Recasting the Role of Memory in the History of Rhetoric: The Case of Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Autobiographies by Rhetors of Color

Hector Carbajal
University of Texas at El Paso, memoryrhetor@gmail.com

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RECASTING THE ROLE OF MEMORY IN THE HISTORY OF RHETORIC:
THE CASE OF NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURY
AUTOBIOGRAPHIES BY RHETORS OF COLOR

HECTOR CARBAJAL
Department of English, Rhetoric and Composition

APPROVED:

Beth Brunk-Chávez, Ph.D., Chair

Carol Lea Clark, Ph.D.

Maceo Crenshaw Dailey, Jr., Ph.D.

Patricia D. Witherspoon, Ph.D.
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Hector Carbajal

2010
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of Gloria E. Anzaldúa and Frederick Douglass—whose memories will live on forever and ever.
RECASTING THE ROLE OF MEMORY IN THE HISTORY OF RHETORIC: THE CASE OF NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURY AUTOBIOGRAPHIES BY RHETORS OF COLOR

by

HECTOR CARBAJAL, M.A.

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of Texas at El Paso
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of the Requirements
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
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Abstract

The primary object of study in this dissertation is memory within autobiographical writing among writers of color. Specifically, this project uses autobiographies by Gloria E. Anzaldúa and Frederick Douglass as case studies for how minority writers of color remember within the act of writing. Memory is an important object of study because it is partially the medium by which knowledge is reproduced, reconstructed, and invented. Autobiographical writing is significant because it is a genre that has enabled individuals to write themselves as part of history. Being a part of history is important because it allows a subject to change the way her/his culture is represented historically. Anzaldúa and Douglass are two important writers whose autobiographies have enabled them to write themselves as part of their culture’s history (respectively) in an effort to create cultural and social change.

This dissertation presents the argument that writers of color have used memory in a political way in order to present and substantiate arguments in order to bring about cultural and social change. In *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, for instance, Anzaldúa argues that women have been forgotten and devalued in the ways in which Chicano culture has been remembered throughout the history of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. She uses her own personal memories to argue that a Chicana woman’s life experiences bring about a more balanced view of Chicano culture along the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. In *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, Douglass presents his life story as a way to prove that a slave’s humanity has been forgotten in the belief that Christianity has been used to justify the existence of slavery. He uses his life story to argue that slavery is an inhumane institution. Both Anzaldúa and Douglass record their memories through writing as a way to reproduce their lives, reconstruct their experiences, and invent new ways from which to present arguments about changing a reality that has the
possibility to be more democratic way for women and people of color. This examination of
memory, autobiographical writing, and rhetoric (or the art of persuasion) is significant within
rhetorical studies and the humanities because it demonstrates how individuals can use writing to
present arguments and thus contribute to a public discourse in order to bring about a change in
culture and society.
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Chapter 1

A Transformation from Margin to Center: Rhetoric, Memory, & Ethnic Autobiography

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“We are born and have our being in a place of memory. We chart our lives by everything we remember from the mundane moment to the majestic. We know ourselves through the art and act of remembering.”
bell hooks, Belonging: A Culture of Place

“The narratives of people of color jog our memories as a collective in a scattered world…”
Victor Villanueva, “Memoria is a Friend of Ours: On the Discourse of Color”

***

Memory is important for rhetors of color. By establishing self-knowledge, cultural existence, and social immortality, memory counters the imposed silence, cultural erasure, and social conflict that pervade a “scattered” world caused by colonization, slavery, and geographical displacement. Rhetors of color include subjects who use rhetoric to communicate their status within historically minoritized cultures in the United States. Rhetoric, in this context, is defined as a “way of knowing, a way of being, and a way of doing” (Benson 1). More specifically, rhetoric is “a way of knowing the world, of gaining access to the uniquely rhetorical probabilities that govern public policy and personal choice for oneself and others…” (Benson 1).

Furthermore, rhetoric is a method by which to construct the self in an act that is considered symbolic. This act is generated in a context comprised of exigencies, constraints, self, and other elements (1). Lastly, rhetoric is a way to exercise control over the self within this context. In sum, rhetoric refers to the construction of knowledge, existence, and actions through situated discourse. As the passages in the epigraph to this chapter suggest, hooks and Villanueva conceptualize memory and rhetoric as intertwined in that they both explain the knowledge, existence, and actions of ethnic subjects using discourse as a form of personal and communal
transformation. This transformation is one that involves a shift from oppression, marginalization, silence and bondage to empowerment, centering, voice, and agency.

Memory is enacted when a subject remembers in a rhetorical way. Remembering rhetorically occurs when minority subjects, as well as minority cultures, use written discourse to claim their presence within a history that has silenced, marginalized or constructed them as an “Other”. Gloria E. Anzaldúa’s multi-genre autobiography *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* and Frederick Douglass’ *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself* are two of many examples of written discourse that attempts to mark a presence for Chicana/o culture and African American culture respectively. In using language, Anzaldúa and Douglass give order and form to their memories. The memories are ultimately constructed images that symbolize ways of knowing, being, and acting in a world comprised of exigencies, constraints, and audiences. If the mind processes the use of language and images, then examining memory involves examining the structure of a strategic representation of the self and a collective group. To examine an autobiographical narrative then means analyzing a reconstruction of memories to counter a hegemonic history in order to give voice, presence, and agency for a self and a discourse community claiming visibility through written memories. Ethnic autobiographical writing is essentially comprised and given meaning through this reconstruction of memories.

Autobiographical writing, or life writing, is a genre that merits rhetorical study because it is used to re-write a subject’s presence in their cultural history. Autobiographical writings are also forms of re-writing to achieve a personal and collective transformation. This transformation involves a shift from margin to center as a self and a link to a self’s cultural community. Ethnic rhetors such as Anzaldúa and Douglass have transformed the genre of autobiography by using
rhetorical memory to bridge themselves to their respective cultural communities by writing both their personal and communal history. This connection is important because it signifies how rhetors of color have used memory as means to create persuasive discourse among audiences of color, as well as white audiences, in order to effect change on an individual and collective level.

Given this context, this project argues that rhetors of color have recast the role of memory within the history of rhetoric during the nineteenth and twentieth century in the United States. The number of ethnic autobiographies published during the nineteenth and twentieth century, in the United States, may provide some evidence that rhetors of color have played a key role in the transformation of memory. This recasting is important because memory, the fourth canon of rhetoric, has historically declined in importance within contemporary rhetorical studies. Also, this recasting is significant because it demonstrates how memory has been used rhetorically in a strategic act of moving the ethnic subject from a marginal status to a center within and outside their discourse communities. The ethnic subject is transformed to the center of discourse within her/his cultural group. Also, the subject is at the center of discourse outside of her/his cultural group. From these particular positions, a rhetoric of difference has allowed ethnic rhetors to acquire a degree of agency to achieve self and cultural transformation. This transformation is one where the cultural subject, such as Anzaldúa and Douglass, for example, and their respective cultural communities (Chicana/o, African American) shift from being marginalized to being a center of discourse. This recasting of memory for personal and cultural transformation is significant because an inquiry is needed about ethnic rhetor’s contributions to the rhetorical tradition that reinforces the significance of a rhetoric based on difference. A rhetoric of difference is one that can be defined as the use of discourse in order to empower and center an ethnic subject based on ethnic difference. The aim of this project is to explain how the
contributions by ethnic rhetors have expanded the nature of rhetorical theory within the nineteenth and twentieth century.

Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* and Frederick Douglass’ *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* are two autobiographies representing the use of rhetorical memory as a mode of action in transforming a personal and cultural history. Literary critics such as Jennifer Browdy de Fernandez and Barbara Rodriguez have examined this trend. Particularly, in the inquiry titled “The Plural Self: The Politicization of Memory and Form in Three American Ethnic Autobiographies,” Browdy de Fernandez argues that ethnic autobiographies re-conceptualize the nature of autobiography in that they “create a hybridized, double voiced form” which connects both a collective ethnic memory and a personal/individual memory in a dialogue whereby the present and past are connected. Browdy De Fernandez’s inquiry is important because it helps us understand the narratives by Anzaldúa and Douglass as hybrid forms of autobiography. The strategic act of using memory rhetorically has allowed rhetors of color to transform the meaning of their reality as historically marginalized subjects. This transformation is the result of the resistance against silence, cultural imposition, and historical erasure. This project essentially argues that the autobiographies by Douglass and Anzaldúa are examples of discourses that are significant in the effort to historicize and theorize the use of memory within the modern and postmodern rhetorical traditions. This introduction will define the nature of memory, rhetoric, language, and autobiography in order to provide a context for the proceeding chapters, which examine the nature of the relationship between rhetoric, memory, and ethnic autobiographical discourse.

These five chapters ultimately aim to present a rhetorically situated analysis of memory using two ethnic autobiographies. This project demonstrates ways in which Anzaldúa and
Douglass have recast the role of memory within their autobiographical writings. They have revived memory during a time when memory was in decline in early American rhetorical history. Furthermore, this project aims to present a theoretical framework for considering the workings of remembrance, persuasive discourse, agency and audience. In using rhetorical theory, critical race theory, and feminist theory; this project aims to present a new framework to present the workings of ethnic memories in ethnic autobiographies. This framework in no way intends to conflate the experiences of ethnic rhetors. Instead, the framework attempts to explain how exigencies drive the act of remembering based on factors relative to race and gender. In remembering, ethnic rhetors have chosen to strategically present written memories that take knowledge of the past, re-write in the present, and propose a change for the future. Moreover, they have presented these autobiographical writings as way to represent themselves as subjects undergone a transformation from silent and oppressed individuals at the margins to active agents using discourse to empower themselves and their cultural communities.

A Brief Overview of Memory in the History of Rhetoric

Memory is one of the five canons of classical rhetoric and has been referred to, by select rhetoricians, as the “storehouse of knowledge” (Yates 1966, Carruthers 1992, Rider 1995, Calendrillo 1996). Memory has also been defined as “what assisted the orator in retaining a prepared text” within a rhetorical tradition that was primarily oral during the classical period in Greece and Rome (Yates 1966, Carruthers 1992, Crowley 1993, Reynolds 1993, Rider 1995, Calendrillo 1996, Horner 2000). In a more general sense, and within contemporary cognitive/scientific discourse, “memory” has been defined as “the mental faculty that holds information about past events, ideas, persons, things, or learned behavior” (Calendrillo 435). During the classical period in rhetorical history, memory was used by ancient rhetors in
composing and delivering argumentative and persuasive speeches before a public audience. However, memory was not recognized as a simple act of memorizing. Memory was significant within an ancient rhetorical tradition because it was considered an “art” that was related to intelligence, providence, and prudence (Yates 1966, Calendrillo 1996). Strategies were created that involved the use of the imagination, image, language, and space to enhance the use of a rhetor’s memory within the creation of persuasive discourse.

These strategies to enhance natural memory were known as “loci mnemonics,” which British historian Frances Yates designated as an “art of memory.” According to Yates, the art of memory was comprised of an act of remembering according to place/space and location, as well as remembering according to “patterning, text analysis, and rehearsal” (Yates, Calendrillo 435). These strategies essentially involved the use of the imagination in that the rhetor would imagine spaces and images from which to attach words that represented a piece of discourse to be publicly and orally delivered. The spaces were associated with buildings, room, and columns while the images were “bizarre,” “comical,” and even “grotesque.” The vividness of the images would enable the rhetor to effectively recall the information attached to a word that was then associated with a speech. In this way, loci mnemonics essentially involved the use of the imagination and visual order to enhance the natural memory and enable the orator to recall certain information upon delivering a speech, or presenting an oral argument before a public court. These strategies are important to recall because they enable us to theorize the act of “remembering rhetorically” among rhetors of color such as Douglass and Anzaldúa.

Despite memory’s rise within ancient rhetorical pedagogy, the nature of memory significantly declined after the eighteenth century, a time frame characterized by the rise of scientific, philosophical and political discourse (Crowley 1993, Calendrillo 1996, Bizzell and
The change in memory’s status occurred primarily because of the technological advances, such as the invention of the printing press and computer technology, both of which replaced an internal memory system with an external system comprised of printed books, library archives, and computer storage space (Crowley 1993, Reynolds 1993, Rider 1995, Calendrillo 1996, Horner 2000). In *Metaphors of Memory*, historian of memory psychology Douwe Draaisma states that “[a]t the end of the nineteenth century the professional study of memory passed into the hands of psychologists. From the outset their research had an experimental and quantifying slant and in the past century clarified much about how we remember and forget” (4). However, Draaisma claims that psychology’s inquiry into the empirical, methodological, and theoretical investigation into memory was shortsighted. In the introduction to his monograph, Draaisma explains that the field of psychology largely overlooked the influence of theologians, physicists, and writers’ contributions to theories about memories. Crowley and Hawhee explain that public libraries and encyclopedias took the place of artificial memory during the modern period. No longer did people need to learn how to naturally remember information that was not available in print in eternal technologies such as books, archives, and libraries (325).

This shift is momentous because the change marked the significant decline of a canon that was once considered the most significant in the classical system of rhetoric. This decline was further reinforced when certain rhetorical textbooks, particularly Edward P.J. Corbett’s *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, dismissed memory as irrelevant to the contemporary study of rhetoric. Specifically, rhetoric scholars eclipsed memory with invention, arrangement, delivery, and style (Corbett 1990). Memory eventually became a basic memorization technique which, in the age of technological storage, had become obsolete because technology now stored the knowledge once stored in the human mind (Reynolds 1993, Horner 2000, Crowley and Hawhee
Crowley and Hawhee explain that “[e]lectronic memory represents a vast improvement on both artificial memory and literate storage facilities. Computers can remember more information than any single human will ever need. The Web is a vast storehouse of information and images available to anyone with access to a computer” (328). Whereas once the mind was the “vast storehouse” enhanced by the techniques (art) of loci mnemonics, external technologies such as books, libraries, and then computers reinforced the decline of a canon that became subsumed under invention. Attention was turned toward invention instead of memory because invention represented progress, originality, and modernity in terms of the creation of ideas and technology.

With this shift, memory had been considered secondary to heuristic procedures in the process of invention (Reynolds 1993, Horner 2000). To counter this gradual decline in the importance rhetorical memory, twentieth century rhetoricians such as Winifred Bryan Horner, Sharon Crowley, John Frederick Reynolds, Rick Cypert, Marion J. Francoz, Wayne E. Hoogestraat, Walter J. Ong and, recently, Thomas S. Frentz have made strong efforts to revive the ancient canon in relation to invention, arrangement, delivery and style. Some of these scholars have presented arguments about the significant role that memory plays in within composition studies. For example, in Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students, Sharon Crowley and Debra Hawhee claim that, with the upsurge of technological use around the globe, memory has once again resurfaced as a critical object of inquiry with regards to how information is stored and how technological images help sustain human memory in the modern period. In particular, Crowley and Hawhee insist that technology has reminded us that human memory continues to be threatened. However, as Crowley and Hawhee have noted, human memory and technological memory continue to mutually reinforce one another. This reinforcement is
occurring in the process of using technology to help reinforce the ability of human memory to store and retrieve significant events, such as 9-11, within public memory.

In agreement with memory as being an ever-present canon of rhetoric within composition studies, John Frederick Reynolds argues that memory is still significant in composition studies despite the historical limitation and de-valueation of memory as an important canon in rhetoric. In “Memory Issues in Composition Studies,” Reynolds points to scholars such as Frances Yates, Mary Carruthers and Patrick Mahony as reviving memory and presenting its complexity in terms of being more than just memorization. Reynolds relates “memory as mnemonics, memory as memorableness, memory as databases, and memory as psychology.” He explains that memory, as mnemonics, refers to the use of memorization techniques used to enhance the human memory. Memory as memorableness refers to the use of memory to remember “details,” “pictures,” “memorable phrases,” and “memorable language.” Memory as databases encompasses human/artificial memory, but more specifically, short and long term memory as used in the composing process, which was examined by such scholars such as Flower and Hayes. Memory as psychology refers to the ways in which memory is linked to the formation of a “psychological consciousness” and to the psychological interaction of using rhetoric and engaging in dialectic with regard to the roles played by writer and reader, as well as speaker and listener.

In another article, titled “Concepts of Memory in Contemporary Composition,” Reynolds maps out the works that have centered memory as a significant contributor to the writing act. In particular, he discusses the work of Frances Yates, Patrick Mahony, Walter Ong and Eric Havelock, Robert Connors, Rick Cypert, Flower and Hayes, Winifred Bryan Horner, and Kathleen Welch—who examine memory in the form of mnemonics, in the form of texts that are memorable, memory as a repository of information, and memory as psychology. Reynolds’
discussion is critical because his claim confirms the significant association between memory and
the use of invention, specifically the use of memory as a source for invention and brainstorming—all of which confirm that writing is a cognitive act. In “The Faculty of Memory,” Virginia Allen argues that memory largely deals with issues of the mind, which makes the nature of rhetoric and rhetorical theory much more complex in terms of dealing with the structure of the mind, an idea that is endorsed by Patricia Bizzell in *The Rhetorical Tradition*. According to Allen, a rhetorical theory that dismisses memory as a critical component ultimately dismisses rhetoric as only a technique to be learned from a textbook. Allen provides a link between Aristotle's memory within the context of "faculty psychology" and British "associationism" in order to demonstrate the way in which ancient ideas about memory, with regard to the association of ideas and images, are linked to contemporary ideas about associationism as inherited by thinkers such as Locke, Hume, and Bain. This article is important because it aligns with most of the ideas proposed by Aristotle about memory. Specifically, it mentions the idea of knowledge coming from sensory experience. Memory is imprinted through what is perceived. Therefore, knowledge is perceptual instead of solely intellectual. Ultimately, memory is subsequent to sensory perception. The senses actually allow us to perceive things and imprint them on our memory—which is almost like a blank sheet or pad. This blank sheet, or “pad,” has become a metaphor that has governed a discussion of memory since the classical period and into the age of Freud. Reynolds and Allen critically address the significant meaning of memory as it is related to the structure and functions of the mind, especially with regard to invention.

Rhetoric and composition scholar Rick Cypert expands on the association of memory and invention by presenting the claim that style may facilitate the process of invention by being an “inducer of memory.” When thinking in images, style facilitates the retrieval of images from
memory because writers stylize what “sounds right” as they transform the images from memory into language. Rhetorical techniques such as amplification and enumeration, for example, can help students choose what “sounds right.” Within this stylizing process, the two forms of classical memory—artificial memory (memoria rerum) and natural memory (memoria verborum)—are interdependent. They are interdependent because they help student writers generate the details of certain recorded experiences and give significance to these written discourses. Teachers can then consider these discourses meaningful because they represent a student’s effort to explore, analyze, connect, and rebuild ideas through language. Cypert’s discussion is important because it reinforces the argument that classical forms of memory are still relevant in contemporary theories about composition. Also, Cypert’s claim about “thinking in images” concurs with Anzaldúa’s claim that writing comes from the act of thinking through images in Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza. In addition, it reinforces Janine Rider’s argument about memory being critical to the act of writing.

**Project Overview**

“Recasting the Role of Memory in the History of Rhetoric: The Case of Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Autobiographies by Rhetors of Color” aims to join a collective effort on behalf of rhetorical scholars to revive memory as a significant canon in the history of rhetoric within the context of ethnic autobiographical writing. Also, my project aims to suggest a way in which rhetorical studies are transformed by the multiple discourses presented by rhetors of color through the genre of autobiography across time and geographical space. This project is both historical and theoretical in that it aims to answer the following historical and theoretical lines of inquiry: How has memory been conceptualized in the past compared to the present within the history of rhetoric? What is the process by which rhetors of color create and present discourse?
What sorts of interaction occur between writer, audience, subject, and purpose within the rhetorical genre of ethnic autobiography? Ultimately, I seek to answer the following research question: How have rhetors of color used memory, in the past and present, to transform themselves and their roles in a cultural and social context? The answers to these questions enable me to argue that ethnic rhetors use memory as a rhetorical tool in order to create and present persuasive discourse. I insist that rhetorical discourse is rooted in the use of rhetorical memory as a means to address Anzaldúa’s and Douglass’ respective audiences about various and shifting topics on different and particular occasions.

The four chapters that follow address these lines of inquiry by suggesting ways in which ethnic autobiographical discourses have recast the role of memory. In these discourses, ethnic rhetors, such as Anzaldúa and Douglass, link the personal with the collective. This link has been crucial in re-situating the marginal subject at the center of discourse. This re-situated position represents the ability of an ethnic rhetoric to transform the reality of a marginalized subject into one where the subject is as the center of a cultural and social context. The autobiographies by Douglass and Anzaldúa are thus examples of narratives representing a shift and transformation of a cultural subject who achieves empowerment and agency.

Chapter 2, titled “The Rise, Fall, and Transformation of Memory in the History of Rhetoric,” surveys the rise and fall of memory throughout the ancient, modern and postmodern periods of rhetorical history. The purpose of this chapter is to explain how memory has been conceptualized within the binary of “human vs. artificial” memory. Understanding this binary is crucial because it suggests that ethnic memory is a combination of these two elements of memory. Furthermore, this historical overview will help us move toward a new theory of rhetorical memory that intersects rhetorical theory, critical race theory, and feminist theory.
Chapter 3, titled “Toward a Theory of Ethnic Memory: Rhetorical Memory as a “Topics of Difference,” examines how ethnic autobiography can be conceptualized as a rhetorical genre and suggests a new theory of rhetorical memory that intersects rhetorical theory, critical race theory, and feminist theory. Specifically, I employ Lloyd Bitzer, Scott Consigny, Richard Delgado, and bell hooks to present a theory that explains how ethnic autobiographies present the use of memory based on rhetorical situations. I contend that these situations prompt narratives that are counter-hegemonic and call for self, and collective, empowerment within and outside various discourse communities. If rhetoric requires the use of memory and memory is rhetorical, then rhetorical and autobiographical discourse are co-constitutive. Remembering is strategic which means that a rhetor selects which memories are to be told and written within a context and toward an audience. This act of remembering requires the use of language. Ultimately, this chapter historicizes and theorizes the extent to which ethnic autobiographies, during the nineteenth and twentieth century, demonstrated how rhetors of color used memory to create a counter-hegemonic discourse to affect social change within and outside their cultural domain. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries are critical time frames to examine because they represent periods when a considerable amount of autobiographies were published by rhetors of color. These particular autobiographies, and the historical contexts by which they were written, merit further inquiry by rhetoricians because they demonstrate how time constraints affect the rhetoricity of autobiography.

Chapter 4, titled “Rhetorical Memory in Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,” is the first case study of how memory works rhetorically within ethnic autobiography. Gloria E. Anzaldúa’s Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza is an example of an autobiographical discourse that addresses several audiences about the workings of memory in order to create a
degree of agency for both Anzaldúa as Chicana/Mestiza subject within the context of Chicana/o culture along the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands. Borderlands/La Frontera is an autobiography about the use of language along the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands, historical land dispossession, cultural alienation, gender within Chicano culture, and the changing consciousness of a racialized and gendered subject. Anzaldúa ultimately uses language to transform the “truth” about Chicano/a culture, Chicana women, Chicano/a language, and the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. She reconstructs the mestiza as an active agent who uses a “Mestiza Consciousness” to address the contradictions and the reinforcement of binaries and dualities. The “New Mestiza” is thus a mediator.

The mestiza in, Anzaldúa’s discourse, remembers on a personal and collective level. She remembers the history of her ancestors as well as her family over the U.S.-Mexico geographical landscape. Anzaldúa remembers in relation to displacement and the pain of being the "Other" within her culture and within Euro-American culture. She transforms language in order to transform her identity. She uses a hybrid language—Spanglish—to communicate her memories which are located in various and shifting places and spaces. Her memories are fixed but also fluid in many time frames. She can locate her memories within Aztec mythology or within the fields where farmworkers feel the pain of arduous labor. In this chapter, I seek to examine how her act of remembering serves as a means to re-write Chicano history and re-write the knowledge that has affected those on the margins, particularly racialized, sexualized and gendered subjects.

In her monograph Autobiographical Inscriptions: Form, Personhood, and the American Woman Writer of Color, literary scholar Barbara Rodríguez argues that women’s autobiographies focus on subject construction, across race and class, as well as focus on inscribing and re-inscribing conventions that disrupt a patriarchal structure that has silenced the gendered subject. Anzaldúa’s
act of inscribing and re-inscribing then allows us to understand how she re-writes her personal and Chicana/o history to give new significance to her new reality within and outside the Chicana/o discourse community.

Chapter 5, titled “Memories of Slavery: Persuasive Discourse in The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself,” extends the significance of this rhetorical theory by examining the first of three autobiographical narratives by Frederick Douglass. I claim that Douglass’ first autobiography was written strategically to argue an oppositional stance against slavery to abolitionists and non-abolitionists during the nineteenth century. The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave tells the story of Douglass’ experience as a born slave, his coming to literacy and oratory, and his escape from slavery. These experiences serve as the evidence that Douglass uses to substantiate the claim that Christianity has been used to justify the existence of slavery. Furthermore, he uses his experiences to dispel the myths surrounding slavery that slavery apologists constructed to justify slavery. This project presents the claim that each of the memories that he presents in his autobiography is a story that serves the purpose to present the argument against slavery and dispel the myths used to justify it. Douglass ultimately addresses a critical audience about the significance of being a slave who underwent a transformation from being in bondage to freedom after escaping to the North. Both Douglass’ and Anzaldúa’s autobiographies serve as examples of rhetorical discourses that are situated within a context that has been constructed out of an exigence and presented before various audiences with certain constraints in tow. I contend that these contexts are those that involve rhetorical remembering.

A rhetorically situated analysis of memory within ethnic autobiographical writings—published during the nineteenth and twentieth century—is significant because it demonstrates
how rhetors of color have recast the role of memory. They have revived memory during a time frame when the study of memory declined within rhetorical studies. Given the extensive published autobiographies by minority rhetors, an inquiry into the relationship between rhetoric, memory, and discourse is deserving of academic inquiry. Within a theoretical context, this analysis complicates memory’s relationship to theories about remembrance, persuasive discourse, agency, and audience. In particular, this examination maps out the corresponding and contradictory ideas in Aristotelian theory about memory with respect to remembrance and sense perception. Moreover, this project reinforces the arguments made for writing as a rhetorical act within a social context aiming for social transformation instead of writing as a de-contextualized act emphasizing solely the personal. Within this context, and as a rhetorical act, these rhetors have shown the possibility of historically linking the self to the social by merging personal history and collective history via the tradition of re-writing personal and collective narratives. This particular merging tells us much about the agency of the rhetor to write the self within history. This particular act involves taking knowledge of the past, re-writing it in the present, and proposing change for the future based on a historically contextualized exigence. This project will prove my engagement with previous knowledge about memory, rhetoric, writing and autobiography. Also, my argument will be essential for understanding the use of a rhetorical canon that is responsible for the creation and reproduction of information and knowledge in different places, contexts, time frames, and by various subjects engaged in the rhetorical act of writing.
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Chapter 2

The Rise, Fall, and Transformation of Memory in the History of Rhetoric

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“Do you think that a mere dilettante like me could recite from memory in a manner worthy of him a speech that Lysias, the best of our writers, took such time and trouble to compose? Far from it—though actually I would rather be able to do that than come into a large fortune!”

Phaedrus

“Dead, I/won’t be forgotten”

Sappho

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I. The Rise of Memory: The Fourth Canon as Natural and Artificial Memory within Classical Rhetoric

Within the ancient Greek and Roman system of rhetoric, memory was divided into two branches: natural memory and artificial memory. Natural memory referred to “what each individual instinctively exhibited when called on to recall information” (Calendrillo 435). Therefore, to use natural memory was to engage in the act of remembering past events during the present, which has become the critical domain of historians in issues of historiography (Hutton, Le Goff). Artificial memory referred to “a trainable function” which involved training the natural memory to enhance the recalling of information (Calendrillo 435). In employing artificial memory techniques, natural memory would be enhanced for each student of rhetoric trained to internalize, compose, and deliver speeches in a public forum. The specific recalling strategies, or “loci mnemonics” became what British historian Frances Yates has termed the “art of memory.”

Frances Yates’ 1966 monograph The Art of Memory remains the seminal, and most comprehensive, text to examine the instructional use of memory within ancient and medieval Europe. It also remains a canonical text which has influenced many rhetoricians interested in
reviving memory. According to Yates, the art of memory was comprised of two artificial systems: the loci mnemonic, or remembering things by place and location, and the use of “patterning, text analysis, and rehearsal” (Yates, Calendrillo, 435). Loci mnemonics was comprised of “two image sequences superimposed one onto the other in a prescribed order” (Calendrillo 435). Rhetoric historian Linda Calendrillo explains how the procedure occurred in the mind of the mnemonist:

The individual would develop both the background and foreground images. The reusable background images were simply settings, frames such as houses, buildings, and streets that served as storehouses for foregrounding images. Into each site the rhetor placed an image that served as a key to some idea or word that then revived the matter of the speech. The foreground images were bizarre, vivid, grotesque, or comical. These images were not necessarily tied to the meanings of a speech’s particular words but might be related to the words through homonyms, rhymes, or any idiosyncratic personal associations. (435)

Thus, loci mnemonics involved the use of the imagination and visual order to enhance natural memory to enable the orator to recall certain information upon delivering a speech or presenting an oral argument before a public court. The second system that comprised the art of memory included Quintilian’s alternative system of patterning, text analysis and rehearsal. In Book XI of *Institutio Oratoria*, Quintilian argues that human memory may be cultivated through proper training. This training includes copying texts by hand, reading aloud, and the careful procedure of arranging certain pieces of texts. Writing is significant in the act of reproducing information and memorizing a piece of discourse. Quintilian states: “…after writing for several days with a view to acquiring by
heart what we have written, we find that our mental effort has of itself imprinted it on our memory” (Quintilian, Book XI). Consequently, the use of repetition and memorable text arrangements helped students of rhetoric learn a text from memory (Calendrillo, Horner, Reynolds, Rider). Quintilian’s states that a “whole education depends upon memory” and that “it is the power of memory alone that brings before us the store of precedents, laws, rulings, sayings, and facts which the orator must possess in abundance and which he must always hold ready for immediate use” (Quintilian, Book XI). Hence, in Institution Oratoria, memory is held in highest importance as a medium from which to reproduce knowledge. Quintilian frames memory within a pedagogical framework.

Both of these branches of memory were critical in the rhetorical discourse by ancient Greek and Roman rhetoricians. Plato politically opposed artificial memory because he associated it with a lack of originality and, in a more philosophical sense, a lack of wisdom. This belief is evident in Phaedrus where the dialectic between Socrates and Phaedrus comes to represent Plato’s opposition between natural and artificial memory. As the prime example of natural memory, Socrates possesses the wisdom that is lacking in Lysias, a rhetor who easily impresses Phaedrus through Lysias’ ability to memorize a speech. In Plato’s characterization, Phaedrus comes to represent artificial memory because of a lack of originality and wisdom that is fitting of a suspect and artificial rhetor, as represented by Lysias, who uses the power to manipulate and distort “Truth.” Plato ultimately believed that natural memory was ideal in helping the philosopher reach the absolutely divine, such as “Good” and “Knowledge,” through contemplation, which allowed the philosopher to connect with images associated with the “Divine.”
Plato’s famous dialectic between Socrates and Phaedrus in *The Phaedrus* presents the dialogue about the nature of achieving “Truth” through dialectic and the faulty nature of rhetoric. This dialectic positioned philosophy against rhetoric by enforcing the opposition between socially constructed truths and an absolute “Truth.” With regard to memory, Socrates tells Phaedrus the story about the dialogue between Theuth, the Egyptian god of writing, and Thames, the King of Egypt. Socrates tells Phaedrus:

The story goes that Thamus said much to Theuth, both for and against each art, which it would take too long to repeat. But when they came to writing, Theuth said: “O King, here is something that, once learned, will make the Egyptians wiser and will improve their memory; I have discovered a potion for memory and for wisdom.” Thamus, however, replied: “O most expert Theuth, one man can give birth to the elements of an art, but only another can judge how they can benefit or harm those who will use them. And now, since you are the father of writing, your affection for it has made you describe its effects as the opposite of what they really are. In fact, it will introduce forgetfulness into the soul of those who learn it: they will not practice using their memory because they will put their trust in writing, which is external and depends on signs that belong to others, instead of trying to remember from the inside, completely on their own. You have not discovered a potion for remembering, but for reminding; you provide your students with the appearance of wisdom, not with its reality. Your invention will enable them to hear many things without being properly taught, and they will imagine that they have come to know much while for the most part they will
know nothing. And they will be difficult to get along with, since they will merely appear to be wise instead of really being so. (274A-275B).

According to Socrates, Theuth attempts to persuade Thames that writing is the “potion for memory and wisdom”; however, Thames counters Theuth. Theuth claims that writing poses more of a threat to memory because writing will make speakers rely more on an outside system that initially is meant to come from the interior—or from the Self. This outside system is one that represents memorization and the reproduction of knowledge. This outside system is one that does not endorse the creation of knowledge. Theuth’s idea is one that Plato may have aimed to address to his audience as a way to attack the Sophists—who may have been inclined to trust writing as a form of general access to knowledge via the recording and storing of information. Therefore, one can claim that Plato used the dialogue between Theuth and Thamus to address his disdain for writing’s negative impact on natural memory, which he believed was connected to divinity, thus possessing much more importance than artificial memory. Phaedrus is seminal in that it remains the evidence for arguing Plato’s position on supporting natural memory over artificial memory. This coincides with Plato’s support of orality over literacy. Furthermore, this dialectic between Theuth and Thamus represents Plato’s attack on technology as the artificial form of memory to dominate over natural memory.

Aristotle examined memory as both a natural and artificial form. He examined memory as a cognitive function whereby the mind’s memory had the ability to spawn images that were inscribed from past perceptions that were affected by lapses in time. (Calendrillo 436) Aristotle discussed memory as involving the “apprehension of an image” by using “the faculty of sense perception” (Calendrillo 436, Sorabji 47-60). In De Memoria et Reminiscentia, Aristotle clearly states that “…memory is of the past” (Sorabji, 47). Aristotle explains that “… memory is not
perception or conception, but a state or affection connected with one of these, when time has elapsed. There is no memory of the present at the present, as has been said. But the perception is of the present, prediction of the future, and memory of the past. And this is why all memory involves time” (Aristotle, 449b24, Sorabji, 48). Aristotle made the distinction that memory related to the past, perception related to the present, and prediction related to the future.

Aristotle defined recollection as “a mode of inference or an act of investigation, which entailed a process of moving from a starting point through a series of ordered movements in which the remembered idea or images resided” (Calendrillo 436). This mode was essentially cognitive and was relative to the association of images, either through similarity, contrariness or continuity. Aristotle states: “Memory, even the memory of objects of thought, is not without an image. So memory will belong to thought in virtue of an incidental association, but in its own right to the primary perceptive past” (449b30, Sorabji 49). Image, association, and matters of divinity were then some of the factors that were significant for ancient thinkers such Plato and Aristotle.

Even though it may seem as though the theorizing of memory was extensive among Greek rhetoricians, an inquiry into memory was scant in comparison to its full and systematic approach by such Roman rhetoricians such as Cicero and Quintilian. Within ancient Roman rhetorical theory, *Rhetorica Ad Herennium*, *De Oratore*, and *Institutio Oratoria* were three seminal texts in the theorization, instruction, and practice of ancient Roman memory (Yates, Calendrillo). Specifically, the *Rhetorica Ad Herennium* was a Latin book on rhetoric that described the method of loci (place) while the Cicero’s *De Oratore* was a handbook for orators which complemented the combination of both natural and artificial memory. Lastly, Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria* was a technical book on the theorizing, instruction and practice of oratory that formally introduced a discussion of memory in relation to kairos and delivery. Cicero associated
memory with the virtues of prudence, intelligence and providence (Calendrillo 435). Quintilian described memory as a specific strategy that required training in order to improve it as the “treasure-house” of ideas generated from invention (Calendrillo 435). Unlike their Greek predecessors, Roman rhetoricians viewed natural and artificial memory as reinforcing one another rather than in opposition (as Plato had scripted them in *Phaedrus*).

Ultimately, as we have seen, the classical period of a Greek and Roman rhetorical tradition produced and theorized two branches of memory: natural and artificial memory. The former type of memory was exalted by Plato because it was connected to the “Divine” and was a marker of a “realized soul” (Yates, Calendrillo). Aristotle directed his inquiry of memory with a more scientific approach by examining remembrance using a cognitive approach that associated the mind with images and lapses in time. Cicero and Quintilian theorized memory more extensively whereby they instructed and practiced the method of loci mnemonics, which involved the use of the imagination in constructing images in background and foreground locations in order to remember information that was essential for an orator to present a speech before a public audience. Therefore, the early history of memory within the Greek and Roman system of rhetoric centered the use of loci mnemonics, which involved using language, location, and arrangement to aid the ancient rhetor to recall information needed in composing and delivering a speech. Image, space, and placement were used to recall information. The use of these elements to recall information essentially involves the use of arrangement.

II. The Continuing Trend of Memory as Thinking, Language, Image and Learning within Medieval Rhetoric

Similar to Aristotle, Plato and Cicero’s ideas about memory as remembrance, the connection to divinity, and the use of mnemonics, St. Augustine also theorized the existence of
memory during the medieval period. Particularly, St. Augustine argued that memory was comprised of representations, rules, axioms, reactions, forgetting, happiness and God. In *Confessions*, St. Augustine explained that representations signified the meaning of the past. Rules referred to the learned rules that are memorized by an individual. Axioms, he claimed, related to sense perception. Reactions referred to memory as a mode of recognition. Forgetting meant a lack of memory while happiness denoted an abstract concept derived from experiences. Finally, the “Truth” that rested in memory was God (Augustine XI). These ideas about memory were explained through metaphors, which Douwe Draaisma explains in *Metaphors of Memory: A History of Ideas about the Mind*. Draaisma states: “In Book X of the *Confessions*, he writes of the buildings, storehouses, caves and treasure chambers of memory—images, as he himself admits, that give at most an approximate vision of memory. With Augustine the reader never forgets for a moment the tension he feels between memory and the words that can be found for it” (27). Draaisma’s claim here demonstrates that Augustine’s conceptualizations of memory were both imaginary, through architectural and spatial metaphors, and discursive. Draaisma notes that Augustine returned to Aristotle’s claim about how memory was derived from sensory perception (29). Despite the use of metaphors, Augustine was unable to understand the workings of memory, yet his ideas about memory are important because the metaphors that he used to describe memory were taken “from what he saw around him,” such as “the fields and caves near Carthage, buildings and palaces, treasure houses and aviaries” (30). Draaisma states that other writers in addition to Augustine also used memorable metaphors for describing memory. He states: “In antiquity and in the Middle Ages the memory as a storehouse was a *topos*, but one with constantly changing imagery” (Draaisma 30). St. Augustine’s use of memory through metaphors was essentially connected to classical ideas associated with Aristotle. These ideas
included how sense perception preceded memory in that anything acquired from the sense was stored in human memory to be recalled later. However, St. Augustine’s discourse on memory reflected more the marking of a good moral character of an individual, which historian Mary Carruthers’ explores in her scholarship on medieval memory.

Mary Carruthers’ *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* is a seminal study about the relation between memory and literacy in Medieval Europe. Carruthers claims that since much of European culture was oral, a refined memory was essential. Carruthers explains that medieval culture defined memory as the trainable aspect of the human mind by strategic mnemotechniques that were part of the medieval educational system, which included instruction in the arts of grammar, logic, and rhetoric. According to Carruthers, the training of memory was critical within Roman literate society, and continued throughout the Middle Ages in the literature and culture. In the introduction to her monograph, Carruthers states: “The choice to train one’s memory or not, for the ancients, and medievals, was not a choice dictated by convenience: it was a matter of ethics. A person without a memory, if such a thing could be, would be a person without moral character and, in a basic sense, without humanity” (13). Within this context, Carruthers defines memory as not “how something is communicated” but to “what happens once one has received it, to the interactive process of familiarizing—or textualizing—which occurs between oneself and others’ words in memory” (13). Carruthers’ definition is important in this case because it reinforces the idea that memory is not only involved the imagination, through the use of metaphors and spatial arrangements, but memory is also discursive. Medieval memory, in part, related to the interaction between self and memory, and the memory between a perceiver of a memory and an audience of that memory via language. In
sum, medieval memory came to represent the supreme capability of the human mind to use signs, language and thinking as essential to remember past events or recall information.

Janet Coleman’s *Ancient and Medieval Memories: Studies in the Reconstruction of the Past* argues that theories of ancient and medieval memory were part of theories about signs, language, and the relationship between language and thinking. Coleman’s inquiry is on equal footing with the works by Yates and Carruthers, in terms of importance, because it is not only an exhaustive examination of classical and medieval memory, but her inquiry also looks at memory as cognitive and epistemological. Thus, these ideas certainly resonate with those presented by Aristotle. Coleman’s inquiry is also important because she argues that medieval culture believed that the past could be understood and acknowledged. This belief contrasted with the postmodern tenet that the past was incoherent and unknowable, which created a doubt in the trustworthiness of memory.

**III. The Fall and Revival of Memory: Memory in Modern and Postmodern Rhetoric**

With the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century and the shift in focus on other canons such as delivery and style during the Enlightenment, the significance of rhetorical memory, particularly the use of loci mnemonics, declined because of a growing literacy in writing and prominence of print culture after the Renaissance. By the eighteenth century specifically, a focus on elocution and eloquence governed much of the rhetorical education among the elite in Europe. Particularly, rhetoricians Gilbert Austin and Thomas Sheridan comprise part of a movement that articulated the importance of delivering and stylizing speech as a means to clarify a rhetor’s speech within rhetorical education (Bizzell and Herzberg). While the oral persuasiveness of an ancient’s rhetorical discourse was central in ancient rhetorical pedagogy and rhetorical practice, Enlightenment rhetoric centered delivery and style as the
canons that would aid in the persuasiveness of a rhetoric student’s speech. Consequently, the use of memory declined in importance among a certain segment of European society.

By the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the printing press and, later, the Internet, made memory external. Thus natural memory and artificial memory were replaced by new technologies that relied more on physical and virtual storage space instead of internal human memory. This decline was reinforced with the emergence of a postmodern trend that countered the idea about memory as “natural.” According to the influential work of Michel Foucault, the constitution of the self is comprised of various and competing discourses that limited the agency of a constructed “self.” Thus, within postmodern theories, memory is socially constructed and could never represent a unique self nor a unique point of view. Instead, memory became the vehicle by which knowledge reproduced itself through power relations. This particular claim became pronounced in Foucault’s “The Death of the Author,” which claimed that discourses govern the role of the subject (as author), thus making the role of the author obsolete considering that pre-existing discourses govern the subject (Foucault 1982, 1984). During the nineteenth and twentieth century, memory therefore became largely absent considering a focus on invention became central in the discipline of rhetoric (Calendrillo, Horner).

Although there was a decline in importance of memory within rhetorical studies, there was a reconsideration and revival within composition studies. Scholars such as Winifred Bryan Horner, John Frederick Reynolds, Sharon Crowley, Linda T. Calendrillo, Rick Cypert, Marion J. Francoz, Wayne E. Hoogestraat, and Walter J. Ong spearheaded a revival of memory by arguing that memory is a rhetorical canon that merited further inquiry concerning its relationship with writing and invention. For instance, in “Reinventing Memory and Delivery,” Horner argues that the conceptualizations of memory and delivery must be expanded because, as she states, the
advent of technology has changed the ways in which memories and information are being stored, and the ways in which messages have been transmitted between speakers/writers and audiences. Furthermore, Horner claims that memory has evolved from being part of the interior mind to the exterior geographic space of archives, books and computers—which now store the memories that were once recalled in the human mind. This evolution can be connected to the binary that Plato presents in *The Phaedrus* in the dialectic between Theuth and Thamus about the opposition between human memory, which represents “natural” memory, and writing—which is to be considered a technology using a symbolic system. Writing, texts, and books are subjects that are directly associated with memory, which introduces the subject of composition. In other words, to remember is to compose and to compose is to produce a text.

John Frederick Reynolds also argues that memory is significant in contemporary rhetorical studies given that memory is closely associated with the canon of invention in the act of composing a text. Reynolds stresses that memory is not a simple canon referring to simple memorization techniques. Instead, memory refers to the complexity and vastness of “memorableness,” databases, and psychology (Reynolds). Consequently, with the advent of technology and the printing press, memory has changed in definition and has problematized the act of writing through the use of heuristic procedures such as stasis theory. Sharon Crowley has argued that technological memory and human memory reinforce and complement one another. She explains that this reinforcement happens when humans use technology to persevere their memories. At the same time, technology is made human in the way that it preserve their memories. All of these scholars have agreed that memory has declined but, in the act of reviving the canon, writing and invention have become closely associated in the composition of texts in the writing classroom (Crowley 1993, Crowley and Hawhee 2004).
The Complex Nature of Memory: Convergence of Knowledge, Imagination, Visual Perception, Language, and Space

While the canon of memory might have been dismissed as “simplistic” in referring to memorization techniques, the role of memory has proved complex in converging issues relative to knowledge, imagination, visual perception, language, and space. Loci mnemonics and textual analysis were systems that involved these factors in the act of composing, rehearsing and delivering speeches during the classical period. Ultimately, these complex approaches to enhancing natural memory were replaced by the technological advances that followed after the Renaissance and dominated the nineteenth and twentieth century. The creation of printed books, library archives, and computer technology indicated that writing became itself a technology that eclipsed the oral culture that had relied on memory for oral storytelling and recalling of information, specifically within the classical and medieval period in Europe. The result was a canon that was dismissed in contemporary rhetorical pedagogy. However, recent composition and rhetoric scholars have argued that memory has always been part of the rhetorical canon because it is the basis from which knowledge is created, reproduced and transmitted, specifically through the rhetorical act of writing. This particular significance about memory allows us to understand the various ways in which autobiographical writing, for example, connects memory, language, and image—all of which are part of an ancient tradition of using rhetorical memory by ancient rhetors and rhetoricians. This historical overview allows us to see that the nature of memory has shifted and questions of its quality, since its rise in Greek and Roman rhetorical roots, have been put into question with the advent of new technological systems such as writing and computer technology.

To a certain degree, this historical overview demonstrates that memory has moved from being used as an internal system of mind recall and human remembrance, and primarily for
educational purposes, as well as for the compositions of orations, and toward an external system of information storage through computer technology and virtual storage systems. During the classical period, ancient rhetoricians defined memory as the “storehouse of knowledge.” This “storehouse” was the means by which students of rhetoric learned how to remember a piece of persuasive discourse for public delivery. However, with the advent of the printing press, in the eighteenth century, and the advent of computer technology, in the twentieth century, artificial memory eclipsed human memory. Within the definition of memory discussed in this chapter, its categorizations of “natural” and “artificial” memory, and the decline of the former and the rise of the latter, this project seeks to interrogate the relationship between rhetoric, memory, writing and subjectivity within a particular cultural context and distinct time frame.
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Chapter 3

Toward a Theory of Ethnic Memory: Rhetorical Memory as a “Topics of Difference”

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Writing autobiography is often a re-writing of history. Re-writing history connotes taking a different position on the reality that is constructed from the histories told and taught in institutions. Re-writing is a powerful act of introducing new ethnic stories into the larger historical framework. This re-writing involves the use of collecting stories that represent an embodied form of memory. To a certain extent, an autobiography serves as a “mnemonic” from which stories are told along space and time that represent the self in relation to the larger cultural community. The autobiographies of Gloria E. Anzaldúa and Frederick Douglass are examples of texts that contain stories representing memories that are told to add to a historical record. Anzaldúa and Douglass add to the historical record by proposing that there be a different way to understand the past and thereby experience the present. To propose this shift, they attempt to restructure and change a reality using rhetoric. Also, shifting an interpretation of the past, they disrupt and claim a space where they represent themselves as empowered subjects who are linked to their respective cultural communities. The space they claim is one where topics are addressed that relate to race and gender. These topics govern the selection of memories that are written and presented in an autobiography.

Considering this context, this chapter argues that ethnic memory should be understood rhetorically as a series of memories that are contextual, spatial, and governed by topics that aim to transform the values, beliefs, and traditions of various audiences. Ethnic memory may be defined as a series of memories that link the self with the collective in order to bring about a balanced representation of cultural memory among various ethnic groups in the United States. In
this context, memory is rhetorical when it resides within the act of remembrance. Remembrance can be defined as an act of re-constructing the past to serve present purposes and to instruct the future making of knowledge in order to create change on a personal and collective level.

Remembering is political because it is strategic. When rhetors remember, they are enacting memory for strategic purposes that aim to transform the values and beliefs of their respective audiences. In order to begin understanding how ethnic rhetors use memory to inform and persuade within various contexts, I propose a theory, which I term a “topics of difference,” which is comprised of rhetorical theory, critical race theory, and feminist theory. In particular, I use theories by Lloyd Bitzer, Scott Consigny, Richard Delgado, and bell hooks in order to outline a theory which helps explain how rhetors, such as Gloria E. Anzaldúa and Frederick Douglass, use memory in order to describe some of the experiences about being a minority in the United States. Anzaldúa and Douglass use memory within autobiographical writing as a series of collected memories to link the self and the social in order to bring about change and transformation as minority subjects.

Chapter 2 presented a brief overview of the trajectory of memory throughout the history of rhetoric. Specifically, I examined the way memory was conceptualized as a binary between human and artificial memory during the classical period in Greece and Rome. Artificial memory, as the art of memory, or use of mnemonics, was used to compose and sharpen human memory, which would then be used to sharpen the rhetorical skills needed to deliver a body of discourse. Since the classical period, memory was the object of inquiry among rhetoricians, philosophers, and psychologists. Throughout the trajectory of memory, various meanings of memory have surfaced. Imagination, arrangement, and space have been consistent elements throughout this
trajectory. This discussion is significant because it emphasizes that memory is more complex than previous thought throughout the history of rhetoric.

In this chapter, however, I choose to look at human and artificial memory as co-constitutive in the creation and substantiation of arguments in a body of discourse. This understanding can help us resolve the constraints that may result because of a constant trend of interpreting memory in oppositional terms. Instead, I argue that rhetoricians should extend an inquiry into memory, particularly rhetorical memory, as something plural, spatial, and contextual. This chapter thus presents a definition of rhetorical memory in order to understand how memories function within the different contexts in ethnic autobiographical writings.

Rhetorical memory refers to the telling of a story or narrative as a persuasive strategy to change the values, beliefs, and attitudes of an audience(s). This telling can either be oral and/or written. The purpose of rhetorical memory is to instruct and persuade an audience to change their values, beliefs, and attitudes, especially if an audience’s convictions or attitudes prove to be distorted, unjust, exclusive, and intolerant to the rhetor. Rhetorical memory is important because it has the capability to both instruct and persuade an audience to change its values, beliefs, and attitudes within a cultural community. In using rhetorical memory, a rhetor, or series of rhetors, believe that a culture’s values, beliefs, and attitudes need to change in order to benefit her/him and their respective cultural community within a certain geographic space and time frame. People of color use memory in order to define who they are, as well as how they view their culture throughout history. They remember because their past has been fragmented by the effects of colonization, slavery, discrimination, and prejudice. Histories of colonized peoples involve the connection between the past, present, and future. The past is to be remembered in order to understand the present and enable a change in the future. Therefore, rhetorical memory involves
remembering the past in the present in order to change the future. Rhetorical memory involves strategic remembering. Strategic refers to selecting certain memories over others. This selection process, I argue, is political.

Rhetorical memory is important to define because it can help us interpret the use of memory in a variety of ways by rhetors of color attempting to change perceptions of the past in order to change the meaning of present and future. This change ultimately allows for institutional histories to be re-written and make way for multiple histories. This shift and re-writing is important because it reinforces the idea that memory and rhetoric can be used to shift the reality that has been imposed upon people of color through the power of discourse. Therefore, this chapter argues that we must view memory in a rhetorical context within an “art of topics,” as theoretically informed by Scott Consigny. Theorizing memory as a series of topics allows us to understand the contexts from which memory is used in writing. These contexts will be examined and explained in Chapter 4 and 5 with detailed examination of autobiographies by Frederick Douglass and Gloria E. Anzaldúa.

This chapter is important because I argue that remembering is political because rhetors make strategic decisions when selecting certain memories over others. Furthermore, rhetors make selective decisions as to how to re-tell these memories to an audience. For example, Douglass remembers the slave songs in his autobiography as a way to dispel the myth about the songs representing a joy felt by slaves. He uses the slave songs to further reinforce the idea the slaves use singing as a way to express their suffering from the hard labor they endure in the plantation. Douglass’ memories of the slave songs become a way to criticize the institution of slavery as one that is cruel, degrading, and oppressive. This political aspect of Douglass’ remembrance makes memory rhetorical. Rhetorical memory is a term that is fitting to the act of
remembering when making political decisions as to the memories that are presented to an audience. This presentation of memories is political because rhetors such as Douglass attempt to persuade an audience to change their beliefs, attitudes, and values about something within a culture. In the case of Douglass, he attempts to change the belief that slavery is an institution that is benevolent in its aim to “civilize” slaves.

In order to understand how the ethnic rhetorics of Anzaldúa and Douglass work as rhetorical memory, I will first discuss the nature of Bitzer’s rhetorical situation, which presents the claim that a situation elicits a rhetorical response from a speaker/writer based on an exigence, audience, and the presence of certain constraints. This claim has been contested by Vatz, who argued that a rhetor creates the rhetorical situation, which gives rise to the creation of discourse. However, Consigny argues against Bitzer and Vatz by suggesting an “art of topics.” An art of topics refers to a set of topics, or commonplaces, where the rhetor is able to discover or invent ways where it is most appropriate and persuasive to respond to a situation. He explains that situations are “indeterminate” because of the ambiguity of language. Consigny’s ideas counter those of Vatz with regard to the agency of the rhetor because Consigny claims freedom for the rhetor to choose among topics to think about various situations. I claim that Consigny’s “art of topics” can be a framework from which we can understand memory in different places and spaces from which writer/speakers to create and present persuasive discourse.

This art of topics has yet to be merged with significant principles in critical race theory and feminist theory, principally in the works of Richard Delgado and bell hooks, which help explain how rhetorical memory seeks to transform, shift, and engage meaning through a discourse on race/ethnicity and gender. Therefore, an “art of topics” can be conceptualized within a critical race theory and feminist framework to highlight issues of race/ethnicity and
gender. My ultimate aim will be to demonstrate how rhetorical memory may be defined as a “topics of difference” whereby a rhetor of color presents arguments based on exigencies that relate to the projects of marginalization based on race/ethnicity and gender. This theory of rhetorical memory, as topics of difference, will be explained more fully in practice in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 with a more specific emphasis on actual autobiographical writings.

Revisiting “The Rhetorical Situation” and “The Art of Topics” in the Creation of Discourse

In order to begin defining rhetorical memory as topics of difference, we need to first accept the use of memory as enacted through remembrance. Remembrance is rhetorical in that it occurs within a context and contains meaning within that context between speaker/writer and audience. Remembrance is rhetorical in the sense that remembrance occurs within a particular context and indicates that the individual who is remembering makes strategic decisions as to what is remembered and how it is remembered, particularly through writing.

This context can be examined using Lloyd Bitzer’s theory of the rhetorical situation. The rhetorical situation has proven instrumental in explaining the nature of rhetorical discourse and the methods by which a rhetor is made active within a rhetorical act. In 1968, Bitzer presented his main line of inquiry: “What characteristics are implied when one refers to the ‘rhetorical situation’? He argued that exigence, audience and constraint are three characteristics that shape the rhetorical act from which a rhetorical discourse emerges. He offered historical evidence such as the Gettysburg Address, as well as other historical documents, and a courtroom case, to explain the nature of rhetorical discourse. Particularly, he explained how exigency gives rise to an utterance, which he argued must qualify as a fitting response (in relation to audience), which meets a constraint in order to give rise to some discourse toward (social) change.
If we consider Bitzer’s theory of the rhetorical situation in relation to memory, then we can understand remembrance as rhetorical in the sense that it is an act that invites an interaction between writer, subject, audience, and occasion. Bitzer’s defines this interaction as the “context in which speakers or writers create rhetorical discourse” (1). Bitzer defines exigence, the first element of the rhetorical situation, as “an imperfection marked by urgency; it is a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done, a thing which is other than it should be” (6). Audience is termed as “persons who are capable of being influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change” (7). Constraints are the last elements used to analyze the rhetorical situation and are terms as “a set of constraints made up of persons, events, objects, and relations which are part of situation because they have the power to constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence” (8). When linked together, Bitzer’s elements refer to how a rhetor creates rhetorical discourse by addressing an urgent problem to a group of persons who are able to enact change in order to address a problem, yet with certain limitations which are present and that affect the relationship between rhetor and audience.

In 1973, Richard E. Vatz’s “The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation” revisited Bitzer’s question about how writers/speakers created discourse. Vatz’s purpose in this article is to counter Bitzer by arguing that language is central to creating meaning and ultimately fluid, thus making situations much more “indeterminate” and unfixed. Therefore, Vatz reversed Bitzer’s theory by proposing that rhetoric precedes a situation instead of a situation inviting a rhetorical act. As support, Vatz also provided historical evidence. For example, during the Vietnam War, Vatz claims, there was no immediate, specific nor objective situation that led to rhetorical discourse. Instead, there was a rhetorical discourse that led to a response, as represented in the political crisis that resulted from the Vietnam conflict. Vatz’s idea can be applied to memory with regard
to the freedom that the rhetor has to select and choose the stories from memory that are to be written in a narrative. However, it is important to ask: In what way can an audience understand a story from memory when the situation is unknown to them? Scott Consigny’s idea about an “art of topics” helps us address this question.

Scott Consigny revisited Bitzer and Vatz and contended that the opposition between rhetor and the situation is one that can be resolved through an “art of topics.” In the first part of his 1974 article, Consigny argues that the rhetorical act is one in which the rhetor becomes engaged in an indeterminate situation and is able to disclose and manage exigencies therein. A situation is deemed indeterminate because the situation is constructed by language, which in itself, is fluid and ambiguous. In the second half of his article, he demonstrates how a rhetor becomes engaged in indeterminate situations and how a rhetor has the means by which to make sense of them.

Particularly, Consigny contended that the rhetorical situation contains “particularities of persons, actions, and agencies in a certain place and time; and the rhetor cannot ignore these constraints if he is to function effectively” (178). He insisted that the rhetor cannot afford to ignore the constraints if the rhetor is to properly respond discursively to a situation. These particularities that Consigny refers to are present in memories. Stories based on memory involve “persons, actions, and agencies” that act as constraints as to what is revealed and hidden in the act of storytelling from memory.

Consigny makes his claim based on the critique that Bitzer made with regard to the situation as “determinate and pre-determining a ‘fitting’ response” (178). The rhetorical act is ultimately one where the rhetor is able to reveal and work with exigencies with an indeterminate situation. (179). Consigny claims that if the rhetor fails to take into account these constraints,
then the rhetor will not be able to adhere to the audience and the rhetor’s discourse will then be considered “ineffective and irrelevant” (179). This failure to consider these constraints applies to storytelling from memory with regards to the rhetor’s failure to consider the “persons, actions, and agencies” that comprise her/his memories. An autobiographical rhetor needs to set up sufficient context for a memory in order to anticipate an adequate response from an audience.

Consigny explains that a rhetor “must be able to enter into an indeterminate situation and disclose or formulate problems therein;” (179). He adds that the rhetor “must also present the problems in such a way as to facilitate their resolution by the audience engaged with him [sic] in the rhetorical process” (179). He elaborates that:

The rhetor discloses issues and brings them to resolution by interacting with the situation, revealing and working through the phenomena, selecting appropriate material and arranging it into a coherent form. Through his actions the rhetor attains a ‘disposition’ of the situation, or a new way of seeing and acting in the situation. He discloses a new ‘gestalt’ for interpreting and acting in the situation, and thereby offers the audience a new perspective to view the situation. When the audience reaches a decision or judgment, it renders the problematic situation ‘closed’ or resolved… (179)

In the interaction with the situation, the rhetor is then strategic in choosing how to interpret and act in a situation. This interaction is important in order for the rhetor to properly respond to an exigence by making a proposition that will then be deliberated by an audience.

Bitzer’s theory of the rhetorical situation and Consigny’s theory of an “art of topics” are significant with regard to a working theory of rhetorical memory as used in autobiography. Exigence is one element that can be said to be a motivating factor in the storytelling based on memory. For example, slavery is the exigence from which Douglass generates memories of his
experiences as a slave. He generates these memories for various purposes and for different audiences. Each memory will be told in different contexts, which will then shift the way in which each memory, or story, will be told to a distinct audience. Audience adherence plays a factor in the way that the story from memory is told and how much information is revealed in the story. In sum, an exigence will trigger a memory in terms of invention, style, and arrangement. The autobiographical rhetor will choose her/his memories based on the exigence, constraint, and audience that comprise the situations that she/he is responding to in an autobiographical text. If the audience determines mostly the nature of the memories that the rhetor will select as a result of the exigence, then what agency does the autobiographical rhetor in having the freedom to choose the way these memories are represented in an autobiographical text?

Consigny argues that an art of rhetoric is needed for a rhetor to function properly in a meaning-making process. Consigny claims that the art of rhetoric provides a means by which the rhetor becomes engaged in particular situations that include two conditions: integrity and receptivity. Integrity involves using the art of rhetoric in order for the rhetor to function in all kinds of indeterminate and particular situations as they arise. A rhetor essentially will have a variety of options and freedom to select the ways in which she/he will make sense anew of each case that arises. In the context of memory, Consigny’s idea may be applied to memory by considering an autobiographical rhetor having the freedom to re-construct a story from memory based on the conditions of integrity and receptivity.

Consigny adds that that the rhetor cannot know what problems faces her/him when she/e enters in a particular situation, thus an “art of topics” theory proves ideal because the rhetor can engage with many “indeterminate fields irrespective of subject matter” (181). Consigny claims that a topic is “a device which allows the rhetor to discover, through selection and arrangement,
that which is relevant and persuasive in particular situations” (181). A topic is one that will facilitate the rhetor toward invention or discovery (182). The topic, he adds, is essential a location or a site, or locus, from which a situation emerges (182). It is within this space that the rhetor thinks (182). He adds that: “[t]he rhetor has a repertoire of available topics derived from previous engagements, and in a novel situation he may try several topics before finding those which are fruitful” (183). A case in point, Consigny explains that “…the rhetor may structure the situation with the topic of ‘freedom vs. slavery’. He will now see the increase of freedom as a positive good…being a release from bondage and tyranny rather than a danger for the citizenry” (183). He elaborates:

The rhetor also has an option to relate the two terms in various modes of opposition. He can treat the two terms of his topic of contradictories, in that one becomes the negation of the other, as in ‘free and not-free’ or ‘good and not-good.’ Or he can treat the terms as correlatives, in which each term is necessary for the understanding of the other, and the two cannot function separately (183-4).

Consigny agrees with Vatz with regard to freedom but argues that the freedom of the rhetor is limited because only some topics will serve useful. Consigny concludes that:

Rhetoric as the art of topics meets the two conditions of integrity and receptivity. The art has an integrity in that the topics are universal, formal devices applicable in a variety of novel situations. The rhetor’s choice of topic is not ‘predetermined’ by the material or the context; rather he is engaged in an interplay of devices and material which direct the indeterminate situation to resolution. The rhetor uses the formal devices for selecting and arranging the heteronomous matter, and by having a wide repertoire of topics at his
command the rhetor is able to select those most fruitful for exploration and management in any given situation (184).

Consigny claims that, in order for these two conditions to exist, the art of rhetoric needs to be conceptualized as an “art of topics,” or in other words, a series of topics that are concerned with the invention of arguments. In turn, these topics help discover and manage the particularities of the situation. These topics essentially represent places for discovery, perception and explanation. Furthermore, topics serve as the realms by which a rhetor thinks and acts. Finally, a topic is a location or a site from where a rhetor conceptualizes a situation.

A topic, Consigny claims, acts as an instrument and a situation. This topic, he asserts, is one that is contextualized. Within this situation, a rhetor has the freedom to use terms to structure a situation. Therefore, rhetoric is understood as an act of topics that meets conditions of integrity and receptivity. Ultimately, the topic, or topi, is the locus of investigation. A topic is the mediator between the rhetor and situation. This topic essentially helps the rhetor manage indeterminate matter.

If we consider Consigny’s “art of topics,” then a topic has the possibility to govern the interaction between the writer and the subject within a situation where an ethnic rhetor remembers within a context. I argue that the act of remembrance allows the rhetor to be engaged in a particular situation to determine what problems need to be addressed. The topic is the realm by which the rhetor thinks. The topic governs the interaction between the writer, subject, audience, and occasion. Therefore, the topic is imbedded within memory. Anzaldúa addresses the U.S.-Mexico borderlands as her primary topic. Within this topic, she addresses issues of colonization, geographical displacement, racism, and patriarchy. Douglass confronts the topic of slavery and presents his audience with the reality that counters the Christian values that
constitute American values in the nineteenth century. In dealing with these topics, these autobiographical rhetors are able to select which memories are best fitting for addressing the exigencies that they are addressing to different audiences in their respective autobiographies. Chapter 4 and 5 explore in more detail the way in which Anzaldúa and Douglass use topics as a way to select memories that help them create arguments that aim to transform the values and beliefs of their respective audiences.

The “Art of Topics” as “Topics of Difference”—Places and Spaces of Ethnic Memory

If we consider the propositions by Bitzer and Consigny, a topic determines which memories will be selected to make sense of a situation. I argue that a topic will be the driving force for which memories are selected and arranged. Topics relative to race and gender will be factors that determine what memories will be told within an autobiography. Race, in particular, is a locus from which memories are told and arranged. These are the spaces from which a rhetor makes sense of “otherness” and marginalization. Critical race theory and feminist theory helps us understand these spaces. They help us understand these contexts. A critical race consciousness and a feminist consciousness allow the ethnic rhetor to make sense of situations involving the meaning of race and gender.

Critical race theory is one theoretical framework that helps us think about the contexts from which ethnic rhetors remember. In particular, the work of Richard Delgado allows one to think about how storytelling involves the use of topics. Storytelling involves the intent to inform and persuade an audience of considering an alternative reality through a selection of written memories. In Delgado’s article “Storytelling for Oppositionists and Others: A Please for Narrative,” he discusses how stories and storytelling are therapeutic for those who are part of the "outgroup," or people on the margins. In the first part of his article, Delgado encourages
individuals of the "ingroup," or the dominant majority, to listen to the stories by those who are part of margins in order to understand a different perspective on reality. Storytelling, he claims, is a meeting ground for human experience and brings these two groups together through the act of listening.

In Part I, Delgado claims that reality is constructed through devising and transmitting stories. Stories are interpretive structures, he claims, which impose order on experience and experience on audiences. I argue that these structures are ordered experiences that are understood as a series of memories contained within an autobiographical text. Also, I claim that since these stories are interpretive structures, and topics are spaces for discovery and invention, then these stories can be understood as a series of topics. These topics, as stories, enable the autobiographical to think about an issue, subject, and ultimately, an argumentative position in a narrative.

In Part II, Delgado discusses counter stories, which are competing versions that can be used to challenge a story and prepare for a new one. In the first section of this part, Delgado presents a case study of counter-storytelling for marginalized groups. In the latter section, he explains the reasons why the dominant group should listen and benefit from the stories told by those in the out group. Delgado’s idea about listening is rhetorical in that listening occurs within a context. In writing, listening may be the equivalent to reading. The relationship between writer and reader is reading, an act that enables memories to present the exigence that created it.

Delgado’s article is significant in relation to rhetorical memory because it can be used to think about how memory shapes audiences as much as audiences shape memory through the order that ethnic rhetors give to their experience. Autobiographical writing is an ideal example of how writing is used to give structure to experiences based on the past and told in the present.
Ultimately, autobiographies are testaments that indicate how a subject orders his/her experience based on audience adherence. This method of ordering becomes the tool of memory. Memory is associated with writing because writing gives meaning to experience as well as some type of order. Memory is a type of remembering and remembering happens through writing. Memory and writing coalesce. It is through rhetoric that this memory writing becomes informative and persuasive to different audiences for different purposes and within different contexts. I contend that an “art of topics” helps us examine which stories are told and for what purposes for different audiences within an autobiographical space. Moreover, since a topic acts as a “locus” from where the rhetor thinks about issues to resolved, the use of memory and space, as discussed by bell hooks, is helpful to think about space and the values, as well as beliefs, which are contested through memory.

In Belonging: A Culture of Place, bell hooks focuses on the idea of "belonging" to space and place in terms of an individual’s connection to community. She explains the return to her native Kentucky and her views about the concept of "home" considering her life in other spaces, where much of her values and ethics were contested. Hooks talks about how her journey to and from places addresses issues of memory in the process of connecting the past and the present in order to heal. Her monograph is governed by memory as hooks recalls places where she has lived, as well as the racial, gender, and class issues attached to places, specifically Kentucky. At the beginning of the monograph, she talks about the racial apartheid in Kentucky and the stigma she faced as a native Kentuckian outside her native home. Hooks’ monograph is significant in the examination of memory because it traces remembrance to space and the values that are attached to this particular geographic space. This idea is important to emphasize because
of the connection between memory and geographic space within the art of memory as discussed in Chapter 2.

Moreover, in “Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness,” hooks uses “margin” as a metaphor that significant relates to the role of memory with regard to an imaginary and literal space. In her chapter, she argues that the “margin” is an epistemological space of struggle whereby an audience can use a language of resistance against a language of domination. She adds that “language is a place of struggle” because the oppressed are caught in a dual bind in that they are forced to use the “oppressor’s language” to speak against domination and oppression. Thus, the challenge lies in using a colonial language, the same instrument by which the subaltern, in a postcolonial sense, is constructed, represented and communicated as “Other.”

As an African American woman from a working class background, hooks identifies with her audiences as she urges them to engage in critique as a form of resistance against racism, sexism and classism. In her chapter, she explains:

Black folks coming from poor, underclass communities, who enter universities or privileged cultural settings unwilling to surrender every vestige of who we were before we were there, all ‘sign’ of our class and cultural ‘difference,’ who are unwilling to play the role of ‘exotic Other,’ must create spaces within that culture of domination if we are to survive whole, our souls intact. Our very presence is a disruption. We are often as much an ‘Other,’ a threat to black people from privileged class backgrounds who do not understand or share our perspectives, as we are to uninformed white folks.

(238)

hooks demonstrates here that rhetors defined by difference have the ability to “disrupt” and effect change by making spaces for resistance. One instance of this disruption and resistance is a
rhetor’s use of a “counter-language,” or more specifically, the use of a black vernacular to counter standard U.S. English (239). Thus, the margin is a space where hooks stands alongside her audience as they use language to subvert and disrupt systems of oppressive power. With regard to memory, the constructed places of disruption and survival against domination become spaces for rhetors of colors to remember and construct stories that ultimately attempt to change the reality that has been constructed through dominant and elite narratives, which have come to represent institutional memory.

Hooks’ discourse is also important to memory because she demonstrates how using language, to construct and organize counter-memories, is one strategy for rhetors of color to use writing for self-empowerment. This language is one that seeks to link the self with the community and attempt to remove the structures that lead to binary thinking. A rhetoric of ethnic memory then utilizes a “topics of difference” in order to present and sustain arguments to various audiences. This rhetoric of ethnic memory is found within autobiography, a genre that is complex in that several memories are interrelated, contextualized, and spatial. Memories are contextualized within arguments. Memories are interrelated. Memories are told throughout space and time. Memories can change over time, whether written or spoken. Most importantly, memories are told as stories that are governed by topics that allow the rhetor to interact with the audience in several ways to instruct and persuade in order to achieve transformation. Transformation is one essential feature of ethnic memory. This transformation is one that seeks adherence to various audiences within different contexts.

Rhetorical Theory, Critical Race Theory, and Critical Feminism

A theory titled “topics of difference” is essentially one that combines rhetorical theory, critical race theory, and critical feminism. Theories by Bitzer and Consigny help us understand
how exigence triggers the act of remembering within a context and toward an audience. A memory is governed by a topic acting as a space from which the rhetor remembers in response to various situations. Critical race theory helps us understand that the exigencies that prompt rhetors to remember relate to the social construction of race, as well as gender. Critical feminism helps us understand the intersection of race and gender as some of the topics from which memories are traced within an ethnic autobiography. This theory involves the use of memory to present stories of transformation for both self and the community. For example, this theory helps us understand how the U.S.-Mexico borderlands acts as the topic from which a series of memories about colonization, displacement, and sexism are presented to various audiences. These re-telling of memories involves constraints that can either separate or unify a rhetor and audience. A topic informs the rhetor as to the most apt memories that will address the exigencies relating to the topic. In the case of slavery as a topic, the dispelling of myths surrounding slavery serves as the exigence prompting the rhetor to remember certain memories that prompt an audience to take action. Depending on the argument to be presented through the archive of memories presented, a topic will govern the arrangement of memories to best present and substantiate a claim to a certain audience. In this case, memory is used to both inform and persuade considering a certain situation.

A theory about topics of difference is one that also helps us understand how storytelling disrupts a reality that is constructed from the symbolic system of language. This language is one that constructs memories. Therefore, the subject that constructs memories has the power to construct a counter-reality to one that has already been constructed. This constructed reality could be one that has marginalized the subject; therefore, the subject creates a counter-reality to shift the subject from the margin to the center using discourse. In using discourse, the rhetor is
using a rhetoric to construct agency for self and her/his community. In using discourse, the rhetor is taking a form of action that ultimately leads to transformation. I argue that Anzaldúa and Douglass are two examples of rhetors using discourse in order to move from margin to center. The writing of autobiography becomes a primary goal for these rhetors to disrupt the binary between history and autobiography to achieve transformation and empowerment.

Conclusion

A theory of ethnic memory is to be conceptualized as a theory of rhetorical memory. This theory is one that I term a “topics of difference.” This theory is comprised of factors such as context, topics, discourse, invention, storytelling, arrangement, and space. A theory about a “topics of difference” is one that emerges from acts where ethnic rhetors are engaged in situations where they address exigencies based on race and gender using language. They are engaged with these situations with the use of topics, or spaces from where the ethnic rhetor thinks and responds to various audiences in order to inform and persuade. These topics can range from race, racism, gender, patriarchy, geographic displacement, slavery, and silence. These topics govern which memories will be told and how they will be arranged. Chapter 4 and 5 describe in more detail how Anzaldúa and Douglass remember and recollect to create and present a persuasive discourse. Therefore, we can examine autobiographical texts as presenting various topics that are contextualized, spatial, and historically relevant in stories that seek change and transformation. This series of topics are part of ethnic memory—which seeks to link the self with the community, emphasize equality and balance, and attempt to end binary thinking.


Chapter 4

Rhetorical Memory in Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza

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RE-WRITING CHICANA/O HISTORY & CHICANA/O RHETORICAL TRADITION

In 1987, Aunt Lute Press published Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza, an autobiography that responded to the ways in which patriarchy, colonization, racial discrimination, and heterosexism affected Gloria E. Anzaldúa, a Chicana feminist lesbian living along the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. Geographical displacement, personal trauma, self-shame and linguistic terror are some of the subjects that she describes in a non-linear narrative that mixes prose and poetry, alongside pre-Columbian, Mexican, and Texas history. Using code switching between English, Spanish, and Nahuatl1, Anzaldúa aims to describe the multiple positioning of the Chicana subject along the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. Another aim for Anzaldúa is to re-write Chicano culture by considering the values, beliefs, and traditions that have oppressed Chicana women. This re-writing is significant because Chicano history has been predominantly male-focused and thereby excluded Chicana/Mexican women. In this chapter, I make the claim that Gloria E. Anzaldúa uses rhetorical memory as a way to re-write Chicano history and therefore redress some factors that negatively affect Chicana women along the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. Rhetorical memory, particularly in the context of Anzaldúa’s work, can be defined as the act of remembering through storytelling, which may signify a response to a situation involving an exigence. This exigence may involve the exclusion of a certain individual or ethnic group from a

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1 Nahuatl is an indigenous language originating in 7th century AD in what is now known as Central Mexico. The language was spoken by the Nahua, an indigenous group presently known as the Aztecs. This is one of many other American Indian languages that has been studied for its grammar description since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, especially examined in relation to Spanish. See SUÁREZ, JORGE A. (1977). “La influencia del español en la estructura gramatical del náhuatl” Anuario de Letras. Revista de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras Ciudad Universitaria, México, D.F. 115–164. Canger, Una. “Philology in America: Nahuatl: What Loan Words and the Early Descriptions of Nahuatl show about stress, vowel length, and glottal stop in sixteenth century Nahuatl and Spanish”. Trends in Linguistics: Studies and Monographs – Historical Linguistics and Philology. Jacek Fisiak, ed. New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 107-118.
larger historical narrative. This exigence may also involve the marginalization of an individual within a certain cultural group. Anzaldúa employs rhetorical memory in her autobiography to write herself within Chicano history. Also, she writes the history of Chicanas/os within the larger framework of American history through autobiography. This act is important because it enables a re-writing of culture, history, and self through language. Consequently, language constitutes the memories that connect the self and the community. In sum, rhetorical memory is used to re-write history and connect the personal with the communal.

I present this argument within the context of a theory of rhetorical memory that is comprised of ideas relating to the use of imagination, space, arrangement and language within various rhetorical situations. Exigence determines when and where a rhetor will remember when using discourse. The memories narrated and told will be located within various geographic spaces and time frames. This intertwining of time, space, and exigence then allows us to understand the workings of rhetorical memory.

Since the 1990s, *Borderlands* has become a groundbreaking text that has influenced Chicana/o Studies, Feminist Studies, and Cultural Studies. Its principal influence has been its strong effort in defining life along the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. Within rhetorical studies, Anzaldúa’s discourse continues significant in the way it links language, culture, and difference in order to create a rhetoric of inclusion. In “Border Crossings: Intersections of Rhetoric and Feminism,” Lisa Ede, Cheryl Glenn and Andrea Lunsford have claimed that feminist rhetors have challenged a rhetoric of victory and conquest to bring about a rhetoric of inclusion that promotes dialogue, exchange, and mediation. Furthermore, Damián Baca has argued that Anzaldúa’s “mestiza consciousness” is one that challenges the binary thinking that has governed
much of Western thinking. Baca derives a rhetorical framing from Anzaldúa’s theory to challenge the hierarchy of Western thinking during the twentieth century.

Anzaldúa’s ideas contribute to rhetorical studies in the idea that she disrupts the binary thinking that governs a male-dominated language. Her rhetoric of mestiza consciousness has a firm place in a feminist rhetorical tradition that includes Sojourner Truth, Virginia Woolf, and Helen Cixous. Anzaldúa’s rhetoric is one that challenges the construction of a male logos, which has silenced women’s rhetorical contributions throughout history. Anzaldúa aims to restore the place of women’s discourse in order to create an egalitarian space for both sexes to speak about the exigencies that affect certain communities. This restoration includes presenting the place of female indigenous myths within the space of Chicana/o history. These myths serve to explain the role of Chicana women and the value of spirituality and pride in an ethnic and gender self. Anzaldúa is radical in the sense that she re-writing history by presenting myths into the construction of history. She challenges the idea of a historian as the objective stenographer. She aims to write myths into the memory of her audiences in order to remember the place and space of mestizas throughout Chicana/o and Mexican history. In challenging the silence of Chicano women within Chicano history, Anzaldúa’s text remains significant in its proposition that Chicana women are constructed by language.

To write history is to make strategic decisions as to who will be included and what narrative will be written and for whom. Writing history is ideological. Anzaldúa knows that history is ideological. So she aims to re-write it within her own ideological standing. She is writing from an indigenous space. She is writing from a place that counters Western ideology. She aims to write about the metaphysical and the supernatural. She is presenting subjects that are not typical in Western discourse. She is attempting to change the discourse. The purpose is
resistance, transformation, and change. To change something requires that you propose something different. However, to propose something is to find strategies that will be accepted by an audience. She attempts to adhere to her audiences by using languages that will effectively communicate to her various audiences. For example, she will use Spanglish, Spanish, Nahuatl, or academic English to address her audiences. Language becomes the constraint from which she will propose, advocate, and argue with or against her audiences.

In “Language and Identity Politics: The Linguistic Autobiographies of Latinos in the United States,” Lea Ramsdell argues that Anzaldúa’s text is one of three autobiographies that demonstrates that the acquisition of language is also the acquisition of selfhood since “language is identity and identity is political” (166). Ramsdell demonstrates how these three autobiographers make language a critical factor in the making of cultural/ethnic identity, which is rooted in the political. The political factor is rooted in strategic affiliations with English, Spanish, or both. Ramsdell’s claim is important because it signifies that autobiographical discourse is one attempt at constructing an identity and a self in order to claim a visibility within a certain group or geographical space. Borderlands is also significant because it aims to synthesize contradictory beliefs and ideas about race, class, gender, and sexuality as a means to arrive at a transformation and reinvention for both the Chicana subject and Chicana/o culture. This synthesis aims to bring about harmony and an egalitarian space for subjects who have faced the effects of colonization and displacement along the U.S.-Mexico borderlands after 1848. Anzaldúa uses rhetorical memory to re-write the personal and communal memories that reside along the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands.

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2 The other two autobiographies that Ramsdell examines are Hunger of Memory, by Richard Rodriguez; and Heading South, Looking North, by Ariel Dorfman
Borderlands/La Frontera represents an autobiographical discourse that exemplifies how memories are reconstructed, arranged, and delivered according to context, exigence, and audience. In particular, this chapter makes the case for examining how memories are reconstructed according to the context from which they are delivered, as well as arranged, according to the exigence and audience contained within various rhetorical situations. Consequently, Borderlands/La Frontera represents an embodied form of rhetorical memory that counters the idea of presenting memories in a linear and chronological order. Instead, the three elements of the rhetorical situation are central factors in how memory works within the larger context of ethnic rhetoric.

This re-writing occurs within the context of Chicana feminist border rhetoric, which may be defined as a series of discourses about the meaning of being a Chicana woman along the U.S.-Mexico border. Chicana feminist border rhetorics are important to examine, in relation to memory, because they represent the active effort of using discourse in order to create an egalitarian and democratic space within and outside Chicana/o culture (Enoch 35). Also, this rhetoric aims to bring about a change in the values and beliefs within the Chicana/o community as a means to empower Chicana women along the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. Historical, cultural, and religious conditions have negatively affected Chicana/mestiza women in the past. As a result, Anzaldúa uses historical events in the past in order to forge a democratic space and demand to be heard as part of a collective in the present.

Borderlands is an example of how the use of the past, or historical memory, to reconstruct knowledge about the present and, consequently, change the future. Anzaldúa uses various languages as ways to define herself and claim a space to claim a visibility among Chicano culture. Anzaldúa’s strategy for visibility allows her to empower herself as a Chicana
and give agency to her discourse community of Chicana women. In sum, Anzaldúa uses rhetorical memory to propose changes for both herself and her cultural community. These changes are prompted from arguments about the problems that need to be addressed and resolved within Chicano culture. These problems include racism, sexism, and homophobia.

I analyze the seven chapters that comprise the first half of *Borderlands.* This analysis serves to demonstrate the several exigencies that constitute the rhetorical memories presented by Anzaldúa to various audiences. This context is important to understand because we can understand the spaces from which Anzaldúa’s memories reside as part of border Chicana feminism. As a significant addition to a contemporary Chicana/o rhetorical tradition, *Borderlands* is also critical in the study of what ways in which storytelling, as a way to recall and remember, involve the strategic use of rhetorical elements such as exigence, constraint, and audience. Thus, my aim is to support the idea that rhetorical situations create the occasion to use memory for different purposes and audiences, who are located within different contexts. The context of *Borderlands* is important because it helps us understand how memory is used rhetorically to record subjective and communal memories and change the nature of cultural memories within a collective memory. The end result is a re-writing of personal and cultural history enabling us to theorize rhetorical memory as a tool for transformation.

This chapter proceeds with a brief explanation of Anzaldúa’s text and its significance within a Chicana/o autobiographical tradition. To discuss this text within this context aims to prompt further inquiry into the use of memory within autobiographical writing among Mexican Americans and Chicana/o writers who documented life before and after the construction of the

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3 The second half of Anzaldúa’s text is comprised of poems, which represents her poetics. While some poems incorporate memory, the primary focus of this project is to look at Anzaldúa’s use and re-construction of rhetorical memory using prose. Her prose primarily contains her theorizing of a “mestiza consciousness,” which contains several of her memories as Chicana growing up in Texas. This theorizing includes the memories that become part of her contribution and use of Chicana rhetoric.
U.S.-Mexico border after 1848. Afterward, this chapter moves toward an analysis of each chapter of Anzaldúa’s text in order to explain the close inquiry into the workings of rhetorical memory in this autobiographical text.

**BORDERLANDS/LA FRONTERA & CHICANA/O AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL TRADITION**

*Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* is a two-part text that includes seven chapters, which comprise the first half of the text. In these seven chapters, Anzaldúa “speaks of my existence.” In the preface to her book, Anzaldúa identifies the borderland as a “psychological, sexual, and spiritual borderlands,” which is “a space of intimacy” where “two cultures edge each other.” This “edging” of two cultures signifies the tension between Mexican and American culture. This space is inhabited by a “border woman” who must straddle between these opposing cultures. According to Anzaldúa, this “straddling” of opposing cultures affects her physical self and consciousness when living amidst the “adversity and violation” that resides within the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

This border is a unique place according to Anzaldúa because it is a place of “contradictions.” This space is simultaneously a site of racial and gender hatred but also a place of exhilaration because it is a potential space from which to form a new racial and gender identity, which is empowering. In her article titled “Creating a Discursive Space Through a Rhetoric of Difference: Chicana Feminists Craft a Homeland,” Lysa Flores argues that Chicanas have theoretically claimed a space for themselves in order to create identities that are significant because they represent the creation of new and empowering discourses. More specifically, Flores claims that Chicanas have constructed a space of their own. This space has been claimed as a homeland and Chicanas have established bonds with other Chicana feminists and Third World feminists. This bond is significant because it signifies a collective empowerment, along with a
construction, and reconstruction, of politicized identities. Flores’ argument here helps us understand how and why Anzaldúa initially claims the U.S.-Mexico borderlands as a space from which she will change male Chicano discourse in order to affirm her identity as a Chicana border feminist. I argue that Anzaldúa uses rhetorical memory as a way to challenge a male-dominated Chicano discourse and move toward an egalitarian discourse that addresses exigencies, such as a racial prejudice, sexism, and homophobia. However, a constraint that continues to affect Anzaldúa’s creation of space for a new discourse is the existence of contradictions.

*Borderlands* proposes the negotiation of contradictions by making the case for the multiplicity of knowledge that border women construct and re-construct in order to claim their space and affirm their shifting identities. Anzaldúa’s autobiography is significant in this regard in that she connects knowledge with image. These images are associated with the use of memory in connection with language. Anzaldúa makes the claim that code-switching, or moving freely between English, Spanish, and Nahuatl, is one convention that will be used to communicate the existence of Chicanas/os within the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. Anzaldúa uses code-switching in order to legitimize Chicano Spanish, which has been historically denigrated by Latinos.

Anzaldúa quotes the criticism against using Chicano Spanish:

*Pocho*, a cultural traitor, you’re speaking the oppressor’s language by speaking English, you’re ruining the Spanish language, I have been accused by various Latinos and Latinos. Chicano Spanish is considered by the purist and by most Latinos deficient, a mutilation of Spanish.

But Chicano Spanish is a border tongue which developed naturally. Change *evolución, enriquecimiento de palabras nuevas por invención o adopción* have created variants of Chicano Spanish, *un nuevo lenguaje. Un lenguaje que*
Anzaldúa crosses the border between English and Spanish to explain how Chicano Spanish is denigrated by Latinos in the U.S. In crossing this border, she demonstrates how Chicano Spanish originated in the development of a Chicana/o identity. This crossing of linguistic borders is important because it explains how Chicanas/os move between different sites of knowledge as they move between languages. To move between these sites helps the Chicana/o subject negotiate contradictions and different sites of knowledge.

In crossing linguistic borders, she also crosses the borders of personal and communal memories to create Chicana feminist border rhetoric that acts as an “invitational” rhetoric to Euro-American, Mexican, Latina/o, and Chicana/o audiences. The crossing of these borders is also a way to create alliances between opposing entities through intercultural communication within Chicana/o culture. Within this preface, *Borderlands/La Frontera* presents the space, subject, exigence, and audiences needed to understand the situation creating the occasion for Anzaldúa to address the knowledge about a Chicana woman within Chicana/o culture.

Anzaldúa describes the experiences in mediating between two cultures in several memories within these seven chapters. The collection of memories in this autobiographical text is one of many that address issues of land displacement, language, assimilation, acculturation, and transcultural subjectivity. Anzaldúa’s text is also one which presents the issue of remembering a cultural identity amidst geographical displacement along the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. Genaro Padilla’s *My History, Not Yours: The Formation of Mexican American*
Autobiography examines the methods and time frames from when a Mexican immigrant becomes an autonomous subject of his/her own autobiographical narrative and ceases to be the cultural object of social scientists. Padilla's monograph makes it clear that he is interested in advocating the importance of early Mexican and Mexican American autobiographical narratives that tell much about the loss that came in 1848. Some of the issues that are foregrounded are loyalty to language, loss of land, assimilation, acculturation, nostalgia for the past, and the transcultural subjectivity that is created from exclusion to both sides of two different countries. Remembering the homeland is a key issue while forgetting one's own roots is another important concern within autobiographical narratives that clearly attempt to make sense of such dislocation. Padilla’s inquiry is important with regard to Borderlands/La Frontera because his monograph sets up a historical context for Anzaldúa’s text, which has much to educate audiences about remembering and forgetting in terms of cultural identity along the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

Padilla’s monograph sets up a historical context by explaining some of the topics that are presented in autobiographies that were written after 1848. These subjects include displacement, language, assimilation, and acculturation. The subjects are important to understand as part of autobiographies written, published, and written in the Southwest after 1848. These subjects are important because they help rhetoric scholars examine the ways in which borderlands subjects confronted and resisted the creation of the U.S.-Mexico border after 1848. This division is significant because it affected the way in which subjects used language to represent themselves. Anzaldúa’s narrative is one where audiences come to understand the exigencies that affect Chicanas attempting to mediate—through language--between U.S. and Mexican culture.
This historical context of Chicana/o autobiographical discourse is examined within the nineteenth century by Padilla in “The Recovery of Chicano Nineteenth-Century Autobiography.” He advocates the recovery of lost voices of Southwest Mexicans writing their memoirs, testimonios, or memorias during the nineteenth century. He argues that an interpretative framework is needed to analyze these narratives as they tell much about the feeling of displacement that Southwest Mexicanos faced after 1848, as well as their ideals before an American invasion. Padilla discusses Mariano G. Vallejo's "Recuerdos" and analyzes the way in which Vallejo's voice communicated a sense of loss, which countered the traditional autobiographical narrative of personal gain, fame and wealth for the self in America. Padilla finds autobiographical and personal narratives valuable because they tell the various ways in which the cultural self is created and what cultural narratives tell about the heterogeneous nature of being Chicana/o.

Padilla discusses how narrators have created a different cultural self on paper that contrasted with a public self in order to navigate through power structures imposed because of American rule. Padilla claims these narratives are important because they represent the way in which the Chicano narrator has used the ever-present "I" to inscribe himself/herself into history. Therefore, writing autobiography has been a means by which to counter a hegemonic history, as well as be and remain a part of history. I contend that “rhetorical memory” serves as the interpretive framework that is needed to rhetorically analyze autobiographical narratives, especially narratives dealing with matters relating to geographical displacement after 1848. Also, I aim to emphasize that Anzaldúa is one of many narrators who has written a text attempting to write the “I” back into a history that has become exclusive and thereby elitist. This interpretive framework is significant because it explains how Anzaldúa uses discourse to re-shift a Chicana
reality that is shifted by shifting the nature of Chicana/o history. She also uses discourse to re-gender the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. This use of discourse is framed by memories from a border woman using her experiences to argue that the U.S.-Mexico borderlands is about mediation, tolerance, fluidity, and resistance. These elements comprise the essence of Anzaldúa’s autobiographical narrative.

Finally, within this context, Juan Velasco’s article “Automitografías: The Border Paradigm and Chicana/o Autobiography” helps us understand Anzaldúa’s text on both a historical and mythological level. In his article, he claims that Chicana/o autobiographical narratives act as "automitografías" which connect the personal, the communal, the experiential, and political knowledge with the historical and mythological dimensions of culture. These autobiographical narratives are a tool for strategic agency. The writing of automitografías emphasizes both the personal and the communal, as well as expands the notion of culture and allows the writing subject to attempt going beyond the consequences of loss, trauma and mourning. Automitografías act as a "cultural autobiography" where a "Total Self" gives voice to multiple experiences of the personal and the various communities where the self is located.

Automitografías ultimately counters elite histories that have written a stable, unified and exclusionary "Truth". These narratives re-write these notions of truth making, as well as history making. Chicana autobiographies have countered these histories by way of addressing how issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality are embedded in the constructions of the self—-who is incomplete in traditional histories which have silenced these voices. Velasco’s idea is useful to think about how memory is the core of automitografías in the ways they blend the personal with the communal, the common with political and the historical and mythological via remembrance. Anzaldúa autobiography represents one example of an automitografía—a strategy to use
rhetorical memory to counter silenced histories in order to transform self and a cultural community.

Historical events and mythical symbols—given meaning through language—comprise Chicana rhetoric, which Anzaldúa uses to change meaning, and thus reality within and outside of her culture. In “Metaphors of Mestiza Consciousness,” Erika Aigner-Voz argues that Anzaldúa creates a “new mythos” that acts as the mestiza consciousness that attempts to bypass socially enforced paradigms. This new mythos is constructed through “surface and conceptual metaphors” that attempt to explain how these paradigms are constraining in that they label individuals unjustly. These metaphors are important, Aigner-Voz argues, because they have the power to “restructure the collective unconscious through both linguistic and visual means” (47). This mythos reinforces the connection between language and image to arrive at knowledge. One example of a surface and conceptual metaphor is Anzaldúa’s “herida”. In her first chapter, she write: “The U.S.-Mexican border es una herida [an open wound] where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds” (3). The metaphor “open wound” works logically to signify a division between two countries. The open wound also appeals on an emotional level to signify injury and pain. These two meanings of the metaphor are used to describe the division and pain that the Chicana subject encounters within the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

RHETORICAL MEMORIES ALONG THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDERLANDS

As an automitografía, Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza is comprised of select memories that comprise the exigencies that have affected the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands: colonization, geographical displacement, poverty, violence, and patrolling the border. Using this set of exigencies, Anzaldúa communicates to her audience how a set of power relations have scripted one group against another by using the conquest of land to then use language as a form
of cultural superiority. Anzaldúa refers to the historical consequences of Spanish Conquest, Texas conquest, and U.S. imperialism that have marginalized Chicana women as racialized, gendered, and sexualized “objects” via language. Anzaldúa also explains how the mestiza is constrained by her culture’s religious beliefs and judgments, which ultimately restrict the mestiza’s mind, body, and soul. The consequences of being constrained by a patriarchal history, traditional cultural beliefs, and narrow cultural judgments become the dissidence that prompts Anzaldúa’s counter-discourse of remembering to begin the task of re-writing history, myths, and spiritual beliefs in order to achieve a “new” way of thinking that is egalitarian, inclusive and non-binary. This re-writing involves both a personal and a communal memory that is fused within Anzaldúa’s Chicana border rhetoric.

At the beginning of the autobiography, Anzaldúa explains how the U.S.-Mexico borderlands is an "open wound" and a space of "Otherness." The U.S.-Mexico borderlands represents a geographic space where Mexicans are considered “foreigners.” Furthermore, the border is to be understood as a third space, primarily a space where there is uncertainty about belonging. The first memory Anzaldúa recounts is about this uncertainty. Anzaldúa re-tells a story originally told by her aunt about "Pedro," a fifth generation Mexican American migrant worker who is deported by mistake by the Border Patrol. While working the fields, Pedro runs after hearing the other migrant workers yell “run.” The Border Patrol then mistake him for an undocumented worker (because he does not speak English nor carries his birth certificate). Pedro is deported to Guadalajara and, afterward, the story ends with the aunt stating that Pedro walks back from Guadalajara, Mexico to his home in Hidalgo, Texas (4-5). This is one story that Anzaldúa recounts to present to her audience the idea that even Mexican American citizens in the United States are deemed “foreigners” in a geographic space they consider a homeland. This
narrative plays a significant role in reinforcing the idea that the border is still where belonging is uncertain, even for a Mexican American like Pedro, whose story signifies a part of Anzaldúa’s personal memory and history of displacement (4-5). This personal memory, re-told from Anzaldúa’s mother’s memory, presents the experience of displacement and anxiety felt by Mexicans and Mexican Americans living along the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

After presenting this narrative, Anzaldúa starts a new paragraph that represents a re-telling of pre-Columbian and Mexican history in order to present the subject of migration and mestizaje (or racial mixing). She explains the "original peopling of the Americas" with the brief history of the crossing of the Bering Straits and the descendants of "the original Cochise people" who migrated lands that are now known as Mexico and Central America. The Cochise people, she explains, are the parent culture of the Aztecs. Anzaldúa explains that "[t]he Uto-Aztecan languages stemmed from the language of the Cochise people”. According to Anzaldúa’s sources, the Aztecs "left the Southwest in 1168 A.D." (4). Afterward, Anzaldúa presents another paragraph about how Huitzilopochtli, the God of War, guided the Aztecs toward what is now Mexico City. She describes an eagle with a writhing serpent in its beak while perched on a cactus. Lastly, she explains Spanish colonialism after 1521 and the creation of "mestizos" or individuals of mixed Indian and Spanish blood, who she claims are the descendents of Chicanos and Mexican Americans. (4-5). Afterward, she explains how Spanish, Indian, and mestizo ancestors explored parts of U.S. Southwest as early as 16th century. Indians who explored the Southwest, she claims, were exploring an original place of origin. This place was known as a "Aztlán"--where Chicanos are descendent. She states "[i]ndians and mestizos from central Mexico intermarried with North American Indians. The continual intermarriage between Mexican and American Indian and Spaniards formed an even greater mestizaje. (5). This re-
telling of a history of migration represents a certain memory of migration that Anzaldúa connects with Pedro’s story, which tells of a forced deportation and then eventual return to a homeland.

Furthermore, Anzaldúa aims to explain the way in which migration brings about a new race that she claims is the origin of Chicanas/os in the present Southwest. The re-telling of Pedro’s story and the claims made about mestizaje are combined in order to contextualize the issue of migration, deportation, immigration, and racial mixing—all of which are pertinent issues along the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. In this early memory and re-telling of several histories, she combines a personal family story, pre-Columbian history, Aztec history, and Texas history in order to explain the exodus of and return of Indians to the Southwest mythic land of Aztlan. This storytelling is nationalistic because it gives a legitimate origin to Chicanos in the Southwest. It establishes the land as belonging to the descendents of Chicanos. This re-claiming of origin and return to origin is one way for Anzaldúa to reclaim a space for Chicanos based on an exigence of geographic displacement. This re-telling is important because it represents the use of both personal and communal memory in order to present the exigencies of deportation, immigration, and displacement.

The next memory that Anzaldúa presents relates to the subject of land appropriation. She writes about her grandmother lost her land in South Texas. To survive, her grandmother had to become a sharecropper. The land was appropriated and, according to Anzaldúa, Mexicans were made “aliens” in their own land. This account is to be indirectly understood as a comparison to Pedro’s story where Mexicans are made foreigners in territory they once claimed as a homeland. The idea of alienation and disconnection is intertwined a "vivid memory" of an old photograph of Anzaldúa at 6 years old. She stands between her mother and father while holding her mother’s hand. Holding her mother’s hand represents a symbolic connection to her mother--who is
considered an origin of culture. However, there is a disconnection because of everything that is imposed by family, culture, and religion (15-16). Ultimately, Anzaldúa’s main claim about deportation, alienation, and loss along the U.S.-Mexico border are made political through this narration of a personal memory and a re-telling of Mexican and indigenous history.

Anzaldúa presents memories of her grandmother’s altar and a memory of her father’s death in order to explain the psychological and spiritual beliefs of a border Chicana woman in the borderlands. In Chapter 3 and 4, for instance, she presents the psychological and spiritual transformation of the mestiza in order to confront the self-terrorism, self-degradation, and shame in order to be empowered through the mythical symbol of Coatlicue, the ancient serpent goddess of the Aztecs. In identifying with this mythical symbol, Anzaldúa reclaims her history as a woman within an ancient culture whose language, beliefs, and traditions have been governed by patriarchy. This reclaiming involves recalling a symbol from the past (Coatlicue) and re-writing her significance within the present in order to change the cultural and social conditions for the future.

Chapter 3 presents a discourse on female deities and the supernatural. In this chapter, Anzaldúa remembers her grandmother’s altar, which represents Anzaldúa’s family folk Catholic background. She uses this memory to deliberate about how Our Lady of Guadalupe has an Indian heritage as Coatlalopeuh. Anzaldúa then narrates the story of Juan Diego’s vision of Our Lady of Guadalupe, who is the essential figure in Mexican and Chicana/o culture. Anzaldúa claims that Our Lady of Guadalupe is the synthesis of the Old and New World (30). From this memory and re-telling of Coatlalopeuh story, we understand that Anzaldúa is using ancient and contemporary religious icons as mediators between the past and present. Also, she uses female deities; such as Malinche and La Llorona as figures that exist in her family lineage. It is through these female
deities that she is able to identify with her culture and her culture’s beliefs. Afterward, Anzaldúa relates a story about a red snake that once crossed her path. She presents these re-tellings, stories, and remembrances as ways to discuss the supernatural. This identification becomes a way to legitimize her religious and spiritual foundations that inform her views about life, death, and survival.

Chapter 4 exhibits a discussion about The Coatlicue State, a method by which the self is transformed into a self-empowered subject by tolerating ambiguity and contradictions. Anzaldúa re-tells a memory of when her father died. She recalls her mother using blankets to cover mirrors as a way to prevent her children to follow their father unto “the other side,” where Anzaldúa claims is the site where the dead souls live. Anzaldúa explains that mirrors are an important symbol because it combines the object and subject (42). This mirror also becomes a symbol of the splitting of the self. Anzaldúa explains that she was 2 or 3 years old when she first saw Coatlicue, the Aztec serpent goddess, and discusses the “mark of the Beast” (42). She talks about the feelings of inadequacy, internalized hate for the self, and the terrorizing of the self (45). The Coatlicue State is a state of living in pain from previous experiences or a state of transformation where something is enacted to transform the self through experience (46). Anzaldúa remembers seeing the statue of Coatlicue in Natural History in New York City. Like the mirror, Coatlicue is a fusion of opposites. According to Anzaldúa, Coatlicue is a symbol of contradictions (47). To move toward the Coatlicue State, Anzaldúa claims, is a new way of empowering self. The Coatlicue State is essentially a method by which to come to terms with contradictions about being a subject and object. This method becomes an exigence through a personal memory about her father. These two chapters are important for Anzaldúa’s contexts because they represent
Anzaldúa’s task of using her autobiographical testimony as the medium from which to change the reality that constitutes her culture.

Chapters 5 and 6 present Anzaldúa’s argument for the connection between spirituality, writing, storytelling, and language. Anzaldúa writes about memories relating to growing up and speaking Chicano Spanish in South Texas and a childhood of storytelling. In Chapter 5, she remembers being punished for speaking Spanish in an English speaking classroom and speaking Chicano Spanish within a Spanish-speaking environment (53). In one early, Anzaldúa recalls being punished for speaking Spanish:

I remember being caught speaking Spanish at recess—that was good for three licks on the knuckles with a sharp ruler. I remember being sent to the corner of the classroom for ‘talking back’ to the Anglo teacher when all I was trying to do was tell her how to pronounce my name. If you want to be American, speak ‘American’. If you don’t like it, go back to Mexico where you belong. (53)

The Chicana subject is prohibited from speaking Spanish in an English classroom. In an earlier memory, she is prohibited from speaking Chicano English in a Spanish setting. This memory demonstrates how the Chicana subject is forced to choose between two exclusive language systems. These two chapters are written in Spanglish, which forms the connection that Anzaldúa sees between knowledge about writing, language, and identity. In this chapter, she also re-tells a memory of hearing corridos, or ballads, on the Texas-Mexican borderlands (61). She explains how there was a stigma against speaking Chicano Spanish, but also shame in listening to Chicano corridos. She remembers food, which she considers important because food is tied to the borderlands. Food is essential to culture, as is language and music. Anzaldúa deals not only with language, but also with
the senses—what she sees, hears, smells, taste, and touch (61). She recalls learning about Cesar Chavez and the Farmworkers Movement, as well as learning about La Raza Unida party forming in Texas.

In the following chapter, she recalls storytelling to her younger sister at night. In this instance, Anzaldúa associates storytelling with image and night (65). Therefore, her identification with writing is connected to nature, especially darkness.

When I was seven, eight, nine, fifteen, sixteen years old, I would read in bed with a flashlight under the covers, hiding my self-imposed insomnia from my mother. I preferred the world o the imagination to the death of sleep. My sister Hilda, who slept in the same bed with me, would threaten to tell my mother unless I told her a story. (65)

Anzaldúa uses this memory to talk about cuentos, or stories/narratives, that were told by her grandmother and father. She explains that Mexicans often tell stories, which for her signify images and the dark of night. This discourse on storytelling becomes the means by which Anzaldúa explains how childhood became a time when she began writing (65-66).

The last chapter of her book combines the interplay of the political, creative, and spiritual in the argument about shifting Western binary thinking. This interplay serves the purpose of moving toward tolerance and dialogue between cultures that have historically been in conflict due to power relations over land and language. At the center, the Chicana mestiza is a subject who has been marginalized, yet Anzaldúa argues for the political, creative, and spiritual transformation of the mestiza to change her reality by changing herself, and her culture, to negotiate the constraints of contradictions in the borderlands. As with the first chapter, Anzaldúa
explores once again the idea of origin. She remembers being a child who picks up watermelon seeds from the ground. She plants and harvests them—an symbol of growth, death, decay, birth (91). Her memories are again connected to nature. Nature, in her belief, is then tied to culture in the memory of her homeland—the South Valley. She remembers walking through her elementary school and remembers how white teachers would punish Mexican children for being Mexican (89). She remembers her homeland and it is the space from where her culture resides. This homeland represents a special memory from where an element of nostalgia and spirituality give meaning to both her life and Chicana/o culture. Memory is also connected to spirituality and the idea of regeneration since there is a sense of renewal. An act of remembering allows Anzaldúa to keep Chicana/o culture alive in the sense of regenerating culture through memory. Ultimately, Anzaldúa strategically attempts at re-writing the myths, religious beliefs, languages, and judgments that have historically placed Chicana women and sexual minorities at the margins. She also re-invents European conventions and beliefs about art and spirituality—both of which are critical components of a Chicana rhetoric that endorses Chicana women as rhetors and artists within a Chicana/o discourse community.

In these seven chapters, Anzaldúa presents colonization, geographical displacement, homophobia, heterosexism, and “language terrorism” as some of the significant exigencies that elicit several of her memories. These memories serve as the discourses that enable her to move toward creating a rhetoric of empowerment. This rhetoric involves using discourse to change Chicano culture’s values, beliefs, and judgments. Her memories largely speak to the way in which her family was displaced after 1848, the castigation faced for speaking Spanish in an American school in the South Valley, the ostracism faced for being a lesbian, and the “inferiority” status given to a Chicano form of speaking Spanish along the U.S.-Mexico border.
B. RHETORICAL MEMORY IN BORDERLANDS/LA FRONTERA

The memories that are written and presented in Borderlands/La Frontera are rhetorical memories. They are rhetorical in the sense that they are presented within a context and based on an exigence, audience, and constraints. These memories, collectively, represent the use of rhetorical memory in that these memories are constructed from various rhetorical situations. In other words, Anzaldúa’s memories are constructed from exigencies and involve various constraints, as well as various audiences. Her memories, which deal with geographical space, as in the case of Pedro’s story about deportation and migration, also deal with arrangement with regard to the sequence that she presents her memories. Her memories can be interpreted as an art of topics. In other words, she presents her memories as a series of places from which she thinks about the past in the present to look toward the future for Chicanas/os within the borderlands. In a more general sense, she looks at the concept of memories as borderlands. Her goal, or one of her goals, is to eliminate dualities and binary thinking. She conflates the present with the past. She remembers as a means to find the evidence for the claims she makes about the views that are missing from history. In mixing and remixing memories from past and the present, she blurs the line between the past and the present. This complicates memory in the sense that memory is not always about something that happened in the past and remembered as past tense. Instead, memory is about what is occurring in the present that continues from the past. In other words, what has happened in the past continues to happen in the present. In sum, memory is a continual cycle. Anzaldúa makes reference to a cycle where the ancestors of Southwestern Chicano have departed the origin of the Southwest, only to one day make a return to their place of origin, which is known as Aztlán, the mythical homeland, which is now the present U.S. Southwest.
Thus, the Southwest serves as one context from which to talk about memories dealing with the exigencies of displacement, assimilation, acculturation, racism, and patriarchy.

The use of rhetorical memory allows Anzaldúa to write memories that concern subjects such as geographical displacement, personal trauma, self-shame and linguistic terror. In this case, using rhetorical memory is to use counter-memory to decolonize. Using code switching as a middle space between two colonial languages, Anzaldúa appeals to Chicana/o audiences, yet is not only situated with only one audience. She claims many spaces and aims to speak to a variety of audiences in the multiple positioning of herself as a mestiza subject. She re-writes the history of the mestiza. The end result is a re-shifting of language, re-shifting of consciousness, and re-shifting of thought.

I present this claim in order to build upon a knowledge that affirms how memory is used rhetorically to address several subjects for different purposes to audiences that are located within different contexts. In this case, Anzaldúa uses memory to address subjects such as the dualistic mindset that creates the conflict that affects the geographic and psychic space that separates two cultures and sexes. Anzaldúa attempts to inform a white audience about Chicana/o discourse. Anzaldúa also attempts to persuade Chicanos/as to re-consider many of their values, traditions, and beliefs in order to acknowledge and respect Chicana women’s contributions in theory and practice. She also aims to convince a global audience to overcome dualistic thinking in order to end conflict.

Gloria E. Anzaldúa *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* uses rhetorical memory as a way to re-write Chicano history as a way to redress some factor that affect Chicana women along the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. The seven chapters present dispersed memories that collectively prove that rhetorical memory is used to re-write an exclusive and elitist history into
one that is more inclusive and balanced. Rhetorical memory is one that uses exigence, geographical space, arrangement, and “counter-storying” to fuse personal and communal memory within autobiography. In constructing and re-constructing the knowledge of the border woman in the borderlands, Anzaldúa explains that she will use images in connection with knowledge. These images, I ascertain, are associated with some of the memories presented in connection with language. Anzaldúa’s memories relate to displacement, personal revelation, spiritual transformation, and family kinship.
Works Cited


Chapter 5

Memories of Slavery: Persuasive Discourse in the “Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself”

In the early nineteenth century, proslavery apologists argued that slavery had the power to both civilize and Christianize slaves in the American South. Apologists argued that abolitionists did not know enough about the institution to enable them to make claims about slavery as dehumanizing and oppressive. According to scholar Peter Ripley, the arguments made by apologists “were heard regularly and were gaining authority in the North as well as the South” during the early nineteenth century. In response, Frederick Douglass “took the lectern, and with his own experiences and whip-scarred back, challenged them [apologists] in ways that no white or free black abolitionist could. Yet he could do that effectively only if he was believed.” (137). In an effort to be believed and persuade a wider audience of the dehumanizing nature of slavery, Douglass began writing his autobiography in 1844. Word had spread about the publication of Douglass’ journey from bondage to freedom.

In 1845, the Anti Slavery Office in Boston published Douglass’ “Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself.” Heavy publicity in the abolitionist paper “The Liberator” and word of mouth helped Douglass sell 4,500 copies in its first printing. Within five years, 30,000 copies were sold. The dramatic increase of sales signified that Douglass' testimony as a slave gained an increasingly wider audience, especially among reformist circles (Quarles 34). According to biographer Benjamin Quarles, Douglass’ friends feared for his capture since Douglass had written the narrative as an escaped slave, who disclosed his master’s identity, as well as his own. (Quarles 35). Consequently, Quarles explains, “the publication of the book strengthened the determination to go abroad…” (35). Douglass followed the publication of his narrative with a tour of the British Isles in an effort to share his
experiences as a slave. According to Quarles, Douglass left the United States, following the publication of the book, because he was seeking refuge, as well as seeking to promote the abolitionist cause through talks about his book and slave experiences (36-37). Since 1845, Douglass’ narrative has since become one of many important narratives to counter the arguments by pro-slavery apologists.

The publication of Douglass’ narrative occurred during a time frame when African Americans and women began using persuasive discourse to respond to oppression in the United States. According to Shirley Wilson Logan’s monograph Liberating Language: Sites of Rhetorical Education in Nineteenth-Century Black America, African Americans such as Douglass acquired and practiced rhetorical astuteness as a means to negotiate with racial prejudice. African Americans also used a common language to interact and challenge the reality they faced in the late eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century. Within this historical background, acquiring literacy skills included reading, writing, speaking, and listening. According to Karlyn Kohrs Campbell’s monograph Man Cannot Speak for Her, early American women also attempted to persuade audiences about the right to be considered equal citizens and active members of public society. Campbell claims that women's arguments had two unique dimensions during this time frame: arguments from justice and arguments from expediency. Arguments from justice were based on a natural rights philosophy and proposed for a woman's rightful personhood. Arguments from expediency involved the idea that women's access to the public realm would improve and benefit society.

Douglass’ narrative is an important rhetorical text within this historical background because, by examining it, we may understand how memory is used persuasively to argue against the moral and ethical nature of slavery. Also, this narrative is important because it proves how
Douglass was able to expand his rhetorical skills to include writing, in addition to speaking, and listening. According to Logan; writing, reading, and listening are part of the rhetorical education and skills that African Americans used to confront racial prejudice, as well as to educate themselves. According to Thomas W. Benson; knowing, being, and doing are the main elements of rhetorical action. Therefore, it is critical to argue that, by writing his autobiography, Douglass used memory as a form of action to assign meaning to himself, the slave community, slavery, and the Christian values being diminished by human bondage. Moreover, Douglass’ action led to the creation of a discourse on slavery that relied mostly on first-account experiences of the injustices that were created by the institution of slavery.

Douglass’ first narrative is one that has been canonized in American literature for its portrayal of slavery in the South during the nineteenth century. Generally speaking, an American literary autobiography has been conceptualized as a series of memories that are told in a linear manner in order to re-tell the life of an individual. The primary purpose of such an autobiography is one that attempts to inform rather than persuade. However, Douglass’ narrative is unique because the narrative convinces us that there is a persuasive factor in autobiography, specifically ethnic autobiography. This persuasive factor is one that is rooted in memory. Douglass’ narrative, as a representation of his memory as a slave, is comprised of several subjects and commonplaces that are to be categorized under the topic of slavery.

In this chapter, I argue that Douglass’ narrative presents a series of memories that are used to inform an audience about the topic of slavery and persuade them that it is an institution that is morally and ethically wrong. Douglass’ autobiographical text is one that presents an argument against slavery and contains a version of Douglass’ life. This autobiography is the first of three that Douglass would write during his lifetime. Douglass did not write works of fiction.
nor poetry, which attests to the idea that Douglass meant to write about his life experiences in order to demonstrate the detrimental and inhumane nature of slavery. His memory and stories therein are part of his voice and life used in order to effect change using a discourse that is framed as memory. Analyzing his first autobiography is ideal in this project because Douglass’ first narrative represents his first attempt to re-construct his memories and construct his argument against slavery. According to James M. McPherson, the latter autobiographies represent revised narratives with different titles. While these revisions are important to the subject of revising memories, the first publication of Douglass’ narrative from memory is significant because it explains Douglass’ initial attempt to represent his memories through persuasive discourse.

My intention in presenting this argument is to propose the idea that tracking and tracing memories are part of the argumentative process. Selecting memories is strategic. Memories provide the knowledge that is gained from experience. This idea is one that can be connected to Aristotle’s in that sensory perception informs the experience that is remembered in the human mind. As stories are traced and selected in an autobiographical narrative, memories present topics that serve as contexts from which a rhetor thinks and asks questions about various subjects, such oppression, violence, torture, and suffering—all of which Douglass describes as the experience of a slave.

Douglass’ memories are ones that include names, dates, and geographical spaces that become part of the public knowledge that his memory reveals in his autobiography. In a sense, his autobiography maps out his experiences. Moreover, his memories are constructed by language and attempt to reveal a reality that Douglass attempted to present before audiences that were to be targeted by pro slavery apologists. This use of language to re-construct a slave reality through writing is rhetorical in that each of Douglass’ memories is told within a particular
context and driven by an exigence. Having escaped slavery and acquired literacy skills, Douglass uses language to assign meaning to his life in the past. By reconstructing his life through the rhetorical act of writing, he re-constructs his memories of his past as a slave.

This chapter will discuss the different contexts of his memories as they are arranged in Douglass’ autobiographical narrative. This discussion will substantiate the claim that Douglass uses a series of memories to present different subjects such as fragmentation, human suffering, instability, illiteracy, and violence—which are part of the topic of slavery in an autobiographical text. I argue that these subjects comprise the topic of slavery which, in turn, determine the memories that are presented in this particular autobiographical text. The use of this topic and its subjects form the rhetorical memory that can be conceptualized from Douglass’ text. Douglass treats this narrative as both a confessional and a social critique within a context where slave apologists claimed to mystify slavery as civilizing and beneficial. Douglass ultimately works from the exigence of how Christianity has been used to justify the institution of slavery. Many of the constraints that Douglass had to contend with relate to the construction and strengthening of his ethos. Douglass’ ultimate aim was to speak the truth in order to change the consciousness of audiences that were misinformed about slavery.

**Rhetorical Strategies in “Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself”**

After establishing his ethos with support from William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips in the foreword to his narrative, Douglass makes his first attempt in presenting a truthful testament using logos and pathos to appeal to his audience. Douglass presents his memories in a linear and logical way so that audiences understand his journey from slavery to emancipation. Each of the chapters in his narrative construct an argument about how slavery diminishes
Christian values and morals such as family, honesty, community, peace, and goodwill. In this regard, Douglass aimed to appeal to an audience’s sense of values related to religion.

Douglass knows that Christianity is the basis and foundation for the nation and therefore attempts to restore the significance of Christianity in the American south. He attempts to restore its significance because he believes it has been distorted by slavery in the South. According to historian James Oakes, Douglass set out to write demonstrate how slavery “degraded Christianity, transforming believers into sinners and churches into temples of Satan” (10). Oakes adds that Douglass aimed to explain how slavery “undermined the slave family, but it also distorted the relations within the slaveholders’ family” (10). I contend that Douglass would use family as an appeal to address how slavery attacked Christian values such as the worth of family and community. Douglass’ attempt and objective in using *The Narrative* is one demonstrating an argument against an entire institution that he claimed was brutalizing, inhumane, and criminal.

At the time of publication, Douglass had two factors working against him: that an audience would not believe a former slave was the author of an eloquent autobiographical work and that his entire argument was based on his life. Therefore, creating and sustaining an ethos as a literate and eloquent former slave was a challenge. Because his entire argument rested in his memories, and because of the suspicion that his contemporary audience held against him, his personal testimony needed to be authenticated in order to persuade audiences that slavery was inhumane. The preface and the appendix of Douglass’ autobiographical text provided the space where Douglass solidified his ethos and thus presented his argument through the series of memories presented throughout the text.

The autobiography is introduced by a letter from militant abolitionist and Douglass’ mentor William Lloyd Garrison. According to historians Benjamin Quarles and James Oakes,
Douglass wrote his first autobiography at a time when he was closely associated with William Lloyd Garrison. According to Oakes: “As a faithful Garrisonian Douglass…worked to promote a moral revolution by persuading listeners and readers that slavery was hateful” (10). Oakes adds that “[a]lthough filled with personal anecdotes, the book set out its central theme in Garrisonian terms: Slavery degraded everyone and everything it touched” (Oakes 10). Douglass argued against slavery because slavery “made ignorance a virtue and literacy a crime. It degraded Christianity, transforming believers into sinners and churches into temples of Satan. It degraded the law by unleashing lawlessness on the plantation, where rape was not a crime and murder went unpunished. Everything slavery came into contact with became brutal and uncivilized” (Oakes 10). The stories, based upon and acting as Douglass’ memories, serve as the evidence to further prove Garrison’s argument that slavery created crime, corruption, heresy, and brutality. Garrison was able to reinforce his argument against slavery by using Douglass’ memory to advance the abolitionist movement.

To reinforce Garrison’s letter of endorsement, Wendell Phillips, a friend of Douglass and militant abolitionist, also wrote a letter confirming that Douglass was a truth-teller of an autobiographical text that attempted to expose the reality of an institution that Douglass believed was countering the values and beliefs of Christianity. In his letter, he writes:

…there is one circumstance which makes your recollections peculiarly valuable, and renders your early insight the more remarkable. You come from that part of the country where we are told slavery appears with its fairest features. Let us hear, then, what it is at its best estate—gaze on its bright side, if it has one; and then imagination may task her powers to add dark lines to the picture, as she
travels southward to that (for the colored man) Valley of the Shadow of Death, where the Mississippi sweeps along. (337)

In this passage from his letter, Phillips attests to the validity of Douglass narrative based on the fact of his origin in the South, which gives him credibility of living the experience of slavery. The credibility of Douglass’ narrative is also significant because it dispels the myths about the “fairest features” of slavery that proslavery apologists argued for during the nineteenth century. The letters by Phillips and Garrison serve as the authentication that would legitimize and authenticate a “truth” that Douglass recounted for an argumentative purpose. Douglass’ truth is one that is presented from the perspective of a victim of slavery. Therefore, this truth is one that is legitimized because it has been lived by Douglass.

The chapters that Douglass presents contain a series of stories from memory that substantiate the claim that slavery is inhumane and unchristian. His argument counters the claim by apologists that slavery is a religious right in order to bring about civility and Christian morals and values. In being an argumentative autobiography, Douglass also aims to present a narrative that demonstrates the transformation of self. As a transformed self, Douglass depicts himself as a survivor who attempts to convince his audience that, ethically, Christianity should not be used to justify an inhumane institution. This transformation is important because Douglass uses this autobiographical text to bring about a change in the Christian values and beliefs that are distorted by the institution of slavery. Consequently, his autobiographical text is one that describes a journey, yet also presents an argument, and simultaneously reflects a self-transformation and self-empowerment.
This journey begins with what we can term a memory of fragmentation. In the first chapter, Douglass recounts his birthplace of Tuckahoe, near Hillsborough in Easton, Maryland. Douglass explains that he has no accurate knowledge of his age and cannot trace his paternal lineage since he was born from an unknown white master and slave mother. He writes:

My father was a white man. He was admitted to be such by all I ever heard speak of my parentage. The opinion was also whispered that my master was my father; but of the correctness of this opinion, I know nothing; the means of knowing was withheld from me. My mother and I were separated when I was but an infant—before I knew her as my mother. (340)

Douglass' memory of his mother is hazy since he was separated from her since infancy. Douglass discloses that his white brother serves as his master during his infancy. It is in this chapter that Douglass announces both his mixed lineage and unknown origin indicating a memory that is fragmented. This fragmented memory is one factor in Douglass' effort to trace his background and find meaning in his ancestry. Fragmentation and hazy childhood memories become part of the characterization that he presents to substantiate the claim that slavery displaces families and erases familial origins. According to Benjamin Quarles, Douglass was the only "authority on the early period of his life" (1). Although his memories were partial and fragmented, Douglass knew that his "slave background was his springboard into public notice" (Quarles 1). Slavery became the exigence that propels Douglass to remember in order to change the present of an institution that shaped most of his life. The traumatic nature of his memories prove that much of the acts he witnessed and experienced were deeply impressed in his mind. This strong impression aided him in reconstructing his memories in The Narrative.
An important memory in Douglass’ narrative is listening to slave songs, which Douglass explains are sung by slaves in order to express suffering and woe. In chapter 2, he describes slave songs and how the songs are representative of a cry for woe, sadness, and suffering. In sum, singing is a form of weeping for slaves. Douglass explains the nature of singing these songs as a way to dispel the misperceptions that singing represents joy and happiness. Douglass’ memories of slave songs indicate they are songs of suffering, misery, and oppression. Douglass writes:

Every tone was a testimony against slavery, and a prayer to God for deliverance from chains. The hearing of those wild notes always depressed my spirit, and filled me with ineffable sadness. I have frequently found myself in tears while hearing them. The mere recurrence to those songs, even now, afflicts me; and while I am writing these lines, an expression of feeling has already found its way down my cheek. To those songs I trace my first glimmering conception of the dehumanizing character of slavery. (349)

In recalling the tones of the slave songs while writing this passage, Douglass is affected emotionally in that he recalls sadness and suffering. Slave songs are not markers to recall a nostalgic or pleasant past but a dismal one. This memory is one that is recalled in Douglass’ present as he writes about a past of suffering, which signifies the inhumane nature of slavery.

In the following two chapters, Douglass makes the case that slavery enforces the act of lying. Slavery also reinforces crimes committed by plantation owners. Slaves were lied to and made to lie in claiming that they were content with their masters. In one memory, Douglass
recalls how slaves created their prejudices as to how benevolent their masters were in comparison to other slave masters. Douglass writes:

Many [slaves]...think their own masters are better than the masters of other slaves; and this, too, in some cases, when the very reverse is true. Indeed, it is not uncommon for slaves even to fall out and quarrel among themselves about the relative goodness of their masters, each contending for the superior goodness of his own over that of the others. (353-354)

In a strange twist, slaves boasted about their masters to each other, which is significant in Douglass’ memory because it demonstrates how lying created conflict among the slaves. Douglass explains that, for example, Colonel Lloyd’s slaves claimed that he was the wealthiest, as opposed to Mr. Jepson’s slaves, who claimed Jepson was the “smartest” (354). This quarrel and conflict allowed masters to use the conflict among slaves for their benefit.

Furthermore, slavery reinforced the act of lying by forcing slaves to lie about being content with their masters when caught escaping. According to one of Douglass’ memories, Colonel Lloyd was one master who owned many slaves—many of whom he never knew nor knew him. Douglass details how, one day, Lloyd “met a colored man, and addressed him in the usual manner of speaking to colored people on the public highways of the south” (352). Douglass details Lloyd’s inquiry:

“Well, boy, whom do you belong to?” “To Colonel Lloyd,” replied the slave.

“Well, does the colonel treat you well?” “No, sir,” was the ready reply. “What, does he work you too hard?” “Yes, sir.” “Well, don’t he give you enough to eat?” “Yes, sir, he gives me enough, such as it is.”

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The Colonel, after ascertaining where the slave belonged, rode on; the man also went on about his business, not dreaming that he had been conversing with his master. He thought, said, and heard nothing more of the matter, until two or three weeks afterwards. The poor man was then informed by his overseer that, for having found fault with his master, he was now to be sold to a Georgia trader. He was immediately chained and handcuffed; and thus, without a moment’s warning, he was snatched away, and forever sundered, from his family and friends by a hand more unrelenting than death. This is the penalty of telling the truth, of telling the simple truth, in answer to a series of plain questions. (352-3)

This incident between Colonel Lloyd and his slave proves how slavery reinforced the moral offense of lying. Lloyd asked “plain questions” expecting to hear lies. However, the slave tells the truth, which nevertheless leads to his penalty. This penalty is used to make the slave believe that lying will lead to survival. This memory demonstrates the complexity as to how truth and lies were distorted in the relations between master and slave.

In Chapter 4, Douglass remembers the injustices against slaves by masters. Douglass remembers how overseers and masters stripped slaves of any credibility and killed slaves. Also, Douglass recalls how Mr. Gore kills Demby and Mrs. Hicks kills a slave—two killings that go unpunished. Witnessing the killings of slaves by plantation owners, Douglass also recalls the instability that he endures when moving from one plantation to another. In Chapter 5, Douglass remembers having to move and the existence of faith in God. He explains that he did not lament moving from one plantation to another because, for him, there was no concept of home, no stability, and so he believed he never had a home. As part of his survival, he found faith in God.
to provide him with the hope to endure life as a slave. Douglass explains his spiritual awakening as a way to demonstrate to his audience of how he was able to survive the witnessing of the violence and death within plantation life. The memories of death and his spiritual awakening are presented to show how Douglass overcame the horrors of slavery. His spiritual awakening proves to his audience that Douglass adheres and finds commonality with his Christian audience.

In Chapters 6 and 7, Douglass presents memories that explain how slavery created and reinforced illiteracy in order to oppress slaves. In Chapter 6, Douglass describes life in Master Hugh’s home, where Douglass meets his new mistress and enamored of her because she teaches him how to read. She becomes the key to a knowledge that he knows will be a means toward emancipation. This knowledge is one that allows him to think about his condition as a slave. Eventually, Douglass’ master prohibits the mistress from teaching the young Douglass how to read. It is at that point, that the relationship between Douglass and his mistress becomes distant. Douglass uses this remembrance to explain how he acquired the literacy skills that he eventually uses to write his autobiography. This writing of his memories becomes the action that Douglass takes to empower himself after escaping toward freedom. His autobiography becomes a part of the knowledge that constitutes the reality that is slavery. Therefore, it is through the acquisition of literacy, that he is able to name and describe his memories. In naming them and describing his memories, Douglass is marking them as a record of his life.

In Chapter 7, Douglass recounts his 7 years living in Master Hugh’s home. Douglass recalls how, at age 12, he reads *The Columbian Orator*, a book that inspires him to speak the power of truth and that becomes his inspiration for reading, knowledge, and rhetoric. It is at this point in the narrative that Douglass realizes that his new found knowledge enables him to see that his reality is worse. In this chapter, Douglass remembers his acquisition of reading and
writing skills—which lead him toward the knowledge that makes him realize that illiteracy is used to control slaves into submission. These chapters are important because Douglass’ acquisition of literacy skills can be understood as an acquiring of a rhetorical education. It is through re-constructing his memories, through written language, that Douglass developed some of his rhetorical skills. In other words, in writing his memories, he learned about how to structure his discourse in order effectively communicate and persuade. He learned how to use appeals in order to bond with his audience’s values and beliefs. He also learned to use his lived experience as evidence to substantiate his claim against slavery.

In Chapters 8 and 9, Douglass’ remembers the cruelty against slaves and the abandonment of slaves. In Chapter 8, for example, he presents one memory about how a slave owner, Mr. Andrew, kills his brother. Douglass recalls: “...Master Andrew...took my little brother by the throat, threw him on the ground, and with the heel of his boot stamped upon his head till the blood gushed from his nose and ears” (374). This act of cruelty is one that is forever imprinted in Douglass’ memory as told through a story. Douglass suffers more as his grandmother is abandoned after Master Andrew dies:

...my grandmother, who was now very old, having outlived my old master and all his (Master Andrew’s) children, having seen the beginning and end of all of them, and her present owners finding she was of but little value, her frame already racked with the pains of old age, and complete helplessness fast stealing over her once active limbs, they took her to the woods, built her a little hut, put up a little mud-chimney, and then made her welcome to the privilege of supporting herself there in perfect loneliness; thus virtually turning her out to die! (375)
Douglass attempts to use this memory and the memory of his brother to demonstrate how his family was shattered. The value of family is an appeal that he uses to connect with his Christian audience. These memories also promote Garrison’s argument about the “brutalizing effects of slavery (10). In Chapter 9, Douglass describes slaves starving and how Mr. Thomas Auld was a cruel master. Douglass recounts how Auld attends a Methodist meeting and finds a reason to reinforce his cruelty toward slaves. Auld sees Douglass as inhuman and, through unspeakable acts of cruelty, attempts to emotionally and physically break Douglass. This is the chapter where Douglass aims to point out how institutionalized religion aims to justify a reason for the existence of slavery.

The last two chapters of Douglass’ narrative present memories that shift Douglass’ narrative from being about bondage and oppression to one about resistance, empowerment, and independence. This shift is important to understanding The Narrative as one of transformation and hope. The theme of transformation and hope moves the narrative away from being solely about being victimized and plagued by despair. For instance, in Chapter 10, Douglass describes being whipped by his master Covey, who almost breaks Douglass in mind and spirit through cruelty and endless work. Douglass describes how Covey worked slaves endlessly: “We were worked in all weathers. It was never too hot or too cold; it could never rain, blow, hail, or snow, too hard for us to work in the field. Work, work, work, was scarcely more the order of the day than of the night” (387). Douglass confesses: “I was sometimes prompted to take my life, and that of Covey, but was prevented by a combination of hope and fear. My sufferings on this plantation seem now like a dream rather than a stern reality” (388). In this passage, Douglass recalls the hopelessness that almost drove him toward ending his life, as well as recalling that feeling as almost a dream. This memory of endless work and spiritual death is one which
Douglass uses to explain the brutalizing reality of slavery. Yet, Douglass shifts his narrative into one of empowerment. He remembers a physical fight against Covey where Douglass stood up to Covey:

I was brought sprawling on the stable floor; Mr. Covey seemed now to think he had me, and could do what he pleased; but at this moment—from whence came the spirit I don’t know—I resolved to fight; and, suit ing my action to the resolution, I seized Covey hard by the throat; and as I did so, I rose. He held on to me, and I to him. My resistance was so entirely unexpected, that Covey seemed taken all aback. He trembled like a leaf. This gave me assurance, and I held him uneasy, causing the blood to run where I touched him with the ends of my fingers. (394)

In this memory, the power relations between master and slave shift to a relation where the slave is empowered and the master is weakened. Douglass fights back unexpectedly and still manages to demonstrate a degree of compassion toward his master. This demonstration proves to Douglass’s audience that despite the cruelty and torture, Douglass retained his compassion toward another human being—which proves to his audience that he held steadfast to his Christian belief in compassion. Furthermore, this memory demonstrated the shift of power that enabled Douglass to believe in himself as empowered after fighting back. This defeat helps him undergo a transformation toward independence, strength, self-confidence, and manhood. Douglass writes: “It was a glorious resurrection, from the tomb of slavery, to the heaven of freedom. My long-crushed spirit rose, cowardice departed, bold defiance took its place” (395).

In 1834, Douglass recounts his life with his new master Mr. Freeland, who Douglass describes as more kind than Covey. The memory of Covey becomes the narrative that represents Douglass’ conversion from bondage to physical/spiritual strength. Douglass states: “You have seen how a
man was made a slave; you shall see how a slave was made a man” (389). This quote solidifies the idea that Douglass attempts to present his memories as to how he became a slave, in addition to how he became a “man,” which signifies physical/emotional/cognitive strength—which was denied to him when treated as a helpless, disempowered, and fearful child.

In this chapter, Douglass describes his efforts toward empowerment by advocating literacy. Douglass creates a Sabbath school to teach slaves how to read; however, the school is shut down. Slaves are prohibited from literacy, which is symbolic because literacy represents the acquisition of knowledge that teaches slaves that they are held in bondage within slavery.

Douglass explains how slaves are conditioned into believing that slavery is right. He writes:

I have found that, to make a contented slave, it is necessary to make a thoughtless one. It is necessary to darken his moral and mental vision, and, as far as possible, to annihilate the power of reason. He must be able to detect no inconsistencies in slavery; he must be made to feel that slavery is right; and he can be brought to that only when he ceases to be a man. (415)

This passage signifies Douglass’ belief that a slave is one that is constructed to think and live as if slavery is innate and natural. Slavery is not only an economic institution of hard labor and oppression but also a psychology that uses ideology to oppress individuals. Douglass discusses this in order to explain to his audience that slavery is not just an institution but also a way of thinking, a way of thinking that is perceived to be right and just. This way of thinking is justified by means of religion. Douglass stresses that religious slaveholders are the worst because they use Christianity to justify their cruelty. After the closing of the school, Douglass uses his acquired literacy skills to write a letter pretending to be “Hamilton” (405). This strategy is also symbolic
because it reminds the audience that literacy is a means of escape toward freedom and empowerment.

In the final chapter, Douglass recounts his escape toward New York City with the help of some friends. He describes being robbed of his wages by his master. After escaping to New York, he moves to Bedford, where he sees prosperity and hope. He changes his name to “Frederick Douglass.” He becomes employed and begins working for his own wages. He reads the “Liberator,” which inspires him to speak out against the institution of slavery.

After this last chapter, an appendix follows where Douglass communicates to his audience that Christianity has been used to create violence, lawlessness, and inhumanity. According to Douglass, the institution of slavery and using Christianity to uphold it is hypocritical and inhumane (430). He declares his love for Christianity in its purity and goodness. Douglass writes “I love the pure, peaceable, and impartial Christianity of Christ: I therefore hate the corrupt, slaveholding, women-whipping, cradle-plundering, partial and hypocritical Christianity of this land” (430). He aims to establish a connection to his audience by explaining that he is not blaming Christianity. He protests how Christianity is used to justify the means of slavery. At one point in the narrative, Douglass states: “Revivals of religion and revivals in the slave-trade go hand in hand together” (431). He ends the narrative with a parody outlining the hypocrisy of Christian slaveholders in the South. The first verse presented is:

Come, saints and sinners, hear me tell

How pious priests whip Jack and Nell

And women buy and children sell,

And preach all sinners down to hell,

And sing of heavenly union (434)
In this one stanza, Douglass presents the convention of literary rhyming to present a critique on the interconnection between religion and the slave-trade. He attempts to announce explicitly the hypocrisy of both Christianity and the slave-trade that is justified as “fair” or “just”.

The narrative ends with a message about his hope that the narrative will bring about a change in the elimination of slavery in the South:

Sincerely and earnestly hoping that this little book may do something toward throwing light on the American slave system, and hastening the glad day of deliverance to the millions of my brethren in bonds—faithfully relying upon the power of truth, love, and justice, for success in my humble efforts—and solemnly pledging myself anew to the sacred cause,—I subscribe myself.—FREDERICK DOUGLASS. (436)

This last passage summarizes the subject, purpose, context, and exigence of the entire Narrative. Douglass’ autobiography is one that attempts to shed light on the horrid nature of slavery. The memories are presented in hopes that slavery will one day for a large community that Douglass claims as his own. He attempts to appeal with the values of truth, love and justice to both his community and that of his Christian audience. Lastly, he commits himself to advancing his and Garrison’s cause of abolishing slavery.

This appendix is important because it shifts his memories as being rhetorical. His memories contain ideas about the power relationships between master and slave, as well as the ideology that sustains slavery as an institution. This ideology is one where slaves are to be taught that they are to be content without the power of reason or logic. Slaves are prohibited from literacy as to prevent them from knowing they are held captive and in bondage. Hence, it is
through ignorance that slavery is sustained as an institution. Furthermore, ignorance prevents the realization that religion and the slave-trade are interconnected.

**Conclusion: The Narrative as Rhetorical Memory: A Topics of Difference**

Frederick Douglass’ *The Narrative* presents a remembered reality of a runaway slave who becomes an independent and empowered individual. Douglass presents memories about his lost childhood, broken family, fractured community, and inner spiritual torture before a Christian audience. He presents his memories as more than a reflection upon his life. These memories represent ideas about slavery that serve to persuade an audience to take action about this subject. This representation tells us that ethnic autobiographies are more than remembrances of a traumatic past. Ethnic autobiographies are memories that serve as testimonials to effect change on the social and cultural conditions that affect various communities. Ethnic autobiographies tell us much about the appeals that ethnic rhetors use to persuade audiences using values, beliefs, and traditions that differ from theirs. Ethnic autobiographies reinforce the idea that memory is epistemological in that remembered events construct part of an ethnic rhetor’s knowledge. The ethnic rhetor then uses this knowledge to claim a space for herself/himself within his discourse community and as an independent subject. This space is one where the ethnic rhetor makes the claim for change in order to seek truth and justice.

The “Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself” is an important rhetorical text, in relation to memory, because it presents a series of memories that counter a fictionalized reality of slavery as a just, natural, and humane institution. Douglass acquired literacy skills in order to re-construct his memories, which he used as evidence to argue against the institution of slavery. Moreover, he argued against the use of
Christianity to justify slavery. Douglass uses his autobiography to talk about the complex nature of slavery. Slavery, in Douglass’ world, is one that is sustained by physical, spiritual, and psychological control. Douglass aims to move his audience to take action against an institution that violates Christian morals, values, and beliefs.

Hence, Douglass’ memories prove to be both informative and persuasive. An ethnic autobiography such as *The Narrative* is one which exemplifies the nature of rhetorical memory as a topics of difference. A topics of difference in *The Narrative* presents a counter-reality that strives to achieve truth and justice through a series of memories. Each memory contains its own idea about a subject. In the case of Douglass’ memories, the power relations between master and slave are one subject that constituted the nature of his memories. Each memory occurs within a different space and time frame. Douglass uses this technique as a means to demonstrate how he went from being a slave to a free individual. Douglass uses these memories to think about and describe his thoughts on oppression, crime, violence, moral and spiritual degradation. The memories appeal to an audience’s pathos. However, each memory contains the logic of the interrelationships between slave and master, and the relationships between slaves. Douglass’ *The Narrative* is an important rhetorical text because it presents a testimonial in order to illustrate the reality that he seeks to counter. In informing and persuading his audience, Douglass aims to change the conditions of black slaves and change the ways in which Christianity has been used to justify slavery in the American South. This effort to effect change explains the transformative nature of ethnic autobiography as a rhetorical text.
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Appendix

The primary object of inquiry in this project is the relationship between memory and rhetoric within autobiographical writing among rhetors of color. Specifically, this project presented nineteenth and twentieth century autobiographies by Gloria E. Anzaldúa and Frederick Douglass in order to examine how and why they remember within the act of writing. Autobiographical writing is significant because it is a genre that has enabled individuals to write themselves as part of history. Autobiographies are also important because they present the possibility to present arguments that create and endorse a change caused by an exigence. Being a part of history is important because it allows a subject to change the way her/his culture is represented historically. Anzaldúa and Douglass are two important rhetors whose autobiographies enabled them to write themselves as part of their culture’s history (respectively) in an effort to create cultural and social change.

Furthermore, their narratives represent a counter-stance to the histories that have been written by individuals and institutions of power. Their stories from memory represent the ways in which their knowledge has been written, reconstructed, reproduced, and reinvented for personal and cultural survival. Memory can be traced to the classical period within Greek and Roman rhetoric. A brief history of memory may show that memory brought much prestige to the art of rhetoric; however, after the eighteenth century, memory declined in importance. In this project, I contend that ethnic autobiographies by rhetors of color, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the United States, proved that memory never declined in importance within the context of using rhetoric to promote social change and justice. Instead, memory became the central factor in the creation and use of ethnic rhetoric. This use of memory is what I term
“rhetorical memory as topics of difference,” which is a theory that explains how ethnic rhetors have used memory to present a counter-stance through the use of storytelling. Storytelling is a subversive act that has the possibility to change meaning and values. I contend that Anzaldúa and Douglass use storytelling as a way to present an argument among various audiences.

Also, this project focused on the claim that rhetors of color have used memory in a rhetorical way in order to present and substantiate arguments which bring about cultural and social change. In Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza, for instance, Anzaldúa argues that women have been forgotten and devalued in the ways in which Chicano culture has been remembered throughout the history of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. She uses her own personal memories to argue that a Chicana woman’s life experiences bring about a more balanced view of Chicano culture along the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. In The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, Douglass presents his life story as a way to prove that Christian values, beliefs, and traditions have been distorted by the institution of slavery. He presents a series of stories from memory in order to argue that slavery is an inhumane institution. Both Anzaldúa and Douglass record their memories through writing as a way to reproduce their lives, reconstruct their experiences, and invent new ways from which to present arguments about changing a reality, which has the possibility to be more democratic way for women and people of color. This examination of memory, autobiographical writing, and rhetoric is significant within rhetorical studies and the humanities because it demonstrates how ethnic rhetors have used memory to present arguments. Hence, ethnic rhetors have historically contributed to public discourse in order to bring about a change in culture and society. Further research is still to be conducted as to the way in which ethnic rhetors have used memory in complex ways write their realities as a way to bring about change for themselves and their respective cultural communities.
Vita

Héctor Carbajal is a queer poet, historian and scholar interested in the ways in which writing is a form of action against all forms of oppression. He has presented his research on the intersection of race/ethnicity, memory, rhetoric, and writing at national conferences such as the Rhetoric Society of America and the Conference on College Composition and Communication. He earned a B.A. in English at New Mexico State University and an M.A. in Borderlands History at the University of Texas El Paso. His creative writings have been published by *Frontera-Norte Sur, Zacatecas: A Review of Contemporary Word*, and *La Voz de Esperanza*. His work is also featured in the Lambda Literary Award finalist *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation* (New York, Routledge, 2002), edited by Gloria E. Anzaldúa and AnaLouise Keating. He has taught courses in First-Year Composition, Technical Writing, and Workplace Writing with an emphasis on technology and digital writing. He is the recipient of the 2010 Dodson Fellowship at the University of Texas El Paso.

Permanent address: 7708 Taxco Dr.

El Paso, TX, 79915

This thesis/dissertation was typed by Hector Carbajal.