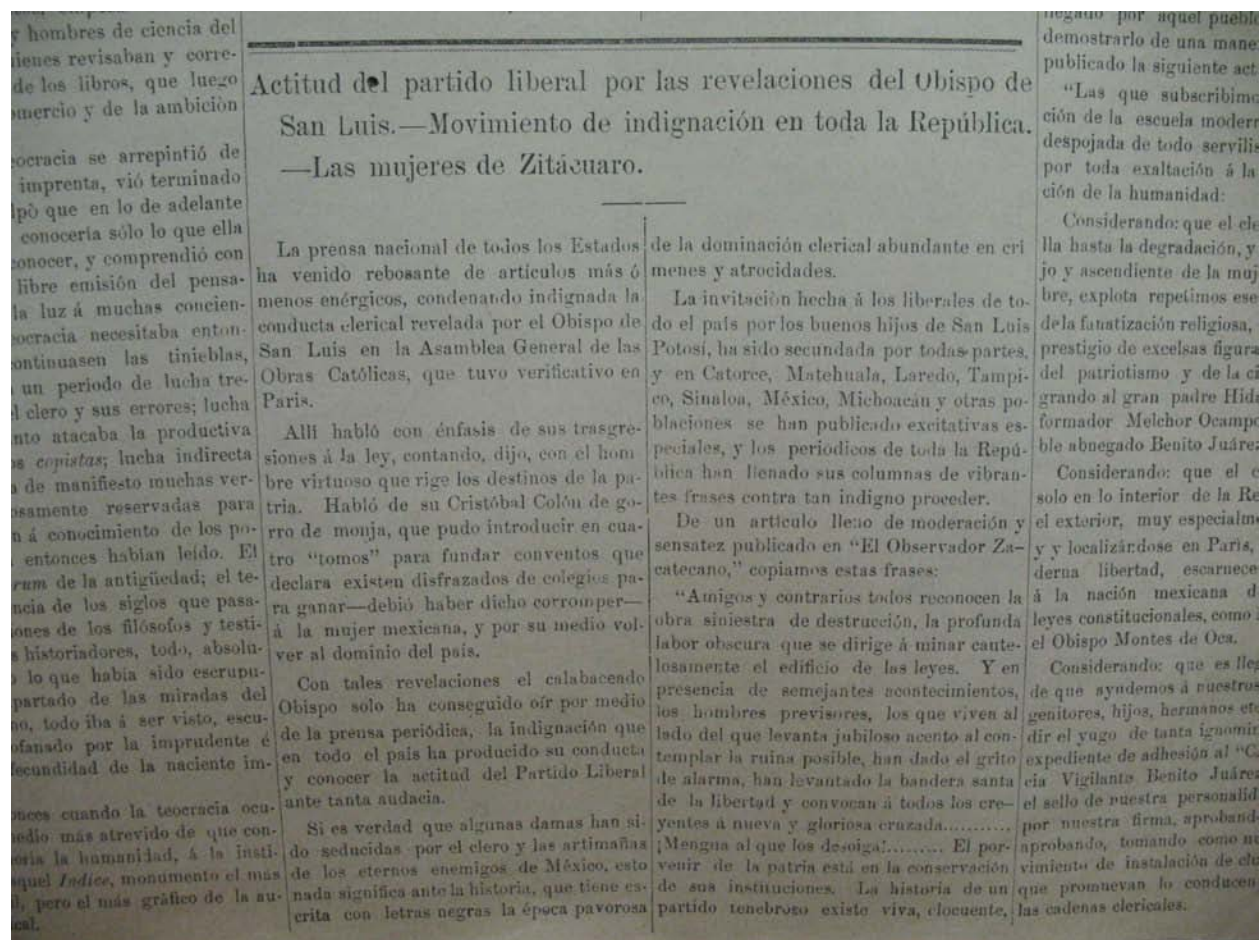




Figure 3.2 – Digital image of “La mujer se emancipa de las opresoras cadenas del clericalismo” and “Propaganda liberal. Manifiesto.”

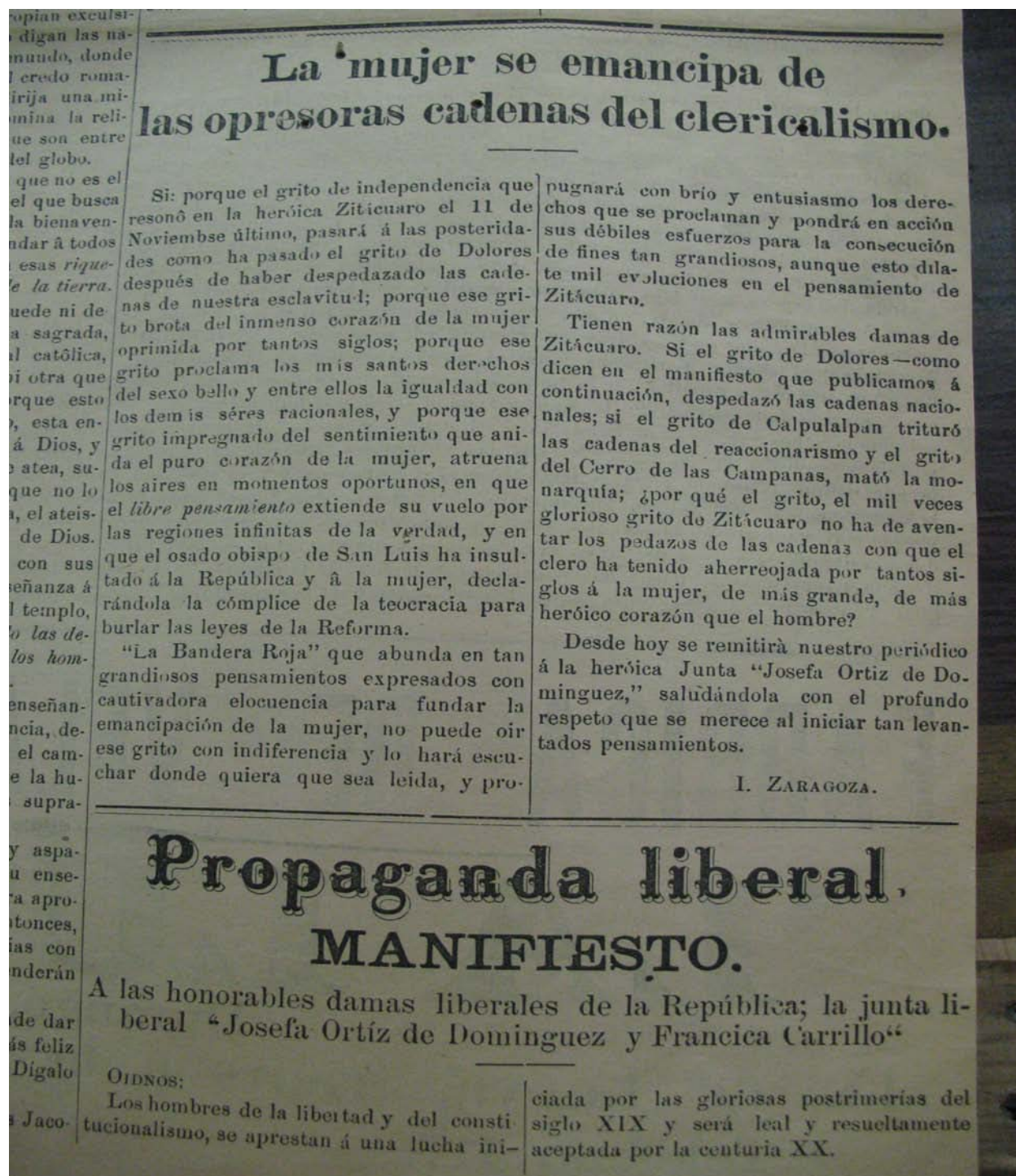
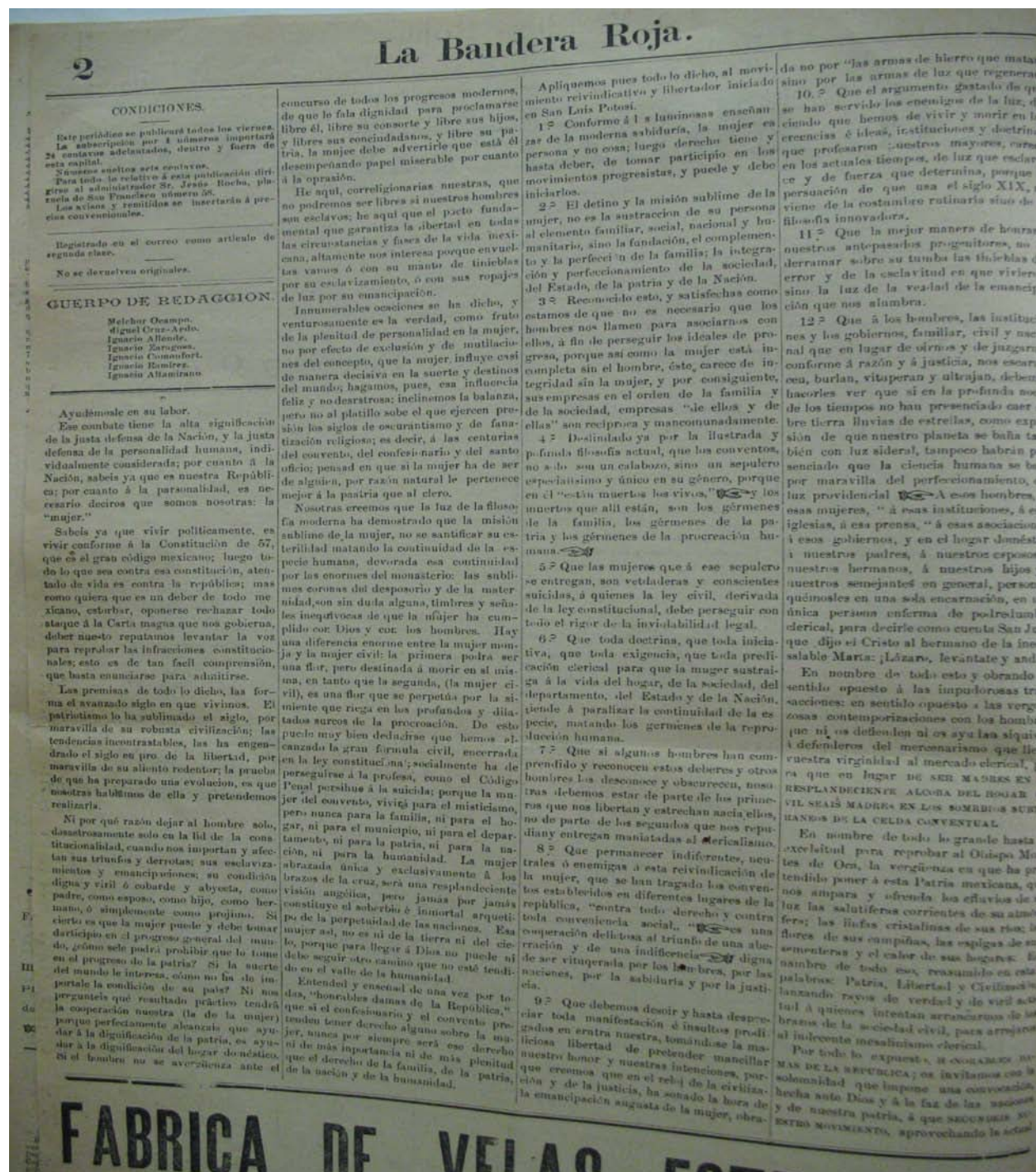




Figure 3.3 – Digital image of the full text of “Propaganda liberal. Manifiesto.”





*Venimos a ocupar nuestro puesto: Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza's Sophistic  
Rhetoric in the Mexican Revolutionary Precursor Movement*<sup>1</sup>

The conscience of every upright man holds the belief that the journalists cited, when writing to censure the punishable acts of a spurious government, make use of a right in the name of their country, in the name of their homeland, representing the people who put their trust in the independent and worthy press; and when that right---exercised honorably and legally---is trampled, is not a reprehensible and punishable abuse committed?

When the citizens who put their trust in the upright journalists not only permit the trampling but also tolerate it and let it happen, is this not an unworthy act committed, one of reprehensible baseness and cowardice? Do the citizens not become implicated in the crime and confused with the very criminal?

- Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza

One year after las mujeres de Zitácuaro published their *Manifiesto*, a new name on the Mexicana journalistic scene appeared, that of Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza. Her newspaper, *Vésper: Justicia y Libertad* which was published at the turn of the twentieth century in 1901 out of Guanajuato, Mexico, shattered every gendered social convention in Mexico and crossed every forbidden boundary for women. As confirmed by various Mexican historians, such as Mendieta Alatorre and Ana Lau Jaiven, Gutiérrez de Mendoza's sarcastic tone would jump off the page affecting and arousing the emotions of those who read her newspaper. Her writings had gained so much attention that it earned her several incarcerations, forced her into exile, and prompted the seizure of her printing press several times throughout her lifetime. In the early years of her writing,

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<sup>1</sup> We have come to take our place

1897-1903, her sarcasm was directed toward the Mexican dictator, Porfirio Díaz, and occasionally to the Mexican people for their political inaction. It was her belief, which she would later retract, that President Díaz was at the root of all the social issues impacting Mexico, and her early rhetorical goal had been to depose him of power. But in the period before the 1910 Mexican Revolution, known as the Precursor Movement, a flurry of pro-Díaz newspapers sponsored by the government appeared on the public scene, such as *El Monitor Republicano* (Garner 124) and *El Diario Oficial* (Guzman 55). In response to the pro-government discourse, an equal number of anti-Díaz newspapers, such as *La Patria*, *Regeneración*, *La Mosca*, and *Hijo de Ahuizote* surfaced around Mexico City and other cities, such as San Luis Potosí and Guanajuato, which were considered hot-beds of resistance. Among those anti-Díaz newspapers, a voice unlike any of the other male voices created a stir and raised eyebrows.

As a Mexican liberal female writing in opposition to the dictator and the patriarchal forces of Mexican nationalism, Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza's writing challenged the foundations of the *científicos*, the aristocratic ruling class influenced by nineteenth-century positivistic thinking, and confronted the gender conventions that kept women from speaking in public spaces. Gutiérrez de Mendoza's 1901 and 1903 writing emerged from the male-dominated discourse centered on the liberal ideals of the 1857 Constitution and appealed to her audience through blunt narratives, candid accusations, and governmental critiques.<sup>1</sup> Because Mexican written discourse emerges from an oral society, her newspaper articles appear as potential political speeches. Another reason Gutiérrez de Mendoza may have manifested such a strong public voice was due to her appointment as first speaker of one of the first liberal clubs in Mexico, El Club Liberal

‘Ponciano Arriaga.’<sup>2</sup>

The liberal clubs which formed during the Precursor Movement were highly political and were striving to be perceived as a legitimate force in the ideological battle being waged against the Mexican regime. Many of the clubs gave formal appointments to its members. As lead speaker at the forefront of nine men, Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s work in the club may have included the writing of public protests or manuscripts for the newspapers, and speaking openly at the meetings. This was a rare role for a Mexican woman. The fact that she was lead speaker ahead points to her tenacity and strength as a public figure. One of the main Precursor intellectuals, Camilo Arriaga, served as president of the Club Liberal ‘Ponciano Arriaga’ in 1903, and several other top male intellectuals of the movement were counted among its members, such as vice-president, Antonio Díaz Soto y Gama, Treasurer, Benjamín Millán, first secretary, Juan Sarabia, second secretary, Ricardo Flores Magón, third secretary, Santiago de la Hoz, and also fourth secretary, Enrique Flores Magón. Gutiérrez de Mendoza actively engaged with the main intellectuals who started the movement. The political club served as a public space in which one could engage in formal debates and exchange political discourse. As the movement escalated, they were forced to meet in secret locations due to the regime’s control; however, the main debates took place in the hundreds of newspapers the circulated throughout the country. Many publications, such as *Regeneración*, later changed to *Periodico Independiente de Combate*, were founded by liberal clubs around the country; therefore, the newspaper medium served an important role in the development of Mexico’s national identity.

In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson points out that the newspaper is a

cultural product that serves as a ritualization of the mass consumption of discourse. and the newspaper has served in this capacity in many other countries, beginning with European countries (35).<sup>3</sup> In *El periodismo en la revolución Mexicana (de 1876 a 1908)*, Diego Arenas Guzman states that the newspaper as a cultural product played a leading role in generating ideas about governmental ideals and functions. Mexico's newspapers contributed to the formation of a national consciousness, and at the helm of this new consciousness was *Vésper: Justicia y Libertad*. Gutiérrez de Mendoza's protest newspaper that initially appeared in 1901 and again in 1903, 1910, and 1932 was the first in Mexico's discursive space to be published, edited, and written solely by a female. Her ideas on public politics were possibly being consumed by hundreds, maybe thousands of readers. Contributing to her position as first speaker of the Club Liberal 'Ponciano Arriaga," she wrote her articles in a style that could be read to a group of factory workers, farmers, miners, or middle-class workers, or to members of other liberal clubs in Mexico, confident that her writing would awaken them to the realities of the Díaz regime. Gutiérrez de Mendoza started her own newspaper, aspiring to give a voice to her people, *su raza*, to claim a discursive presence for women, and to fight for the rights of those who had been forgotten in Mexico's advance toward modernism and progress.

In this chapter, I contend that Gutiérrez de Mendoza wrote intending to assert the political presence of Mexican women in a male-dominated discursive journalistic environment. The newspapers were a new type of imagined community where language, national politics, and cultural consciousness were being created and debated, and Gutiérrez de Mendoza's subjectivity must be considered in this historical process. Further, I liken the open debate in Mexican newspapers during this period that lead up to

the Revolution to the ancient Grecian Athenian Assembly where citizens debated political issues. As a female writer with a mestiza conscious, speaking and writing in this space reserved for only men, Gutiérrez de Mendoza carved a discursive space for future mestiza female journalists and writers through her harsh, edgy, and boundary-breaking discourse.

Chela Sandoval's "U.S. Third World Feminism: The Theory and Method of Oppositional Consciousness in the Postmodern World" illuminates the revolutionary position Gutiérrez de Mendoza claimed early in her writing career. Her discursive stance against the Mexican dictatorship resonates with the theoretical revolutionary tactic which Sandoval states "'breaks with ideology,'" while also speaking in and from within ideology" (2). Examining Gutiérrez's writings through Sandoval's theories, her feminist stance sees "no desire for assimilation within the present traditions and values of the social order. Rather, this tactic of revolutionary ideology seeks to affirm subordinated differences through a radical societal reformation...to produce a new culture beyond the domination/subordination power axis" (12). This "new culture," the feminine discursive space that Gutiérrez de Mendoza created, was inspired by living in several culturally contradictory ideologies: that of the Mexican woman, the indigenous woman, and the world of Mexican journalism. To write from these various subjectivities required that Gutiérrez de Mendoza negotiate the expectations and boundaries of each space, and many times the discourse that was created in these contradictory spaces was paradoxical.

Throughout her life, Gutiérrez de Mendoza identified more with the indigenous aspect of her identity, which only complicated her struggle as a woman journalist/activist; yet, it strengthened her resolve to go against the social order that ignored the Indian and

that silenced women in public. As Anzaldúa enumerates on the *india*-Mestiza of Mexico, “the dark-skinned woman has been silenced, gagged, caged, bound into servitude with marriage, bludgeoned for 300 years, sterilized and castrated in the twentieth century (22).” Part of Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s rhetorical allure is that she broke from the curse of the infamous Nahua Indian *Malinali Tenepat, or Malintzin*, or the *india*-mestiza, who Anzaldúa says “hid her feelings; she hid her truths; she concealed her fire; [and]...remained faceless and voiceless” (23). Gutiérrez de Mendoza did not hide her feelings or her truths; she did not remain silent. She took control and balanced between the ambiguity of her stances, which claimed recognition for the workers, the women, and the journalists being silenced. It is these conflicting and complex rhetorical stances that shape this writer’s mestiza rhetoric.

### **Early life of Juana Belén**

María Juana Francisca Gutiérrez Chávez was born on January 27, 1875 in San Juan del Río, Durango to parents of little means. Her father, Santiago Gutiérrez Lomelí, was a carpenter and blacksmith, and her mother, Porfiria Chávez, was devoted to her family whose maternal lineage claimed relation to the Caxan Indians (Lau Javien 2).<sup>4</sup> The family moved to San Pedro del Gallo, Durango where Gutiérrez de Mendoza and her sister, affectionately known as Yova, attended school for several years.<sup>5</sup> She did not have the privilege of attending school for very long, very few girls did, but this short time in school provided Gutiérrez de Mendoza with a crucial introduction to literacy. As an autodidact, she sharpened her reading and writing skills and avoided the positivist pedagogy heavily influenced by the Europeans that many Mexican schools were utilizing at the time (Bazant 12 and Delmez). Mexican writer Eduardo Arrieta Corral has

compared Gutiérrez de Mendoza's early intelligence and social acumen to that of Francisco Zarco, José Revueltas, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. He comments that she was endowed with an early intelligence, of natural intuition and artistic sensibility, and especially for this reason she was self-taught, she knew how to incorporate her education with her conflictive moment in history, emphasized in everything she learned through her indestructible civil courage, taking on the motto of don Melchor Ocampo: 'I break, but I will not fold' (13).

Following the unexpected death of their father, Gutiérrez de Mendoza and her sister found work as domestic servants in Durango. In 1892, at the age of seventeen, she married Cirilo Mendoza, and moved to Sierra Mojada, Coahuila, where Cirilo found a job as a miner in a mine known as "La Esmeralda." During the years that she lived among the miners, she gave birth to three children, Laura, Julia, and Santiago; taught her husband how to read and write; witnessed the miserable, degrading conditions the miners endured; and lived on the menial pay they received. Gutiérrez de Mendoza's husband died from complications related to the abuse of alcohol, leaving Gutiérrez de Mendoza alone to raise three children. As a young widow, tragedy soon struck again when her infant son, Santiago Mendoza, died. It was because of these harsh material realities she had faced that she started her life of political activism and writing.

Her first articles, which denounced the treatment of the miners, were anonymously published in three early opposition newspapers, including *Diario del Hogar* (Mexico), *Hijo de Ahuizote* (Mexico) and *Chinaco* (Laredo, Texas) (Lau Javien 3 "Me Quiebro"). In 1897, authorities from the mines discovered Gutiérrez de Mendoza's

connection to the anti-government publications, and she was sent to prison in Minas Nuevas, Chihuahua in 1897 (Alatorre 63). This was the first of several jail sentences she would endure throughout her life. Instead of deterring her activism, the time in prison only intensified her resolve to depose Porfirio Díaz and to live a life of activism. In her autobiography, she recounted the impressions about being in jail:

If I had been blind without knowing it and suddenly had seen, I would have received the same impression that I received by seeing the jail. I had the feeling that I had lived outside of reality, in a fantastic or artificial world.

The jail, with its cruel realities, gave me notice of the distance I was from the truth. Because it is true that I no longer believed that the fall or the death or elimination of the President of the Republic would be sufficient in any form, for everything to be resolved. (Alatorre 21) <sup>6</sup>.

Because of the time spent in jail, Gutiérrez de Mendoza lost some of her naïve notions about how to change society. She may have also grown to understand the harshness of the life of an outcast and as a pariah because jails in Mexico were known to have impossible conditions of filth and abuse. Time spent in jail may have given her a level of credibility in that she was not speaking from a space of privilege, but from a space of risk-taking and of a willingness to suffer the consequences of speaking to power.

Spending time in jail also taught Gutiérrez de Mendoza that deposing Díaz would not change the cruelty of Mexican life, yet she continued in the struggle. She may have realized that a change of social circumstances could be achieved through writing, activism, and through a shift in her belief system that countered the dictator's power.



Gutiérrez de Mendoza's agency, then, came from claiming a space on the Mexican male journalistic scene, challenging the sociopolitical conditions, and defying the social patterns of positivistic thought and local customs, which arose from an ideology, such as that of appointing non-elected *jefes políticos*.<sup>7</sup> It would be naïve to believe that in a time when women were extremely socially constrained, that Gutiérrez de Mendoza's agency came from a romantic well-spring of personal will. In "Using Writing to Structure Agency: An Examination of Engineer's Practice," Dorthy Winsor explains how people gain agency not from "some unified valorized self but from the position in which we function and the power those positions allow us to exert" (413). The opportunity to claim agency, then, is socially structured, and so it is through the existing social structures that people can claim agency. Gutiérrez de Mendoza claimed agency through the social structure of the journalistic scene that was gaining rhetorical strength at the time she moved to Guanajuato in 1900 and started her own journal. She seized the *kairos* of the moment to claim a place within the journalistic structure. By entering into this structure, the influence of her discourse expanded, and she was able to intersect and disrupt the power structures of patriarchy, government, and the church. If her discourse was powerful enough to draw attention and land her in jail, then it had the power, as government officials must have believed, to shift the reality around her.

### **The Mexican Political Assembly**

Pre-revolutionary Mexico, the time in which Gutiérrez de Mendoza started writing and publishing her work, shares some similarities to ancient Greece and the emergence of the Athenian Assembly in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. In Athens, a democracy was emerging, and the ability to speak in public was of major importance.

The use of deliberative or sophistic rhetoric, “the task of urging the city to one course of action or the other” (Lawson-Tancred), played a major role in Athenian politics. In the non-elected position of the Assembly, anyone, as long as they were a male and a citizen who could establish a clear argument for or against a person or governmental policy, would be given political consideration. Regular citizens, however, did not often make it to the Assembly, and speeches were invariably made by kings, elders, and ephors, a board of five officials, but the idea of free speech based on debate and deliberation of ideas was, at the time, a remarkable concept (Rhodes 79). Similar to Athenian freedom of speech, the 1857 Constitution of Mexico granted citizens the freedom to speak out.

At the turn of the twentieth century in Mexico, a time of rising political discourse, there existed no physical edifice where the people could gather and debate political issues, such as the Athenian Ecclesia or Assembly. But fourteen years before the main Precursor Movement, there was a surge of newspaper publications that in 1888 reached 227, rose to 385 publications in 1889, and then exploded in 1898 with a total of 531 papers (Garner 125). This wave of publicly circulated writing can be seen as Mexico’s journalistic political Assembly or imagined spaces.<sup>8</sup> But due to the lack of unsanctioned physical space for debate, liberal clubs were forming throughout Mexico. For example, in *Intellectual Precursors of the Mexican Revolution, 1900-1913*, James Cockcroft writes that Camilo Arriaga called for the formation of liberal clubs in his 1901 pamphlet, *Invitación al Partido Liberal* (93). Arriaga’s proposal to open up a forum for debate prompted the creation of the First Liberal Congress, held on February 5, 1901 in San Luis Potosi. The proposal prompted liberal clubs to form in thirteen states with approximately fifty clubs included (Cockcroft 94). Many of these clubs met in secret due to government

persecution; however, their voices emerged from secrecy. The Mexican public had such an ardent desire for free speech and open debate, that single members of these clubs, such as Gutiérrez de Mendoza, started newspapers.

The journalists, many of them club members, spoke out against a number of issues from the resurgence of the power of the Catholic Church, the mistreatment of factory, farm, and mine workers, the disbursement of lands to foreign investors, the corruption at the voting poles, and most openly debated, the public assassinations and incarcerations of journalists who spoke out against the regime. The presence of opposition newspapers, such as *Regeneración*, directed by Enrique Flores Magón in the capital, *El Demócrata y El Progreso*, directed by Dionisio Hernández, *El Hijo de Ajuizote*, directed by Daniel Cabrera, *El Calrín*, directed by Alberto M. Alvarado from Durango, *El Diablito Bromista*, directed by Antonio de P. Escárcega, *La Democracia Latina* directed by Adolfo Duclós in Monterrey, *El Demófilo*, directed by José Millán in San Luis Potosí, *El Alacrán*, directed by Alberto Araus and Mariano Ceballos, and *Vesper: Justicia y Libertad: Justicia y Libertad*, directed by Gutiérrez de Mendoza appeared on newspaper stands (Arenas Guzman).<sup>9</sup> Countless newspapers and transitory tabloids that were known as *papeles volantes*, literally meaning “flying papers,” raised issue with the regime and its actions, served as a space for the exchange of ideas, and more importantly, functioned as a fissure in the foundational thought of the government

Díaz tried to silence dissent against his governmental policies, and he did so with an amendment to the Constitution of 1857, Article 7, which limited “absolute ‘freedom of the press, only to be limited by respect for private life, public morality and public order’” (Garner 124). The original constitutional wording guaranteed the public to the right to

free speech, but Díaz rhetorically manipulated this right of the people through shrewd policy maneuvers, public flattery of the journalists, and calls to the public to verbally and juridically attack the journalists when a reader felt there had been a personal attack on a politician. Thus, the terms “private life, public morality, and public order” were subject to public interpretation. Díaz dealt with the press as he did with the rest of the regime, through complexities and subtleties – “in other words, a blend of authoritarianism and conciliation, manipulation, and concession” (Garner 123). The journalists continued to write in the face of this opposition. Cockcroft reported that over forty-two anti-Díaz newspapers had been shut down, and that over fifty journalists from around the country had been jailed. “As fast as old opposition newspapers were closed down, new, more militant ones opened up” (102). As the journalists were silenced, the people’s need for public participation increased.

The power of the dictatorship and the oppression of alternative voices generated the creation of counterpublics in the form of liberal clubs and newspapers. Nancy Fraser in “Rethinking the Public Sphere” defines counterpublics as “parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinate social groups invent and circulate counter discourses to formulate oppositional interpretation of their identities, interests, and needs” (123). Yet, with each oppressive act against the journalists, their influence was incorporated more into the main public sphere because they made their protests known through publications, such as Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s. The pro-Díaz newspapers in turn, engaged the opposition’s discourse. Ironically, in an era of oppression, there seemed to be a greater exchange of ideas. Hence, the journalistic practices came to resemble a democratic exchange, such as that of the Athenian Assembly. The newspaper columns were not only

filled with objective reporting, but they were augmented with responses, comments, and arguments opposing or supporting what other publications were saying about the regime and its policies; in other words, these were precursors to what would develop into public debates.

An example of how this journalistic rhetorical custom unfolded is found in a dialogue between two Durango newspapers, *La Bandera Roja*, an anti-Díaz liberal publication, edited by Francisco O. Arce (a pseudonym), and *La Idea*, a pro-Díaz publication, edited by Juan Manuel Rocha. On May 26, 1900, the front page of *La Idea* opened with an article titled, “La Bandera Roja.” In this article, the editorial staff of *La Idea* countered the claims *La Bandera Roja* had made several weeks prior over a controversial incident that happened in Durango. A man by the name of Villanueva contracted marriage with two women, a Dorador through the church, and a Cosío through the civil courts. In the article, *La Idea* was responding to *La Bandera Roja*’s claim of the culpability of the priest, Father Sánchez, and the church for total social impropriety and complicity in Villanueva’s adultery. The liberal leaning *La Bandera Roja* had reported that they considered marriages conducted through the church as an affront to the Reformist Laws. The article condemned *La Bandera Roja*’s complaint against the consultation of the church and the civil courts on the issuance of marriage licenses as a violation of the law because marriage was now a civil operation, not a church function. The question of power and the Catholic Church was an ongoing debate as Karl M. Schmitt contends in “The Díaz Conciliation Policy on State and Local Levels 1876-1911.” In 1859, the Liberal government had taken the power of confirming lawful marriages away from the church and placed the right to grant legal unions solely in the

hands of the civil government (Schmitt 514). *La Bandera Roja* first reported on the Villanueva public scandal, and *La Idea* responded and maintained that both the church diocese and the civil offices should be notified, and that the dual confirmation of matrimonies was sound practice, not an illegal practice. *La Idea* wrote:

They [*La Bandera Roja*] say that our short newspaper article titled “Issue of the Day” (Asunto del Día) is immoral and involves disobeying the law of the Republic and the State, but we will also go on to prove that those perceptions are completely inexact.

*La Idea* went on to explain its position toward Father Sánchez’s innocence on the issue, stating that if he had known of the previous civil contract, he would have denied Villanueva’s marriage within the church. The newspaper staff then referred to a previous article they had published, “El Matrimonio en México” [Marriage in Mexico] in which they claimed that the church and state should create a system of dual notification for marriages. They continued:

We would be able to refute the response paragraph by paragraph that *La Bandera Roja* and Dorador-Villanueva make to us, with respect to the matter, but since the columnist distorts things in his own way, and limits himself to insulting us by addressing us as stupid, fanatics, ignorant, and who knows how many other things; there is certainly no longer any reason for a logical discussion..

*La Bandera Roja* says that we fell into flagrant contradictions with respect to them after they insulted us, and they don’t have any problem with stating that we were the first in failing to abide by the laws of

courtesy in the discussion because we called them hypocrites. Where could this “old Lady” (*La Bandera Roja*) have taken lessons in courtesy and decency? <sup>10</sup>

This is an obvious exchange of ideas, and even insults, which took place within several issues of both publications. *La Idea*’s suggestion that it could “refute the response paragraph by paragraph” only emphasized the care with which the opposing newspaper read its rival’s responses; further, it stressed the importance they felt toward rhetorical decorum. *La Idea* considered public debate a serious dealing and felt that the breakdown of rhetorical decorum, such as “insulting [their audience] by addressing [them] as stupid, fanatics, ignorant, and who knows how many other things” was limiting and counterproductive.

This exchange provides merely a minute example of the public discourse that took place on a myriad of topics from the Reform Laws, the reelection of President Díaz, the incarceration of anti-Díaz journalists in Belén prison, and other hot political topics. Not only did the newspapers exchange ideas, but they published the names of the newspapers, which they felt were worthy and credible sources of information. As a show of support, they would reprint portions of each other’s writings, as seen in the 1900 article “Actitud del partido liberal por las revelaciones del Obispo de San Luis” in *La Bandera Roja* that published a section from *El Observador Zacatecano*, and also in 1888 from *Violetas del Anáhuac* that published comments from *La Industria de Veracruz* and *El Combate* (48). These democratic conversations, discussions, and refutations of ideas were alive and thriving in the newspapers of the Precursor Movement leading up to the Revolution, regardless of Díaz’s attempts to silence them.

In 1901, *Vésper: Justicia y Libertad*, Gutiérrez de Mendoza's own opposition newspaper was hailed as a serious contender in the flurry of discussion and debate being voiced in these publications. Her participation in this Mexican Assembly of newspapers was an anomaly, like the voice of Sappho, Theano, and Aspasia in Grecian discourse (Glenn *Rhetoric Retold*). Her rhetoric conformed to the deliberative and confrontational tone of the other major revolutionary and intellectual writers such as Ricardo Flores Magón, Camilo Arriaga, Juan Sarabia, Antonio Díaz Soto y Gama, and Filomeno Mata (Cockcroft), yet it presented its own feminist agenda seeped within the male-dominated writing. More than just confrontational, these intellectual's rhetoric emerged from a "conjectural crisis, a deep-rooted dissatisfaction with leadership, that later turned into an organic crisis, a wide-spread socio-historical criticism" (Villanueva 127). To seize the historical and *kairotic* moment, the conflicting elements within a situation that create the impetus for a rhetorical act, Gutiérrez de Mendoza and others sounded as "voices of discontent look[ing] back to the root of oppression and articulat[ing] the socio-historical precedents" (Villanueva 128). In May of 1901, Richard Flores Magón published an article in *Regeneración* that acknowledged Gutiérrez de Mendoza's early rhetorical efforts, which claimed that her confrontational voice put others, who were not politically active, to shame.

*Vésper: Justicia y Libertad* is a bundle of active energies. With a courage that without doubt puts to shame many of our fellow citizens that lack it, *Vésper: Justicia y Libertad* confronts the tyrants to strip the mask that hides their true voices (Allatorre 85).<sup>11</sup>



Gutiérrez de Mendoza shared the goal of her male intellectual counterparts of wanting to remove Díaz from office, and she was acutely aware that her rhetoric had to produce a keen awareness of the *científicos*, “the tyrants” that Flores Magón referenced. Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s distinctive use of genre, a harsh and belligerent tone of voice, and a unique linguistic style would contribute to a persuasive effect on her audience. For example, one of Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s radical early publications originated on June 15, 1901 from her press in Guanajuato. She and her co-author, Elisa Acuña y Rosete, a public school teacher, published hundreds of copies of “The Conquest of Bread” by Russian anarchist, Peter Kropotkin (Cockcroft 102). This publication positioned them as radicals, even anarchists. But her philosophical viewpoint would not remain consistent throughout her life; it reflected her need in the political moment, never the popular attitude.

Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s rhetoric in her newspaper articles created a critical space for female political action and established a rare feminine voice in the rhetorical assembly of the Mexican Revolution Precursor Movement. Her organic intellectualism, which remained tied to the classes from which she originated, even if she worked outside of her original community, countered the hegemonic grip of the scientific, positivistic truth of the ruling *científicos* through her choice of genre, tone of address, and linguistic abilities. In *Rereading the Sophists*, Susan Jarratt states that during the nineteenth century “the site of the sophistic/Platonic crossing proved a fertile ground for the enactment of intellectual” and political battles (4). In other words, the nineteenth century was, in general, a period in which there existed a clash of foundational and relativistic ideologies. In Mexico, these same ideological lines between Platonic rhetoric and sophistic rhetoric were drawn between the *científicos* and the liberals. The distinction

between Platonic rhetoric, discourse based on the belief that there exists an immutable truth, and Gorgionic rhetoric, a term derived from the most famous sophist, Gorgias, whose discourse was based on relativistic truth, is significant here because it establishes the distinction between the discourse of the *científicos*, and the diametric discourse of the liberals who opposed the científicos socio-political thought.<sup>12</sup>

For Plato, rhetoric was an irrational methodology that only led people toward deceptive paths. His belief in the social failure of rhetoric was only fortified after his beloved teacher, Socrates, was sentenced to death for the corruption of the minds of Athenian youth. Rhetorical theorist, McComiskey states that, “[f]or Plato, the rational is based on certain knowledge of immutable truth” (21), or a foundational epistemology. “Access to true knowledge,” McComiskey says, “was limited to those of wealth and high birth, and those few born with these qualities were the only legitimate candidates to be counted among the philosophic ruling few” (20). The Porfirian view of reality stood firmly within Plato’s camp of thought. As seen through the dictator’s repression of thought, of the poor, disenfranchisement of the indigenous people, and complete disavowal of election law, he did not believe that the people’s opinions toward the government were valid.

Conversely, sophistic rhetoric exists in a state of unstable knowledge and does not rely on absolute law or policy to drive its epistemological bearings. Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s discourse stands within the sophistic camp. The sophists believed that laws and policies should grow out of discussion; this view supported Athenian democracy. Sophistic rhetoric is also based on historical or opportune moments, or *kairos*, and carries the basic rhetorical precepts of Gorgianic rhetoric, established on socially constructed

codes (*nomos*), which in turn, create distinctive exigencies of a particular rhetorical situation. Finally, sophistic rhetoric parallels mestiza rhetoric because it accepts and creates alternate realities based on public rhetorical situations, which are specific to cultural contexts. Sophistic rhetoric is also Gorgianic rhetoric in that it is “concerned with the greatest good of the community” (McComiskey 27). Gorgias believed that the basis of rhetoric should bring about laws and policies that supported a just and reasonable position for the people was meant to govern, and not merely for the governing few. Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s discourse falls under sophistic rhetoric because she, too, believed in a communal truth. She framed her arguments with a concern for the greater good of the people: the factory workers, the women who worked and who stayed at home, the indigenous and Mexican people enslaved by the profit-hungry mine owners, the greedy *hacendados*, or owners of large, private, rural estates.

The goal in her discourse and in the publications of others opposed to the regime centered on exposing the deceptions and broken promises of the government and to incite the conversations of the middle class people, who Gutiérrez de Mendoza felt, were generally complicit to the growing injustices. Her early 1903 writings reflect the beginning of a social movement that would eventually lead to revolution. She was at the forefront of “the first serious political opposition to the Díaz regime,” and lead the charge by confronting the people and the government. She utilized a clear accusatory stance that directly addressed the dictator in her early 1903 writings from *Vésper: Justicia y Libertad*, AL GENERAL DÍAZ:

Before concluding, we will make a slight clarification. Our newspaper concerns itself with you continually, and we have come, you see, to have

to aim our voice directly. This would cause one to suppose that we come to combat only you, that you are our only objective. And this would be harmful to us, because we would become confused with any paltry mediocrity of the kind that scheme in the Palace and the antechamber for a particular personality; No, our ideals are worth somewhat more than a Porfirio Díaz and yes for the moment we concern ourselves with combating him (Villaneda 129).<sup>13</sup>

Gutiérrez de Mendoza believed that speaking directly to her audience with an accusatory tone would somehow rouse the people to action. And as a rare public rhetorical move, she addressed her discourse in this tone directly to the dictator. Because of her frequent use of this tactic, she may have seen it as the best rhetorical technique for this historical situation, which found many citizens blinded by the false peace Mexico was experiencing.<sup>14</sup> Yet she did not rely on pathetic appeals. To counter the objective, hegemonic rule of positivism, synonymous with the thinking of the *científicos*, Gutiérrez de Mendoza spoke directly to the people of Mexico, urging them to reclaim their rights. She was firm with her sentiments, yet gave people reason to listen to her persuasive appeals. This rhetorical style would become Gutiérrez de Mendoza's trademark.

### **Sophistic Rhetoric: Uncovering the Corruption**

Díaz may have thrown journalists in jail on a regular basis, and even had the more radical writers assassinated, but soon after being released from jail, many of the journalists went right back to the presses and continued to write. To some, this was like a game of cat and mouse. However, a certain measure of leeway from the government in allowing the journalists to voice their opinions and thoughts was necessary in order to

maintain social hegemony. Up to this moment in 1903, almost twenty-seven years had passed with Díaz still in power. According to Stuart Hall in “Race, Articulation, and Societies Structured in Dominance,” hegemony is “a state of ‘total social authority’ which, at certain specific conjunctures, a specific class alliance wins, by a combination of ‘coercion and ‘consent,’ over the whole social formation, and its dominated classes” (51). Although hegemony is based on a level of “total social authority,” hegemony is formed from the continuation of class struggle. Hall says that hegemony is “a state of play in the class struggle,” and so, in order for hegemony to exist, there must be a level of permitted resistance on the part of the ruling class. Krauze described the power that Porfirio Díaz wielded over people as godlike, and that for many of his followers, there was a “sacred aura that accompanied their obedience...and it clearly had its roots in the Indian past” (212). The Mexican journalistic scene served as the resistance in this hegemonic order.

The lack of a physical location to gather and discuss political topics prevented the journalists and the people from taking further action in Mexico City and San Luis Potosí. These spaces were reserved for the “intellectuals” who subscribed to Díaz’s ideology. Krauze notes that “[e]ntire generations of real or potential writers on politics use their pens to write poetry, history, or novels, to move freely among all genres except the forbidden zone of political criticism” (588). Díaz never appeared before the masses to answer questions as one would in a true democracy, and so the people took their protests to the pages of the newspaper. As a result, a rhetorical revolution began, and sophistic rhetoric, based on a relativistic epistemology which allowed for the determination of communal truth (McComiskey 18) spread like fire. Because of his positivistic principles, Díaz prohibited Mexican citizens from political and governmental policy making.

Porfirio Diaz's absolute rule created a *kairotic* moment for an oppositional, counter-hegemonic, sophistic rhetoric to emerge.

For centuries, the philosophical thought of Mexico reflected the main currents of European tradition. The same was true of Porfirio Diaz's political ideology. At the heart of Porfirian political thought and extended leadership, the views influenced by the Spanish and French technocrats that the Mexicans called *científicos* persisted. They were advanced by scientific thinkers, philosophers, educators, and politicians, such as Luis Yves Limantour, Justo Sierra, and Francisco Bulnes. The *científicos* believed in positivist thinking, stemming from Auguste Comte's belief that only scientific knowledge is true knowledge (Raat 90). The tenets of this thought permeated Mexican society, and since the Presidency of Benito Juárez (1858-1872), the primary and secondary schools in Mexico had based their curriculum on positivistic thinking. In "The Positivist Philosophy in Mexican Education, 1867 – 1873," Albert J. Delmez points out that Antonio Martinez de Castro, then Minister of Justice and Public Instruction, had appointed Gabino Barreda and four other intellectuals charging them with the task of developing a curriculum for Mexican schools. Delmez asserts that Barreda was most greatly influenced by Comte and the idea that morality should be separated from the Church. With an education based in positivistic ideas, the methodology of this curriculum was "designed to discover truths of general universal validity, what was just as important, to permit the application of these to the social order" (Delmez 42). His goal was for *all* students who completed the course work to come to the same conclusion in every social situation. This curriculum led to the development of Mexico's hegemonic "formation of a 'national-popular will' ( Hall 52). Barreda was successful in

implementing a curriculum in Mexico based on positivist philosophies, and to counter this curriculum and thought would take future educators and social activists years.

In 1903, Juan Pedro Didapp, an outspoken Mexican politician, reserved the term positivist or *científico* (those scientifically oriented) for followers of scientifically-oriented thought. For many, the científicos were synonymous with the ruling class. In his article, “The Anti-positivist Movement in Prerevolutionary Mexico, 1892-1911,” William Raat contends that the people felt that científicos “did not represent the will of the people,” “were nothing other than representatives of a foreign interest,” and “were destructive of the nation’s interest” (Raat 90-91). From the pages of *El Diablito Rojo*, a pro-worker newspaper, there emerged a belief that positivism was equal to money grubbing. “The Científicos,” the liberal newspapers claimed, “[robbed] the poor to feed the rich. Love in the positivist value system meant only love of money” (Raat 86). This system kept the wealthy in power, and also gave them authority to selectively choose those who represented the same ideology and to appoint them to positions at state and local levels. Positivism derived from Porfirian-funded intellectualism and would support the dictator’s hold on power for nearly thirty years.

Barreda’s educational and social goals toward progress and universal order succeeded all too well. Scholars of political history describe Díaz’s positivistic views as translating into a “petrification of politics, and to the preference for the administration of politics rather than the open or democratic practice of political debate and electoral competition” (Garner 100). Díaz’s belief in positivism, which also depended on the empirical evaluation of reality, translated into immutable truths about the people of Mexico. Believing the characteristics of the Mexican people to be absolute, immutable

truths, he felt that the population should be governed and not allowed a voice in politics. In order to sustain the status quo and push for progress, “[Díaz’s] political style emphasized reticence and caution, and his preference was always for political action rather than ideological debate” (Garner 71). The popular phrase “*poca política y mucha administración*,” meaning limited politics and lots of administration,” came from his method of governing. The journalists and intellectuals writing in opposition to his policies and methods were silenced, but only to a degree. As Garner points out, “murder and assassination were far from frequent and they were certainly never part of a general strategy of press control” (125).

Connected to the abundance of Mexican publications in the Precursor Movement was the anti-positivist movement that emerged in San Luis Potosí and Mexico City in 1900-1903. The anti-positivist movement combated the hegemonic grip of positivism and the blanket consent that the middle and upper class of the nation had bestowed upon Díaz’s governmental rule. Journalists and organic intellectuals, such as Gutiérrez de Mendoza, relied on personal experience to attract other groups to their cause, and as a result, emerged as major voices against the regime. “In 1901 and 1902, at least forty-two anti-Díaz newspapers were closed down. More than fifty journalists were jailed throughout the nation, not counting the detention in Belén of Mexico City journalists from *Regeneración*” (Cockcroft) and other radically liberal papers.<sup>15</sup>

Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s writings embodied the sophistic rhetoric of the Precursor Movement. McComiskey stated that sophistic rhetoric it stemmed from one’s genuine “concern for the greater good of the community,” and the ability “[t]o demonstrate reason and truth in the relative context of a particular situation” (28). Throughout her



publications, Gutiérrez de Mendoza unveiled the hidden atrocities she saw, which imperiled the country's move toward order and progress, and manifested her deep consternation that the law under Díaz would permit such depravity. In her 1903 article "A LOS MEXICANOS," she reported on a 2.5 million dollar loan given to the government by the friars of California, which was intended for public use. Gutiérrez de Mendoza expressed doubt that the funds would reach their destination.

It is logical that other countries should suppose that a nation that borrows 2.5 million for public works must be a prosperous country.

For this operation to work, two things are required: give the people an explanation of the use of those funds and give the foreigners the impression of great wealth.

We ask the conniving economists: Is this an economic system? We ask the serious men who are honorably worried about the country's well-being: Does the path of profligacy lead to prosperity? [...]

Supposedly the 2.5 million will be used in public works, but it is ridiculous to expect that because it is obvious that the employees don't even have enough for shoes, such is the extent of the poverty of the people, unknown to the outside world, but very visible and palpable for the men of our nation who do nothing to avoid either the waste or the poverty (Alatorre 126).<sup>16</sup>

The government's treatment of the poor and disenfranchised, which Gutiérrez de Mendoza had experienced firsthand, infuriated her. It also served to fuel her motivation

to persuade her audience, the citizens of Mexico, that a change within the high ranks of the government was the only solution for progress.

Other journalists who subscribed to Gutiérrez de Mendoza's idea of change were jailed and persecuted for reporting on employee abuse and malfeasance in what they believed should be an open democratic society. They reported on these government infractions through reasoned premises. For example, in several articles from *Vesper* in 1903, Gutiérrez de Mendoza reported on the April 16, 1903 arrest of the staff of *El Hijo de Ahuizote*: the Flores Magón brothers, Juan and Manuel Sarabia, Rosalío Bustamante, and other movement leaders (Cockcroft 114). At the time she published the May 15, 1903 volume of *Vesper*, the main leaders were all imprisoned in Belén, which added to her rhetorical strength. She was the lone female voice in the sea of publications speaking on behalf of the dissenters. Along with reasoned facts of the event, Gutiérrez de Mendoza did not hesitate to reveal the "truth-as-probabilities," which created a space for her to "defend those who act justly and prosecute those who do not" (McComiskey 34).

There exists in the conscience of every honest man, the idea that the previously quoted journalists, while writing in condemnation of the punishable acts of an illegitimate government, make use of a right in the name of their country, . . . and when that right, which is worthily and legally exercised, is trampled upon, hasn't there been committed an unspeakable abuse which is worthy of punishment?<sup>17</sup>

Gutiérrez de Mendoza used the probable truth that people *should* be allowed to speak out against their government as a way of combating unjustified suppression of newspapers and journalists. Although the people of Mexico witnessed such infractions, they did not

react. The jailing of journalists continued through the early part of the twentieth century, and Gutiérrez de Mendoza accepted the people's silence as acquiescence, and tried to convince them that their silence meant complicity.

In another article published two months after the May 15 article on July 8th, she continued to target the Mexican people who remained silent in the face of tyranny.

People: right now it is time that you wake up and see the ones that abuse you and enchain you, that steal from you and look down on you. Right now it is time that you march alongside the liberals that fight for your redemption, watching over with devotion, unscathed in spite of the sacrifice, the works that our heroes bequeathed to us and ensured our rights and our freedoms. People: choose between the Monarchy and the Republic. Between those that enchain you and those that give you freedoms (Allatore 136).<sup>18</sup>

After months of inaction on the part of the people, mostly the middle class, Gutiérrez de Mendoza gave her audience a clear choice of whom to follow. Again, her writings read as powerful political speeches that reflected the aureate and ostentatious political language of the time. Gorgias, one of the key Grecian sophists, would have condoned Gutiérrez de Mendoza's use of powerful and persuasive language (*logos*) as being completely ethical, seeing that "democracy depends on the ability to change the opinions of others and the willingness to allow one's own opinions to be changed" (McComiskey 25). Combined with the demonstration of reason and truth, Gutiérrez de Mendoza also relied on another rhetorically sophistic element: emotional appeal (*pathos*).

Emotional appeal is a sophistic tool that Gorgias understood as “important for rhetorical uses of language to elicit a certain emotional response in the audience” (McComiskey 28). Nevertheless, Gorgias distrusted the rhetor that relied too heavily on emotional appeals to reach an audience. There is an appropriate time when a desired action expected from an audience is needed for the greater good of the people. An affective discourse is necessary for moving audiences toward the desired physical action, which in Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s case was to elicit revolt against Díaz’s regime. McComiskey cites Segal’s interpretation of Gorgianic rhetoric, stating that a process is required in order to achieve an aesthetic response in an audience. The first step includes *terpsis*, “a passive aesthetic sensory response to a stimulus, leads to and must precede *anankê*, the active psyche-based force that motivates the desired physical action in the audience” (McComiskey 28). The discourse presented to the audience must provide a perception of reality that “leads to aesthetic dissonance (*tarachê*) in the senses” (McComiskey 28). Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s rhetoric did not rely solely on *pathos*. She first presented a logical and ethical argument. For example, she logically argues for the rights of the press in the article “A LOS MEXICANOS”: “Before 16 million inhabitants, the dictator has trampled upon guarantees, had violated rights and insulted citizens. With a savage rage, he has shred to pieces the independent press, the only manifestation that was left of our liberty, he has filled the jail cells with honorable citizens, he has closed workshops, and he has sacked properties and has not respected the sacredness of the home (Alatorre 127).<sup>19</sup> After these logical arguments infused with personal observations, Gutiérrez de Mendoza unleashed her emotional appeals.

By repeating loaded phrases and words, Gutiérrez de Mendoza used the tragic

events and observations as rhetorical means to awaken the people out of their political slumber, and help them realize the truth of their *existencia pacífica* (peaceful existence) (Bartra 76).

Where has the embarrassment gone from those who usurp the representation of the people?

Where has the decorum gone of the people who permit such gross exhibition of character?

Where is the dignity of the people that let them be robbed of their rights?

Mexicans, in the face of so many obvious errors, in the face of crimes committed in our mist, in the face of unprecedented calculations, in the face of the death of the liberties of the Republic, we call to your conscience, show us the civic example of our citizens...Citizens worth of our ancestors, worthy of ourselves in the name of our national honor... save the Republic (Alatorre 129).<sup>20</sup>

Gutiérrez de Mendoza's writing was not poetry *per se*, but it carried, as many did journalists' writing of the time, an oratorical rhythm. This style of journalistic writing in Mexico could have partially been influenced by the speeches and writings of Emilio Castelar (1832-1899), the Spanish parliamentary orator and journalist from the age of eloquence. In "Emilio Castelar and Mexico," Charles A. Hale paints Castelar as a supporter of a liberal Mexico and a defier of the Spanish regime, and whose writings appealed to many Mexicans who read *La Libertad* and *El Monitor Republicano*. Justo Sierra's eulogy of Castelar in 1899 provides evidence of his journalistic influence on the

intellectual journalists of the time. “In grandiloquent prose that was truly Castelarian, Sierra extolled Castelar’s oratorical power, unequalled through the ages...[and] was more than political oratory, said Sierra, it was also a transmutation into ‘oral music’ of all of history – philosophy, art and science” (Hale 141). Many of Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s publications read like political oratory suffused with oral music. Gorgias, the sophist, warned against this style of writing, “logos with meter” or poetry, which can “elicit a range of emotions.” When tragic experiences are coupled with meter, the audience becomes seduced through the rhetor’s grief and fear, and consequently, *logos* becomes a negative force, deceiving the audience to take unsound action. Sophistic rhetoric, as Gorgias concedes, must arouse some aesthetic response in the audience. Gutiérrez de Mendoza did not write tragic poetry, but her *technê*, or art, through the use of *epanaphora*, the repetition of a word or words at the beginning of two or more successive verses, clauses, or sentences, may have had the ability to induce the same response in an audience as that of a tragedy. This common use of repetition of clauses or phrases, also called parallel structure, is a very common trope in the Spanish language, and is indicative of many political or public speeches.

Besides conforming to her language’s structure, the common use of epanaphoras in Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s writing was deliberately meant to elicit a variety of emotions in her audience. In the next example, the repetition of the word “*sin*,” meaning without, coupled with virtues such as consideration, respect, and fear, has the ability to draw on the emotions of grief for her position as a victimized citizens and to incite hate toward the government that lacks those virtues. Repeated phrases loaded with emotional appeal, serve the rhetor with a metrical verbal representation of suffering meant to awaken

feelings in the audience. “Without respect to anyone or anything, without consideration of the Homeland or the Republic, without respect for the sacred institutions, without fear of losing one’s reputation, a shameful charade is organized” (Alatorre 129).<sup>21</sup> Although strong emotional appeals made by questioning the civility and decorum of her audience are seen, one should ask if Gutiérrez de Mendoza obtained the emotional response she desired. The answer, it seems would be yes. After the July 8, 1903 publication of *Vésper*, Gutiérrez de Mendoza was thrown in jail on the charges of “*sedición y rebelión*” (Pouwels 65), and if her words from the 1903 publications warranted a place in jail alongside the key male liberal political agitators, then the conclusion could be drawn that her rhetorical intentions had been fulfilled. It would be nearly impossible to measure how the people were receiving her message, but the authorities obviously did not want her to continue delivering her edicts. The leading liberals not only used specific stylistic features in their writing, but they also incorporated different genres, such as open letters to their readers or certain politicians, which were meant to send out a rallying cry exhorting citizens to awaken to the conspicuous malevolence of the dictator.

### **Audience Consideration: Public Letter Writing as Rhetorical Opposition and Confrontation**

As has been demonstrated, daily, weekly, and monthly newspapers in San Luis Potosí and Mexico City served as a rhetorical space for the exchange of political ideas and concerns. And since this was an era of journalistic expansion, Mexican journalists also employed this space to experiment with rhetorical norms. Journalists writing against the regime did not always adhere to a strict rhetorical structure or public discourse. For example, many of the early anti-Díaz papers featured articles that were written more in

the style of public letters, treatises, or manifestoes than that of an objective news report. These were rhetorical strategies which harkened back almost a decade to the age of the polemic press, which had ended in 1896 with the birth of the daily newspaper *El Imparcial* (Pouwels 42). Ricardo Flores Magón, the main intellect of the Precursor Movement, published many manifestos and plans in his newspaper, *Regeneración*, which specifically identified his audience in the opening lines (Bufe and Cowen Verter). By directly addressing a specific audience in a newspaper article, the writer employs rhetorical opposition, which suggests that every argument or rhetorical form expresses a counter argument (Herrick 213). In other words, the speaker acknowledges the opposition, even hoping for a response.

For example, Ricardo Flores Magón used the simple phrase: “A la Nación,” or “Mexicanos,” in several openings of his declarations and manifestos, which other journalists, such as Gutiérrez de Mendoza, would later echo by employing variations in their opening statements. This does not imply that these radicals from the turn of the century invented this style. This type of salutation, when addressing an audience as if delivering a speech, was a deeply rooted Mexican tradition, as seen in the manifestos discussed in chapter three. But it does suggest that Flores Magón and other journalists, such as Gutiérrez de Mendoza, borrowed these forms to engage in polemics. In modern Mexican journalism, journalists did not identify a particular audience in the by-lines because news reporting was expected to be objective and directed to a general audience (Pouwels 42). Even at the cusp of modernism, the Flores Magón’s and Gutiérrez de Mendoza were breaking with rhetorical norm. Gutiérrez de Mendoza followed this journalistic trope which was being widely used, as seen in the opening to her May 15,



1903 article with the *salutatio*, or greeting: “A LOS MEXICANOS” (Alatorre 125). Gutiérrez de Mendoza used the plural article “los” in order to specifically identify the citizens of Mexico. The word *los* is a masculine plural article meaning *the*, which encompasses male and female forms. In this article, she explicitly intended to address *the* Mexican people, not the people who were living there as foreigners, businessmen, or visitors, which in turn, evoked a level of nationalism or comradeship in the audience. By making this designation in the *salutatio*, she was able to appropriate certain styles of address, and to make assumptions of what her audience might know about the culture and the political climate.

These are important designations; however, they do not answer specifically why Gutiérrez de Mendoza employed the genre of the letter and not the modern genre of journalistic reporting that provided an objective view of the political situation. Part of the reason for the choice of genre could be the repression of open public debate. Throughout his rule, Díaz made certain that he was never directly questioned regarding his political views. The newspapers may have questioned his politics, but there was never a direct answer from Díaz. He allowed government funded newspapers, such as *El Imparcial* and *El Monitor Republicano* to speak for him on political issues. Sensing the tense political atmosphere, journalists, like Gutiérrez de Mendoza, may have felt that they could communicate their disdain for the president in an unconventional forum of journalism, such as that of letter writing. A newspaper article in the form of a letter has the potential to carry more persuasive power and counter hegemonic force than an ordinary objective report. These open letters can be compared to the stance of a journalist poised in front of a governing assembly who dared to speak their mind to the dictator, a bold and

courageous rhetorical posture. Furthermore, the author of these published letters is able to take certain liberties in a letter to the people by including opinions and commentary in a tone that resonated with the audience.

An example of Gutiérrez de Mendoza's articles in the form of a letter addressed to General Díaz was published in *Vesper* on the same date as "A LOS MEXICANOS." She began with a salutation to the dictator: "AL GENERAL DÍAZ." In the discourse that followed, the letter to the General broke with all Mexican cultural norms of society and gender in addressing authority. The *salutatio* of a letter is usually followed by the *captatio benevolentiae*, which is meant to secure the good will of the reader (Herrick 136). Gutiérrez de Mendoza's letter to the General ignored this structure. She depersonalized her introduction to General Díaz, even referring to him in the third person. This respectful form of address appears in other archived letters she wrote to public officials, such as in her letter to General Antonio I. Villarreal (Alatorre 107), but with the address of "AL GENERAL DÍAZ: General:" there is a lack of respect for his position, which she felt he had defiled. She wrote:

For so long you have impeded our progress that we are now  
obligated to direct our words to you, as difficult as it is to direct our words  
to you, we cannot find in you a person that will lead us seeing that your  
moral character has disappeared completely, the man, the politician, the  
gentleman, the human being; nothing has been left but blind ambition,  
(Alatorre 132).<sup>22</sup>

In the opening lines, Gutiérrez de Mendoza hints of the public's difficulty when addressing the dictator, but that the continued silence from him now called for a direct

confrontation. Gutiérrez de Mendoza made a strong rhetorical statement in the opening of the letter that immediately positioned hers as an opponent of the government. This was an especially uncivil and unimaginable position for a woman to take. As if to incite contempt by not conforming to the hierarchical structure of social address, Gutiérrez de Mendoza symbolically brought the ruler down to the level of an ordinary citizen, or even worse, to that of a non-entity (Herrick 135).

In the same article, Gutiérrez de Mendoza called for the dictator's resignation. However, before requesting that he cede power, Gutiérrez de Mendoza presented the classical *narratio*, an elucidation of the state of affairs at the moment, or "the facts that have motivated the writing" (Fulkerson 125). The tone throughout the *narratio* is highly sarcastic and confrontational, which is consistent with Cathcart's theory of the rhetoric of social movements. According to Cathcart, the use of confrontational rhetoric separates the rhetor from the perceived corrupt existing order. Cathcart states that

[c]onfrontation is a proclamation. It proclaims through the movement, 'We are already dead but we are reborn.' It says, 'We are united in the movement and we understand you for what you are, and you know that we understand' (Cathcart 101).

From a larger perspective, then, Gutiérrez de Mendoza's letter, in addition to many manifestos and Plans which were circulating, marked the beginning of a social movement from a feminine perspective. Manifesting the characteristics of an aural society, Gutiérrez de Mendoza's confrontational and even contemptuous voice, requesting that Díaz resign, may have given the reader an image of her as someone in an assembly of angry people who dared to challenge authority.

And we do not come to demand respect from you of the principles from which you have distanced yourself by trodding on them, no more do we come to demand compliance with the obligation of which you are ignorant, we have come sincerely to demand that you retire (Alatorre 132).<sup>23</sup>

By indirectly confronting Díaz, she gained a certain level of legitimacy and credibility in a patriarchal society that thrived on masculine power or machismo, as seen in the praise elicited from Flores Magón. The 1903 publication of *Vesper*, co-authored with Elisa Acuña y Rosete, which was full of insults and criticism of the government, would earn Gutiérrez de Mendoza a ten month jail sentence. Even to this day, among scholars and historians, her name is synonymous with these types of indecorous attacks against Díaz, the government, and later, as we shall see in chapter five, of educational policies she perceived as injurious to indigenous people. Confrontation became her rhetorical signature.

Gutiérrez de Mendoza's convention in her use of the language was also consistent with protest traditions throughout Mexican history. As Hammerback and Jensen note in their article, "Ethnic Heritage as Rhetorical Legacy: The Plan of Delano," a specific rhetorical tone had been used in public documents throughout Mexican historical movements which had called for changes in the governmental structure (305). They successfully argued that the "tone of formality" that appeared in the revolutionary plans dating back to 1821, beginning with the issuance of *El Plan de Iguala* by Colonel Agustín de Iturbide, had prevailed throughout Mexican history and had morphed into other governmental conflicts and revolutions. Although Gutiérrez de Mendoza's articles

from *Vesper* were not formal Plans that gave “justification for the seizure of the government by force,” (Hammerback and Jensen 307), her publications certainly carried the same rhetorical goals: “to expand the revolutionaries’ circle of followers and gain public support for [her] cause” (306). In order to attract others to her cause, she would switch from the formal, *Ustedes* to the informal form *vosotros*, a common linguistic trope in the Spanish language. Gutiérrez de Mendoza fortified her relationship with her audience by reverting in the middle of her missives to a more familiar tone, as one would with a friend.

In letters to friends, the writer has the liberty of digressing from the topic, and even has license to proffer advice, whether solicited or not. After the main premises in the letter “A LOS MEXICANOS,” Gutiérrez de Mendoza accused Díaz of trampling on the rights of the people, and then deliberately veered into a distinctive Spanish linguistic structure that had a warmer tone than the formal tone typically utilized in the revolutionary plans. Wanting her audience to understand that she could empathize with their suffering and that she knew them personally, she adopted the Latin American *vosotros* form of address instead of the formal *Ustedes*. In the English language, the pronoun *you* or the understood *you* is used when speaking to someone either formally or informally. In the Spanish language (and other languages) there are two forms of *you*, the formal (*Usted*) and familiar (*vosotros*). By changing her tone from the formal (*Usted*) to the informal (*vosotros*), the reader or listener sensed that Gutiérrez de Mendoza was on the same social level and were made to feel that all were personally committed to the same liberal cause. The use of the *vosotros* form reinforced the personal character of the letter. Furthermore, by reporting the attack of two journalists while at home, Mr. Soria

and Mr. Maldonado, she exposed the issue of repression in the public and private realm.

She continued to digress from the main premise, that of questioning her audience in the familiar form of address: “Mexicans: Do you not blush at these things happening before you? Have you degraded as much as your enemies that neither them nor you feel shame? They for persecuting women and you for allowing them to?” (Alatorre 128) <sup>24</sup>

When politically expedient, she spoke of women’s frailty and how they were tethered to their homes while, at the same time, exhorting them to claim control of certain political constructions. She ended the section stating, “For this reason we accuse you and for this reason we come to take your place.”<sup>25</sup> Digressions in correspondence are productive interstices within the body of the document. Fulkerson notes in his seminal analysis of Martin Luther King Jr.’s letter to the clergymen, that “[i]f the section is digressive, it is progressive at the same time; and such asides...enhance the feeling that this is a personal letter in which personal feeling and digression are acceptable” (Fulkerson 125).

Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s decision to write letters as a means of communicating her disdain for the government advanced her discursive relationship with her audience to a more personal level, giving her the license to address them as a concerned friend, even if it meant criticizing them.

From the beginning of the article, Gutiérrez de Mendoza accused her readers of failing to live up to their responsibilities as citizens and chastised them in a tone intended to provoke guilt; however, her castigation the concluded with uplifting words. In “Militant Motherhood: Labor’s Mary Harris “Mother Jones,” Mari Boor Tonn points out that the rhetoric of Mother Jones was full of irritation and sarcasm and was always mixed with a sympathetic and reassuring mercy, a blended quality” (Tonn 343).<sup>26</sup> Gutiérrez de

Mendoza also used a combination of the two rhetorical appeals. She employed accusatory discourse and followed it with words of conciliation. “We call on your patriotic sentiments, we call on your dignity as citizens, do not require us to maintain our accusation through posterity, causing the dying Republic to curse you and, in its death throes, to brand your faint-heartedness with the stigma of disgrace, with the prominent mark of cowards” (Alatorre 130).<sup>27</sup> In the section before the following, she shamed her readers, asking when their honor and dignity as Mexican citizens had vanished, but then closed with words of reconciliation, seeking to inspire them to participate in civic engagement.

Citizens worthy of your ancestors, worthy of your very selves, and  
in the name of national honor and of your own honor, save the Republic  
(Alatorre 130).<sup>28</sup>

From phrases such as this, one can perceive of Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s feelings of conflict of interest between the love for her country and for its people and with a frustration and contempt toward them because they could not or would not see past the false progress and order of their everyday lives as promulgated by the bureaucracy in power. In many ways, these first articles represent Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s desire for an ideal world, a notion that the experience of the Mexican Revolution would later dispel. It was through these first articles, though, that she would emerge as the subject of revolutionary discourse. The moment was ripe with possibility for a woman such as Gutiérrez de Mendoza, who could shape her discourse to define the country’s situation and urgency for action, all while redefining Mexican women as articulate, sentient, and publicly active subjects.

## Conclusion

In the years leading up to the revolution, Gutiérrez de Mendoza became more involved in journalistic, militant, and anti-Díaz activities. She continued to employ a radical voice, such as that of the May 1903 article, “Ecce Homo,” in which she addresses the audience as if she were Pontius Pilot, sole judge and jury of the people. She presents Díaz, the dictator, to the people of Mexico declaring, “Flatterers! Here is your man as he is.” Her tone, though, is not one of praise, but of scorn, “What, Porfirio Díaz figures that his most humble servant Juana B. Gutiérrez de Mendoza, wants to snatch away his title of local thug (Alatorre 131)?”<sup>29</sup> As if to add rhetorical insult to injury, she claimed that Díaz will be “the first man to be afraid of women.” In another article from July 1903, “Un discurso bulneriano,” she employed a play on Bulnes’s name, one of Díaz’s supporters who gave a flattering speech in praise of the dictator, and converted his name into an adjective, *bulneriano*, which made reference to the type of speeches that Bulnes delivered. In Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s response to his speech, she pointed out that “the claims Mr. Bulnes makes toward Esquire Porfirio in praising him are the same we make in accusing him” (137).<sup>30</sup> After these May and July 1903 publications of radical open letters to the public, and lengthy speech-like editorials, she was thrown in jail for the second time. She served her sentence in Mexico City in the Belén prison, where she was reunited with the Flores Magón brothers, Santiago de la Hoz, Juan Sarabia, and other revolutionaries. Having been imprisoned in the same space of rebellious exile for the same rhetorical infractions as the men, who were later proclaimed to be the greatest revolutionaries of the time, Gutiérrez de Mendoza officially earned the label of revolutionary, and her writing gained greater validity and advanced to a level of



revolutionary cache.

Gutiérrez de Mendoza's discursive presence in an Athenian Assembly-like arena during the Revolutionary Precursor Movement has rhetorical implications beyond that of being intertwined with the canonized Revolutionary leaders. Her ability to act upon a belief that she could be politically active within the social structure of journalism opened the way for other women to become involved in the field of journalism and politics. Moreover, her writing is an important part of the overarching mestiza rhetoric and mestiza consciousness interwoven throughout this dissertation. Mestiza rhetoric emerges from a place of suspension between cultural realities, meaning that the writer does not necessarily identify with an indigenous background, but that she is able to conceptualize a *different reality* of herself and her behavior, which then creates an ontological shift. Gutiérrez de Mendoza, however, *did* consider herself to have emerged from an indigenous background, and was able to imagine herself outside of her prescribed reality as a Mexican woman. Although she worked and wrote within a male discursive structure, she was also creating her own discourse, one that stemmed from a feminine understanding of the world, and one that also materialized from an indigenous understanding of the world. This new space, this new culture that Gutiérrez de Mendoza created was feminized in a way that Hélén Cixous explains as writing outside of the positivist view of reason. "To write...[a]n act that will also be marked by woman's *seizing* the occasion to *speak*, hence her shattering entry into history, which has always been based *on her suppression*. To write and to forge for herself the antilogos weapon" (880 emphasis Cixous'). Cixous's interpretation is also in line with the sophistic view of writing that relies on the *kairos* of the moment.

The Precursor Movement, which eventually led to the Mexican Revolution, was more or less about destruction and about creation. The movement created a space for democracy, a space for the few to challenge the hegemonic grip of the positivistic ideology sponsored by Díaz. The sophistic spirit continues to live within the writings of Gutiérrez de Mendoza and the activist/revolutionary writers of Mexico at that time. Susan Jarratt notes that the sophists work endeavored to shape human behavior for the benefit of the community, and analogous to the work of the Grecian sophists, Mexican journalists writing against the maltreatment of workers, indigenous people, and women, “concentrated on the power of language in shaping human behavior explicitly within the limits of time and space. Sophistic rhetoric, then, as an instrument of social action in the *polis* was bound to the flux” (11). Mexico *was* in a period of unrest, politically, socially, and discursively. This period of instability provided Gutiérrez de Mendoza with an opportunity to enter into the public discursive exchange of ideas as a woman. Her rhetoric may have been harsh, searing, and at times offensive to the reader; yet, it was the voice that inscribed her discourse as a material construct of her identity.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The 1901 publication of *Vesper* is not available any archive either in the US or Mexico.

<sup>2</sup>, Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza acted as first speaker, second speaker, Evaristo Guillén, third speaker, Federico Pérez Fernández, fourth speaker, Rosalío Bustamante, fifth speaker, Elisa Acuña y Rosete, sixth speaker, Alfonso Cravioto, seventh vocal, María del Refugio Vélez, eighth speaker, Tomás Sarabia, ninth speaker, Alfonso Arciniega, and tenth speaker Humberto Macías Valadez (Allatore 89-90).

<sup>3</sup> Also see *Habermas and the Public Sphere* edited by Craig Calhoun

<sup>4</sup> All historical writings on Gutiérrez de Mendoza call her Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza, but Juana Belén was not her given name. In baptismal documents I procured from the church archives in San Juan del Río, Durango, her birth date is noted as January 27, 1875 and was baptized on February 2, 1875. Her given name reads María Juana Francisca Gutiérrez Chavez. The authentication of this document can be proven because of the names of the parents listed on the document of Santiago Gutierrez and Porfiria Chavez are cited as her parents in all historical accounts I have read on Gutiérrez de Mendoza.

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<sup>5</sup> The number of years Gutiérrez de Mendoza attended school is not documented. At the time, many girls did not even attend school, so it would be difficult to even speculate on the level of education Gutiérrez de Mendoza received.

<sup>6</sup> Si hubiera estado ciega sin saberlo y repentinamente hubiera visto, habría recibido la misma impresión que recibí viendo la cárcel. Tuve la sensación de que había vivido fuera de la realidad, en un mundo fantástico o artificial. La cárcel, con sus cruda realidades me advirtió la distancia a que estaba de la verdad. Porque es cierto que ya no creía que bastaba la caída o la muerte o la supresión en cualquier forma de Presidente de la República, para que se resolviera todo.

<sup>7</sup> *Jefes políticos* were the district officials charged with overseeing municipal affairs. This term became synonymous with corrupt officialdom during the Díaz era.

<sup>8</sup> I am not suggesting that the Mexican journalists carried the same political and decision making power as those who spoke and participated in the Athenian Assembly, whose decisions were carried out by Council of Five Hundred. But what this comparison does suggest is that the Mexican journalists words were considered politically powerful enough by the government for censure. With this analogy, I am pointing out how the circulation of Mexican newspapers did constitute a level of freedom of speech and influence on the government and the people.

<sup>9</sup> See Arenas Guzman

<sup>10</sup> Que nuestro párrafo de gacetilla titulado “Asunto del día” es inmoral y envuelve desacute a las leyes de la República y del Estado, pasaremos también a probar que son del todos inexactas todas esas apreciaciones. [...]

Párrafo a párrafo podríamos refutar la réplica que nos hace *La Bandera Roja*, con motivo del asunto Dorador-Villanueva, pero como el articulista tergiversa las cosas a su manera, y se limite tan sólo a insultarnos llamándonos estúpidos, fanáticos, ignorantes, y quien sabe cuantas cosas más; desde luego y no tiene caso una discusión razonado.

Dice *La Bandera Roja*, que nosotros incurrimos en flagrantes contradicciones de ella después de insultarnos no tiene inconveniente en asentar que fuimos los primeros en faltar a las leyes de la caballeridad en la discusión por que le llamamos hipócrita. ¿En donde habrá tomado lecciones de caballeridad y decencia esta antigua Señora?

<sup>11</sup> Vesper: Justicia y Libertad es un haz de viriles energías... Con un valor que sin duda avergonzará a muchos de nuestros conciudadanos que carecen de él, Vesper: Justicia y Libertad se encara a los tiranos para arrancarles la careta que oculta sus vicios.

<sup>12</sup> The sophists were known in Grecian times (440 BC) as traveling teachers who would teach the skills of public speaking to anyone who could pay the fees for instruction. The sophists did not believe that only the ruling class had the gift to speak in public and make decisions; they believed that anyone could be taught these skills.

<sup>13</sup> Antes de concluir, haremos una ligera aclaración. Nuestro periódico se ocupa de Ud. continuamente, y hemos llegado, ya ve Ud., hasta tenerle que dirigir nuestra voz directamente, esto haría suponer que venimos a combatirlo a Ud. únicamente, que es Ud. nuestro único objetivo, y esto sería perudicial para nosotras, porque se nos confundiría con cualquier medianía raquítica de esas que intrigan en el Palacio y la antesala por determinada personalidad; No, nuestros ideales valen algo más que un Porfirio Díaz y sí por el momento nos ocupamos de combatirlo.

<sup>14</sup> See Chapter One of *Workers, Neighbors, and Citizens: The Revolution in Mexico City* by John Lear

<sup>15</sup> Before Belén was a prison, it served as a monastery.

<sup>16</sup> Se supone que los 2.5 millones se emplearán en obras públicas, pero es ridículo esperarlo porque los empleados se ve que no tienen para zapatos, pues es tal la miseria popular, desconocida en el extranjero, pero muy visible y palpable para los hombres de nuestro país que nada hacen para evitar el derroche ni la miseria

<sup>17</sup> En la conciencia de todo hombre honrado, está que los periodistas citados, al escribir censurando los actos punibles de un gobierno espúreo, hacen uso de un derecho en nombre de su país, . . . y cuando se atropella ese derecho ejercido digna y legalmente ¿no se comete un abuso incalificable y digno de castigo. [

<sup>18</sup> Pueblo: es tiempo ya de que despiertes y veas a los que te vejan y te encadenan, te roban y te desprecian. Es tiempo ya de que marches al lado de los liberales que luchan por tu redención, guardando con veneración, incólumes a pesar del sacrificio, las obras que nos legaron nuestros héroes y garantizar nuestros

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derechos y nuestras libertades. Pueblo: Elige entre la Monarquía y la República. Entre los que te encadenan y los que te dan libertades.

<sup>19</sup> Ante 16 millones de habitantes, la dictadura ha atropellado garantías, ha violado derechos y ultrajado ciudadanos. Con ensañamiento salvaje, ha despedazado la presa independiente, única manifestación que quedaba de libertad, ha llenado las bartolinas de ciudadanos honrado, ha arrancado talleres, [y] ha entrado a saco en la propiedad y no ha respetado ni lo inviolable del hogar.

<sup>20</sup> Bernardo Reyes fue acusado por la hecatombe del 2 de abril en Monterrey y toda una cámara de diputados se inclinó ante la consigna y absolvió a Bernardo Reyes para agradar a Porfirio Díaz. Ante el mundo entero y plena luz los verdaderos patriotas han esgrimido todas las armas legales, y ante el mundo entero y a plena luz, la Dictadura les ha arrebatado esas armas y rotas la ha arrojado al lodazal inmundo por donde sus lacayos pasan uncidos al carro de la tiranía.

<sup>21</sup> Sin respeto a nadie ni a nada, sin consideración a la Patria ni a la República; sin respeto a las sagradas instituciones, sin temor al desprestigio se organiza una mascarada vergonzosa.

<sup>22</sup> Tanto y de tal modo se interpone usted en nuestra marcha que nos obliga a dirigirle la palabra, por difícil que nos obliga a dirigirle la palabra, ... no encontramos en Ud. a quién dirigirnos, puesto que de su ser moral ha desaparecido todo.

<sup>23</sup> Y no venimos a exigir de Ud. respeto a los principios de que se ha desligado pisoteándolos, ya no venimos a exigir de Ud. cumplimiento de deberes que desconoce, venimos sencillamente a exigir de Ud. que se retire.

<sup>24</sup> Habéis degenerado tanto como vuestros enemigos que ni ellos ni vosotros sintáis vergüenza? ellos de perseguir mujeres y vosotros de permitirlo.

<sup>25</sup> Por eso os acusamos y por eso hemos venido a ocupar vuestro puesto.

<sup>26</sup> Mother Jones was an American women who fought for the rights of miners and was organizing and speaking to miners and union members around the same time period as Gutiérrez de Mendoza was involved in pre-revolutionary action in Mexico.

<sup>27</sup> Llamamos a vuestro sentimientos de patriotismo, llamamos a vuestra dignidad de ciudadanos, no queráis que mantengamos nuestra acusación ante la posteridad para que la República al morir os maldiga y en su agonía suprema señale vuestra cobardía con el estigma bochornoso, con la marca inminente de cobardes.

<sup>28</sup> Ciudadanos dignos de vuestros antepasados, dignos de vosotros mismos y en nombre del honor nacional y en nombre de vuestra propia honra, salvad a la República.

<sup>29</sup> Que, ¿se figurará Porfirio Díaz que se muy humilde servidora Juana B. Gutiérrez de Mendoza quiere arrebatárle la motana?

<sup>30</sup> Los cargos que hace el Sr. Bulnes a Don Porfirio adulándolo, son los mismos que hacemos nosotras acusándolo.

The resurrection of our People will be the best correction of the falsehoods that they have created that History relates. When the solemn voice of that secular soul resounds in all the purviews of the world, not a single error will remain in place.

From the other History, from the History of the Conquest, we will refer only to the page upon which the fable of Independence is written. Everyone knows it: The proclamation of Independence was a rebellion of the Spanish against Spain, provoked by the Decree of the Crown that dispossessed the descendants of the conquered, of the theft that they have handed down, ... not to restore it to its legitimate owners ... the Indians.

- Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza

Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza's career as a writer and activist was forged during the years of the Precursor Movement, 1897 – 1910. These were essentially her formative years and throughout this period claimed her agency within the familiar structures of the male-dominated journalistic scene. Gutiérrez de Mendoza continued to write, to organize, and to speak through countless pamphlets, newspapers, various articles, and a book for thirty-two years on the issues that were most important to her: women and indigenous people. Her philosophy of life, which was communicated through her publications, did not follow the status quo or the path of least resistance. For this reason, many of her writings and her political stances were seen as an obstruction to modern progress. The Mexican government tried to suppress her rhetorical outbursts by confiscating her printing press on six different occasions. After each confiscation, she secured funding from friends and supporters which allowed her to continue with the writing and publishing of her work (Lau “¡Me quiebro...!” 10). Along with her refusal to surrender, Gutiérrez de Mendoza continued as a powerful rhetor because she was not swayed by popular

ideas, such as modernity, the government's renewed alliance with the Catholic Church, even the fear of being thrown in jail. By continuing to serve as a spokes person for the rights of women and indigenous people, she would continue to play a marginal role in the realm of societal politics. She took time to analyze the politics of the moment, allowed the gravity of the surrounding discourse to penetrate into her mind, and so she would be better prepared to present her opinion. Gutiérrez de Mendoza not only spoke her opinions, but embodied her rhetoric and acted upon them in the public sphere. The spirit of the Revolution, which maintained that the oppressed and those whose rights and lands were stolen should have a voice in the formation of a new nation-state, would burn within her for the rest of her remaining years.

This chapter examines some of Gutiérrez de Mendoza's early writings; however, her writings from 1910 through 1924 are central to this study. Her later writings prove philosophically contradictory to the currently accepted definition of *mestizaje* during this period, but they bridged the historical and rhetorical gap between those who had access to public discourse, such as the elite, and those who struggled for a voice in Mexico. Gutiérrez de Mendoza harbored contempt for the Spanish, other Europeans, and North Americans, whom she believed were interested in Mexico, not because they cared about the people or their culture, but whose objective was to colonize and subjugate them. She did not buy into the myth of modernity and the Eurocentric views to which so many of the elite philosophers and policy makers of the time, such as José Vasconcelos, head of the Secretaría de Educación Pública (1920-1924), and rural public school policy writers, such as Moisés Saénz, undersecretary of the Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP) 1925-1928 subscribed (Vaughan 28).<sup>1</sup>

The promise of a new world order of progress, thrift, and equality did not obscure Gutiérrez de Mendoza's clear understanding as to how these ideological paths would only

continue to lead to the domination of the indigenous people. During the Porfiriato, the government made symbolic overtures to the indigenous people by employing the pre-Columbian culture as a basis for Mexico's identity which was presented to Europe and to the world (Tenorillo-Trillo 88), while embracing the Catholic Church and allowing it to maintain its influence over the indigenous people and their social milieu. However, the assertion by the government that indigenous people were the foundation of the Mexican culture was merely a façade, a way to provide Mexico with a unique identity among its international neighbors. This claim was heavily infused with European cultivation and enthusiasm. After the Revolution there was an incredible mobilization of the masses, and the politics shifted to an emphasis of appealing to and proclaiming the interests of the common people (Knight 400). The outdated image of the government as elite, aloof, and unreachable, was forced to change in an attempt to garner support from the masses and to look toward political profitability (Knight 401). The government then aggressively pursued "state projects of 'modernization' —embracing education, anti-clericalism, nationalism, and 'developmentalism,' [the process of] disciplining, educating, and moralizing the degenerate Mexican masses" (Knight 396). This included basing the nationalist identity on the *campesino* and the indigenous people, as depicted through some of the famous murals by Diego Rivera. At the same time the state "understood them [indigenous] to be decadent, diseased, and demobilized by backwardness, oppression, and disruption, [and] had to be vitalized and its energies harnessed for development" (Vaughan 11). Gutiérrez de Mendoza saw through the government's guise of modernization, and understood it to be a way to deal with the "Indian problem." To her, the promise of modernization was a myth, nothing more than another way of promoting European and American ideologies through the back door.

In *The Invention of the Americas: Eclipse of "the Other" and the Myth of Modernity*,

Enrique Dussel states that the myth of modernity sees Europe as more developed, and its civilization as superior to others (66). Another principle in the myth of modernity, according to Dussel and one which Gutiérrez de Mendoza understood and rejected as it was being articulated in her time, stated that:

a culture's abandonment of its barbarity and underdevelopment through a civilizing process implies, as a conclusion, progress, development, well-being, and *emancipation* for that culture. According to the *fallacy of development*, the more developed culture has already trod this path of modernization" (66 italics in original).

Because of her lived experiences and the knowledge that came from a subaltern reality, Gutiérrez de Mendoza understood the epistemological direction of the nation. She believed that a majority of the Mexican philosophies, policies, direction of anarchist revolutionaries, transformative curriculums, and the SEP's wide reaching directives that were meant to integrate indigenous people into the modern world translated into a cultural extinction of her people. This meant further oppression, historical erasure, and a silencing of the people's beliefs and traditions. Gutiérrez de Mendoza had sharpened her rhetorical skills before, during, and after the Revolution, and was ready to respond to the claim of modernity.

From this perspective, it is easy to understand why Gutiérrez de Mendoza rejected Jose Vasconcelos's concept of a united people or of mestizaje. Does this ideological separation invalidate her later writings from being mestiza rhetoric? On the contrary, I argue that her resistance to Vasconcelos's philosophies places her writings in a more symbolic light within the mestiza consciousness. Mestizaje is a space for the development of new identities which separates and frees one from the binaries of modernity. It negotiates multiple rhetorical spaces



whereby subjects are able to practice a third space feminism. Gutiérrez de Mendoza's writings and rhetorical strategies not only encompassed a mestiza consciousness, but also negotiated a space of invention: exile. In her article, "Hipparchia the Cynic: Feminist Rhetoric and the Ethics of Embodiment," Kristen Kennedy theorizes about the space of exile as "another way of thinking through a practice of critique, one that demands an exterior position is taken and a critical space is assumed" (59). As a rhetorical strategy, Gutiérrez de Mendoza symbolically and physically exiled herself to create rhetorics of disruption, interruption, and validation, which are all mestiza rhetorical approaches. As a female social critic, she drew upon her everyday experiences, such as that of having been imprisoned for speaking against the Mexican regime, having left Mexico for the United States after her second imprisonment, and through the formation of various groups and organizations. These experiences enabled her to carve out strategic rhetorical spaces from which to create a new identity.

A myriad of symbolic actions set her apart from Mexican discourses of assimilation as defined by the mainstream and the SEP. Before, during, and after the Mexican Revolution, Gutiérrez de Mendoza articulated her discursive stance through her various newspaper articles; the speech she delivered in Zitácuaro, Michoacan; her post-Revolutionary paper, *El Desmonte*; and in the writings of *¡Por la tierra y por la raza!* [For the Land and for the People], a history and validation of her tribe, the Caxcan indigenous people of Mexico. The Caxcan tribe was one of the northern Mexican Indian groups known to the Mexica people as the Chichimeca. Anthropologists believe that the Caxcan were one of the seven tribes that left Atzlán to settle in the lands of Huitzilopochtli. Through the *Crónica* of Padre Antonio Tello, the language of the Caxcan people was similar to the Mexica. In *¡Por la tierra y por la raza!*, Gutiérrez de Mendoza cites the historian, Frey P. Frejes from "Historia breve de la Conquista de los Estados

independientes del Imperio Mexicano,” stating that the Caxcan joined in the offensive against the Spaniards in the battle of Mixtón in 1541 (34). One of her more important works, *¡Por la tierra y por la raza!* conveys a mestiza consciousness and a mestiza rhetoric. Viewed through the lens of Anzaldúa, it “seek[s] an exoneration, a seeing through the fictions of white supremacy, a seeing of ourselves in our true guises and not as the false racial personality that has been given to use and that we have given to ourselves...I seek new images of identity, new beliefs about ourselves, our humanity and worth no longer in question” (Anzaldúa 87). From her earliest works to her writings and activities in her later life, Gutiérrez de Mendoza never allowed her spirit of creating new paths and alternative discourses to diminish.

### **Exile as a Rhetorical Space**

Throughout her life, Gutiérrez de Mendoza suffered voluntary and forced banishment through several experiences: imprisonment, persecution that forced her to flee from Mexico, public accusations of lesbianism, and non-conformity to the ideas of modernity. Usually, exile is perceived as a space where a person is neither seen nor heard, but strategic rhetors, like Gutiérrez de Mendoza, used the space of exile to their discursive advantage. Kennedy notes in “Cynic Rhetoric: The Ethics and Tactics of Resistance” that exile “describes the space from which tactical uses of discourse generate. As a literal and rhetorical space, exile offers a starting point for the possibility of discursive agency. Nevertheless, the exiled are often those who are without power in society. They are the minority that is always excluded from creating the very power structures that dominate them” (42). Each position of exile, whether forced or voluntary, which Gutiérrez de Mendoza inhabited, provided her a space from which to speak critically and politically. One of the first newspaper articles that Gutiérrez de Mendoza wrote in 1897 earned her a forced exile of several months in prison in Minas Nuevas, Chihuahua. She published this

first article anonymously. After her identity was discovered by the mine owners, she was sent to prison. From time spent in jail, she may have come to believe that anonymity was a cowardly rhetorical stance, and thereafter signed her name in all of her writings.

After her first imprisonment, her next term of exile was voluntary. With the loss of her husband, Cirilo, and after the loss of her son, Santiago, Gutiérrez de Mendoza may have felt that there was nothing left for her in Durango. In 1900, she packed up her belongings, her goat, Sancha, and her two girls, Laura and Julia, and moved to one of the emerging hotbeds of resistance against Porfirio Díaz, the city of Guanajuato, Mexico. More than just a change of location, Gutiérrez de Mendoza's strategic move to north-central Mexico marked the beginning of her rhetorical move into exile. Kennedy's article on Hipparchia, a Grecian woman of status who chose to marry Crate, a Cynic and man of no means, recounts how she gave up her life of comfort and stability to embrace the life of the Cynic. A Cynic's life was dedicated to exile, which Kennedy posits, created a space in which they could speak out. "The Cynic operated from a position of exile – sometimes chosen, sometime forced - ...[and] did provide a rhetorical space for the Cynic rhetor. In addition, the idea of exile assumes a spatial understanding of the political subject in her relation to community" ("Hipparchia" 50). Like Hipparchia, Gutiérrez de Mendoza on several occasions voluntarily chose the space of exile, such as her move to Guanajuato, Mexico as a political activist in order to start her own protest newspaper, *Vésper: Justicia y Libertad*. Guanajuato was far from her home, and as she wrote in her autobiography, after the success of her newspaper, she had to sell her goat, Sancha, in order to cover the mounting costs of publishing. At that moment, her heart sank and she wanted to return home, emotions common to those in exile. If one chooses a space for greater freedom, as Gutiérrez de Mendoza did, then this rhetorical move is also "related to the body's relationship to lived

context” (55 “Hipparchia”). In other words, the rhetorical stances from within an exiled space become inscribed upon the rhetor, who then becomes an embodiment of the discourse.

Another form of embodiment can be enacted through the naming of an object or a person. Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s middle name of Belén, which was not her given name, conveyed a position of rhetorical exile. The name on her baptismal record, dated February 2, 1875, reads “Maria Juana Francisca Gutiérrez Chavez,” yet, in all the newspapers she published from 1901 up to the last publication in the late 1930s, Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s name appeared as “Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza” or in an abbreviated form as “Juana B. Gutiérrez de Mendoza” or as “Juana B.G. de Mendoza.” María was the standard Catholic name most young girls were given at birth, while boys were given the traditional names of Juan or José.<sup>2</sup> Because the name María was so common or because it was directly connected with the Catholic Church, which she denounced later in life, Gutiérrez de Mendoza chose to use her second name, Juana. But the reason for the name Belén remains a mystery. At some juncture in her life, after the founding of *Vesper* in 1901, she changed her name by adding Belén.

In the Catholic tradition of naming, a child is given a name at birth and then another name later in life. Usually at the age of 7, “the age of reason,” a confirmation name is chosen either by the child or the parents/godparents. Many times the child is given the name of the Saint which corresponds to their date of birth. On his website *Marianismo In Mexico: An Ethnographic Encounter*, Robert Kemper notes that “in the daily life of most Mexicans it would be impossible to carry out normal social interactions without being reminded -- by name -- of the Virgin Mary,” or other religious aspects of the church. The child’s new name would then come between the first name and the last name. Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s birth date, January 27, falls near the *Fiesta de la Señora de Belén*, January 29. The word *Belén* in Spanish means Bethlehem,

giving both her name and association with it heavy religious connotations. As an adult Gutiérrez de Mendoza disassociated herself with the church because she believed that it oppressed and intellectually stifled the people. She followed the Mexican liberal belief that the Catholic Church held too much power in Mexico and distanced herself from any sort of organized religion. But if she took this name as a child, why then did she keep Belén as her middle name? I believe she kept Belén as a form of identification, solidarity, and social protest. It is my assertion that Gutiérrez de Mendoza kept Belén, also the name of the prison in Mexico City where Díaz imprisoned the journalists (Cockcroft 102), as a revolutionary name to symbolically mark her exile from those who conformed to the status quo or as a show of solidarity with the imprisoned journalists.

Many revolutionaries from this era, such as Doroteo Arango Arámbula (1878 – 1923), who took the more dynamic and energetic name of Pancho Villa, changed their names to more fully embrace the ideas of the revolution. Even though the name Belén carried heavy religious connotations, Gutiérrez de Mendoza may have kept the name Belén to set herself apart as a revolutionary, an outsider, and as a non-conformist. Kennedy notes that “the literal and figurative space of exile assumes ‘an outside,’ a sense of (dis)placement that situates the exiled in relation to a perceived ‘inside’” (“Hipparchia” 50). After her incarcerations, Gutiérrez de Mendoza perceived of her name as socially exiled. In Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s autobiography, fragments of which were published in Angeles Mendieta Alatorre’s book, she recounts what her birth date, name, etc. represented.

I cannot vouch for it, but I have been assured that I was born in San Juan del Río, Durango on the snowy morning of January 27, 1875.

This piece of information must be earth-shattering, because it has been entered with detailed scrupulousness in the jail records, every time I have been there. And as a result of repeating it, I have gotten used to it in such a way, that when I enter somewhere, especially into public buildings, or when I am introduced to someone, I invariably say: Juana B. Gutiérrez of Mendoza, San Juan del Río, Durango, January 27, 1875, etc., Etc.

These etceteras are the second part of the program: They encompass a whole series of details that are added to the first ones, always on the increase. I also know these etceteras by heart and I have also gotten used to repeating them; They seem to be a quick and resounding ringing of bells: SEDITION REBELLION, SEDITION REBELLION, SEDITION REBELLION that is what the words say that are added to my name in the records.<sup>3</sup>

Her name obviously gained significant meaning for those whom she encountered at the registration desk of the prisons where she was incarcerated. The ritual of repeating her name became a source of social exile because the information attached to her name social constructed her as a rebellious woman. Gutiérrez de Mendoza was imprisoned on various occasions, each time for speaking out or conspiring with revolutionaries. These multiple imprisonments can be perceived as a forced form of exile that intersected with the greater issues experienced by a woman entering a space defined by gender.

Gutiérrez de Mendoza's second sentencing came in 1903 after her unrelenting criticism of Díaz. When a woman, such as Gutiérrez de Mendoza, enters public spaces traditionally designated for male political prisoners, she comes to embody her feminine discourse in “‘political semantics,’ an intersection of the body, the public sphere, and resistance” (53). In

Latin America, separation of men and women in jails was a common practice, as seen in “Girls in Prison: The Role of the Buenos Aires Casa Correccional de Mujeres as an Institution for Child Rescue, 1890 – 1940,” Donna J. Guy’s study of women and children in jails. Many of these prisons were run by nuns and functioned as reform institutions meant to “enable them [the women] to support themselves without committing crimes” (371). But more specifically to Mexico, as seen in “Criminalization of the Body” by Cristina Rivera-Garza, many of the women who committed offenses were charged with crimes of sexual deviance and placed in hospitals that functioned essentially as prisons. These practices were put in place in order to closely monitor the female body in public spaces. In these prisons, female inmates were separated from the men, such as in the Morelos Hospital in the 1870’s where, under the leadership of Amaro Gazano, four isolation rooms were created for the sole purpose of isolating “unruly women” (158). But Gutiérrez de Mendoza was not charged with any sort of sexual deviance, as most of the Mexican women were, but with discursive deviance. Further, she was not sent to a women’s only prison, but was sent to the infamous Belén prison along with the male revolutionaries, such as the Flores Magón Brothers, Camilo Arriaga, and Santiago de la Hoz, only to name a few (Villaneda 26). From this perspective, Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s immediate physical and discursive interaction with the most influential revolutionaries in a space of exile for political deviants, such as those in the Belén prison, places her at the convergence of rhetoric, the intersection of social, private, political, and gendered discourses. Her crime was considered a male infraction, not necessarily a crime a female would commit. Each circumstance surrounding her various imprisonments served as evidence that her discourse was consistently intersecting with those in power. Her first prison sentence was issued in 1897 in Las Minas, Chihuahua. She was sentenced to more prison time in 1903 for her scathing criticism of Porfirio Díaz; in 1910 for

her participation in “*El Complot de Tacubaya*;<sup>4</sup> in 1914, during the Revolution on the order of General Victoriano Huerta for carrying out a mission commissioned by Emiliano Zapata, and then again in 1916 (Alatorre 65-66). Through this personal identification with discursive criminal acts and interaction with male revolutionaries, Gutiérrez de Mendoza continued to engage in feminine rhetorical acts of resistance.

Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s forced exile into prison may have limited her freedom, but in the end, it also provided some degree of rhetorical agency. Kennedy states that the space of exile presents an opportunity for those who inhabit that space to engage in social criticism. She says, “The space of exile provides us with another way of thinking through a practice of critique, one that demands an exterior position is taken and a critical space is assumed” (“Hipparchia” 59). It is important to note that in Kennedy’s analysis of exile that a central part of the analysis also examines the ethics of what is done within this space. “There is an ethics to this position of exile, an imperative to take up this position of critical consciousness” (59). Kennedy cites Chela Sandoval who states that “this position produces an ‘oppositional consciousness’ for those ‘men and women who move between the cultures, languages, and the various configurations of power and meaning in complex colonial situations (in Kaplan 1990, 357)” (59). In Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s mestiza rhetoric, she was moving through three cultures: American, Mexican, and indigenous. This movement is noted not only in her claimed heritage, but also in her movement across the United States border.

After her second incarceration, she fled to Laredo, Texas in 1904 to secure greater freedom of speech. She went at the invitation of Ricardo Flores Magón, Camilo Arriaga, one of the main funders of the movement, and other revolutionaries. They all stayed with Sara Estela Ramírez, another female journalist who published *La Corregidora* stateside. The Mexico City



courts had ruled it illegal for *any* newspaper to print anything written by the Flores Magón brothers (Bufe and Verter 35); however, they were not the only activists who were persecuted. Díaz had ordered a judge to prohibit the publication of *El Hijo de Ahuizote*, *¡Excelsior!*, and *Vesper* (Alatorre 95). Although it became almost impossible to publish her writing, Gutiérrez de Mendoza found it difficult to leave Mexico. She wrote in her autobiography of the exiled revolutionaries and how they pressured her to leave Mexico.

Santiago de la Hoz, in turn, departed, inviting me to go also. Shortly afterwards I received letters from everyone. I had already received the same invitation from the other colleagues, but I did not make up my mind to go because I felt sorrow for going to fight in a foreign place. They insisted in such a manner that finally I left (Alatorre 22).<sup>5</sup>

Gutiérrez de Mendoza may have hesitated to leave because it would have produced an erasure or a silencing beyond the censorship already endured. In the end, she chose to join the group who initially accepted her ideas of governmental reform.<sup>6</sup>

During this time in Laredo, the group held meetings around Ramirez's kitchen table and in the course of these meetings, serious differences about the direction of Mexico's politics began to emerge (Alatorre 23). Ricardo Flores Magón's solution to the problems of Mexico leaned toward a socialist and anarchist ideology, and Camilo Arriaga's contribution included the terms of democracy and the principles of the 1857 Constitution. The influence of the Flores Magón brothers and Arriaga's ideological differences eventually led them to a parting of ways. In 1904, Gutiérrez de Mendoza and her companion, Elisa Acuña y Rosete, followed Arriaga to San Antonio, Texas (Villaneda 34) because she differed with Flores Magón's political ideas. Not only did she side with Arriaga's philosophy over the Flores Magóns, but Gutiérrez de

Mendoza did not like the way the brothers conducted business. She objected to their practice of charging the public of Laredo for the privilege of listening to the debates and discussions conducted by their group (Villaneda 37).<sup>7</sup>

While exiled in San Antonio, Acuña y Rosete and Gutiérrez de Mendoza continued to publish *Vesper*, also publishing a phantom newspaper, *La Protesta Nacional*, which indicated on the broad sheet that it was being published in Saltillo, Mexico so as to confuse the Mexican authorities. Gutiérrez de Mendoza never became comfortable with the people and places where she stayed in the United States; instead, she continued to address her people in Mexico from her position as an exile. Gutiérrez de Mendoza and Acuña y Rosete lasted about two year in the United States because they felt physical exile was not conducive to their struggle; moreover, they did not consider the place or people agreeable. Contrary to their feelings, Villaneda notes that many Mexican liberals “saw the United States as a model country to emulate” (43). But customary to Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s politics, she rejected the popular ideas that were not compatible to her beliefs. Time spent in San Antonio solidified her negative views of the United States, which served to further exile her from mainstream liberals.

Say what you will; but the truth is that that I was being consumed with homesickness; I no longer could live among those hateful Yankees and even less among the barbarians from Texas.

From my stay in Texas I took away the conviction that the ghost of the intervention we were always threatened with, was just that: an actual ghost, made to frighten faint-hearted souls. Although it seems contradictory, that practical nation is pure vanity. It does not possess anything more formidable than the appearance that the claim gives to it; any effort will deplete it, and the force of its

first effort can be taken into account, but on the subject of resistance it will be a nonentity (Alatorre 24).<sup>8</sup>

While exiled in the United States, she may have felt that she was among the people who were appropriating themselves of Mexican indigenous lands as offered by Porfirio Díaz, and so she may have experienced conflict which would have prevented her from seeing past her colonized perspective. Her opinions of the people north of the Rio Grande did not change, and they only worsened as she saw their influences permeate throughout Mexican society, and worse yet, into the Mexican schools' curriculum. She developed and cultivated these ideas while living in the United States, and would continue to inform her ideological convictions well into the future. However, before she could continue in her activism for the country she loved, she would have to return to Mexico. After about two years in Texas, Gutiérrez de Mendoza returned to Mexico in 1905.

A year after her return in 1906, she faced serious allegations of social indiscretion from Ricardo Flores Magón, who was once a staunch supporter of Gutiérrez de Mendoza and her discourse. He publicly accused her of being a lesbian and of being unfaithful to the cause of the *Partido Liberal Mexicano* (PLM) and to her country (Villaneda 35). The accusations may have stemmed from her and Acuña y Rosete's split from Flores Magón and for having joined Arriaga, who Flores Magón blamed for the deterioration of the relations among the group. At the same time, Francisco Madero, who was financing Arriaga's and Flores Magón's activity, agreed with Arriaga's negative sentiments against Flores Magón, and split with the brothers (Cockcroft 122). This move infuriated the Flores Magón's because, as a direct result, Madero also retracted his financial support. Flores Magón blamed Arriaga for the disintegrated coalition of the PLM and for threatening the group's goals of an armed revolt against Díaz. Flores Magón was known for

his harsh rhetoric and criticism toward people (Bufe and Verter 38); and, on mere speculation, he accused Gutiérrez de Mendoza and Acuña y Rosete of being lesbians. At the turn of the century in Mexico, and even to this day, the charge of lesbianism carried the likelihood of seriously damaging a woman's reputation and could lead to complete ostracism from society. Flores Magón leveled these claims against Gutiérrez de Mendoza in a letter dated June 10, 1906 to Crescencio Márquez, a political newspaper publisher and PLM leader in Del Rio, Texas,<sup>9</sup> which was later published in *Regeneración*:

I will tell you that the antipatriotic behavior of Doña Juana B. Gutiérrez de Mendoza has irritated us very much. That lady has made a joint cause with Camilo Arriaga to compromise the labors of the Liberal Party.

When we were in San Antonio we learned, this is extremely nauseating, that Doña Juana and Elisa Acuña y Rosete gave themselves over to a putrefied Sapphism that she didn't find disgusting. Really loathsome details are told of all that and many fellow supporters have withdrawn their protection from that propagandist of sapphism, because as I am telling you, in Mexico it was common knowledge what those ladies were doing (Villaneda 36).<sup>10</sup>

Such accusations from one of the founders and leaders of the PLM could have easily silenced and intimidated anyone, especially a woman. But Gutiérrez de Mendoza interpreted this attempt to exile her from her country and supporters as a clear exigency to speak out and clarify her position as a Mexican journalist and activist. Flores Magón inadvertently created a powerful rhetorical space from which Gutiérrez de Mendoza could reinforce her beliefs in the movement and express adulation for the country she loved. In a letter to Crescencio Marquez, published in full in Villaneda's book, Gutiérrez de Mendoza responded to the charges:

Forgive me if I do not understand what you call passion, in what applies to disdain for the enemies. I draw a distinction, if you will permit me: For my personal enemies, if I had them, I would reserve the right of treating them according to whatever was happening and I would not give permission to anybody to tell me anything about it. But I do not have a right to despise the enemies of the country and of the principles that I defend, I have the duty to punish them. That's why I punish the members of the Organizing Assembly.

You say that I rail against you. No, I do not rail against any others except the enemies of the country, against the tyrants and the impostors, and I believe that against these, all honest and sincere men will direct their criticism also, because above all come the fatherland and the principles more than appearances *Vésper* is a combatant and not a concealer! *Vésper* does not betray the Fatherland nor its principles (Villaneda 39)!<sup>11</sup>

After this letter, the exchange between Gutiérrez de Mendoza and Flores Magón escalated to the point of public scandal (Villaneda 39). Other liberals intervened and called for reconciliation between the two, but the divide ran too deep, and they would never come to an understanding.<sup>12</sup> Undaunted by the personal charges meant to discredit her, Gutiérrez de Mendoza continued to exercise the power of the press so that she could respond to the accusations. On July 1, 1906 in an article titled “Redentores de la peseta,” she discounted the importance of the claims against her and accused Flores Magón of not living up to the ideals of the movement.

Accusations of collective interest, such as the ones that we make, are neither answered nor destroyed with slander and insults of an absolutely personal nature, such as *Regeneración* would like. I do not believe that anybody

cares about those abuses and slander, much less do I believe that such outlandishnesses has any connection with the common interests.

These Flores Magóns are patriots, they are the members of the “Junta Organizadora”, they are the insulters of women who bellow with rage and bitterness because we have been very worthy and we love our homeland dearly so as not to take its misfortunes to the marketplace, and sell its adversity for a peseta (Villaneda 37).<sup>13</sup>

Gutiérrez de Mendoza must have known that this public exchange would likely damage her image in the public’s eye, but she showed a spirit of relentless courage which allowed her to solidify her beliefs. With Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s response to the Flores Magón’s accusations, there is strong evidence of how fluid identities are created and demonstrates how internal conflicts arise within a nascent social movement. Issues of sex and gender intersecting with politics were only precursors of what was to arise out of the intersection of sex and gender in the revolution.<sup>14</sup>

As a conclusion to the dispute, Francisco I. Madero, the future president of Mexico, championed Camilo Arriaga’s vision of democracy as an alternative to Flores Magón’s inclination toward anarchy. Flores Magón established a PLM headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri, attempting to gain support for the organization from foreign sympathizers. He invited Madero to a conference in Missouri, but he did not attend. In a missive to Márquez, dated August 17, 1906, Madero turned down the invitation, defended Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s honor (Villaneda 41) and discredited Flores Magón stating:

You say to me that I should join the "Junta" of Saint Louis Missouri anyway, but I will answer you, that I do not like the politics that those (Flores)

Magón (brothers) have adhered to that irrespective of anything they insult everybody and for entirely personal matters. They set about to insult and to defame such unblemished liberals as the engineer Camilo Arriaga and they set about to stain the pages of their media with the meanest insults toward a lady (Villaneda 41-42).<sup>15</sup>

The “*señora*” Madero referred to and defended in the letter was Gutiérrez de Mendoza. In this short passage, she was exonerated. Gutiérrez de Mendoza and Acuña y Rosete continued for several years to be social companions; however, documentation that these two women were lovers never materialized. In published histories about her, there is no mention of this allegation again. By standing her ground against such accusations, she refused Flores Magón the right to forcefully exile her from the legitimate struggle for her people’s rights, to silence her, to discursively inscribe her as anti-patriotic, or to cast aspersions upon her of lesbianism. With words written while she was in exile, Gutiérrez de Mendoza created a space for discursive activism from which she would critique, condemn, and contemplate a new space for women to join in the active pursuit of revolution.

### **Revolution on the Horizon**

This public disagreement was only the beginning of the public work and exposure that Gutiérrez de Mendoza would become involved with in the years leading up to the Revolution. Unlike the Flores Magón brothers, who continued as leaders and promoters of the PLM from the United States,<sup>16</sup> Gutiérrez de Mendoza and her colleague, Acuña y Rosete, had returned to Mexico City in 1905 to face the brutal reality of a nation under the control of a dictator. As mentioned earlier, Gutiérrez de Mendoza was “consumed with homesickness [and could] no longer...live among those hateful Yankees and even less among the barbarians from Texas.”

Upon her return, she wasted no time in organizing her resources and reinitiated the publication of *Vésper*; however, her rhetorical reach would not be limited to this one publication. *Vésper* was only a small part of her rhetorical activism that escalated in the years during and after 1906. The correlation of her writings as mestiza rhetoric resonates, especially in the years she resisted the dominant narrative of assimilation to those in power. Gutiérrez de Mendoza would become an important and active participant in the discursive direction of the revolutionary movement.

The year of 1906 proved to be a historic year of serious and bitter struggles among the industrial working class and their employers. Scholars have labeled it “the year of strikes” because it encompassed major industrial movements such as the Cananea Mine strike in Cananea, Sonora, and the Río Blanco in Orizaba, Veracruz, which were lead by a group known as the Gran Círculo de Obreros Libres. In his article “Mexican Workers and the Politics of the Revolution, 1906-1911,” scholar Rodney D. Anderson rightly contests the long held belief that the exiled PLM group formed the driving force of the strikes and struggles that were happening on the ground in Mexico. Anderson argues against the historical assumption that the local industrial workers were inarticulate or wrote little of value (96). As an anti-Díaz and pro-worker activist in Mexico City during the time of these struggles, Gutiérrez de Mendoza played a role in the development of a space where the common worker’s opinion could be heard through her efforts in organizing worker’s unions and co-authoring various newspapers.

For Gutiérrez de Mendoza, 1907 to 1911 were filled with activism and collaboration with revolutionaries and politicians. In 1907, she collaborated with Sara Estela Ramírez in the reorganization of her newspaper, *La Corregidora*, and helped to establish another newspaper titled *El Partido Socialista*, a publication with ties to a group of industrial workers (Villaneda 43). During this period, she also worked with Dolores Jiménez y Muro and other liberals, such



as José Edilberto Pinelo, Elisa Acuña y Rosete (Lau 6 “La participación...”) and organized an association of worker’s unions known as “Socialismo Mexicano” (Pouwels 69). In keeping with Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s character, she utilized the power of discourse to circulate the ideas that represented Socialismo Mexicano, and as a result, co-founded and edited the association’s weekly paper, *Anáhuac*.<sup>17</sup> The economic crisis of 1907 sparked further anger among the farm and industrial workers, and in 1908 and 1909 the fervor against Díaz’s re-election grew, and several politicians positioned themselves to take his place. The main leader of the movement against Díaz’s reelection, Francisco I. Madero, believed in true democracy for Mexico, which made him look attractive to other non-reelection Socialists and activists. Another emerging periodical, *El Partido Socialista*, commissioned Gutiérrez de Mendoza to interview Madero (Pouwels 70). If he agreed to lead the revolt against Díaz, she would place her full support behind him. Gutiérrez de Mendoza may have shifted her thinking from action and change through discourse to action and change through armed revolt because of a growing realization that the persuasive efforts of so many activists were not producing the desired political headway. Or it could have been that Madero had a major influence on her as evidenced from her writings in his favor.

In these interviews [with Madero], it was agreed that the [Mexican Socialists] group would support the armed movement that would begin after the electoral movement that would inevitably fail, the sureness of that failure being one of the reasons that we did not want to take part in the useless election if they were not followed by a show of force (Alatorre 25-26).

Through personal interaction with Madero, Gutiérrez de Mendoza became convinced that he was the most qualified leader who could replace Díaz. She announced her support for Madero,

whom had been given the title of “the Apostle of Democracy” of Mexico (Krauze 253). As with her other publications, she had a clear understanding that her articles could once again land her jail and even lead to personal injury. After her interview was released in 1907, along with more public activism, Gutiérrez de Mendoza was again jailed in 1909 in the Belén prison (Pouwels 71). When she was released, Gutiérrez de Mendoza encouraged other women to become politically active in Mexico City and was instrumental in the organization of a feminist Maderista political club, *Amigas de Pueblo*. She was also part of another political feminist club, Hijas de Cuauhtémoc, which was led by well-known activist, Dolores Jiménez y Muro (Lau 7 “La participación...”).

The political frustration of these years increased, and once again, Gutiérrez de Mendoza was motivated to once again publish her protest newspaper, *Vésper*. Even though arrests and harassments against the Maderistas continued to increase, in the May 8, 1910 edition of *Vésper*, Gutiérrez de Mendoza continued to fully supported Madero. In an editorial titled, “*Don Francisco I. Madero. Candidato a la presidencia de la República*,” she wrote:

Why sing the praises of the man whose acts have let him be known as extremely worthy to occupy the position that he was appointed to?

For those who are familiar with the cowardice that has the nation shuddering before General Díaz, it is enough with the mere fact that Mr. Madero had stood up before that power that is intended to submit everything to it, not because it is an extraordinary act to face up to a tyrant that in the final analysis could come tumbling down on his own, but because under the present circumstances, it is not the most difficult thing to stand up to Don Porfirio Díaz,

like a citizen with rights to exercise, the serious thing is to stand up in front of this people like a citizen with rights and duties to carry out (Alatorre 147 ).<sup>18</sup>

In order to understand the rhetorical temerity of the 1910 publication of *Vésper*, one must also understand the political climate of the time. While other newspapers acquiesced under the pressure of censorship from the dictator, Gutiérrez de Mendoza amplified her rhetorical criticism. For example, *Evolución*, a newspaper published by a group of workers in Mexico City, appeared on May 1, 1910 and fully supported Madero for his candidacy within the Anti-Reelectionist Party (Lear 131). The printer, Rafael Quintero, who later became the leader of the Casa del Obrero Mundial, a major workers union, urged the workers to “reclaim their rights and fulfill their duties as worthy citizens of a country that...celebrates the triumph of democratic institutions” (Lear 131). But, as Lear stated, within the first month of the publication, Quintero and the newspaper minimized their strong discourse and “instead proposed a protagonism among workers in the defense of citizenship rights. The very real possibility of repression forced critics of the government to use rhetorical, elliptical, and abstract arguments and above all to avoid direct attacks on President Díaz” (Lear 131). Gutiérrez de Mendoza followed the opposite rhetorical strategy. She opted for the more politically dangerous approach and intensified her rhetorical attacks on activists, such as Quintero for his cowardice, and chastised Díaz for being politically obstinate.

In the summer of 1910, Mexico was caught in the middle of a highly contested election between Madero and Díaz. In his book *Emiliano Zapata: Revolution and Betrayal in Mexico*, Samuel Brunk comments on the growing countrywide discontent in Mexico. In Morelos, the peasants, lead by Emiliano Zapata, grew increasingly frustrated with the government’s process of providing the *campesinos* with titles to land that was rightfully theirs (Brunk 27). “It was not

just in Morelos that people were upset. In other parts of Mexico, too, they were angry about losing their land, about a lack of economic opportunity, about the failure of the Díaz regime to deliver the democracy that the Constitution of 1857 promised” (28). Gutiérrez de Mendoza, having become cynical of the Mexican government and its people, was in Mexico City and could hardly bear the hypocrisy of the Mexican citizenry who stood idly by in the summer of 1910 while Díaz planned a monumental celebration on the centennial events of the Revolution of 1810 which secured Mexico’s independence from Spain. The irony of this celebration was that people’s rights and liberties which were supposedly won in the war of 1810, were currently being crushed through the heavy arm of censoring and repression. And those in power felt omnipotent, empowered by the political environment, and debased the people to the point of humiliation. For example, the state government of Morelos had left the decision as to whether or not land should be redistributed to their rightful owners under the control of the *hacendados*, owners of large farming and ranching estates which had been appropriated from the indigenous people. They were allowed to continue to exploit the farm workers as they pleased. On one occasion noted in Brunk’s book, the *hacendados* suggested to the *campesinos* that they should plant their livelihood “in a flower pot” (27). Unbridled arrogance and insults such as these only worsened the political situation.

In 1910, Díaz was 80 years old, and his advanced age and impending death generated hopes and murmurs among those anticipating his demise for a change in leadership at the presidential level. Gutiérrez de Mendoza vented her frustration with Mexico’s stagnant political situation in a diatribe in an editorial piece which appeared in the 1910 edition of *Vesper* titled, “Cuando se muera” [When He Dies]. The frustration of the moment permeated her discourse.

Cowards! So often have we seen the contorted faces, the furtive looks, the

trembling lips, in the ones from whom trembling words escape: When General Díaz dies!

And how disgusting we found those men who in order to live wait like worms, the cadaver that nourishes them! Alas! And for the ones that await the grave where a tyranny that seems to be eternal is to be buried.

We almost have come to despair that a worthy act did not come to pass in this nation where everything is postponed for the death of General Díaz.

Fortunately for the dignity of the country, death has not heard that clamor and a group of men stood up, proposing that General Díaz leave office and not when he dies, but when the action orders (Alatorre 145).<sup>19</sup>

These short passages provide evidence of how closely Gutiérrez de Mendoza followed the politics of the time. The “action” Gutiérrez de Mendoza refers to may have been in reference to the book Madero wrote and presented to Díaz titled *La sucesión presidencial en 1910* in February of 1910, or it could be in reference to the formation of the Anti-reelection Center, which was founded in Mexico City in May of 1910 (Krauze 253). Regardless of the allusion, she was unafraid of the societal, political, or personal consequences that this style of writing could engender. Gutiérrez de Mendoza wrote against the political grain, and on several occasions, she wrote in the bombastic tone of a political diatribe. Politically, the diatribe was a dangerous rhetorical approach because it drew attention to the speaker, and only those who are unafraid of the consequences dared to engage in such rhetoric.

Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s actions and the language she employed in the 1910 edition of *Vesper* are consistent with those of the Grecian Cynics who spoke and acted out in public, knowing that they would be ostracized for their views. In “The Diatribe: Last Resort for

Protest,” Theodore Otto Windt states that

the diatribe is the rhetorical version of the philosophic dialogue and bears a resemblance to the dialogue roughly similar to the relationship between conventional speeches and philosophic disquisitions. It is an attempt to criticize, to entertain, to shock and to convey impressions of public figures, all in one” (7)

Windt theoretically redefines the diatribe, which in literature may not hold any esthetic or poetic appeal, but when viewed through the lens of rhetoric, it becomes a transformative strategy for those who have been silenced. Windt continues, “The diatribe is to rhetoric what satire is to literature. Each attempt to reduce conventional beliefs to the ridiculous, thereby making those who support orthodoxy seem contemptible, hypocritical, or stupid” (8). Theoretically positioning Gutiérrez de Mendoza as a Cynic appropriately defines her actions from the opposition’s perspective as “bad discursive behavior” (Kennedy “Cynic” 38).

Documentation to the effect that Gutiérrez de Mendoza *physically* engaged in shocking public actions, such as those attributed to the Grecian Cynics, does not exist. Unlike the Grecian Cynics, she did not engage in public sexual acts, neither did she speak out in just any public spaces. Ultimately, her printed discourse reflected the strategies employed by the Cynic as a result of its intersection with the spacial politics of the moment. As established earlier, the public sphere of Mexico had excluded women through public regulation of their bodies in order to maintain the private sphere. Kennedy sites Diprose in explaining that “the body cannot be divorced from discourse” (54); thus, the speaker and her discourse become one. This is especially true when a woman or an individual from a marginalized group manages to speak in spaces where they are not welcomed. “Indeed, bodies often do this; they can both destabilize and institute discourses. In either sense, embodiment challenges us to deal with real bodies in

real spaces” (“Hipparchia” 65). With Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s continued feminine rhetorical presence in the Mexican “body politic,” compounded with her harsh language toward the governmental officials, the result proved to be an intersection of the body, the public sphere, and resistance (Kennedy “Hipparchia” 53). An examination of Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s rhetoric from this theoretical perspective places her body squarely within the Mexican public of 1910 that was ripe for revolution.

I assert that Gutiérrez de Mendoza understood the theoretical premise that one’s discourse must intersect with the body, the public sphere, and resistance. She understood that her discourse was breaking every gendered convention and standard of Mexican feminine modesty, and she remained unapologetic. In the same 1910 edition of *Vesper*, she delivered one of her most powerful defiant acts in an article titled “Contra todos los tiranos y contra todas las tiranías” [Against all tyrants and against all tyranny]. The reader could have assumed through an initial reading of the article that she had stated her ideological position; however, from a spacial perspective she had substituted the name of her newspaper, *Vesper* for her name and identity. The rhetorical theories of Kenneth Burke’s *Grammar of Motives* can further illuminate this rhetorical strategy. Gutiérrez de Mendoza employed the powerful trope of synecdoche, the process by which a part stands for the whole; for example, when one associates food when mentioning *daily bread* or when one asks “to lend me your ears.” Burke states, “We might say that representation (synecdoche) stresses a relationship or connectedness between two sides of an equation, a connectedness that, like a road, extends in either direction...” (Burke *Grammar* 509). In other words, the name Gutiérrez de Mendoza became synonymous with the identity of *Vesper*. The trope of synecdoche is relevant here because it informed the audience of a public

representation of Gutiérrez de Mendoza's philosophy and rhetorical strategies to which she adhered, not only in time of revolution but for rest of her life.

*Vesper*, always proud, will rise up forever against all tyrants and against all tyrannies.

*Vesper* has its own criterion and just as the accommodating official criterion will never be imposed on it, neither will the absurd criterion of the groups we alluded to ever be imposed on it.

*Vesper* does not have its energy borrowed from the harshness of the word. *Vesper* does not have its weapons of combat in the arsenals of insults. *Vesper* does not rise up in front of the magnates in order to submit to the idiots. *Vesper* does not censure the tyrants in order to cajole the masses. *Vesper* does not have biting censure for the obstinate functionaries and a servile compliment for the passionate rabble. *Vesper* does not separate itself from the press that sells itself to become affiliated with the journalism that gives itself out for hire.

*Vesper* does not ever sacrifice the energy of its perseverance for the satisfaction of people. *Vesper* is not the unconscious cutting edge that follows the first impulse that is imprinted on it. All this is not an excess of pride, but because it is the only way that we know how to understand independence.<sup>20</sup>

Each "*Vesper*" is followed by an ontological statement, or a declaration of one's nature of being. Using a calculated tone, she substituted *Vesper* in place of her name, which is indicative of the fact that she acted in concert with her own discourse and ethics. Her discourse was never articulated unless it was accompanied by social engagement. Her philosophy, she stated, would



not be subjected to the passions and fluctuations of the moment, and that she would continue to write without fear of retribution. These sentiments are apparent in the quote, “*Vésper* does not censure the tyrants in order to cajole the masses.” And when she declares, “*Vésper* does not have its weapons of combat in the arsenal of insults,” she may have been referring to cartoonists, such as those made famous in *El Hijo de Ahuizote*, who substituted humor and satire to attack Díaz instead of employing a harsher more direct critique. Hence, this passage can also be interpreted as a critique of the cultural politics of corruption in Mexico, which allowed her to elevate her moral and ethical discursive behavior above that of the male journalists, who tended to engage in censure, flattery, and insults as smoke screens to hide the truth.

This commentary also provides insight into the rhetorical strategies she espoused. For example, when she states that “*Vésper* does not have its weapons of combat in the arsenals of insults,” her audience could understand this to mean that she does not rely on logical fallacies, such as *ad hominem* to make a point. An *ad hominem* fallacy attacks the individual personally through insults instead of the logic of the argument, such that conveyed by Ricardo Flores Magón when he accused her of being a lesbian and as anti-patriotic. When she declared, “*Vésper* does not censure the tyrants in order to cajole the masses,” her audience could interpret this to mean that she would continue to print the truth and not pander to the audience or to the politicians. An example of her attempts to adhere to this philosophy appeared in her July 8, 1903 publication. She printed a short two paragraph article, “Amenazas” [Threats], in which she publically denounced Don Manuel de León who threatened *Vésper* with judicial prosecution if she published damaging correspondence penned by Soto la Marina y Tampico. She wrote that she would not publish it, stating that “those correspondences remained in the newspaper office of *Vésper* closed down by action thanks to our concerned government” (Alatorre 138). But as soon

as the staff was able to procure the correspondence, she said, “not only will we publish them, we will comment on them as they deserve to be” (Alatorre 138). Strong words from Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s pen always resulted in actions, as these words that foreshadowed her revolutionary participation, “*Vésper*, always proud, will rise up forever against all tyrants and against all tyrannies.”

Open and direct speech, such as this example from Gutiérrez de Mendoza, and that taken from other publications created a dilemma for the government in its attempt to censor them. But in June of 1910 on Madero’s last speaking tour, the Monterrey government arrested him in order to fully repress the Anti-reelectionists, allowing them to fix the upcoming elections, and to prepare for the extravagant centennial celebration in September. Upon his release in October, he slipped across the border into the United States. Writing from exile in San Antonio, he issued the *Plan de San Luis* that called for revolution and his appointment as provisional president. Additionally, it declared that central government of Mexico was obsolete, demanded a restitution of appropriated lands to villages and Indian communities, and that political prisoners be freed. Madero wrote: “Fellow citizens, do not hesitate, even for a moment! Take up arms, throw the usurpers out of power, recover your rights as free men” (Krause 255). Madero’s Revolution, which officially began on November 20, 1910, was only the beginning of the long and bloody conflict that would evolve into an extremely complex and overwhelming conflict for the people of Mexico.

Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s participation in the revolution proved to be the true embodiment of her discourse. Toward the beginning of the revolution, she took part in the Complot de Tacubaya, a conspiracy that hoped to overthrow the Díaz regime in March of 1911. The plot was betrayed, and she was again jailed and later released after Madero’s ascendance to the

presidency in November. With Madero now in power (1911-1913), she received compensation for the printing press which Díaz had confiscated. In the midst of this revolutionary environment, she left Mexico City in 1912 for Morelos where Zapata was engaged in fighting.<sup>21</sup> Zapata continued his resistance even after Madero became president due to a cautious distrust which permeated their relationship. At their first meeting, Madero refused to accommodate Zapata's requests, which mainly related to the problem of land disputes and the working conditions agricultural workers (Krauze 287). The fact that these desired reforms were not met may have prompted Gutiérrez de Mendoza to travel south to work under Zapata during the first part of the Revolution. But Madero would not remain in office for long. President Madero, along with Vice-President, Pino Suarez, were kidnapped and shortly after assassinated in 1913 by Victoriano Huerta, who seized power of the Mexican government in what came to known as the *Decena Trágica*.<sup>22</sup> Gutiérrez de Mendoza remained active in the latest revolutionary politics, and along with the group she had organized in 1910, *Amigas del Pueblo*, she authored a manifesto in protest of Madero's assassination and printed it in *El Voto* and *Vesper* (Alatorre 65). In the manifesto she issued a call for women to get involved in the Revolutionary movement, not as helpmates to men, but as independent women willing to join the cause.

The Friends of the People Club issues a solemn call to all Mexican women to give up your proverbial indifference, and to resolutely join in the task of human regeneration, ripping away old traditions, forever shedding prejudices, and giving the world the healthy example of your own rise to dignity (Pouwels 74).

This phrase from the manifesto is evidence of Gutiérrez de Mendoza's rejection of the traditional perceptions of women. Her rhetorical defiance, at times, seems to have been actualized and carried out in isolation of other women; however, many women did come together in support of

Madero and the revolution, which was the genesis for a feminist movement which was not well known.<sup>23</sup> With Huerta now in power, a lack of sympathy prevailed for Zapatistas and their supporters. In 1914, Gutiérrez de Mendoza was imprisoned for ten months after having been captured while carrying out a mission commissioned by General Zapata (Alatorre 65). Upon her release, she returned to the rank and file of Zapata's followers, where the General honored her with the title of colonel and made her the leader of a regiment called *Regimiento Victoria* (Villaneda 64).<sup>24</sup> While serving under Zapata, Gutiérrez de Mendoza, once again, was faced with the reality of the deplorable conditions under which the campesinos lived and labored. The conditions she experienced while living among the people of Morelos would inspire her to organize an experimental agricultural project in 1919 with the members of the *Regimiento Victoria* that she named Colonia Agrícola Experimental *Santiago Orozco* (Villaneda 77).<sup>25</sup>

The Revolution raged on through the years of 1913 and 1914, creating a more complex and violent environment in the struggle for power. Venustiano Carranza, the *Primer Jefe* now of the Revolution, would overthrow Huerta in the position for President as the Constitutionalist, and would call for an end to the Revolution. But the end was far from sight. Carranza's revolution, one centered on the writing of a new constitution, was perceived differently from Zapata and Villa's perspective. Zapatistas' revolutionary zeal centered on land reform, where as the Carracistas did not see it as the main political and social issue that needed to be addressed (Brunk 134). The conflict between Villa and Carranza "was more a difference of passions and personalities than of belief or ideology" (Krauze 348). Aside from the conflict with the two main generals, Carranza ushered in a period hoping to rebuild the nation; yet, this direction was difficult to manage. He proposed a new Constitutionalist direction in what was said to be one of the most important speeches of the Revolution which was delivered on September 24, 1913

(Krauze 343). Ten months later, Huerta's presidency came to an end with the signing of the Teoloyucan treaty on August 15, 1914. Carranza tried to establish peace in Mexico with the proclamation of the Constitution of 1917, but the Revolution had not ended due to the continued fighting of Zapata and Villa on the Southern and Northern fronts respectively. Neither felt that the demands of the revolution were being met, and Carranza would either have to persuade the two Revolutionary Generals to side with him, a near impossible task, or to eliminate them from the political picture (Krauze 348). Major class differences resonated in the relationships of the men who supported opposing party lines. Carranza opposed the agrarian revolution and perceived Zapata and Villa as bandits. Carranza believed that he and his followers represented the "real interests of a revolutionary state that still had to be shaped. All his actions were based on that conviction" (Krauze 350). The idea of Zapatismo did not fit into Carranza's idea for a stable, unified Mexico. And like Huerta, Carranza went after all those who supported Zapata. And once again, Gutiérrez de Mendoza was incarcerated in 1916 along with her seventeen year old daughter, Laura, for approximately ten months for their involvement in Zapatismo (Villaneda 78). To take control of the Revolution, Carranza slowly restricted and depleted Zapata's power through the years. On April 10 of 1919, Zapata, who never recognized Carranza as President (Brunk 222), played into the hands of those in power and was assassinated while entering a hacienda in Chinameca to meet with Colonel Jesús Guajardo to broker a deal for men and equipment (Brunk 224).<sup>26</sup> The great leader of the Revolution was dead. A year and some months after the assassination of Carranza, the Villistas put down their weapons; however, the Revolution had not ended. After Álvaro Obregón took office in December of 1920, there remained a long line of generals from the revolution who aspired to the presidency, which resulted in several rebellions (Krauze 397). Gutiérrez de Mendoza, though, did not forget the

Zapatistas' reason for participation in the revolution, nor the death of her son-in-law, Santiago Orozco, and continued actively in the struggle to better the lives of the indigenous and the working poor.

Gutiérrez de Mendoza surely mourned the loss of Zapata, who had fought for the same ideals, which included “land and liberty and the chance at basic human dignity for the poor people he lived with; the fulfillment of the promises of justice and law that generations of politicians had often polished but never honored” (Brunk 224). Within the tumult of this period, Gutiérrez de Mendoza did not lose heart and continued to fight for her ideals. She read and studied the shift in Mexican policy, which favored the fulfillment of the Revolutionary ideals. Members of the Constitutionalist Convention, which officially marked the end of the Revolution, drafted the Constitution of 1917.<sup>27</sup> But Gutiérrez de Mendoza was not satisfied with the direction of the country or with the signing of the Constitution of 1917, which she, as Zapata and many others agreed severely fell short in providing a resolution to the issue of land disputes which did little to better the lives of the poor. The frustration that intensified from 1917 to 1921 only served to embitter Gutiérrez de Mendoza. Once again, she would make her rhetorical presence known. These political sentiments prompted her to once again pick up her pen and start up her printing press, which initiated the next 20 years of continued discursive activism in her life.

### **Clearing the Way**

Mexico was in a state of chaos in the later part of Carranza's presidency. He tried to stabilize the country, but the fighting in the South and especially in the North, under Villa, continued. The Revolution, which started out as a movement which hoped to bring justice for the *campesinos* and fair wages for industrial workers, turned into a movement of power grabbing

among the elites. Empty political discourse blared from all factions, from those who supported the Constitution and from those who did not support it. Gutiérrez de Mendoza witnessed the disintegration of a movement which she once believed would lead to practical solutions. If the government and the revolution continued to fail to ameliorate issues of poverty and despair among the people, she would once again decide to engage in personal social action. Gutiérrez de Mendoza heard too much talk and saw too little action. These sentiments appeared on June 15, 1919 in her new publication titled, *El Desmonte*, which means to level or to clear away. The title *El Desmonte* held rhetorical and ontological significance for Gutiérrez de Mendoza. The writings in *El Desmonte* also represented Gutiérrez de Mendoza's mestiza consciousness in the sense that it illustrated a shift in her political consciousness. The outcome of the Revolution did not produce the idealistic outcomes that she, and many others, had expected; so she altered her course of action. She wrote, "The revolutionaries sowed without clearing the field and, naturally, have harvested everything except what they sowed. The field has given what it had: bitter fruits of bad seed."<sup>28</sup> Baca says that those living within mestiza cultures "have continually adapted to new social realities," in order to survive, and in turn, create "discursive manifestations of continuity and adaptation that comprise this survival" (4). Gutiérrez de Mendoza surveyed the political landscape and continued on her own post-Revolutionary path.

Two months after the betrayal and assassination of Zapata, Gutiérrez de Mendoza addressed the direction of her mission, which continued in direct conflict with the sentiments of President Carranza, who remained in power. In an article titled, "¡Por la Tierra y por la Raza!" [For the land and for the people], Gutiérrez de Mendoza promised to keep Zapata's movement alive.<sup>29</sup>

Before it was written in a newspaper, that motto was written on a battle

flag and signed with blood, with a dreamer's noble blood who in the flower of youth fell as the good fall, struck from behind.

But his beautiful dream did not die with him, that of seeing the Land that he defended kept from the ones that corrupt it by selling it and from the ones that abuse it by appropriating it without any more right to it than that which money gives to them. His unselfish longing did not die with him, that of seeing the people, his people, ennobled, this people who are a protest against human wickedness .

*Desmonte* will know how to keep the flag aloft which was taken up from the field of battle; *Desmonte* will know how to carry on with dignity the motto of a dreamer of this people.<sup>30</sup>

Through the publication of *El Desmonte*, Gutiérrez de Mendoza endeavored to keep the spirit and direction of the revolution alive, to clear out the chaos and confusion of the present, and to foster a new direction. The Revolution with its myriad shifts in power, killings, and battles did not, for Gutiérrez de Mendoza, bring about the solutions to societal problems. In particular, the politician's words did not accomplish anything for the people. In another article from the same publication titled "Hechos, no palabras" [Actions not Words], she defined revolutionary discourse as empty talk, and stated that when it was infused with action and change, only then do the words become meaningful.

Revolutions are not made with desires, nor with speeches, neither with printed paper. These are no more than means of insinuation, of orientation; resources to give decisiveness to the spirit, conviction but nothing else. Very useful means of preparation for that objective, but completely



useless, absolutely ineffectual when everything is reduced to that.<sup>31</sup>

With this paragraph, Gutiérrez de Mendoza offered a critique of the men in power and while verbalizing her perception about the power of discourse. She stated that social change, such as that induced by revolutions, was not solely created through oratory or the printed word. This comment provides evidence of her understanding of the nature of rhetoric, which assumes that one's discourse should bring about some social action. As an ephemeral publication, *El Desmonte* also served as a rhetorical space in which Gutiérrez de Mendoza could mourn the death of Zapata and Orozco, allowing her to discursively claim herself as heir of the struggle for the people, and to articulate the philosophy that would sustain her for the next eighteen years, and which would also later appear in her book *¡Por la tierra y por la raza!*, published in 1924.

The same year Gutiérrez de Mendoza published *El Desmonte* (1919), she initiated the formation of an experimental agricultural community, Colonia Agrícola Experimental *Santiago Orozco* in Cuernavaca, Morelos, which was initially supported by the interim president, Adolfo de la Huerta (Villaneda 53).<sup>32</sup> Gutiérrez de Mendoza's efforts within the experimental community dwindled as the resources for the development of the community were exhausted. To make matters worse, the money she was promised in a letter from Plutarco Elías Calles, at the time, Governor of Sonora, (Villaneda 53) never arrived. Calles, a teacher by profession, wrote to Gutiérrez de Mendoza ensuring that "Very soon we will see the triumph which the aforementioned Colonia will obtain, and with it, you, who so worthily represent it and who, untiringly and tenaciously in your patriotic idea, are the one who truly has won the triumph" (Villaneda 53).<sup>33</sup> This promise and praise from Calles, who would become the next president of Mexico (1925-1928), sounded as patronizing, meaningless words. From this time, and even before, Gutiérrez de Mendoza addressed the hypocrisy of the Mexican government that

venerated the Indian's past in one breath, and in the other disparaged them. She wrote in *El Desmonte* about her people and how they were perceived by the nation: "Forgotten by all, the bereaving caravan of the defeated, who stoically bear the weight of their misfortune, passes by like a ghost. Mute and somber, the Indians carry in their dark eyes the tempests of their unspoken pain and hide their misery in caverns... like strangers in their own country " (2).<sup>34</sup> Calles's letter was only a reminder of the struggle that lay ahead.

Although these letters were filled with broken promises, correspondence from prominent politicians, such as Calles, demonstrates Gutiérrez de Mendoza's discursive presence among Mexico's most renowned men. As a female who interacted with Zapata, Calles, Madero, and others, all prominent politicians and revolutionaries listed by Krauze as the key actors in Mexico's history, she defied the odds of gender, class and race. A failed revolution, broken promises and empty praise would have been enough to discourage one from seeking an ideal solution for the people, but with each experience, prison sentence, revolution, and failed social experiment, Gutiérrez de Mendoza became more determined to continue her work. Gutiérrez de Mendoza, the literate Mexican-Indian and practiced rhetorician considered her failures as future opportunities; for example, she reframed the prison into a space from which to speak and shaped the revolution into a space for confronting authority and tradition.

### **Revising Historical Narratives**

In the first months of 1922, she left Morelos after the failure of the *Santiago Orozco* agricultural community and returned to Mexico City to take a job as a *maestra rural* or a missionary teacher, among the indigenous people in the mountains of Mexico. The crusade to educate the indigenous population was lead by philosopher and educator, José Vasconcelos, first leader of the Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP), which was established in 1920.

Vasconcelos's idea of a fifth and perfect race grew popular in the early 1920's in Mexico as the new modernist perspective. His book, *La raza cosmic* (1924), ultimately pleaded for the Spaniard and Indian to unite in the formation of a superior race. The underlying premise was that the Indian needed to be assimilated into main stream society and educated to better serve the nation. This book was the pivotal point of departure for Mexico's new modernist school of thought, and many artists, scholars, and politicians accepted Vasconcelos's social theories, and hoping they would solve the "Indian problem." His theories, along with those of others, such as Justo Sierra and Salvador Alvarado, would prove to be influential in the expansive social engineering experiment that would take place with the formation of the SEP.

In *Cultural Politics and Revolution: Teachers, Peasants, and Schools in Mexico, 1930 - 1940*, Mary Kay Vaughan addresses the *maestras rurales*'s role in the active social implementation of revolutionary ideas. These ideas were articulated in the Constitution of 1917 under Carranza, and they represent the philosophy and pedagogical paths the SEP was taking in the early stages of social reform. By analyzing the SEP director's ideological framework, one can see the direction the teachers involved in the program were told to take. "Every minister of public education cited Mexico's Indian roots as a point of departure along the road to modernity. Although each praised the Indian's artistic creativity, the latter was to be preserved in a modern subject. [...] They took certain peasant goals – land and sustenance – and reworked them into their own paradigm of improvement" (26). In other words, the mission of the teachers who joined the movement was to trek into the mountains, educate the Indians about the modern world, and ultimately, assimilate them into Mexican society. "The [SEP] assumed that peasants had held no knowledge that could serve to contribute to their own personal transformation. Enlightenment came from abroad and from the cities" (28). The SEP's program was infused with

ideas of Western eugenics, racial fitness, and domestic science with teachers on the front lines as promoters of these ideas. Vaughan not only recounts the steps and ideas that policy writers and the *maestras rurales* embraced in order to carry out this action pedagogy, but she also paints a picture of local and communal resistance to the ideas forced upon the people. It was not uncommon for *maestras rurales* to be attacked and sometimes killed because the indigenous communities felt that either their communal cultures or hierarchies were threatened or that the teachings insulted their cultural beliefs. As one of the *maestras rurales*, Gutiérrez de Mendoza would use her proficiency as a critical observer to resist the history and policies that were being forced upon the indigenous people.

Although Gutiérrez de Mendoza was counted among the very first *maestras rurales*, who traveled by mule to different indigenous communities in the states of Jalisco and Zacatecas (Villaneda 55), she did not accept the ontological basis of the curriculum. Because of her racial, gendered and societal situatedness as a female Mexican-Indigenous activist from the mountains of Durango, she discerned another message directed toward her people in the social policies being enacted. This *maestra rural* did not see the modernist's history in a linear fashion, as many blindly accepted. She understood that these teachings were ideological tools which were employed to essentialize, marginalize and infantilize the indigenous people. The *maestras* were instructed to infiltrate the communities and essentially *shift* the Indians' everyday habits by introducing new rituals and rites of passage such as songs, dance, theater and most powerful, festivals.

Mexico's social engineering movement was a revolution of language, which can be a subtle yet powerful tool in the process of change. In *Community Action and Organizational Change: Image, Narrative and Identity*, Brenton Faber refers to the social theorists, Andrew

Giddens and Pierre Bourdieu, as a basis for understanding the power of discourse and the process of change. Faber's synthesis of these social theories can shed some light on how the SEP was using "the often unacknowledged operation of language and the products of language: specialized discourses and stories" (52). Gutiérrez de Mendoza's literacy as a Mexican indigenous woman at the turn of the century gave her a rare insight into the cultural and social politics of the time, and she reacted to the "specialized discourse and stories" the government was telling about her people in a one hundred and nineteen page pamphlet titled, *¡Por la tierra y por la raza!* She read the Mexican government's argument in the policies that were delivered to the *maestras rurales*, such as the following quote from José Vasconcelos, "Let us take the campesino under our wing. Let us teach him to increase his production through the use of better tools and methods" (Vaughan 28). Vaughan notes that the SEP's "[a]ction education became a vehicle for the politics of oppressed groups" (36). The movement to better the lives of the indigenous people was not necessarily a step in the wrong direction because it gave teachers the charge to align themselves with the campesinos to ensure land reform, higher wages, loans, and fair prices.

The movement sustained underlying currents of racism which were difficult to detect, and members of the communities chosen for this project, such as Gutiérrez de Mendoza, applied policies which allowed her to counter some of the negative repercussions. Faber says that "[l]anguage is unacknowledged because few people are fully conscious about the words they use and the ways these words intersect and thereby sustain or even build beliefs and values. Thus, our specialized discourses and the stories we hear and tell," such as those of the Mexican SEP's, "sustain our habits and routines and thereby build our social culture" (52). In Vaughan's study of the movement, she shows how "peasant and worker as agents of history were abstracted out of

real social conflict” (40). Their frustrations with the system were now being redirected by the new state institutions, such as the SEP and The Department of Education and Indigenous Culture. Vaughan points out that “as constructions in a new Mexican history [the state institutions] could be used to legitimate popular claims” (40). By working as a member of the SEP, Gutiérrez de Mendoza was able to counter the language of the status quo with the language of mestiza rhetoric.

After teaching from 1922 to 1923 among the indigenous people, she was able to take a critical look the ideological basis of the action pedagogy, and in reaction to the policies, she formed a group in Juchipila, Zacatecas known as the *Consejo de los Caxcanes*.<sup>35</sup> A year later, the cultural philosophical writings of Vasconcelos were published and Gutiérrez de Mendoza immediately responded to the societal direction of thinking that the mestizo was the superior race in her book *¡Por la tierra y por la raza!* In it, she responded directly to Vasconcelo’s claims and the SEP’s direction as obstacles that threatened the survival of the indigenous people.

Humanity, regardless of its alleged superiority over the irrationalists, suffers to a great degree from that intense primitivism that makes its different people fight one against the other for the domination of the world. And a good example of it is our people, that have suffered the aggressions of others and have been on the brink of extinction, shattered and deprived by the others.

We have an indisputable right to not disappear as a people; we do not want to be a part of human kind as a conquered people nor with the poor temperament of an assimilated people. And WE DO NOT RECOGNIZE THE RIGHT OF ANY PEOPLE TO IMPOSE THEIR CIVILIZATION ON US. Our aspirations and our salvation are not in BECOMING INCORPORATED INTO another

civilization, but in RESTORING OUR OWN. It is for this reason than the Council of the Caxcanes, organized by the descendants of that people in the region of its origin, initiates that work of restoration that entails the abolition of all social standards that have been imposed by the conquistadors, and that are opposed to the natural laws that regulated their primal system of government (103-104 capitals in original).<sup>36</sup>

Gutiérrez de Mendoza vehemently opposed the direction of the governmental institutions, which were established in order to assist the Indians gain the “ways of reason.” She understood the epistemic and ontological bearings of modernity as a philosophy that could “hurt and disrespect the Indian” (95), not one that would uplift them. The underlying position of Vasconcelos was based on a multicultural approach, but Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s analysis was correct; it sought to foreground the indigenous cultures, reprogram them to support the tenets of capitalism, and to establish a central state hegemony.

There was a growing suspicion not only of Gutiérrez de Mendoza, but with others, such as the villagers, that the *maestras rurales* were trying to destroy their culture. Their fears were not unfounded. But as Vaughan so eloquently recounts, many of the villages and indigenous tribes, such as the Yaqui, kept their own records and archives and were able to rewrite histories of their people that respected and validated them (158). Like the Yaquis, Gutiérrez de Mendoza reframed the history of her people, the Caxcanes, and her account of this appears in the first and second chapters of *¡Por la tierra y por la raza!*. Vaughan notes that many of the pueblos that were visited by the *maestras rurales* did struggle “successfully to legitimize their cultures and assert their right to pace the entry of modernity and determine its content and meaning” (155). To legitimize one’s culture in the face of oppression and to rewrite one’s history may be

reinterpreted as a mestiza rhetorical project. Anzaldúa states that the history of the indigenous people must be told by their own people, not by those who are in power; and only then, will ignorance be replaced with self-determination. “Before the Chicano and the undocumented worker and the Mexican from the other side can come together, before the Chicano can have unity with Native Americans and other groups, we need to know the history of their struggle and they need to know ours...each of us must know our Indian lineage, our afro-*mestizaje*, our history of resistance” (86 emphasis in original). As part of a larger project, Gutiérrez de Mendoza joined in the grassroots struggle of the indigenous people in an attempt to chronicle their own stories.

Central to the cultural and everyday existence of the indigenous people was their religion and creation myths, which were deemed as pagan and primitive by the conquerors. The first chapter of the original 1924 edition of *¡Por la tierra y por la raza!* presented the reasoning behind the beliefs of the indigenous people, such as that of waiting for the arrival of Quetzalcoatl, known as the feathered serpent and the Aztec God representing the priesthood, learning and knowledge, and also the creation of the sun and moon. Gutiérrez de Mendoza reverses modernity’s logic and dares to state that indigenous people have the same rights to express their own religious beliefs. If European cultures are allowed to maintain the myth of the return of their Messiah, why cannot the indigenous people also maintain their own myths?

For many centuries Tenochtitlán has waited for Quetzalcóatl to return.

This hope, solid as a rock in the soul of the Indians, nobody knows of it, nobody wants to understand it. It makes sense. Only the soul of an Indian understands his own people.

Outsiders have mistaken for Mythology what is a reality, the Indians await



the return of The One that launched his arrows toward infinity and from Chaos, wounded by them, he took out the Day and the Night.

Fantasy?....No; Reality, and Reality, and a very beautiful Reality; Reality upon which has fallen, like mountains of sand piled up for Centuries, the Lie.

Below that mountain, that inexhaustible people are stirring like the Truth. Perhaps the whole of mankind is stirring in that way. . . Don't the faithful await the arrival of a Messiah?

Why shouldn't the faithful await the Messiah for the same reason that the Indians wait for Quetzalcóatl?<sup>37</sup>

The Europeans' encounter with the Mexican people denied the natives of their cultural reality, and Gutiérrez de Mendoza's rhetorical backlash and questioning turned this modernist denial on its head. Her view of the world was not grounded in Eurocentrism; therefore, she understood the modernist reasoning to be an extension of the colonizers' perspective that Dussel states "asymmetrically *excluded* the world of the Other from all rationality and all possible religious validity" (55). Anzaldúa asserts that the dominant culture has "white washed and distorted history" (86), and by taking on the role of an historian infused with a mestiza consciousness, one can reclaim a level of self-determination for one's people. This was Gutiérrez de Mendoza's position as a rhetor. Her reasoning adopted a sophistic method of reworking civilization's truth by rhetorically intervening in the process of cultural formation. As Jarratt states, "the sophistic historian disrupts the continuity of the given historical narrative...[and] throw[s] into new light a range of facts and causes for the purpose of a more general consideration" (17). Part of SEP's process for a new indigenous cultural transformation included the organization of festivals that celebrated school openings and seasonal changes.

Many rural people appropriated these festivals as a way to intervene in claiming their own discursive identities. In her book on cultural politics, Mary Kay Vaughan claims that “community festivities were political” (60). Several sections emphasize the importance of the community festivals in the process of the ritualization of the nation-state in the indigenous communities. In other words, the festivals introduced new rituals that would integrate the Indians into the nation-state. Many of the rural community leaders saw the festivals as spaces where they could claim and enact their own culture’s identity. Vaughan states that “[i]n the Cárdenas period [1934-1940], the insertion of the central state’s democratic messages helped to empower the subaltern” (93). Some of the festivals and rituals they organized involved the learning of *danzas* from different regions of Mexico and the singing of indigenous songs such as “Los chaparritos,” and “Las palmeras” (Vaughan 60). Vaughan notes that female school teachers were crucial to the organization of community rituals because they distinguished the festival as a space to enact and reinforce their own identities.

Gutiérrez de Mendoza reiterated the value of the historical festival of the Caxcan people known as “Danza del Xúchil.” This traditional *danza* was celebrated in honor of Teocal-li, the name given to the Caxcanes first cave where they housed all their provisions and memories of Xochiquetzal, goddess of fertility and beauty and Quetzalcóatl, the feathered serpent deity related to Aztec priesthood and knowledge (Gutiérrez de Mendoza 13). In *¡Por la tierra y por la raza!*, Gutiérrez de Mendoza reinforced the importance of the fiesta and *danza de Xúchil*, which was celebrated in Juchipila, Zacatecas, one of the many places in which she taught as a *maestra rural*. She wrote, “In fairness to all the descendants of that noble race, it must be accounted for that in Juchipila they still celebrate the traditional «festival of Xúchil,» even though they try to exterminate it by confusing it with a religious festival or passing it off as common popular

festivity, to have it forgotten that the «danza of Xúchil» should have corresponding solemnity for the sacred martyr” (55).<sup>38</sup> In order to document its authenticity, she included on the next page a musical score corresponding to the *danza* which she found in the rural community of Juchipila. She recognized the modernist push to eliminate this festival from the pueblo’s collective conscience, and included it in her history of the people in an attempt to keep the Caxcan cultural memory alive. It is through these historical narratives that she enacted a mestiza rhetoric in *¡Por la tierra y por la raza!*

Mestiza rhetoric, such as the discourse in *¡Por la tierra y por la raza!*, seeks a validating vision, an exoneration, and “new images of identity, new beliefs about ourselves, our humanity and worth no longer in question” (Anzaldúa 87). The creation of a new image of identity, as Faber would suggest, is done solely through discourse. In addition to the festivals, Gutiérrez de Mendoza used a mestiza rhetorical strategy in the first chapter by infusing Nahuatl and Spanish into the creation story of the Caxcan people. For example, in many places in the chapter, she included many Nahuatl words such as *tlahtohcayatl*, *quiyáhuac*, *metzitli*, *totoli*, *cacalotxúchil*, and *coahuatl* and made reference to Aztec deities such as Tezcatlipoca, Tahtli, Quetzalcoatl, Xochiquetazl. Gutiérrez de Mendoza did not provide definitions of the Nahuatl terms for the reader, which could be interpreted to mean that she either expected the audience to understand some of these words, or that she would not offer a discursive apology for having introduced an indigenous language into the discourse. The only instance that she included a footnote was to correct a Spanish misinterpretation of Juchipila, which was originally known as Xochipillan, the mythological origin meaning “Place of the God of Flowers” (11). Throughout the rest of the book, she argued for the unrepresented historical documents of her people, transcribed parts of other historians writings, such as that of Frey Frejes’s “Historia breve de la Conquista de los

Estados Independientes de Imperio Mexicano” and forwarded the ultimate insult to the modernist movement, the assurance that the indigenous people, their culture, language, and religious beliefs would survive.

It is toward the end of *¡Por la tierra y por la raza!* where Gutiérrez de Mendoza clearly states her reason for writing about the Caxcan people and affirms her counter argument against modernism.

Humanity, regardless of its alleged superiority over the irrationalists, suffers to a great degree from that intense primitivism that makes its different people fight one against the other for the domination of the world. And a good example of it is our people, that have suffered the aggressions of others and have been on the brink of extinction, shattered and deprived by the others.

We have an indisputable right to not disappear as a people; we do not want to be a part of human kind as a conquered people nor with the poor temperament of an assimilated people. And WE DO NOT RECOGNIZE THE RIGHT OF ANY PEOPLE TO IMPOSE THEIR CIVILIZATION ON US. Our aspirations and our salvation are not in BECOMING INCORPORATED INTO another civilization, but in RESTORING OUR OWN. It is for this reason then the Council of the Caxcanes, organized by the descendants of that people in the region of its origin, initiates that work of restoration that entails the abolition of all social standards that have been imposed by the conquistadors, and that are opposed to the natural laws that regulated their primal system of government (103-104 capitals in original).<sup>39</sup>

Gutiérrez de Mendoza stated clearly and frankly that her people did not accept the definitions

and current directions articulated for their people in the curriculum proposed by Vasconcelos. Vasconcelos' project, while it looked inclusive, was not — it was assimilationist. On several occasions she explicitly stated that “Our aspirations and our salvation do not rest in INCORPORATING ourselves into another civilization, but in RESTORING our own.” These claims that deny the evolution of a new ontology from the peaceful convergence of two or more cultures are theoretically outside those of a mestiza consciousness. Ironically, though, this quotation clearly positions her discourse within a mestiza consciousness. It crossed the “barriers imposed by Western global expansion and its hierarchical configuration of assimilation” (Baca 131). *¡Por la tierra y por la raza!*'s historical memory cleared the way for a new cultural understanding outside of the conviction that the history, as recounted by the colonizers, was the only valid interpretation.

## **Conclusion**

Gutiérrez de Mendoza never extended an apology for her definitive rhetorical stances. To seek approval was not her style. Her experiences of witnessing and sharing in the struggles of the indigenous people, losing many of the lives she cherished, participating in a violent revolution, and having endured countless broken promises extended to her people all served as her reasons to write unapologetically. Her unabashedly frank rhetoric certainly contributed to the many reasons why she has been overlooked in Mexican history; the same way the Mexican government refused to validate the works and efforts of *las soldaderas*, the female soldiers of the Mexican Revolution. The inclusion of Gutiérrez de Mendoza in Mexican and American rhetorical history serves as an acknowledgement of the importance of women's role in the Revolution's discursive realm, and not only in the role of *soldadera*. Although this study centers on Mexican historical events, the rising numbers of Mexicans living in the United States blurs

the line between what is considered as “our” history. Investigating our sisters to south makes our discipline more democratically inclusive and respectful of other cultures. Further, this study rightfully establishes them in the position of politically and rhetorically active women who were influencing and steering the direction of the nation. This claim is certainly not meant to diminish the tireless efforts of the thousands of *soldaderas* who worked as nurses, messengers, cooks and counselors to the men; however, it was only on rare occasions that women intersected with the main political powers in the manner of Gutiérrez de Mendoza. This study may isolate Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s actions as anomalous to the period; however, as Martha Eva Rocha contends in “The Faces of Rebellion: From Revolutionaries to Veterans in Nationalist Mexico,” there were many other women taking part in discursive activism such as Hermila Galindo, Julia Nava de Ruisánchez, Leonor Villegas, and many others (15). Gutiérrez de Mendoza, though, was among the most publicly visible and discursively active, making *her*/story deserving of close historical attention.

Many of her societal actions consisted of strategic attempts meant to influence the decisions of politicians, such as those desired when she established Club Femenil Amigas del Pueblo; through her participation in the Complot de Tacubaya; through her service as Inspector/Instructor of Federal Schools in Querétaro and Zacatecas; and in her position as a hospital director (Alatorre 66). Whether as a journalist, as director of a political club, or a *maestra rural*, each position she held involved a level of discursive intervention in a particular political or social event. Few mainstream Mexican histories acknowledge Mexican women’s *discursive* participation, mostly because the public domain offered limited possibilities for them. Although several histories counter the stereotyping of Mexican women at the turn of the century and in contemporary times, the collective conscience of society does not carry these narratives

according to scholars such as Olcott, Vaughan, Macias, Cano, and Tuñón.

During and after the Revolution, a Mexican modernist view of the world emerged as the answer to the Indian question, and many people accepted its philosophical tenets without question. Vaughan states that missionary educators, the *maestras rurales*, accepted the linearity of history and the claim that the “European conquest pulled Mexico into civilization [and that] the modern world emanated from Europe” (25). The era of modernization fostered a global acceptance to the affect that Europe was the center of world order and progress. The Mexican Revolution and its ideological outcome reversed *some* of this modernist thinking. It became the norm for the Mexican people to embrace their indigenous roots; however, the assimilationist model of progress fueled the move toward a nation-state. This Mexican modernism became a contact zone of modern conquest philosophies, which promoted individualist education, capitalism, and industrialization. These beliefs clashed with those of the indigenous communities who believed in a different way of life, such as the coming of Quetzalcoatl, the practice of ancient rituals and cultures, and the use of indigenous languages. As a *maestra rural*, and even later as the director of these federal schools in 1925, Gutiérrez de Mendoza did not accept modernist ideas.

The articles in *El Desmonte* and *¡Por la tierra y por la raza!* disrupted the belief that all of Mexico accepted the myth of modernity which Vasconcelos presented, and more importantly, it challenged the idea that only men were taking part in shaping the cultural history of Mexico. The writings of Gutiérrez de Mendoza add to the evidence of previous scholars that women in Mexico in the early twentieth century did participate in the politics of the Revolution outside that of the role of *soldadera*. This study, nonetheless, brings into focus exactly the point in which her discourse intersected with the complex sphere of power. The participation of women in the

formation of Mexican culture during the time of the Secretaría de Educación Pública of 1921-1940, however, is not disputed. Vaughan notes that the “SEP did not relegate women to a docile space marginal to civic life and citizenship” (43); on the contrary, they were the “foot soldiers” in the movement to integrate the indigenous people into Mexican society. Gutiérrez de Mendoza was one of the foot soldiers, and since she may have been the only *maestra* in the pueblos of Zacatecas, she may have interpreted the curriculum and policies so as to meet her ideological standing, not the SEP’s. We see this through the formation of the Consejo de los Caxcanes in Juchipila, Zacatecas, and her validation and encouragement of the fiesta de Xúchil. Her hard work in these communities did not go unnoticed by the male directors of the program, evidenced in the fact she was named Inspector-Instructor of the Federal Schools in San Juan del Río, Guerrero in 1925, and the following year she was made Director of the Hospital of Zacatecas (Pouwels 81). Although she took on administrative roles, she continued to write and publish.

Gutiérrez de Mendoza may not have had time to publish her own periodical, as in the early days of *Vesper*; however she contributed to many other journals. In Zacatecas she was the principal director of the group Indio América, and she contributed an article for publication in the group’s periodical, *América India* (Pouwels 81).<sup>40</sup> And her influence in the Mexico City journalistic scene was not quickly forgotten. Camilo Arriaga, a one-time revolutionary ally and now director of *El Heraldo de México*, published some of Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s writings (Pouwels 81). In 1932, she resurrected *Vesper* for the last time in an effort to stir women into a more active role in post-revolutionary Mexican politics, issues such as that dealing with women’s suffrage. Toward the end of her career, Gutiérrez de Mendoza seemed to increase her activism, and her ideological convictions shifted toward a radical feminism that elevated motherhood to a superior in lieu of the harsh politics of men. Lau Javien notes that these ideas



first appeared in a small 1936 publication titled, *República Femenina*. Gutiérrez de Mendoza considered feminism as fundamentally biologic because “it vindicated the maternal condition and the difference of activities between men and women when proposing a government of women, for women ready to become partners with men, in order to integrate the representation and the official administration of the collective interests, in order that society could function” (29).<sup>41</sup> In the final years of her life, she gained a greater level of recognition by the government and even the elites. She received a pension of five pesos a day for her service in the Revolution, and collaborated with artists like Concha Michel and Frida Kahlo to form the radical group *República Femenina* in 1938.

Gutiérrez de Mendoza had fulfilled the promise she had made in the early writings of *Vésper* when she stated, “*Vésper siempre ocupará su puesto*” [*Vésper* will always occupy its place]. The newspaper *Vésper*, which is synonymous with its founder’s identity, stormed onto the political journalistic scene and occupied a distinctive discursive space. Not only did Gutiérrez de Mendoza occupy this discursive space; she commanded it. With so much rhetorical activism, Gutiérrez de Mendoza had to have been recognized as a strong player in the formation of Mexican journalistic politics. In his book *El Periodismo en la Revolución Mexicana*, Diego Arenas Guzman cites a history of Mexican newspapers that were published during the Precursor Movement written by Barrera Fuentes, who wrote under the pseudonym of *El Hombre Gris*. In the same breathe in which he mentions Sr. Díaz y Soto, Sr. Arriaga, and the politics of no reelection under Porfirio Díaz, he mentions “*la Sra. Juana B. Gutiérrez de Mendoza...in a position that everyone knew of her newspaper Vésper in which she was always energetically attacking the government*” (222). She was active for over forty years in the struggle to give the poor, the marginalized, and the women a public voice. “I will never be silenced!” she

proclaimed in 1935 upon reaching retirement age. In one of her last publications titled *Alma Mexicana*, she claimed that “thirty-five years of incessant fighting and sixty years of living, can put anyone out of combat, or at least serve to justify indifference or to disguise cowardice...” But her decolonial understanding of the situation of so many poor people in Mexico “only had one solution: to continue [her] work, although bearing the sad conviction that it is all in vain” (84 Pouwels). An analysis of Gutiérrez de Mendoza’s writing as a scholar and activist, and from the historical facts presented here, *none* of her discourse or activism was spoken or written in vain.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> The Secretaría de Educación Pública (Ministry of Public Education) was created by President Álvaro Obregón only a few days after he took office in December of 1920. He appointed José Vaconcelos as head of the new governmental agency, who was able to apply his philosophies to create change in Mexican education and culture, that even to today, live on in the Mexican present (Krauze 393).

<sup>2</sup> These names were so prevalent some men were even given the name José María.

<sup>3</sup> No me consta, pero me han asegurado que nací en San Juan del Río, Durango el nevado amanecer del día 27 de enero de 1875.

Este dato debe ser importantísimo, porque lo han anotado con minuciosa escrupulosidad en los registros de la cárcel, cada vez que he estado allí. Y a fuerza de repetirlo, me he acostumbrado a ello de tal modo, que cuando entro a alguna parte, especialmente a los edificios públicos, o cuando me presentan a alguien, digo invariablemente: Juana B. Gutiérrez de Mendoza, San Juan del Río, Durango, 27 de enero de 1875, etc., etc.

Estos etcéteras son la segunda parte del programa: comprenden toda una serie de detalles que se agregan a los primeros, siempre en creciente. Estos etcéteras también me los sé de memoria y también me he acostumbrado a repetirlos; parecen un sonoro repique de campanas a vuelo: SEDICION-REBELION, SEIDION-REBELION, SEDICION-REBELION...eso dicen las palabras que agregan a mi nombre en los registros.

<sup>4</sup> In March of 1911, Gutiérrez de Mendoza took part in “El Plan de Tacubaya,” which was meant to overthrow the Díaz’s government and his powerful legislative and judicial leaders. The plan, also plotted with Rudolfo y Ocatavio Magaña, Carlos Mújica and Dolores Jiménez y Muro, named don Francisco I. Madero as Provisional and Chief Supreme. It also declared the 1857 Constitution Law Supreme; it established the free ballot and not reelection; reformed the law of the press; restored freedom of expression; reorganized the administration of local municipalities; protected the indigenous; called for lands that were seized illegally to be returned to their legitimate owners, demanded an eight hour work week, ordered an equality in the rents tenant farmers pay and that monopolies are abolished. “El Complot de Tacubaya” was to have taken effect the 27 of March, but the plan was compromised

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and discovered by authorities and the Plan's participants were thrown into Cárcel General (Eduardo Arrieta Corral 15).

<sup>5</sup> Santiago de la Hoz, a su vez, se marchó, invitándome para que fuera yo también... Poco después recibí cartas de todos. Ya había recibido la misma invitación de parte de los otros compañeros, pero no me resolvía a ir porque sentía pena de ir a luchar al extranjero... Insistieron de tal modo que al fin me fui.

<sup>6</sup> The other revolutionaries staying in Estela Ramírez's home in Laredo included Santiago de la Hoz, the Flores Magón brothers, Juan Sarabia, Santiago R. de la Vega, Elisa Acuña y Rosete, and Manuel Sarabia (Alatorre 64).

<sup>7</sup> Gutiérrez de Mendoza would later write a piece titled "Redentores de la peseta" which accused the Flores Magón brothers of being traitors to the nation and their cause for charging a *peseta*, at the time equal to about five cents, for entrance into the political conferences where the exiles would discuss Mexican politics.

<sup>8</sup> Se dirá la que se quiera; pero lo cierto es que me estaba consumiendo la nostalgia de la Patria; ya no podía vivir entre aquellos yankis odiosos y menos entre los bárbaros de Texas.

De mi estancia en Texas saqué la convicción de que el fantasma de la intervención con que se nos amenazaba siempre, era eso: un verdadero fantasm, propio para asustar a espíritus pusilánimes.

Aunque parezca contradictorio, ese pueblo práctico es pura vanidad. No tiene de formidable más que la apariencia que le da el reclamo; cualquier esfuerzo lo agotará, y la fuerza de su primer impulso puede tomarse en cuenta, perso en materia de resistencia será una nulidad

<sup>9</sup> Crecencio Villareal Márquez founded the two newspapers *El Mensajero* and *1810* in Del Río, Texas. He wrote about the injustices along the border, criticized corrupt Mexican officials, and supported the liberal cause in his writings (Brufe and Verter 40).

<sup>10</sup> Le diré a usted que nos ha indignado mucho la conducta antipatriótica de Doña Juana B. Gutiérrez de Mendoza. Esa señora ha hecho causa común con Camilo Arriaga para comprometer los trabajos del Partido Liberal.

Cuando estábamos en San Antonio supimos, eso es asquerosísimo, que Doña Juana y Elisa Acuña y Rosete se entregaban a un Safismo pútrido que no repugnó... Detalles verdaderamente asquerosos se relatan de todo eso y muchos correligionarios han retirado su protección a esas propagandista del safismo, pues como le digo a usted, en México se sabía lo que hacían esas señoras (36).

<sup>11</sup> Perdóneme si no entiendo a que llama Ud. pasión, por lo que se refiere al desprecio para los enemigos, yo hago un distinción, si Ud. me lo permite: a mis enemigos personales, si los tuviera, me reservaría el derecho de tratarlos como se ocurriera y no le daría a nadie permiso de que me hiciera indicaciones sobre el particular; pero a los enemigos de la Patria y de los principios que defendiendo no tengo derecho a despreciarlos, tengo el deber de castigarlos. Por eso castigo a los miembros de la Junta Organizadora. [...]

¿Que hago fuego contra Uds.? No, yo no hago fuego más que contra los enemigos de la patria, contra los tiranos y los impostores, y creo que contra éstos, todos los hombres horados y sinceros harán fuego también, porque antes son la patria y los principios que las falsas apariencias. ¡*Vésper* es un combatiente y no un encubridor! ¡*Vésper* no hace traición a la Patria ni a sus principios (Villaneda 39).

<sup>12</sup> Another issue that may have caused such a riff between Flores Magón (brothers) and Gutiérrez de Mendoza was the death of compatriot and poet, Santiago de la Hoz. De la Hoz and Gutiérrez de Mendoza had been close friends, when on March 20, 1904 he drowned in the Rio Grande in Brownsville, TX. There were two accounts of what happened to de la Hoz. Flores Magón told authorities that a strong current took him, and Villaneda's account places

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blame on Ricardo Flores Magón for intentionally drowning de la Hoz. Gutiérrez de Mendoza accepted the later version, and would never see Flores Magón as an honorable man again.

<sup>13</sup> Cargos de interés colectivo, como son los que hacemos nosotras, ni se responden ni se destruyen con calumnias e insultos de carácter absolutamente personal, como pretende ‘Regeneración’. Esos ultrajes y esas calumnias...no creo que le importe a nadie, ni menos creo que tales extravagancias tengan alguna relación con los intereses de la colectividad...

Estos [los Flores Magón] son los patriotas, estos son los miembros de Junta Organizadora, estos son en fin los insultadores de mujeres que rugen de rabia y despecho porque hemos sido bastante dignas y amamos bastante a nuestra patria para no llevar sus desdichas al mercado, para no vender por una peseta sus infortunios ( Villaneda 37).

<sup>14</sup> See Stephanie Mitchell and Patience in *A Schell in The Women's Revolution in Mexico, 1910-1953*, Jocelyn Olcott, *Revolutionary Women in Postrevolutionary Mexico*, and Olcott, Mary Kay Vaughan, and Gabriela Cano in *Sex in Revolution: Gender, Politics, and Power in Modern Mexico*.

<sup>15</sup> ...que no me gusta la política que han seguido esos señores Magón pues sin distinción de ninguna especie insultan a todo el mundo y por cosas enteramente domésticas se ponen a insultar y a calumniar a liberals tan inmaculados como el ingeniero Camilo Arriaga y se ponen a manchar las hojas de su órgano con los insultos más soeces hacia una señora” (Villaneda 42).

<sup>16</sup> See *Dreams of Freedom: A Ricardo Flores Magón Reader* edited by Chaz Bufe and Mitchell Cowen Verter

<sup>17</sup> Pouwels notes that the newspaper *Anáhuac* had several connections with other revolutionaries. Gutiérrez de Mendoza cofounded the weekly with “José Edilberto Pinelo, who co-authored with Jiménez y Muro, the 1911 Political and Social Plan signed by the Tacubaya conspirators. The 1907 editorial board of *Anáhuac* is listed on the front page of the 1 January 1907 issue. The officers included J. Edilberto Pinelo, Juana Gutiérrez, Elisa Acuña y Rosete, and several male representatives. The microfilm of this issue of *Anáhuac* is in the University of Texas at Austin’s Benson Collection” (70).

<sup>18</sup> ¿Para qué hacer elogios del hombre cuyos actos lo han dado a conocer como altamente digno de ocupar el puesto que se le designó?

Para quien conozca la cobardía que tiene a la nación temblando ante el Gral. Díaz, basta con el solo hecho de que el Sr. Madero se haya puesto de pie ante ese poder que pretende someterlo todo, no porque sea un hecho extraordinario enfrentársele a un tirano que en último extremo pudiera bajar rodando por sí solo, sino porque en las actuales circunstancias, no es lo más difícil ponerse frente a Don Porfirio Díaz, como ciudadano con derechos a ejercitar, lo grave es ponerse al frente de este pueblo como ciudadano con derechos y deberes que cumplir (Alatorre 147).

<sup>19</sup> ¡Cobardes! Tantas veces hemos vistos los rostros desencajados, las miradas furtivas, los labios trémulos, en los que se escapan temblando las palabras: ¡Cuando se muera el General Díaz...

¡Y qué repugnantes encontramos a esos hombres que para vivir esperan como los gusanos, el cadáver que los nutra!

¡Ay! Y para los que esperan el sepulcro donde ha de enterrarse un tiranía que parece ser eterna.

Casi llegamos a desesperar de que un acto digno no llegara a verificarse en este pueblo donde todo se aplaza para la muerte del General Díaz.

Por fortuna para el decoro del país, la muerte no ha oído ese clamoreo y un grupo de hombres se puso de pie, proponiendo que el General Díaz deje el poder y no ‘cuando se muera’, sino cuando la acción ordene (Alatorre 145).

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<sup>20</sup> *Vesper*, altivo siempre, se rebelará eternamente contra todos los tiranos y contra todas las tiranías.

*Vesper* tiene su criterio propio y así como nunca se le impondrá el acomodaticio criterio oficial, nunca tampoco se le impondrá el absurdo criterio de los grupos a que aludimos.

*Vesper* no tiene sus energías prestadas de la dureza de la palabra. *Vesper* no tiene sus armas de combate en los arsenales de la injuria. *Vesper* no se yergue ante los magnates para doblegarse ante los idiotas. *Vesper* no fustiga a los tiranos para adular a las multitudes. *Vesper* no tiene una acre censura para los funcionarios obcecado y un elogio servil para las chusmas apasionadas. *Vesper* no se aparta de la prensa que se vende para afiliarse a la prensa que se alquila. *Vesper* no sacrifica nunca la energía de su perseverancia para la complacencia a las personas.

*Vesper* no es la inconsciente arista que sigue el primer impulso que se le imprime.

Todo esto no es un exceso de orgullo, sino porque es el único modo que conocemos de entender la independencia.

<sup>21</sup> In Villanueva's book on Gutiérrez de Mendoza, a personal letter from her to Madero, written on September 5, 1911, appears in her own handwriting, as well as in transcribed format. Gutiérrez de Mendoza recounts to Madero the events that led up to her son-in-law, Santiago Orozco, capture. She asked him for his support in the matter, saying the "Santiago's liberty is more important to me than my own life." He was later assassinated. Santiago Orozco would be one of several Santiagos that meant a great deal to her, her son, Santiago, her friend, Santiago de la Hoz, and her son-in-law, Santiago Orozco. They all died in her lifetime.

<sup>22</sup> See Cole Blasier's "The United States and Madero" for a detailed account of *la decena tragica*.

<sup>23</sup> Martha Eva Rocha investigates the pedagogical, rhetorical and medical activities of other Mexican women in "The Faces of Rebellion," of *The Women's Revolution in Mexico, 1910-1953*.

<sup>24</sup> There is no evidence that Gutiérrez de Mendoza was involved in battle, but while she served as leader of regiment *Victoria*, one of the members raped a woman, and upon Gutiérrez de Mendoza's orders, had the guilty member killed as punishment. When the word reached Zapata, many people thought that he would not accept her actions, but he sanctioned her decision and coupled it with a decree that those who engaged in abuse against women should be severely punished (Villaneda 64).

<sup>25</sup> Santiago Orozco was a Zapatista General and son-in-law to Gutiérrez de Mendoza. She relates Orozco's own rebellion within the ranks of the Zapatistas calling for a true rebellion for the restoration of lands to the indigenous people, not to the mestizos or criollos fighting in the Revolution. This call was a threat to those in the Zapatista ranks, and they planned to rid him from the ranks. Gutiérrez de Mendoza reports that on September 29, 1915 several officials called him to help them, and when he came to help them, they betrayed him with murder. Gutiérrez de Mendoza notes that the criminals in the crime had yet to be tried. In her writings, she does not mention a her anger against Zapata for not pursuing the issue, but her discontent with the movement is implied. This may have been one of the reasons for her turn toward a conservative approach to the true restoration of lands and culture to the indigenous people.

<sup>26</sup> See *Emiliano Zapata: Revolution and Betrayal in Mexico* by Samuel Brunk for a detailed account of Zapata's life

<sup>27</sup> For a detailed account of the Mexican Revolution see *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* by John Mason Hart.

<sup>28</sup> Los revolucionarios sembraron sin limpiar el campo y, naturalmente, han cosechado de todo menos de lo que sembraron ellos. El campo ha dado lo que tenía: frutos amargo de mala simiente.

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<sup>29</sup> The reference here could be in regards to Gen. Santiago Orozco or Zapata.

<sup>30</sup> Antes que en un periódico ese lema fue escrito en una bandera de combate y rubricado con sangre, con la noble sangre de un soñador que en plena juventud cayó como caen los buenos, heridos por la espalda.

Pero no murió con él su hermoso sueño de ver respetada la Tierra que él defendió de los que la envilecen vendiéndola y de los que la ultrajan apropiándola sin más derecho que el que les da el oro: no murió con él su generoso anhelo de ver dignificada la raza, su raza, esta raza que es una protesta contra la maldad humana. [...]

*El Desmonte* sabrá sostener en alto la bandera recogida sobre el campo de batalla; El Desmonte sabrá llevar dignamente el lema de un soñador de esta raza. [...]

<sup>31</sup> [L]as revoluciones no se hacen con deseos, ni con discursos, ni con papel impreso; estos no son más que medios de insinuación, de orientación; recursos para llevar a los ánimos la decisión, el convencimiento...pero nada más. Medio de preparación muy útiles para ese objeto, pero completamente inútiles, absolutamente ineficaces cuando a eso se reduce todo.

<sup>32</sup> Adolfo de la Huerta was installed as interim president after Carranza and served six months before Álvaro Obregón became president in 1920 (Krauze 394).

<sup>33</sup> muy pronto tendremos el placer de observar el triunfo que obtendrá la ya mencionada Colonia, y con ella, usted, que tan dignamente la representa y que, incasable y tenaz en su patriótica idea es quien verdaderamente ha obtenido el triunfo (Villaneda 53).

<sup>34</sup> Olvidada de todos pasa como un fantasma la doliente caravan de vencidos que soportan estoicamente el peso de su desgracia. Mudos y sombríos los indios llevan en sus ojos oscuros las tempestades de su dolor callado y esconden su miseria en las cavernas...como extranjeros en su país” (2).

<sup>35</sup> Gutiérrez de Mendoza claimed to be descendent from the Caxcan people, closely related to the Mexica people. The Caxcan Indians spoke a language very closely related to Mexica.

<sup>36</sup> Departamento [Departamento de Cultural indígena] creado “EXPRESAMENTE PARA INCORPORAR A LOS INDIOS A LA CIVILIZACIÓN”, según declaración oficial de la Secretaría de Educación Pública a cargo del Lic. José Vasconcelos, no es mas que un reto audaz e injustificado a la Civilización Indígena y a todas las civilizaciones, ya que esa declaración trunca de «incorporar a los indios a la civilización», parece decir que no hay más que una: la del Secretario de Educación Pública.

La gravedad de esa declaración obliga a meditar sobre sus causas: o el Lic. Vasconcelos desconoce la Civilización Indígena y en tal caso no se explica su presencia en la Secretaría de Educación, o sabe de ella y deliberadamente la desconoce no considerándola como tal, y en este caso se declara más conquistador que los conquistadores, más ENEMIGO de los indios que el propio D. Pedro de Alvarado (94).

<sup>37</sup> Há muchos Siglos Tenochtitlán espera que retorne Quetzalcóatl.

Esta esperanza, firme como una roca en el alma de los indios, nadie sabe, nadie quiere comprenderla. Es lógico. Sólo un indio comprende el alma de su Raza.

Los extraños han tomado por Mitología lo que es una realidad.....Los indios esperan que retorne Aquel que lanzó sus flechas a lo Infinito y del Caos herido por ella arrancó el Día y la Noche.

¿Fantasía?...No; Realidad, y Realidad, y Realidad muy bella; Realidad sobre la que ha que ha caído como un aluvión de arena amontonada por los Siglos, la Mentira.

Debajo de ese aluvión se remueve esta Raza inextinguible como la Verdad. Quizás la Humanidad entera se remueve así. . .¿No esperan los creyentes la llegada de un Mesías?

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¿Por qué no han de esperar los creyentes al Mesías por la misma razón que los indios esperan a Quetzalcóatl?

<sup>38</sup> En justicia a los descendientes de aquella noble raza, hay que advertir que en Juchipila celebran todavía la tradicional «fiesta del Xúchil,» por más que aun se lucha por extinguirla degenerándola al tratar de confundirla con una fiesta religiosa o haciéndola pasar por un plebeyo regocijo popular, para que se olvide que la «danza del Xúchil,» ). debe tener la solemnidad que corresponde a lo consagrado por el martirio.

<sup>39</sup> La Humanidad, no obstante su pretendida superioridad sobre los irracionales, adolece en alto grado de ese primitivismo agudo que hace a sus diferentes razas luchar unas contra otras por el predominio del mundo, y buena muestra de ello es nuestra raza, que ha sufrido las agresiones de otras y ha estado a punto de extinguirse, destrozada y despojada por las demás. [...]

Tenemos un indiscutible derecho a no desaparecer como raza; no queremos formar parte de la especie humana como raza conquistada ni con el pobre carácter de asimilados, y NO RECONOCEREMOS A NINGUNA RAZA EL DERECHO DE IMPONERNOS SU CIVILIZACIÓN. Nuestra aspiraciones y nuestra salvación no están en INCORPORARNOS a otra civilización, sino en RESTAURAR la nuestra. Es por esto que el Consejo de los Caxcanes, organizado por los descendientes de aquella raza en la región de su origen, inicia esa obra de restauración que entraña la abolición de todas las normas sociales que han sido impuestas por los conquistadores, y que son contrarias a las leyes naturales que normaron su primitivo régimen (103-104 capitals in original ).

<sup>40</sup> Her writings in other periodicals forwarded her same ideas of preserving and perfecting the indigenous culture, and free it from foreign influences such as Spain and the United States.

<sup>41</sup> biologicista ya que reivindicaba la condición maternal y la diferencia de actividades entre hombres y mujeres al proponer un gobierno de la mujer por la mujer en condiciones de asociarse con el hombre, a fin de integrar la representación y la administración oficial de los intereses colectivos, para que funcionara la sociedad

## Epilogue

Her first step is to take inventory. *Despojando, desgranando, quitando paja.* Just what did she inherit from her ancestors? This weight on her back – which is the baggage from the Indian mother, which the baggage from the Spanish father, which the baggage from the Anglo?

*Pero es difícil* differentiating between *lo heredado, lo adquirido, lo impuesto.* She puts history through a sieve, winnow out the lies, looks at the forces that we as a race, as women, have been a part of. *Luego bota lo que no vale, los desmientos, los desencuentos, el embrutecimiento. Aguarda el juicio, hondo y enraizado, de la gente antigua.* This step is a conscious rupture with all oppressive traditions of all cultures and religions. She communicates that rupture, documents the struggle. She reinterprets history, and, using new symbols, she shapes new myths. She adopts new perspectives toward the darkskinned, women and queers. She strengthens her tolerance (and intolerance) for ambiguity. She is willing to share, to make herself vulnerable to foreign ways of seeing and thinking. She surrenders all notions of safety, of the familiar (82).

- Gloria Anzaldúa

In this epigraph, Gloria Anzaldúa articulated the ontology, the nature of being, of women who are torn between two or more ways of understanding the world they inhabit. These women carry a mestiza conscious that Anzaldúa was able to articulate through theory, and which millions of people before her had experienced as colonized beings, as fractured selves who did not know their true history. The writings central to this study, those of Wright de Kleinhans, Hermila Galindo, las mujeres de Zitácuaro, and Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza, have been buried at the bottom of microfilm draws and in the dusty corners of Mexican archives, or have been hidden in the history books, discursively represent a way of being in their world that was both conflicting and liberating ; yet they penetrate the complexity of Anzaldúa's "mestiza way." Bringing the theoretical lens of mestiza consciousness to these Mexican women journalists'



writings has elucidated their writings complexity, something no other post-colonial or post-modern theory could have accomplished. The term *mestiza* rhetoric, as first coined by Andrea Lundsford during an interview with Anzaldúa, takes into account the multiple natures of the feminine, colonial, racial, and political conditions. Heretofore, no methodological framework has existed with which to analyze and to unravel the complex and multifaceted positions the women had presented in their writings. Yet through the multiple insights into *mestiza* consciousness presented by Anzaldúa, these women, who were living and writing during the emergence of modernity, revolution, and social upheaval, may now be understood.

The analysis presented in this dissertation marks several discursive milestones not only in historical studies, but also in rhetorical studies. First, the women whose writing were selected for analysis, Laureana Wright de Kleinhans, Hermila Galindo, *las mujeres de Zitácuaro*, and Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza appear only briefly in historical accounts by Macias (1982); Pouwels (2006); and more extensively in writings from scholars such as Alvarado (2007); Villaneda (1994); Lucrecia Infante Vargas (1995, 2001); Susana A. Montero Sánchez (1996); Alatorre (1983); Trinidad (2001); and Lau Javien. Four of the scholars, Trinidad, Alvarado, Infante, and Montero approached the history of the women's writing from a discursive analytical perspective. The other scholars presented a straight historical account of these women's lives, with various conclusions about the women's ontological stances; however, none of these other works examined their writings through an alternate lens. The methodology of this dissertation embodies a rhetorical historiography of Mexican women's publications and writings that have been overlooked by scholars, such as Mexican literary scholar, Martha Robles. In her pivotal book on Mexican women writers, *La sombra fugitiva: escritoras en la cultura nacional* (1985), she commented that, in general, Mexican female journalists from the past have not taken a

feminist stance, and that their social “conquests” have been made in areas of public opinion and social reporting on corruption, such as Esperanza Valásquez Bringas (1899 – 1968) and Elvira Vargas (1906 – 1967) (285). Early turn of the century Mexican female journalists, such as Gutiérrez de Mendoza and Wright de Kleinhans were not included in Robles’s scope. From this study’s perspective, Mexican female journalists did not merely present their opinions in public; their writings were based on an emerging feminism in Mexico and were contributing to the creation of new emerging national identity.

Robles and other scholars’ omission of these early Mexican female journalists is indicative that the opinions of women in reporting and essay writing, such as that of the female rhetors in this study, were not taken seriously by Mexican scholars until recently. They may have considered their opinions as being valid; however, they were thus far, not worthy of canonization. Yet my rhetorical perspective sees their opinions and essays not only as being worth of canonization, but as cutting-edge. The Mexican female journalists in this study were actively participating in civic discourse and were leading the way as agents of social change. According to Thomas Miller and Melody Bowden in “Archivists: A Rhetorical Stance,” the uncovering of civic participation is paramount to new directions in rhetoric. And by uncovering and analyzing Mexican women’s civic discourse, their introduction into rhetorical studies breaks new disciplinary ground. The writings of these Mexican women defy any definitive literary classification, such as seen in chapter three with the *manifiesto* and *grito*, and also with the editorial/essay/reporting and discursive activism, in which Gutiérrez de Mendoza participated seen in chapter four and five. The writing of these women emerges from their diverse range of racial and class perspectives, which made this rhetorical analysis more difficult. The employment of the lens of mestiza rhetoric, nevertheless, brought a new critical angle, which

allowed for multiple perspectives of these women, who were discursively negotiating between various subjectivities.

Assuming that rhetoric is epistemic, the discursive actions of these Mexican women can be situated in the realm of those who are empowered to *create* reality, and not as merely passive participants. For example, Laureana Wright de Kleinhans's writings in *Violetas del Anáhuac*, fall under various diverse categories of philosophical essays, poetry, and history. Literary scholars like Robles may not have had the theoretical background in rhetoric to enable her to categorize the writings other than through a literary lens. Scrutinizing these writings through a sophistic and mestiza rhetoric analysis, which does not focus on the aesthetics of writing and one that actively disrupts the continuity of the historical narrative, we see that Wright de Kleinhans *was* contributing to the formation of a national and historical identity from a feminine perspective. She wrote through the limitation of her understanding of the world as an elite mestiza who looked into her nation's indigenous past for a legitimate identity and for validation as a woman. Hermila Galindo, the spokeswoman for Carranza who traveled throughout Latin American in an effort to disseminate and advance his ideas for a Mexican Constitution, as well as many of her own, created a diverse image and reality of Mexican politics, which also led to the acceptance of women in the public sphere. Galindo's public presence, however, did set precedence although Mexican women's legal admission into politics was still almost forty years in the future. Las mujeres de Zitácuaro borrowed traditional rhetorical tropes from the men, but their strategic use of the *grito* and their *Manifiesto* situated them early on within the anti-cleric conversation of the nineteenth century. Their writings and strategies were easily analyzed through the lens of mestiza rhetoric because they were writing from the perspective of two worlds, one of practical complicity to tradition and one of practical resistance to patriarchy. And

lastly, Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza sustained her rhetorical presence in the public sphere for over forty years through her courage to continuously voice her opinion in a time when women were not welcome in the public sphere. Her voice, ruthless and intrusive, had an impact in that it made it possible for other Mexican women to follow her example and participate in public politics. The histories of these women are divergent, yet parallel. They form almost a perfect time line in the history of women's writing from the early discourse of Wright de Kleinhans in 1887 to *las mujeres de Zitácuaro* in 1900, whose writing served as a bridge to Gutiérrez de Mendoza and Galindo. Each of them claimed a right to a discursive self in the Mexican public sphere that had yet to recognize them.

Through the employment of the theoretical lens of mestiza rhetoric, whose underlying objective is feminist, created a space for these women whose writings would not have been accommodated under a traditional feminist lens. From a mestiza rhetorical perspective, one that makes concessions for various cultural, social, and ethnic stances, these women's writings were given the respect by not merely placing them within the rhetorical landscape, but through an analysis how their discourse had been subjected to colonial and neocolonial silencing. They wrote from multidimensional points of view. They wrote not only as women, but as women of color within a colonized territory. Laureana Wright de Kleinhans may have been the least racially marked of all the women in this study, but the space and ethnicity she occupied as a Mexican, forced her to be self-reflexive in her writing. An exclusively feminist perspective would not have been enough to encompass these women's projects as writers.

One of the most important components of the theoretical lens of mestiza rhetoric is that it takes into account the women's resistance as not simply resisting the structure of patriarchy, but a resistance of multiple societal realities. A mestiza consciousness takes into consideration the

colonized aspect of one's subjectivity, and the discourses that are created from this awareness, enacting another subjectivity that defies modernist binaries. Wright de Kleinhans, Galindo, las mujeres de Zitácuaro, and Gutiérrez de Mendoza wrote from the "underside of colonial relations of power" (Baca 25), such as from the strong European influences in which impacted Mexican history and politics. Each of their writings reflects an understanding of this quandary. Gutiérrez de Mendoza's writing, however, was most overtly aligned against the political powers of colonization and modernism, which in turn created "new" memories from her subaltern recollections that formally denied the interpretations of the Spanish and of the United States. These acts of defiance against modernism and colonialism were truly significant for a writer, such as an autodidact as Gutiérrez de Mendoza, because these new forms of discursive colonialism, imperialism, and modernism were unfolding within her lifetime. Because of her subaltern subjectivity, she was able to recognize them and react critically. But because these women's rhetorical stances were not always in favor of the status quo, and because they appeared in a male-dominated society, their writings were not valued and may not have always survived or even made it to the archives.

### **New Directions**

Research on Mexican female journalists from a rhetorical perspective certainly does not end with this study. On the contrary, this study merely scratches the surface of their writings and the implications they entail. For example, Wright de Kleinhans's repertoire of publications far exceeds anything which could have been covered in a single chapter, and the selection process of which articles to include proved most difficult. An entire thesis or dissertation certainly could be written on her publications alone. Hermila Galindo was also prolific, and her writings have yet to be read, analyzed, and translated. Her work, *La Doctrina Carranza y el Acercamiento*

*Indolantino*, which she wrote in defense of Carranza's Constitutionalist political position, has only been briefly analyzed by Laura Orellana Trinidad in *Hermila Galindo: una mujer moderna*. No in depth analysis or translation has been done of Galindo's writing. Gutiérrez de Mendoza is another Mexican female journalist whose writings have only been given a small representation in historical accounts. In Ana Lau Javien's article, "La participación de las mujeres en la revolución Mexicana: Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza (1875-1942)," she lists several of her writings which I do not have; nor do I know how to acquire them. These include writings such as *Alba* (1919), *Génesis* (1937), *Camisas de Colores* (1935), *Más allá de los muros* (1938), and *Chicomostoc* (1941). The lack of accessibility, linguistic and otherwise, to these writings only reiterates the fact that much more research needs to be done. Not all of the research will be done in the public archives, because as this study discovered, these writings exist in personal archives and other public or private places. The research will need to be done through personally contacting cooperative researchers, such as Lau Javien in order to acquire these materials. And after they have been acquired, it is imperative they be translated and made accessible to others in the academic community. With this study, some gaps within these women's discursive history have been filled, but large gaps remain.

The answers which are posited in a dissertation should always generate new questions. Some of the questions this dissertation has generated are: What are the implications for these women's writings in history of rhetoric courses? How can this research help others who are engaging in cross border rhetoric and writing studies research? How should the primary sources uncovered be made available to the rest of the English speaking academic community? Does this research have the potential to be instrumental in the establishment of a transnational rhetorical research society? One of the larger and more important projects that needs to be

completed is the translation of the women's publications. This is the direction of one of my future projects. Working in conjunction with scholar, Joel Bollinger Pouwels, we have undertaken the task of translating the main writings by Wright de Kleinhans, Galindo, las mujeres de Zitácuaro, and Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza with the goal of publishing their writings as an anthology. Many of these women's male contemporary's writings have been translated, such as Ricardo Flores Magón, Justo Sierra, José Vasconcelos, and other essayists; yet the women's writings remain inaccessible to a wider international audience. Their writings await crossing discursive borders, and the translation of the works by these Mexican female journalists will open up doors for more researchers to advance the boundaries of the traditional rhetorical canon and feminist rhetorical scholarship.

And finally, this study opens avenues for the establishment of a transnational civil research community. In the introduction to their book *Transnational Civil Society: An Introduction*, Srilatha Batliwala and L. David Brown catalog the three main aspects of civil society – “organizations and associations; societal values, aspirations, and norms; and spheres for public discourses” (3). A transnational civil society, or in this case, a transnational civil community, “would accept norms of civic engagement – tolerance, inclusion, cooperation, and so on – as important factors in global decision making” (3). This study of Mexican female journalists from the turn of the century has attracted attention not only from scholars in the United States, but also from scholars in Mexico. Through the use of technology and networking sites, I have been able to locate women, such as Joel Bollinger Pouwels and Ana Lau Javien to initiate a conversation dealing with the issue of representation of Mexican women in various disciplines throughout the international academic community. A transnational project, such as this one, has already opened up “spheres for public discourse.” I have participated in the

formation of the Latin American Rhetoric Society, a transnational society that welcomes open conversation among scholars in Latin American, the United States, and Canada. The Society's scholarly interchange focuses on the efforts of scholars on both sides of the border who are contributing to the historical, pedagogical, and cultural knowledge of rhetoric. Projects such as this dissertation have the potential of generating interest and dialogue pertaining to the issue of academic representation of Hispanic women, and furthermore, it blurs the cultural and historical borders that separate our worlds.

One of the crucial goals of this dissertation was to answer Biesecker's compelling argument in respect to the "exaltations of individual rhetorical actions," and Cheryl Glenn's insistence on exploring "gender as a relationship among distributions of power, a relationship that plays itself out within cultural constraints and demands" (2). The discourse surrounding the existing structures that these women entered contributes to a limited understanding of this history. Recognizing the societal structures that existed at the time was fundamental to the identification and the importance of the women's discourse; however, as important as this first step may be, the women's voices in this history were paramount. At every turn, I fought the modernist urge to portray these women as romantic individuals fighting a lone battle against racial, gendered, and political oppression. On the contrary, they were subjects who acted as discursive agents through the social structures that were always already socially constructed. Certainly, the women were constrained by societal beliefs and traditions. But ironically, they were able to find their agency and their identity through these same structures that were meant to oppress them. "Power and resistance," Biesecker states, "are two sides of the same coin..." (152). The women practiced practical complicity and practical resistance through their discourse, or "a force of structure of breaching in practice that establishes a cleft or fissure out of which an



unforeseen and undesigned transgression may ensue” (Biesecker 155). The women served as the “unforeseen and undesigned transgression” in the history of Mexican women claiming their discursive selves. Yet each of these women created a different discursive identity due to the fact their social circumstances and conditions were so diverse. Each writer then disrupted, fragmented, and altered the direction of human engagement in different ways.

Although I assert that all of the women were contributing to a mestiza rhetoric, the level of engagement of racial and gendered understanding varied. Establishing these women’s various subjectivities was fundamental in this dissertation. Laureana Wright de Kleinhans came from an elite background. Having been born to an American father, she received a much higher level of education than many women received in the mid 1850’s in Mexico. Her writing was situated in the elite ranks of the Porfiriato, and it reflected the high, baroque tone of her discourse. Hermila Galindo also received an elite education at a private school in Chihuahua, ensuring that her writings were published and read by an elite audience. Her rhetoric intersected with the power structure of the nation; however, it did not threaten the status quo as the writings by Gutiérrez de Mendoza. Unlike Wright de Kleinhans and Hermila, Gutiérrez de Mendoza received a limited education, yet she expended a great effort in teaching herself how to read and write. Her background as a daughter of a blacksmith and the experience of having lived among the indigenous people did not afford her a prestigious position in society; however, her background did allow for a perspective and credibility that few could claim. Her biting commentary and harsh criticism clashed with the power structure, and clearly challenged the status quo. In reference to *las mujeres de Zitácuaro*, there existed no outside history except for the writings made available to me. And so one can only speculate from the level of the women’s writing that they were educated; however, their class or background cannot not necessarily be determined.

All of these female writers, though, did challenge the status quo at some level, but Gutiérrez de Mendoza's writings came from a subaltern reality the other women could not have imagined. The challenge to the norm may not have been noticeable at the time, but through this study, we see that their discourse was the beginning of a long journey toward Mexican women's suffrage that was finally granted in 1954. The acknowledgement of these racial, class, and societal differences fulfills Biesecker's call to "address the real fact that different women, due to their various positions in the social structure, have available to them different rhetorical possibilities and, similarly, are constrained by different rhetorical limits" (157).

A mestiza rhetoric lens served best in the analysis of these women because it acknowledged their multiple subjectivities, interests and various backgrounds and because it encompassed a wider circle of those who were considered rhetors. Because all of these women were from Mexico, the theoretical lens of mestiza rhetoric has respected their origins. The analysis of these women's writings serves as a transnational gesture in rhetoric and writing studies because it democratizes this discipline's academic space and transcends the shortcomings of women of color as subjects of research. It recognizes the discursive efforts from our sisters and brothers to the south, which also recognizes what Raka Shome called "diasporic cultural identities." It is my hope that this dissertation may serve to prompt the beginning of a deeper study into the discursive practices of women of color south of our American borders.

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## Curriculum Vita

Cristina Victoria Devereaux Ramirez was in San Angelo, Texas in 1971. She is the only daughter of Dr. Neil J. Devereaux and Sandra Gonzalez, and graduated from San Angelo Central High School in 1989. After a semester enrolled at Angelo State University, she transferred to The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) where she earned a bachelor's degree in English Literature, a minor in Education, and a second minor in Spanish. Upon graduating, Cristina started her teaching career in the El Paso Independent School District at Henderson Middle where she taught seventh and eighth grade English. She later transferred to Lincoln Middle School and then to El Paso High School. While teaching full time, Cristina completed a Master's of Teaching English at UTEP in 2004. She was accepted in the Rhetoric and Writing Doctoral Program at UTEP, and shortly thereafter, quit her job as a full-time public teacher to concentrate on graduate studies. While in the program, Cristina traveled to Durango, Mexico on three separate occasions to complete archival research for her dissertation. Cristina was awarded the Dodson Dissertation Completion Fellowship, and received a Post-Doctorate position at UTEP in the Office of Strategic Initiatives.

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