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ALTERNATIVE CARTOGRAPHIES:
*THIRD WOMAN AND THE RESPATIALIZATION
OF THE BORDERLANDS*

CATHERINE S. RAMÍREZ

In the introduction to *Loving in the War Years*, Cherrie Moraga maps her life via her writing. "Este libro covers a span of seven years of writing," she begins. Then she enumerates the places where her writing has carried her: Berkeley, San Francisco, Boston, Mexico, and finally, Brooklyn, where, she informs her reader, she writes the final introduction (i-ii). In addition to completing *Loving in the War Years*, Moraga helped to found and was an active member of Kitchen Table Women of Color Press while living in New York during the early 1980s (*Loving* 153). In 1983, Kitchen Table published *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, a collection of poetry, creative prose, and scholarly essays by U.S. women of color co-edited by Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa. Far from her native Los Angeles and outside what some may have perceived as the ideological and, at the very least, physical boundaries of Aztlán, the mythical homeland of Chicanos and Chicanas, Moraga launched her career as a writer, cultural critic, and self-described "politica" as she articulated (i.e., enunciated and linked) Chicana feminism and a coalitional politics of, for, and about U.S. women of color (*Loving* 153).

Like *This Bridge Called My Back*, the journal *Third Woman* forged ties between women of color. And like *Loving in the War Years*, which condemns racism and classism in the United States, as well as sexism and homophobia among Mexican Americans, it challenged what Mary Pat Brady describes as "spatial narratives...that have gained a normative or taken-for-granted status" (6). Published at Indiana University from 1981 to 1986, *Third Woman* produced and highlighted the U.S. Midwest as a rich site of and for Chicana and

Latina feminisms. Its six issues (the first five of which were published at Indiana) featured poetry, creative prose, visual art, book reviews, and scholarly essays by and about Chicanas, Latinas, and Hispanic women (all of these labels were used in the journal). In this essay, I focus on “Of Latinas in the Midwest,” the first issue of *Third Woman*, to highlight the ways in which the journal used place to relativize Chicana cultural nationalism (in particular, the spatial narrative of Aztlán as the Chicano homeland) and to remap Latina/o America (i.e., the United States of Latinas and Latinos). All the while, it took part in and contributed to a surge in publishing by self-described “women of color” in the United States during the early 1980s. In doing so, *Third Woman* demonstrated the significance of the journal and, later, after it was transformed into a press, the anthology to the articulation of what has come to be known as “borderlands feminism.”

In “Mestizaje as Method: Feminists-of-Color Challenge the Canon,” Chela Sandoval defines “borderlands feminism” as “a syncretic form of consciousness made up of traversions and crossings: its recognition makes possible another kind of critical apparatus and political operation in which *mestiza* feminism comes to function as a working chiasmus (a mobile crossing) between races, genders, sexes, cultures, languages, and nations” (352). Since the late 1980s, the concept of borderlands has played an important role in Chicana feminist discourse, as evidenced not only in Sandoval’s essay, but in Gloria Anzaldúa’s influential *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), Sonia Saldivar-Hull’s *Feminism on the Border: Chicana Gender Politics and Literature* (2001), and Rosa Linda Fregoso’s *MeXicana Encounters: The Making of Social Identities on the Borderlands* (2003) (to name a few texts). In this essay, I also show that, even though it did not use the term “borderlands” in the same way as later Chicana feminist works, *Third Woman* exemplified “borderlands feminism” nonetheless. Indeed, via a transnational, coalitional politics, the journal presaged the concept of “borderlands feminism.” By paying attention to its geographical roots and evolution from journal to press, I hope to illuminate a Chicana feminist intellectual trajectory spanning the late twentieth- and early twenty-first centuries.

OF LATINAS IN THE MIDWEST

On September 13, 1980, Chicago-based photographer Diana Solis convened the Midwest Latina Writers’ Workshop at the Chicago Women Writers’ Conference so those in attendance could

“explore ways of helping each other with our work and with the publishing of it” (Alarcón 5). Approximately ten women, including Norma Alarcón (then a graduate student in Spanish and Portuguese at Indiana University, Sandra Cisneros, and Ana Castillo attended the workshop. At the time, none had published much. Cisneros, for instance, had published a chapbook entitled *Bad Boys*, while Castillo had published *The Invitation*, a small collection of poems.

Alarcón credits the Midwest Latina Writers’ Workshop for inspiring *Third Woman*. “We all [at the workshop] agreed that we needed a journal that promised continuity, and offered encouragement to the creative work of Latinas and other Third World Women,” she states in her editor’s introduction to the premiere issue of *Third Woman* (5). With assistance from Solis and Cisneros, as well as other members of *Third Woman*’s editorial board, including Marjorie Agosin, Sandra Esteves, Cristina González, Luz Mestas, Bernadette Monda, Patricia Montenegro, Marcia Stephenson, and Luz Umpierre, Alarcón solicited art, poetry, short stories, and book reviews from Latinas across the Midwest.

From its inception, *Third Woman* emphasized the importance of independence. Participants in the Midwest Latina Writers’ Workshop wished to create their own journal because they “wanted to overcome the dependency on the ‘special-issue syndrome’ that has beset the work of minority women for years” (Alarcón 5). Prior to founding *Third Woman*, Alarcón had served on the editorial board of *Revista Chicano-Riqueña*, a journal of poetry, creative prose, and scholarly essays published at Indiana University Northwest from 1973 to 1979.¹ In an interview that I conducted with her, she stressed the *RCR* provided Chicanas and Puertorriqueñas with the opportunity to publish their work, yet added that she “never felt thoroughly included, even in [its] special issue on la mujer [Volume 6, Number 2].”² In fact, *RCR*’S 1978 issue on “la mujer” was emblematic of the “special-issue syndrome” that Alarcón and the other women at the writers’ workshop had criticized. “[I]f women didn’t...publish...themselves,” she explained, “we would not learn what we needed...to organize a kind of literary movement or a ...reconfiguration through writing of our reality...and...we’d always be subordinated [to] and dependent on the guys, no matter how generous they were.” In order to produce the first issue of *Third Woman*, Alarcón taught herself how to typeset and secured funding from various units at Indiana University, including Chicano-Riqueño Studies, Latin American Studies, Women’s Studies, and Latino Affairs.

However, as a means of safeguarding the journal's independence, she noted, she was careful never to make a single unit its institutional home.³

BEYOND AZTLÁN

One year after the Midwest Latina Writers' Workshop convened at the Chicago Women Writers' Conference, *Third Woman*, Volume 1, Number 1, entitled "Of Latinas in the Midwest" (1981), premiered. Inspired by Marjorie Agosin and Patricia Montenegro's 1980 collection of Latina poetry *From the Midwest to the West*, this issue brings together writing and visual art by Latinas from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin and reflects the editorial board's desire "to make the Midwest come into being [as] a Latina feminist location."⁴ In general, the U.S. Midwest has not been associated with Latinas, much less with Latina feminists. In fact, the so-called American Heartland is often perceived and portrayed as a bastion of cultural and racial (i.e., white) homogeneity and social and political conservatism. Furthermore, "Middle America," which invokes the white Midwest, is often upheld as a metonym for the United States as a whole. In contrast, if Latinas and Latinos are included in the national imaginary at all, they are usually associated with the margins of the United States—literally with its coasts and southern border: with California and the Southwest, with the urban Northeast (especially New York City), and with Miami. More often than not, Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory, does not even appear on maps of the United States.

Mexican Americans have comprised the largest "Hispanic or Latino" group in the United States and their population is and has been concentrated in New Mexico, California, Texas, and Arizona, states that have been identified with Aztlán, the mythical ancestral homeland of Chicanos and Chicanas.⁵ According to legend, Aztlán is located north of what is now Mexico and is the place from which the Aztecs' forebears originated.⁶ It has been superimposed upon not only California and the Southwest, but the territory that Mexico ceded to the United States as a consequence of the U.S.-Mexico War (along with California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, this territory included present-day Nevada, Utah, and parts of Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas, and Oklahoma). The concept of Aztlán gained currency among a number of Chicana and Chicano writers, artists, and activists during the late 1960s and 1970s and was championed in

"El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán," a manifesto produced at the Chicano Youth Liberation Conference in Denver in March 1969. "El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán" heralds cultural nationalism as "the key to organization [that] transcends all religious, political, class, and economic factions or boundaries" (2). Moreover, it identifies brotherhood (a.k.a. carnalismo) as an important characteristic of Chicano cultural identity and community. "Brotherhood unites us," it proclaims, and "love for our brothers" enables us to struggle "against the foreigner 'gavacho' who exploits our riches and destroys our culture" (1).

"El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán" condemns "the brutal gringo invasion of our territories" and claims "the northern land of Aztlán from whence came our forefathers" for "those who plant the seeds, water the fields, and gather the crops and not [for] the foreign Europeans." It emphasizes Aztlán as a physical place: it is "our territories," "the northern land," and "the bronze continents" (1). Above all, it is "home." However, as Rafael Pérez-Torres points out,

As a place, or even as a unifying symbol or image, Aztlán erases the vast differences that help form the richness and variety of the terms "Chicana" and "Chicano." The histories of Mexicans in this country are marked by a series of tensions and ruptures—cultural, linguistic, political, racial—that cut across various social and national terrains in which one can and cannot call one's location "home" (115).

Far from land designated Aztlán and the states with the highest concentration of "Hispanics or Latinos," Alarcón felt removed from an "essentialized notion of home...[and] belonging" as a graduate student in Bloomington, Indiana. She and her Chicana colleagues at *Third Woman* fell outside cultural nationalist narratives of the Chicano homeland. "We felt a kind of relationality to Aztlán [and] the Southwest," she recollected. "We were isolated because Aztlán saw itself as the ombligo del mundo [bellybutton of the world]." However, she and the other members of the editorial staff "worked isolation against itself" by transforming it into independence.⁷

By emphasizing the Midwest and "mak[ing] come into being [as] a Latina feminist location," the first issue of *Third Woman* underscored that space is in fact produced, rather than simply "the grand manifestation of ...natural terrain" (Brady 7). Thus, it exposed the constructedness of Aztlán (i.e., it showed that Aztlán, like the nation-state, is neither natural nor a given, but created). Additionally, Volume 1, Number 1 interrogated Aztlán as *the* Chicano homeland.

Indeed, "Of Latinas in the Midwest" attested to alternative cartographies and narratives that differed from those of and about California and the Southwest. Although Mexicans and Mexican Americans have lived and worked in the Midwest since the early twentieth century, their history and presence in the region are often overlooked.⁸ After World War I, many Mexican immigrants began settling in the American Heartland, where they found employment in sugar beet companies, the railroad industry, and manufacturing (Vargas 2). In fact, Alarcón's family moved to Gary, Indiana, in the mid 1950s so her father could work in a steel mill there. Alarcón's own history of migration to and settlement in the Midwest, like that of many of her colleagues at *Third Woman*, respatializes Mexican American history and demonstrates the "richness and variety" of Chicana experience.⁹ It reveals that there is no such thing as a singular Chicano or Chicana homeland, history, or experience.

BORDERLANDS FEMINISM": BRIDGES AND INTERSECTIONS

By forging an alliance of women and highlighting the U.S. Midwest as a site of Chicana literary and artistic production, the inaugural issue of *Third Woman* challenged two fundamental tenets of Chicano cultural nationalism: carnalismo (i.e., a community of men) and Aztlán. The journal was, in Alarcón's words, a "response, a way of saying, 'There are things beyond those boundaries that you yourself have created.'"¹⁰

However, this is not to say that it situated itself exclusively in relation to Chicano cultural nationalism, that it focused exclusively on Chicanas, or that it limited its scope to the Midwest. In fact, Alarcón and her cohort clearly defined *Third Woman* as a pan-regional, Latina (rather than exclusively Chicana) journal. They did so because of the relatively small number of Chicanas in the Midwest and by devoting four of the five issues published at Indiana University to a particular part of the United States. Volume 1, Number 2 (1982), entitled "Looking East," focuses on the East Coast; Volume 2, Number 1 (1984) is on the Southwest and Midwest; and "Texas and More" is the title and subject of Volume 3, Numbers 1 and 2 (1986).¹¹ By highlighting the United States' multiple regions as centers of feminist, Latina artistic and intellectual creativity, *Third Woman* remapped not only the nation, but Latina/o America. It proclaimed that no single place—be it East Los Angeles, South Texas,

the Bronx, or Miami—has a monopoly on Latina cultural production and self-expression.

What's more, *Third Woman* looked beyond the borders of the United States. Latin America is not only the emphasis of Volume 2, Number 2, which is entitled "Hispanic Women: International Perspectives" (1984), but is present in all of the issues. For instance, in Volume 1, Number 1, Lucia Fox's, Salima Rivera's, and Lupe A. González's poems are about Peru, Argentina, and Mexico respectively, while Alarcón pays tribute to Chilean poets Gabriela Mistral and Violeta Parra and the Mexican feminist Rosario Castellanos in "Hay Que Inventarnos / We Must Invent Ourselves," her editor's introduction.

Third Woman takes its name from the "third way" of women's activism proposed by Castellanos in her 1975 farce *El Eterno Feminino*. Alarcón describes this "third way" as a project of

transform[ing] our lives and free[ing] ourselves from our oppressive circumstances due to race, class and sex.... [I]t is not enough to merely adapt to a society that changes superficially and remains the same at the root (as in reformism)...it is not enough to imitate the models that are proposed to us and that are responses to circumstances other (different) than ours, furthermore, it is not even enough to discover, to recognize, to know what or who we are. We have to invent ourselves (4).

The name *Third Woman* also evokes the Third World, rather than a specific nation or ethnic group. (In my interview with her, Alarcón stated that she wanted "a name that would not be encumbered by cultural nationalism."¹²) Additionally, the name *Third Woman* "refers to that pre-ordained reality that we have been born to and continue to live and experience and be a witness to, despite efforts toward change" (Alarcón 4). In other words, it points to and disrupts the space between the real (i.e., reality) and utopic, between the present and future, and between being and becoming. In doing so, the journal's name invokes "the 'third' and repressed force that nevertheless constantly rises up through dominant meaning systems, breaking apart two-term or binary divisions of human thought" (Sandoval, "Mestizaje" 356).

Similarly, the label "Latina" can and frequently does represent a third, trans-or-extranational space when situated between the nation-state (e.g., the United States, Mexico) and cultural nation (e.g., Aztlán).

Like the label “woman of color,” it has produced a third identity category, one that simultaneously is subsumed by and disrupts the U.S. racial binary of black and white. I do not intend to argue here that “Latina” is an unproblematic term that locates the women of the Americas and Caribbean beneath a banner of equality and sameness, regardless of nationality, race, class, language, or sexuality.¹³ However, I do wish to explore the meanings Alarcón and the producers of *Third Woman* invested in the term as a site of identification, especially in the context of the burgeoning feminist movement led by self-proclaimed “women of color” and “Third World women” in the United States in the 1970s and 1980s. From the outset, *Third Woman* was to serve as a forum for “the creative work of Latinas” (Alarcón 5). In my interview with her, Alarcón stressed that the journal was a Latina, rather than a Chicana, effort for both practical and ideological reasons. In the Midwest in the early 1980s, there were simply more Latina artists and intellectuals (including Chicanas) than there were Chicana artists and intellectuals alone.¹⁴ As she recalled, “[T]he number of women who were publishing and making their way into the arts at that time was so small”—so small that the editors and contributors to the first issue were often one and the same. Alarcón also pointed out that “it was beginning to look as if Sandra [Cisneros], Diana [Solis], and I were doing...everything.”¹⁵ With time, however, the journal would have no shortage of contributors and would help to launch the careers of a number of well-known scholars and creative writers, such as Julia Alvarez, Ana Castillo, Cherrie Moraga, Achy Obejas, Tey Diana Rebolledo, and Yvonne Yarbo-Bejarano.

Volume 1, Number 1 sought to describe and enact a surge of Latina creative expression in the U.S. Midwest. One book review, for instance, praises the work of a blossoming young, Chicago-based poet by the name of Sandra Cisneros (whose picture is also featured on the issue’s front cover). “Cisneros is a talent to watch,” it reads (Cantú 45). In addition, the review lauds Agosin and Montenegro’s *From the Midwest to the West*, which it describes as possibly the first anthology “to bring together the voices of six Latina poets (five Chicanas and one Chilean) who desire to create geographical bridges, to share work and sensibilities across the continent, and to reveal a community of women reclaiming and creating their own culture beyond their back door” (Cantú 43). Like its inspiration, *From the Midwest to the West*, *Third Woman* cre-

ated “geographical bridges” by forging ties between Latinas throughout the Americas and Caribbean. In doing so, it created a network of women, an alternative to the androcentric community posited and produced by Chicano cultural nationalism.

Alarcón felt that it was especially important to break the isolation she and other Latinas in the Midwest experienced by uniting them with Latinas in other parts of the United States and world. “We tried to create a network...a sense of linkage,” she explained in my interview with her.¹⁶ In doing so, the journal articulated “Latina” as a space for both coalition and difference and as a transnational site of identification. Space, the feminist geographer Doreen Massey argues, is “a moment in the intersection of configured social relations” (265). It “depends crucially on the notion of articulation” (8). The space that *Third Woman* worked to produce functioned as an intersection of the Americas as it articulated Latinas from across continents and hemispheres and, thus, exceeded the boundaries of any single nation. As a space for the “traversions and crossings” of multiple races, languages, and nations, the journal exemplified Sandoval’s concept of “borderlands feminism.”

At the same time, *Third Woman* highlighted the differences between and among women who self-identified as “Latinas.” The journal underscored that Latinas hail from various regions of the United States, as well as different nations. Some are from the First World, others are from the Third. Some write in English, some in Spanish, and some in a combination of both languages. And while *Third Woman* produced and relied upon “woman” as a relatively stable concept and category (as evidenced by its privileging of the feminine term “Latina”), it still illustrated the complexity and multiplicity of genders and sexualities, especially in its final issue, “The Sexuality of Latinas” (1989) (the use of the singular in the title of this volume notwithstanding).

Third Woman emerged at an exciting moment for feminist women of color in the United States. Key works published around the time of its founding include Ntozake Shange’s *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enough* (1975), Martha Cotera’s *The Chicana Feminist* (1977), Audre Lorde’s *Uses of the Erotic* (1978), and Angela Davis’s *Women, Race, and Class* (1981). The 1970s and 1980s also saw the publication of a number of journal issues and anthologies edited by and about women of color. As I noted, *Revista*

Chicano-Riqueña published a special issue on women in 1978. Five years later, Evangelina Vigil edited "Woman of Her Word: Hispanic Women Write" (1983), another issue of *RCR* dedicated to Latinas. (Clearly, while *Third Woman* augmented discourse on and by Chicanas and Latinas, it did not put an end to the "special-issue syndrome.") In 1979, Lorraine Bethel and Barbara Smith co-edited "The Black Women's Issue," a special issue of the journal *Conditions*, and in 1982, the journal *Heresies* devoted an issue to women and racism. As for anthologies, in 1970 Toni Cade Bambara edited *The Black Woman: An Anthology*, and 1973 saw the publication of Janice Mirikitani's *Third World Women*. These important collections were followed by Dexter Fisher's *The Third Woman: Minority Women Writers of the United States* (1980); Moraga and Anzaldúa's groundbreaking *This Bridge Called My Back* (1981); Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith's *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave* (1982); and *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* (1983), also edited by Barbara Smith. Feminist presses, such as Shameless Hussy of San Lorenzo, California, Kitchen Table Women of Color Press of New York, Calyx Books of Corvallis, Oregon, Spinsters, Ink (sic.), and Aunt Lute Press (both of San Francisco), enabled many women of color writers to publish their work.¹⁷

Rather than situating *Third Woman* within the discourse of a particular national or ethnic group, Alarcón and the editorial staff aligned it with the coalitional politics of women of color feminism and what Sandoval has termed "differential consciousness." Differential consciousness produces and is the product of "a *tactical subjectivity* with the capacity to recenter depending upon the kinds of oppression to be confronted" ("U.S. Third World Feminism" 14, italics original). This subjectivity is not fixed, organic, or essential, but fluid and—to draw from Alarcón's editor's introduction in the premier issue—invented (i.e., fabricated). In this introduction, Alarcón compares the journal's contributors to not only Latin American women writers, but to June Jordan, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Adreinne Rich (Alarcón 4). In the following issues, a list of books and periodicals by and/or about "U.S. Latinas, Hispanic Women and Other Third World Women" appears at the end of the journal, as well as advertisements from other feminist publications, including *Sage: A Scholarly Journal on Black Women*,

Manushi, a journal published in Hindi and English in New Delhi, and *Conditions: A Feminist Magazine*, edited by Dorothy Allison, Cheryl Clark, Jewelle Gomez, and Mirtha Quintanales. By identifying differences and similarities along the axis of gender and forging ties among themselves and between themselves and other women, Alarcón and her cohort at *Third Woman* practiced differential consciousness and produced "Latina" as a site of both specificity and multiplicity.

In summary, *Third Woman* anticipated the concept of borderlands as it is currently used in much Chicana feminist discourse and distinguished it from that of Aztlán. By showcasing various regions of the United States (and the Latina cultural production to emerge from them), it illustrated that the borderlands as a physical place extends well beyond the U.S.-Mexico boundary and the states in traverses. At the same time, the journal situated itself in and represented a metaphoric or symbolic borderlands (i.e., a crossroads or syncreticism) as an example and enactment of coalition. As such, it defined "borderlands" as Aztlán's antithesis. Aztlán, as many Chicana writers and artists have proclaimed, is supposed to be home, whereas the borderlands as a site of coalition is not. As Bernice Johnson Reagon remarks in "Coalition Politics: Turning the Century,"

Coalition work is not done in your home. Coalition work has to be done in the streets.... Some people will come to a coalition and they rate the success of the coalition on whether or not they feel good when they get there. They're not looking for coalition; they're looking for a home!...In a coalition you have to give, and it is different from your home. You can't stay there all the time. You go to the coalition for a few hours and then you go back...and coalesce some more (359).

Moving beyond their "back doors," Alarcón and her colleagues at *Third Woman* rejected cultural nationalist narratives of a mythical homeland and located themselves at a transnational crossroads: the borderlands.

ANTHOLOGIES AND ALLIANCES

In 1987, Alarcón moved from Indiana University to the University of California at Berkeley, where "The Sexuality of Latinas," the sixth and final issue of *Third Woman*, was published.¹⁸ With this issue, Alarcón transformed *Third Woman* into a press and

reinvented herself as publisher. She founded Third Woman Press for “strictly economic” reasons because, as she explained to me, “journals have a very short shelf life. People see them as outdated, whether they are or not.”¹⁹ Upon its tenth anniversary, Third Woman Press had published more than thirty books, a significant number of which are anthologies (Cockrell 1). For example, under the auspices of its Chicana / Latina Studies series, it has published *Chicana Critical Issues* (1993), edited by Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social; *Chicana (W)Rites: On Word and Film* (1995), edited by Maria Herrera-Sobek and Helena Maria-Viramontes; *Máscaras* (1997), edited by Lucha Corpi; *Living Chicana Theory* (1998), edited by Carla Trujillo; and *Latinas on Stage* (2000), edited by Alicia Arrizón and Lillian Manzor. Additionally, it has published *Chicana Lesbians: The Girls Our Mothers Warned Us About* (1991), edited by Carla Trujillo, and *Writing Self / Writing Nation: A Collection of Essays on Dictée by Theresa Hak Kyung Cha* (1994), edited by Elaine H. Kim and Alarcón. As their titles alone indicate, all of these collections feature work by Chicana, Latinas, and /or other women of color.

Both *Third Woman* the journal and Third Woman Press underscore the significance and value of coalition for a feminist, women of color politics. As in its previous incarnation as journal, Third Woman Press has continued to connect Chicanas, Latinas, and other women of color. However, it has done so in large part via the anthology. After all, an anthology, like most journal issues, consists of a grouping. Unlike the monograph, it brings together different works by different writers, accentuating what they share in common and what separates them from one another. Yet, like the monograph, its “shelf life” often exceeds that of the journal issue. Some scholars, such as Benedict Anderson and Cathy N. Davidson, argue that the newspaper and novel have helped to produce and maintain national consciousness. Likewise, *Third Woman* and Third Woman Press highlight the important role that the journal and anthology have played in forging alliances among women of color and articulating a transnational “borderlands feminism.”

As several recent publications illustrate, the anthology in particular continues to serve a key function in shaping Chicana and Latina feminist discourse and building writers’, especially scholars’, careers.²⁰ In many ways, *Third Woman* acted as a harbinger for these collections (while Third Woman Press has served as a mechanism for some of them). From a geographic and ideological periphery vis-à-

vis Chicano cultural nationalism, the journal impacted the fields of Chicana/o and U.S. Latina/o studies by helping to launch the careers of a generation of women writers, articulating a feminist, transnational, Latina politics, and expanding the concept of borderlands.

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NOTES

This essay is a product of much collaboration and revision. First, I thank Norma Alarcón for talking to me about her life and work and the history of *Third Woman*. I also thank Gabriela Arredondo and Eric Porter for reading drafts of this essay. I credit them for improving it and take full responsibility for any errors and oversights herein. I presented a shorter version of this paper as part of a panel on the Midwest and Chicana/o literature at the annual convention of the Modern Language Association in Chicago in December 1999. The version presented at the MLA convention was also posted on the Third Woman Press website at <www.thirdwomanpress.com>. At the time of this writing (January 2004), this website is no longer up.

1. *Revista Chicano-Riqueña* was founded at Indiana University Northwest in Gary in 1973 and moved to the University of Houston in 1980. In 1986, its name was changed to *Americas Review*.
2. I conducted my interview with Alarcón on February 15, 1999, in Berkeley, California. Unless indicated otherwise, all notes are from this interview.
3. Author’s interview with Alarcón (February 15, 1999).
4. Author’s interview with Alarcón (February 15, 1999).
5. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the state with the highest concentration of “Hispanics or Latinos” are New Mexico, (42.1% of the state population), California (32.4%), Texas, (32%), and Arizona (25.3%). I use the quotation marks around “Hispanic or Latino” because I am quoting the Census here. See <http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/GTTable?geo_id+01000US&ds_name=DEC_2000_SF1_U&_box_head_nbr+GCY-P6&format+US-9&_lang=en&_sse=on>.
6. Given evidence that the indigenous people of the Americas migrated from north to south during prehistoric times, the assertion that the Aztecs’ ancestors originated from somewhere north of present-day Mexico may be more than legend or myth. See Anaya and Lomeli, Anzaldúa, and Chavez.
7. Author’s interview with Alarcón (February 15, 1999).
8. However, more recently, several valuable works on Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the Midwest have been published. See, for example, Gabriela F. Arredondo’s “Navigating Ethno-Racial Currents, Mexicans in Chicago, 1919-1939,” forthcoming in *Journal of Urban History*. Also see Vargas, Valdés, Martínez, and García.
9. Alarcón was born in Coahuila, Mexico. In 1955, her family moved from San Antonio, Texas to Gary. The following year, they relocated to Chicago. Ten years later, Alarcón moved to Bloomington. Author’s interview with Alarcón (February 15, 1999).
10. Author’s interview with Alarcón (February 15, 1999).
11. While the writers and artists featured in a particular issue of *Third Woman* were from a specific region, the subject of their work was not always about said region. I elaborate on this below.
12. Author’s interview with Alarcón (February 15, 1999).
13. For an astute discussion of some of the pitfalls of the panethnic term “Latina,” see Chabram-Dernersesian.

14. According to the 1980 U.S. Census, the number of people of "Spanish origin" in Indiana's civilian noninstitutional population was 83,000 out of a total population of 5,387,000 (United States Bureau of the Census 1980, 36, 12). This would put the "Spanish origin" population of the state between 1 and 2 percent.
15. Author's interview with Alarcón (February 15, 1999).
16. Author's interview with Alarcón (February 15, 1999).
17. Shameless Hussy published Shange's *For Colored Girls* in 1975. Kitchen Table published the second edition of *Bridge* in 1983 (it was originally published in 1981 by another feminist press, Persephone of Watertown, Massachusetts), as well as Smith's *Home Girls*. Calyx Books published *The Forbidden Stitch: An Asian American Women's Anthology* (1988), edited by Shirley Geok-Lin Lim and Mayumi Tsutakawa. Spinsters, Ink published *The Woman Who Owned the Shadows* (1983), by Paula Gunn Allen, and Aunt Lute Press published Anzaldúa's *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987).
For a useful and comprehensive bibliography of publications by and about women of color, see Sandoval, "Mestizaje as Method."
18. "The Sexuality of Latinas" was originally published in 1989 as *Third Woman*, Volume 4. In 1993, it was published by Third Woman Press and co-edited by Alarcón, Ana Castillo, and Cherrie Moraga.
19. Author's interview with Alarcón (February 15, 1999).
20. See, for example, Anzaldúa and Keating; Arredondo, et al; Cantú and Nájera-Ramirez; Latina Feminist Group; and Torres and Pertusa.

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