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RE: PUBLIC*S*

: WOMAN OF COLOR FEMINIST RHETORICAL PROCESS SHAPING SAFE SPACES FOR A *RE*HUMANIZING DISCOURSE

A Thesis

by

ELOISA E. MORENO

Submitted to the Graduate College of

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

December 2015

Major Subject: English

RE: PUBLIC*S*

: WOMAN OF COLOR FEMINIST RHETORICAL PROCESS SHAPING SAFE SPACES

FOR A *RE*HUMANIZING DISCOURSE

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by
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December 2015

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ABSTRACT

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The discourse of women of color feminists over the last thirty years follows what I refer to as woman of color feminist rhetorical process in three recursive phases: location, deliberation, and restoration. The process is a significant contribution to rhetorical theory in the form of woman of color consciousness. This way of knowing considers complex identities at the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexual identity. The woman of color feminist rhetorician asks us to view self, community, and our notions of love as political constructs. By doing so, we are able to move beyond identity politics and build new alliances by working through our differences. Moreover, this consciousness and the method which emerges from it, *intersectional method* is possible via her rituals of resistance shaping safe spaces. This shaping of public space advances the design of dialogue and deliberation to realize community-based restorative solutions in our communities of color.

DEDICATION

The completion of my thesis would not have been possible without the courage and thirst for justice of the students and their families who daily risk realizing their dreams and coming out of the shadows. Many thanks to The Minority Affairs Council of the University of Texas, Rio Grande Valley for sharing your stories as a source of knowledge and inspiration to keep on going in the face of all obstacles. Most importantly, thank you MAC for teaching me the greatest success is to pave a way for others to succeed.

In loving memory of Trayvon Benjamin Martin, Michael Brown Jr., Tamir Rice, and Joaquin Luna Jr. whose lives, and the movements born out of them, inspired, motivated, and supported the accomplishment of this degree.

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Many thanks to my graduate advisor and professor, Dr. Mark Noe, for his open mind and open door. He taught me about the history of rhetoric, so I could propose its possible future. I am grateful for learning about Plato's Phaedrus, and the role of Love in the shaping of spaces where our views of rhetoric and composition may collide and challenge one another.

Many thanks to Dr. Francisco Guajardo who validated my lived experience and encouraged me to write my story and engage the stories of others. His classroom is a gracious space where I learned the art of plática.

My thanks also goes to William D. Mainous II whose interest in Mexican American and Latino studies encouraged me to consider what women of color feminist rhetoricians tell us about community and the common good.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It takes the commitment of many organizations, public and private, along with a diverse body of stakeholders, to ensure once change work in our communities begins, it has the staying power to become the task of future generations. However, before we can garner long term buy-in from multiple publics, these publics must be engaged, and a process of dialogue and deliberation must commence and be sustained between them (Fraser 1990). It is the goal of city managers, urban planners, and those who make the practice of dialogue and deliberation their daily task to engage as many stakeholders as possible to inform policies that will inevitably determine the quality of life for these publics (Frasure 1990; Gastil 2014). I came across the concept of "multiple publics" while locating a set of ideas which could help me name my argument against a notion of a comprehensive academic discourse which views itself as assimilative in nature. I found these ideas in Nancy Fraser's 1990 critique of a body of concepts first proposed by Jürgen Habermas known as "public sphere theory." In her critique, she problematizes one of his central ideas that depicts a theoretical forum where all walks of life are welcome in a neutral space. In this space, differences such as: gender, race, class, sexuality, and ability are bracketed. In other words, he proposed that granted a space to gather, anyone could come to the table of dialogue to deliberate a "common concern" (Fraser 1990). First, she argued that bracketing differences did not really happen, and all walks of life were often not given equal representation at the table of dialogue. Therefore, a "comprehensive public" does not exist (Fraser 1990). Secondly, she

challenges a notion of a common concern where at any given time there might be a national priority list reflective of the needs of its diverse constituents (Fraser 1990). However, a "common concern," in reality, looks more like a multiplicity of common concerns depending on which public is defining it. Fraser offers the term "counterpublics" to represent voices from the margins (1990). She posits counterpublics engage national conversation on their own terms which means they use their own set of discursive practices to engage mainstream, national discourse (Fraser 1990; Patricia Hill Collins n.d.; Alarcón 1990; Smitherman 1997).

As we keep multiple publics in mind—the myth of a neutral space—or forum—where deliberation can happen regardless of our differences is also challenged by James Berlin who emphasizes a social-epistemic approach to the teaching of rhetoric and writing (2006). In this approach the emerging writer becomes aware of existing beliefs and values they bring into the act of writing and how language shapes relationships of power (Berlin 2006). After reading Berlin, I considered for the first time everything we think, do, say, and write are constructions of social and economic ideologies (2003). Most importantly, Berlin's pedagogical approach to the teaching of rhetoric and composition taught me how language works to empower or to entrap entire peoples in realities of social and economic inequity. While he does not refer explicitly to the term multiple publics, he suggests the diverse interests of a multiplicity of voices deliberate whose concerns weigh-in the national priority list in an "arena of struggle" (Berlin 2006).

As a graduate student, my primary concern was to find an entry point into this academic conversation most view as well-rounded because anyone is welcome to join it. Along this line of thinking, all voices have an equal opportunity to inform a discipline's discourse. I recall an article in one course referring to academic discourse as "a buffet line." Terms like assimilation were viewed in a positive light. While the conversation welcomes all voices, the voices of

women of color feminist rhetoricians simmer on an intellectual back burner—the buffet line is limited to me. This notion of a comprehensive discourse is one that encouraged me to seek out those voices I knew were there but not emphasized throughout the majority of my education.

The following inquiry stems from two concerns: initially, what begins with a personal desire to bring women of color feminists' contributions to the fore of rhetoric and composition theory and praxis, then becomes a concern about what their contributions really tell us about the realization of economic and educational equity in our communities of color. These two concerns share a connection in the notion of shaping "public" spaces. Here, the rhetoric and composition classroom is considered a potential space where the emerging writer may *do* dialogue and deliberation. Learning to negotiate difference is a lifelong process that begins way before any formal introduction to rhetorical theory. However, if we view the teaching and practice of rhetoric and writing as critical to the creation of democratic culture, and further, to its sustainability, then I argue in the first two chapters, it is necessary to engage what is referred to here as woman of color feminist rhetorical process. Through the process presented in three recursive phases: location, deliberation, and restoration, a differential consciousness is named – *woman of color consciousness*. Primarily, it is in the first two phases, location and deliberation, where this consciousness fully develops. In the phase of location, the process begins with challenging identity and those forms of interlocking oppressions vying to own an individual's experience. Therefore, I posit these two primary phases as her contribution to rhetorical theory because it is here where she first imagines a *safe* space for her identity and community to be viewed differently. As her way of thinking transforms, so too her way of acting in the world reflects this transformation via the method which crystalizes from her differential consciousness as *intersectional method* (Patricia Hill Collins n.d.). In the third phase of restoration, I present

intersectional method as a replicable approach to viewing differences as a starting point to engage multiple publics in dialogue and deliberation. It is a method that positions different publics to view their experiences at the intersections of race, gender, class, sexuality, and ability as possible points of building new alliances. Intersectional method is treated as women of color feminist rhetoricians' contribution to a praxis of rhetoric and composition in a replicable form of cypher and circle or what it means to realize a safe space for initiating and sustaining group deliberation dynamics. Before this change work may begin, and more importantly be sustained, an initial groundwork must be laid. It is how the woman of color feminist rhetorician shapes *safe* spaces in which dialogue and deliberation occur both within her internal landscape, then as an outward intention to engage multiple publics in order to work through difference that is at the heart of my argument. While I propose her process and differential consciousness as significant intellectual contributions to the theory of rhetoric and composition and intersectional method as a significant contribution to a praxis of rhetoric and composition, what I now realize is none of these contributions are possible without her means of shaping safe spaces in which this process may unfold. Her means is rituals of resistance rooted in a feminist spirituality. These rituals, as a theoretical framework carve a safe space within her inner landscape from which she is able to express her vision of social justice and equity outwardly. As a theoretical framework, rituals of resistance are introduced in the form of Audre Lorde's "power of the erotic," bell hooks' "love ethic," and Gloria Anzaldúa's "path of conocimiento." Rituals of resistance in these forms are a deeply spiritual practice. Daily, she determines to work through differences within herself, and in the act of connecting to these deeply spiritual sources of knowledge, another way of knowing, she is doing the work of shaping a safe space within herself to challenge constructions of identity and community. Her theory building happens upon a foundation of rituals of resistance. Because

theory is something women of color feminist rhetoricians *do*, I view their praxis as what they are doing *differently*. How they suggest we initially shape *safe* spaces for a plurality of publics to work through difference advances the design of dialogue and deliberation.

Safe space is about building relationships of trust. While I propose the shaping of spaces across many publics, it should be understood the origin of safe space for the woman of color feminist serves the primary function as '"social spaces where Black women speak freely'" (Patricia Hill Collins n.pag.) A safe space is necessary "for an oppressed group to continue to exist as a viable social group, the members must have spaces where they can express themselves apart from the hegemonic or ruling ideology" (Patricia Hill Collins n.pag.). Safe spaces nurture interpersonal and intragroup relationships (Patricia Hill Collins n.pag.). As part one will look into the woman of color rhetorical process, the first phase of which is referred to as location, safe space relates to "opportunities for self-definition; and self-definition [as] a first step to empowerment: if a group is not defining itself, then it is being defined by and for the use of others" (Patricia Hill Collins n.pag.). It is a stretch to imagine widening the scope of the notion of a Safe space as one whose use did not originate as a means to bring multiple publics together in dialogue. However, in the field of educational leadership, they have already made this claim. Only now I link it to woman of color feminist rhetorical theory and praxis. What I will attempt to show is how women of color feminists move through what I loosely refer to as their rhetorical process of location, deliberation, and restoration. With a shift in their thinking—the phases of location and deliberation—must follow a shift in their actions—the phase of restoration—which requires intention. Hence, rituals of resistance shape safe spaces best suited to engage a multiplicity of publics on their own terms because a necessary trust is built between publics as a groundwork to sustain dialogue and deliberation to realize *community-based restorative*

solutions (blacklivesmatter.com). In other words, safe space advances the design of dialogue and deliberation because in this space all stakeholders are viewed as contributors to the collective knowledge generated and circulated here (Ruder 2010). Knowledge is generated in this space through dance, song, conversation and stories. The function of ritual as it forms a framework for her process will be explained further as daily affirmations or practices with intention.

In their multimodal form, rituals of resistance contribute to doing dialogue and deliberation *differently*. Thereby, woman of color feminist rhetoricians' contribution to rhetorical praxis is presented here in the forms of cypher and circle as a best practice for initiating and sustaining group deliberation dynamics across multiple publics. The advance in the design of dialogue and deliberation rests on the ability of these rituals to shape safe spaces where relationships of trust may be formed before and during the process of collective change work. Even as a collective line of action is agreed up, what is more important than the present actions is the longevity of an ongoing dialogue which ensures there is space to keep coming back to the table of deliberation as needs and demographics of communities, and as I will later consider movements, change. Moreover, when the life of a movement whose explicit goal is to redress inequity in communities of color is on the line, it is a best practice to engage a plurality of publics on their own terms. Women of color feminist rhetoricians offer a process to initiate engagement of many publics. Further, and the greater point I wish to make here is how they shape safe spaces to sustain a dialogue across multiple publics. The idea of sustained dialogue across multiple publics is necessary for continuous social change as Patricia Hill Collins refers to it (n.d.).

Trust is a key idea women of color feminists expand into a larger conversation about Love. Their rhetorical theory, presented in the first half of this inquiry, asks us to imagine

transformation is possible both within ourselves and within our communities. As a consequence, their way of knowing and being crystalizes into the defining method of their feminist movement—intersectional method (Patrical Hill Collins n.d.).

The method informs how to engage a plurality of publics on the terms of those publics. For example, if a particular public is accustomed to sharing their community-based knowledge via conversation and storytelling, then it is a best practice when engaging this public to recognize this mode of discourse as one which contributes to a collective course of action. A large part of this trust is the ability to shift how we view these ways of life. Though they are accepted more and more as valid sources of knowledge, when these forms of knowledge are brought into processes of dialogue and deliberation, their immediate purpose may be missed or passed off as unproductive to group deliberation dynamics. So, with this in mind, spaces where many publics will be working together toward a collective vision of social justice and equity must begin from a point of viewing nontraditional modes of discourse as intellectually and socially competent. In other words, a prevailing view of marginalized groups at the intersections of race, gender, class, sexuality, and ability is one of relationships of power. In the case of women of color feminist rhetoricians, their process and its emerging consciousness, positions these groups as a viable source of leadership. Many ways of knowing and being are in a position to contribute to a collective course of action.

Their rhetorical process, differential consciousness, intersectional method, and multimodal expressions of their feminist spirituality (rituals of resistance) aim to work through difference. Due to their recursive nature, a long-term commitment to social change for these women begins with self and moves outward to challenge notions of "public," and how "the public" shapes safe spaces for an ongoing discourse. Their process speaks back to such false

notions of neutral space and a singular counterpublic. Instead, women of color feminist rhetoricians complicate these ideas with the concept of a transformative consciousness—a way of viewing one's lived experiences at the intersections of gender, race, class, sexuality, and ability. They posit difference as a starting place, and points at which our experiences intersect as possible new points of alliance building. Further, from this transformative consciousness, a clearly articulated method emerges—intersectional method. Intersectional method is treated here as women of color feminist rhetoricians' contribution to rhetorical praxis (a replicable, daily lived practice) whereby spaces are shaped by and with multiple publics who are able to view their differences as starting points for possible new alliances in the process of deliberation. When lived experiences are viewed in light of the many intersections that on the surface appear to define and limit the individual and group experience, upon deeper consideration, relationships of power may be questioned, and a collective course of action may be reached because publics are in a position to work through difference.

If we view writing as a subject creating and sustaining the project of democracy, whether it is cities engaging community organizations, or organizations attempting to engage those they wish to serve, the idea is to earn the public trust of those who ultimately want their needs to be identified, and their contributions to the communities they live in to be acknowledged. This trust, I believe is key to doing dialogue and deliberation *differently*. Therefore, how women of color feminist rhetoricians garner trust is what I propose advances the design of dialogue and deliberation and contributes to a praxis of rhetoric and composition. It is by their rituals of resistance, or their intentional, daily practices rooted in feminist spirituality that puts difference in the context of trust.

Before embarking on the woman of color rhetorical process, it is worth noting here at times I will refer to women of color feminists, and at others, women of color feminist rhetoricians. I do this to acknowledge that many of these women who have contributed to rhetorical theory and praxis would not call themselves rhetoricians. It is not their day job. They are by charge, social theorists, gender studies scholars, freelance writers and storytellers. Nonetheless, what they do informs how we do rhetoric and composition theory and praxis if we view our day jobs as critical to the creation of democratic culture (Mentzell Ryder 2011). This said, I believe my initial concern speaks to those whose day jobs revolve around writing and writing studies. However, as my concern expands, so my audience widens to be inclusive of those who make the design of dialogue and deliberation their daily task. I suggest the woman of color feminist rhetorician advances the design of dialogue and deliberation by her rituals of resistance as an alternative way to initiate and sustain relationships of trust between many publics. Without which, we do not have the capacity to sustain the national project of democracy. The advance here borrows from her intellectual capital; woman of color consciousness and the intersectional method crystalizing from it (Alarcón 1990; Anzaldúa & Keating 2002 ; Sandoval 2002; Patricia Hill Collins n.d.). Together, woman of color feminist rhetorical theory and praxis informs a best practice to realize continuous social change in our communities of color by how she suggests we shape public spaces to best nurture dialogue and deliberation across multiple publics.

Namely, I claim she intentionally shapes safe spaces via rituals of resistance as rhetorical expressions of feminist spirituality (hooks feminism is for everybody 109). These rituals shape safe spaces to build capacity first between herself and other women of color, and as I will discuss in part two, how the notion of safe spaces may be widened as a means of sustaining an inclusive

process of dialogue and deliberation across many publics (Nienow et al. 83). Although her rituals are modes of doing dialogue and deliberation differently, they are not readily recognized as a form of public engagement. Yet, John Gastil, professor of Communication Arts and Sciences at Penn State, urges us to make the design of dialogue and deliberation a priority if we are to realize a robust democracy (2014). Professor with the Department of Humanities, Social Science and Social Justice, and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, John P. Portelli, defines robust democracy as "one that fully respects social justice, diversity and equity (rather than simply equality of opportunity) (n.pag.). To support the idea: rituals shape safe spaces to initiate, engage, and sustain a conversation across many publics, I will attempt to overlay the framework of rituals onto the landscape of a movement—*Black Lives Matter*. I view the "demands" of *Black Lives Matter* as a collective expression of rhetorical sovereignty. Addressing what Native Americans want from the technologies of writing, Richard Scott Lyons defines rhetorical sovereignty as "a people's control of its meaning" (447). For those who may view the subject of writing with its innumerous composition technologies as one that creates and sustains democratic culture, the idea of rhetorical sovereignty is not limited to control of meaning by a single counterpublic. In a group deliberation dynamic composed of many publics, collective control of meaning may be in the explicit intention to work through different visions of social justice articulated on their own terms. A collective meaning of the process of dialogue and deliberation is not in its outcome but in the sustainability of relationships formed to realize continuous social change. A shared meaning informed by women of color feminist rhetorical process is her rituals of resistance. The shaping of safe spaces is what these counterpublics do with multimodal rhetoric and composition technologies. *Black Lives Matter* takes control of the meaning of these technologies in their collective and explicit intention to sustain continuous

social change in their communities of color. Moreover, I believe women of color feminists rhetoricians' rituals of resistance are necessary to sustain this movement's capacity to engage a multiplicity of publics with the intention to work through differences; "not over, not by, not around, but through" (Moraga 1983 xiv). I suggest a way of life, rituals of resistance, shape safe spaces best suited to sustain publics as they deliberate visions of equity and restoration of *public* space that inform policies that will affect whole communities for generations. Woman of color feminist rhetorical process supports a rehumanizing discourse. To rehumanize a discourse is to reclaim a language that traps entire peoples physically (migration), economically (inequity), or socially (prison industrial complex) in generational cycles of injustice (ferguson commission). The "demands," also viewed here as a living document must be engaged to stay alive. Women of color feminist rhetoricians offer a way to be sure we are best prepared to respond to these demands, engage them, and sustain this movement as if the quality of our own lives depended on it.

CHAPTER II

DOING DIALOGUE AND DELIBERATION DIFFERENTLY: WOMEN OF COLOR FEMINIST RHETORICIANS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION THEORY—A NEW WAY OF THINKING

In the study of Rhetoric, kairos is considered the moment ripe for public response. Kairos is defined by those acts which articulate a moment in history or a movement toward an envisioned future. We think of such acts in their oral, embodied, or text-based form. We identify key players and shapers of discourse as those whose speeches, performances, or personas are representative of shifts in American consciousness. Women of color feminist rhetoricians understand such transformations in consciousness. It is her personal transformation, her rhetorical process, which I trace here. In the opening of this bridge we call home, Gloria Anzaldúa, Analouise Keating, and Chela Sandoval shape a space for a differential way of knowing and being— woman of color consciousness (Anzaldúa & Keating 2002; Sandoval 2002). Patricia Hill Collins refers to woman of color consciousness as a process of rearticulation rather than the accepted view of "consciousness raising" as woman of color feminist method (n.pag.). She views Black feminist discourse as one already existing as part of national discourse. She suggests rearticulation is a dynamic between changes in thinking and their consequential actions that inform Black feminist theory. Her point is one Benita Roth supports as well, Black feminism emerged in direct relation to experiences with both gender and racial oppression.

Therefore, her discourse is one kept alive by informing it with her lived experiences in relationship to—what she refers to as—intersecting oppressions (Patricia Hill Collins n.pag.; Hill Collins 1993). Her writings affirm Black feminist method evolved at the intersections of race, gender, class, and sexuality at a time when their feminist counterparts were articulating the feminist method as "consciousness raising" which stood solely on the grounds of gender. Therefore, this rearticulation of her being, way of knowing, and making meaning in the context of her personal lived experience is not inclined to homogenous standpoints or unified subjectivity (Alarcón 1990). Norma Alarcón critiques contemporary feminism's failure to question their inherited White male consciousness. She discusses how feminists adopted a mainstream notion of consciousness which originates with a singular voice affirming individual agency, and further, the ideology of Western individualism. Citing Jane Flax, she supports woman of color consciousness problematizes the subject of knowledge and …[feminism's] complicity with the notion of consciousness as synthetic unificatory power, the centre and active point of organizations of representations determining their concatenation" (Alarcón 1990). This way of knowing and being is at home in difference and divergence.

This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color embarked the rhetorical process of the woman of color feminist rhetorician referred to here in three phases as: location, deliberation, and restoration (1983). To begin, location delineates from an initial intention of women of color feminists to grapple with their complex identities. In this phase, the self is a starting place. *This Bridge Called My Back* serves as a principal anthology which broke ground for woman of color feminist discourse with its unapologetic tone and bold claims to woman of color and third world woman identity as separate from their White feminist counterparts. These proclamations testified to feminism on the margins whose political agenda

reflected the lives of women of color. While the voices contributing to this larger body of work were concerned with naming their experiences, their primary intention was to shape a space in which to express them. They formed this safe space via rituals of resistance as rhetorical expressions of feminist spirituality ("chapter one" 2010; hooks 2000). This idea is supported in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde* and bell hooks' *Ain't I a Woman*, *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*, and *All about Love: New Visions*. From these texts, one is exposed to a woman of color feminist process as deeply spiritual. It is her way of making meaning of her daily lived experience by tapping into her instinctual knowledge (Brown 101; hooks Ain't I Woman 13; Feminism is for Everybody 103-109; All About Love 2000; Lorde 53). Gloria Anzaldúa refers to this feminist spirituality as:

> the spiritual practice of conocimiento: praying, breathing deeply, meditating, writing—dropping down into yourself, through the skin and muscles and tendons, down deep into the bone's marrow, where your soul is ballast—enable[s] you to defuse the negative energy of putdowns, complaints, excessive talk, verbal attacks, and other killers of the spirit
>
> (572)

Conocimiento as a feminist spirituality tells us this is something we must return to repeatedly. In this sense, early in the process, the woman of color feminist recognizes the necessity of ritual as a means to challenge dominant modes of being in and making meaning of the world. Moreover, these rituals serve to create a safe space where women of color feminists could locate the intersections of their complex identities and view them in relationship to their social constructions. When we think of a ritual, we think of something we do repeatedly with focused

intention. June Jordan would refer to ritual as a daily affirmation of self-love and self-determination: “And it is here—in this extreme coincidence of my status as someone twice stigmatized, my status as someone twice kin to the despised majority—it is here, in this extremity, that I stand in a struggle against demoralization and suicide and toward self-love and self-determination” (174). It is along this deeply spiritual trajectory which emerges as daily rituals of self-affirmation, the woman of color feminist challenges constructions of self, community, and ultimately Love. Therefore, we may regard early-on what she does throughout her process as rituals of resistance. These rhetorical expressions of feminist spirituality shape a safe space for her process—location, where she rewrites her *self*, and deliberation, where she rewrites her community—to unfold. For Audre Lorde, this ritual of resistance is the power of the erotic (53). She reminds us to connect to our innermost, deep-seated feelings of satisfaction and fulfillment in our physical, emotional, and spiritual lives. She testifies “The erotic is a resource within each of us that lies in a deeply female and spiritual plane, firmly rooted in the power of our unexpressed or unrecognized feeling” (53). The act of locating within one’s self the suppressed faculty of our psyche to make meaning of our physical realities is rhetorical and theoretical when we consider the definition of theory from Readings in Feminist Rhetorical Theory:

> Theory is a way of framing an experience or event in an effort to understand and account for something and the way it functions in the world. We define theory as something individuals do as they try to ‘figure out answers for, develop explanations about, and organize what is happening in their worlds.
>
> (Griffin, Foss and Foss 2)

Rituals of resistance are what women of color feminists rhetoricians do. When I suggest her process contributes to rhetoric and composition theory, I suggest her rituals of resistance are collectively composed, multimodal rhetorical expressions in the employment of shaping space necessary to initiate change work. Moreover, it is shaping safe spaces for many public which extends beyond the limits of the personal. She challenges what rhetoric and composition can do when a deeply spiritual process informs a critical approach to the shaping of our public spaces. As we will see, whether in the form of dance, storytelling, or protest, it is how she and those who share her consciousness account for a world—as it is—and moreover, how they believe it should be. Location is the phase where the woman of color feminist both embraces and interrogates a view of self as a political construct (Hanisch 2006; hooks "Feminist Politicization" 2015).

The woman of color feminist rhetorician challenges at every phase of her process notions of private and individualism. It is a notion of the woman's private body as a public battle ground for the perpetuation of patriarchal order and oppression which sparked contemporary feminism's rhetorical response "the personal is political" (Hanisch 2006). The phrase underscores a woman's daily domestic life as a political struggle for autonomy and equality. A woman did not have to be radically politicized beyond her individual experience. This also served the purpose of debunking the private/public dichotomy of a woman's homeplace as the bastion of patriarchal order where her wellbeing was a private matter. The personal is political brought domestic violence out of the shadows of the private bedroom and into the light of the public eye. A private issue became a public concern. However, woman of color feminist theorist, bell hooks, expressed her apprehension of "the personal is political" to sustain a clearly articulated feminist politics ("Feminist Politicization"). This standpoint, hooks argued, would leave feminist publics weak in terms of forming a sustainable solidarity which she believed could only be forged with

the intention of engaging multiple publics outside of the personal ("Feminist Politicization"). Nancy Fraser asserts, weak publics engage discourse on their own terms between themselves and across other counterpublics. Yet, they lack impetus to garner sustainable political clout (Fraser 1990). Rather than accepting this feminist standpoint as the movement's panacea, hooks proposed feminists view the personal is political as a necessary first step in an ongoing process of change where politicization of self would extend outward to include other potential sites of resistance and politicization ("Feminist Politicization").

Gloria Anzaldúa agrees, it begins with locating self "to create a new narrative articulating your personal reality…creating a new description of reality" ("now let us shift" 545). The personal is a starting place. It is the initial phase of woman of color feminist rhetorical process. It is represented by an internal struggle to bring the pieces of one's identity together; the ones we gather are broken, or in the worst case, without meaning beyond just another story told, another token testimony tolerated. Our words, we must remind ourselves, are not pointless. The point is only missed by those who still view what is meaningful to us through a singular lens. Even if that lens is one of neutrality, we now understand there is no greater killer of the spirit than apathy. Our testimonies are not tainted in a language of brokenness. Only when our words are not engaged, our intellectual capital is left broke. The determination to know ourselves, and further to reach out beyond ourselves in hope of engaging the identities and views of others is the determination to love ourselves. This is what June Jordan speaks of. She resists those killers of the spirit Anzaldúa refers to. Once we determine to make sense of our complex identities, we are determined to put our stories of self out into a public arena. For when our stories come into dialogue with the stories of others, empowerment is fully realized. Empowerment is not a transitional state but a transformational *way of life* (Ruder et al. 6). The path of conocimiento,

and the power of the erotic are commitments the woman of color feminist makes to herself on a daily basis to resist those external forces which would have her believe the quality of her life is her own private agenda. She understands, the personal is political is not sufficient to sustain the eradication of inequity at it roots (Anzaldúa "now let us shift" 540, Lorde 2007). Her story of self cannot remain within the limits of the personal.

Location in the context of woman of color feminist rhetorical process may be misconstrued. While it is a way to make meaning of their lived experiences, more so, it is a way to reconstruct or rewrite their identity by deliberately viewing "self" as a political construct. In other words, they are aware the personal is political, but the personal cannot remain so. The story of her self must not settle on some sense of false synthesis. It is this initiating stage of the process where notions of identity are complicated (Anzaldúa "now let us shift" 2002). Women of color feminists understand their unique position at the intersections of race, class and gender identity ("Patricia Hill Collins" n.pag.). Across an inner landscape as diverse as the outside world she treads, her identity may be further complicated by linguistic, cultural, and regional differences as well (Anzaldúa Borderlands 1987; Smith 1990; Smitherman 1997). Location functions as a way she recognizes the many voices informing her subjecthood (Jane Flax cited in Alarcón 1990). Before she is able to put her story of self out into the world to find connections to the stories of others, she must first find these connections or intersections within herself ("Patricia Hill Collins" n.pag.).

Location is a form of empowerment. Anzaldúa explains empowerment as "the bodily feeling of being able to connect with inner voices/resources (images, symbols, beliefs, memories) during periods of stillness, silence, and deep listening or with kindred others in collective actions" ("now let us shift" 571). This knowledge and strength in one's ability to

make connections is referred to by Anzaldúa as "an identity of mestizaje…the new tribalism…propagating other worldviews, spiritual traditions, and cultures" as you determine who you are ("now let us shift" 560). It is a way to resist false binaries and dehumanizing labels. Especially the labels we place on ourselves and others who have more in common with us than we have taken the time to imagine. Location then is a position from which to speak back to the master narrative (Anzaldúa 1983, 1990, 2002; Brown 2009; Falconer and López 2011; Durham et al. 2013). This master narrative is one that limits us to acculturation to one culture; one way of life, or enculturation to a singular identity within the diverse diaspora of our cultural heritage ("now let us shift" 561).

Further, for Anzaldúa, the path of conocimiento is a ritual of resistance that articulates tapping into our instinctual knowledge as an alternative source of knowing and being. The woman of color feminist does not need to break herself down into parts and pieces, so she may be able to analyze them critically and put them back together again in some false synthesis. Wholeness within the framework of woman of color rhetorical process is qualitative at best. It is not a quantitative, fixed reality. However, wholeness is realized in one's ability to work with others, to engage in dialogue and deliberation with the intention of emerging whole as a community whose identity is collectively negotiated. A community shaped by a multiplicity of publics values knowledge generated and circulated via rituals of resistance as a means to sustain the continuous project of social equity and restorative justice. For the phase of Location, one may imagine this wholeness on the personal level preparing to emerge into an arena of multiple publics.

Anzaldúa's path of conocimiento occurs in seven stages. She refers to the first stage as "éste arrebato, the earthquake" ("now let us shift" 544). It is a moment of fissure and the

breaking up of the world around you. As Anzaldúa describes it "the need to understand, you crave to be what and who you are" ("now let us shift" 540). To locate ourselves then means to recognize our own inner differences and multiple voices shaping our identities. With this struggle to make meaning of herself, there is the initial break with what she has been told to believe is good, possible, and beautiful. The next stage is referred to as "nepantla" ("now let us shift" 544). Nepantla is a "transition space":

> You reflect critically, and as you move from one symbol system to another, self-identity becomes your central concern… the place where different perspectives come into conflict and where you question the basic ideas, tenets, and identities inherited from your family, your education, your different cultures. Nepantla is the zone between changes where you struggle to find equilibrium between the outer expression of change and our inner relationship to it
>
> ("Now let us shift" 548-549)

As the individual surfaces from these depths of Nepantla, or what is considered here as the transition from the phase of location to the phase of deliberation, one determines to share their rewritten story of self with the *public*. One is prepared to make their story part of the story of many public*s*.

Before transitioning from location, and the view of self as a political construct, I would like to expand upon the notion of location. I first came across this term by Whitney A. Peoples' bold proclamation: "we cannot resist what we cannot locate" which speaks to intergenerational tensions between Hip hop feminists and "second wave" Black feminism (37). She views a

diverse public in conversation in order to get a fuller view of how each contributes (albeit on their own terms) to the capacity of a movement to be sustained. Though this public consists of Black feminists, they differ in their identity as contemporary Black feminists or Hip hop feminists. They also belong to different generations of Black feminism. In response to this tension, Peoples speaks to the necessity for a generationally specific feminism (Hip hop feminism) not to disregard the political strategies of previous generations of Black feminists whose "respectability politics" functioned to secure a space for their voices to be represented in the shaping of public and academic discourse (36). People's concern is Hip hop feminists may not immediately relate to the political urgencies of their predecessors. However, she believes there is still much to be learned by past struggles in order to preserve political gains Hip hop feminists enjoy today. Here, the rhetorical act of location functions to preserve the historical memory of Black feminism which informs the future of the movement. On the other hand, Peoples supports Hip hop is shaped by five elements: the deejay, producer; the rapper, femcee and emcee; the breakdancer, b-girl and b-boy; the graffiti artist; and the fifth element, knowledge, generated by the aforementioned four elements. She takes time to recognize this in order to dispel a false notion of Hip hop culture as homogenous (23). She wants to be sure second wave Black feminists do not view their Hip hop feminist sisters as the sum of rap music. In other words, to find connections between generations of Black feminists, she must complicate the views each have of the other. For the Hip hop feminist, location takes on another meaning rooted in one's zipcode. Location is a shout-out to one's physical place or group association (Rose 11). For example, a b-girl comes from a specific neighborhood, or even within her neighborhood, from a specific crew or group of b-girls and b-boys who want to be recognized. In a growing global Hip hop culture, this recognition ensures one's part of the world is present in

the shaping of the culture overall. So, for the Hip hop feminist, location is a "shout out" to one's place of physical origin. Peoples identifies the rift between generations as a need to shift how Black feminists view Black women and women of color who identify Hip hop. While she supports the relevance of questioning how Hip hop culture exploits women, she also understands that *with new ways of thinking must come new ways of acting* ("Race, Class, and Gender" 1993). Though she does not explicitly mention "intersectional method," she refers to many crosscutting interests at the intersections of being a woman of color and a woman of color who identifies Hip hop ("Race, Class, and Gender" 1993). The act of location functions to retain a movement's history as it also functions to bring this movement to the fore of a wider global culture. While location is treated within the limits of woman of color feminist rhetorical process as a contribution to rhetorical theory, here, Peoples also applies intersectional method in her attempt to draw connections and points of continued solidarity between different generations of Black feminism. If theory is what they do within the phases of location and deliberation as a transformational way of thinking, then in the phase of restoration, their method contributes to praxis as what they do differently. Intersectional method is a means of locating crosscutting interests between diverse publics. It begins by locating within ourselves internal contradictions or those points where gender, race, sexuality, and ability meet. It is a formation of identity constructed via these intersections, as they inform a new sense of wholeness that is not limited to acculturation or assimilation. Location helps us to embrace more than one way to know a thing, to circulate what we know, and engage with the world from this epistemological standpoint. Location denotes a shift is about to take place. Intersectional method crystalizes as woman of color does theory and offers a new way to do something out of it. To conclude my initial engagement with the term location, what begins with location finalizes for Peoples with her use

of intersectional method to make connections between the historic struggle of Black feminists, and the current political agenda of Hip hop feminists. As she locates the intersections of their struggle as women, women of color, Black feminists, and Hip hop feminists, she contributes to possible new points of alliance within the movement. She arrives at the necessity of previous generations of Black feminists to continue to question what Hip hop culture is doing to women of color who identify Hip hop, but she now urges us to reposition Hip hop feminists within a consideration of how they engage Hip hop culture in ways which rearticulate Black feminist method as one that raises consciousness as it explicitly seeks to make connections between intersecting interests across a multiplicity of publics.

In the attempt to make connections and form new alliances, we find an entry point into the second phase of the woman of color rhetorical process—deliberation. Another term for deliberation may be divergence, disruption, or even dislocation. It is a shift to a consciousness at home in divergent thinking. A way of making meaning disruptive of false dichotomies and dislocating "fixed" and "normative" ways of being and knowing. Anzaldúa refers to this part of the process toward transformation as spiritual activism:

> spiritual activism begins with the personal yet moves outward, acknowledging our radical interconnectedness. This is spirituality for social change, spirituality that recognizes the many differences among us yet insists on our commonalities and uses these commonalities as catalyst for transformation. What a contrast: while identity politics requires holding onto specific categories of identity, spiritual activism demands we let them go
>
> (Keating 9)

Gloria's spiritual activism requires we rearticulate or rewrite our notion of identity as individuals and communities. By doing so, we are not bound to the false "we" of a single issue or unitary category (Fraser 64, Alarcón 358). In deliberation, the woman of color feminist rhetorician learns what to let in and what to keep out. Deliberation supports the flow of ideas in dialogue as identity is negotiated and new alliances nurtured. It is in the phase of deliberation, the woman of color feminist, and those who desire what Patricia Hill Collins refers to as "continuous social change," view community as a political construct ('Patricia Hill Collins n.d.; "the new politics" 2009). Continuous social change is a collective commitment to sustain a movement for justice and equity in our communities of color by not limiting a social movement to the interests of a single social group ("the new politics" 2009). When community is viewed as political construct, it no longer affords its status as a neutral term grounded in a neutral space ("the new politics" 2009). Without a view of community as a political construct, no room is left to challenge those interlocking structures of oppression which are not readily understood as having connections to one another (Hill Collins 1993). For example, over the last five years, I have witnessed the term community weaved into a political language of "safe communities" as a means to justify the militarization of the US-Mexico border and the consequential criminalization of undocumented, migrating peoples (Cracking the SAFE 2013). When we view community as a political construct we challenge standpoints of neutrality and resist criminalization of our neighbors and families because we are in a position to deliberate those aforementioned intersections which the struggles of many publics overlap and meet. The act of locating intersections within one's self as a starting place and in one's community where the oppression of the undocumented intersects with the oppression of the undocumented lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and queer youth of color, positions these intersecting publics to deliberate a collective vision of social justice and equity.

These conversations may make us feel uncomfortable, or at worst, apathetic. For these conversations to inform a line of action we can take as a community to redress these issues of inequity, women of color feminist rhetoricians understand we have to do some initial ground work. To have conversations where our differences are a guide-map and not solely points of contention, a level of trust needs to be nurtured. Publics who occupy these spaces of dialogue and deliberation must view them as safe spaces where the intention is to work through difference, and more importantly, to view many ways of life as they inform potential collective action (Ruder et al. 6). As we transition from their contributions to theory to their contributions to praxis, we will see how they shape such spaces.

For now it is worth making a connection to the age of information where ideas are the new currency. The woman of color feminist rhetorician understands the importance of the flow of her ideas as they often take the form of dance, storytelling, and interactive composition technologies. One of her contributions to rhetorical theory—woman of color consciousness—is her intellectual capital. As she moves through the phases of location and deliberation, her consciousness encompasses and is shaped by points of divergence within herself. Her inner divergence manifests in the phase of deliberation where her story of self comes into contact with the stories of others and is affirmed or resisted. As she moves through many publics, she is in the position to view pieces of herself in the struggles others face. The woman of color feminist rhetorician treats difference as a means to engage multiple publics. What is clearly significant to this way of knowing, being in, and making meaning of the world is its explicit state of divergence. As she views self and community as a political construct, she is able to make connections otherwise not readily accessible or visible because they are located at points of divergence or difference other publics may view as counterproductive or unnecessary to the

project of alliance building. However, the woman of color feminist rhetorician understands the value of working through difference to free ideas from hegemony. When the genuine interests of social justice and equity are an explicit goal, we may not know the struggles we share until we are able to name their cause. In a struggle for equity, the cause is tied to notions of self and community we take for granted. Therefore, the woman of color feminist is aware it takes a different way of thinking about and a different way of doing dialogue and deliberation where the starting place invites difference; it does not check our differences at the thresholds of neutral standpoints. Difference is a door we walk through to meet with new possibilities for the spaces we shape collectively. In an age of information, how we shape spaces for publics to deliberate the meaning of whole communities determines the quality of relationships formed in them and sustained over time. Rituals of resistance are a rich source of community-based knowledge. They are storehouses of information expressed collectively in the form of movement, dance, storytelling and plática (Guajardo and Guajardo 2011). The initial shaping of safe spaces allows deliberating publics to maximize the amount of information collectively generated and circulated to contribute to a vision of a whole community. When many ways of life flow into the process of shaping collective action via community-based knowledge, deliberating publics value human dignity over categories of humanness.

Back on the path of conocimiento, Anzaldúa presents the woman of color feminist rhetorician as a facilitator of dialogue and deliberation. She calls her the “nepantlera” (“now let us shift” 569). The concept of the nepantlera is aligned here with the next phase in the woman of color rhetorical process referred to as restoration. Anzaldúa articulates this transition from an individual or community in deliberation to those who emerge transformed in consciousness “now let us shift” 569). It is worth recalling here the phases of woman of color rhetorical process are

recursive. Even as we understand the significance of forming spaces for many publics to deliberate new ways of thinking and taking action in their communities, we ourselves emerge as writers, feminist thinkers, and public engagement practitioners whose own way of thinking is constantly challenged as we work, live, and learn immersed in the complex diaspora of community. Therefore, restoration is not to be treated as a final product but an ongoing commitment to grapple with difference, so we may locate those ideologies that reinforce our limited scope of problematizing gross inequities in our communities of color. Anzaldúa refers to one who possesses this transformed consciousness as "las nepantleras [who] must alter their mode of interaction—make it more inclusive, open. In a to-and-fro motion they shift form their customary position to the reality of first one group then the other" ("now let us shift" 567). Further, she identifies the nepantlera as a facilitator of conflict resolution between many differing viewpoints. She refers to this as a *connectionist faculty* to show the deep common ground and interwoven kinship among all things and people; "this faculty, one of less structured thoughts, less rigid categorizations, and thinner boundaries" ("now let us shift" 567-568). For the radical feminist of color who became a woman of words, it is a matter of disrupting normalized modes of doing change work. It is a matter of locating and deliberating those underlying ideologies that serve to subjugate spaces of potential alliances. (Hill Collins 1993).

Restoration as the final phase of woman of color rhetorical process is a commitment to working through our differences in order to return to a sense of wholeness in our communities of color (Moraga preface xiv). In the phase of restoration, a question about Love resounds. The woman of color feminist wants to know where love is in her life, but moreover, in her community. bell hooks asserts the only way to recover love in our lives and communities is to first admit we may have very little experience with what love actually is ("all about love" 2001).

Like Audre Lorde who locates the power of the erotic as a liberatory practice, hooks asks us to consider collectively defining love as a liberatory force with the power to eradicate inequity at it roots when we act in the world the way we want to feel ("all about love" 2001). Ultimately, underlying women of color rhetorical process is a search to locate, deliberate, and restore love in communities of color. Here, rituals "[create]…a bridge of compassion between you and those who hold beliefs that are opposed to yours" (Bray, Attwood and Atwood 232). The question of Love is one the woman of color feminist rhetorician poses as she transforms herself, and in the process, offers us a way to transform how we view and engage difference in spaces shaped by many publics (hooks 2001; Fraser 1990; Jordan 1990; Sandoval 2002). The Love posited here must first and foremost be in the form of self-love, self-respect, and self-determination (Jordan 174). This love is not the sum of identity politics but a commitment to embrace one another's stories, one another's lived experiences, in dialogue. Dialogue is critical to continuous change ("Patricia Hill Collins" n.d.). Deliberating differences in dialogue requires ritual to bring us together with the explicit intention to make connections between our "common challenges" and "diverse responses" ("Patricia Hill Collins" n.pag.). hooks names this approach to the restoration of whole communities as Love ethic ("all about love" 2001). One may view this way of acting in the world as an ethic; more so, a way of life which is expressed rhetorically in the forms of rituals of resistance that inform a best practice for the shaping of spaces suited to do dialogue and deliberation ("all about love" 2001). Citing Erich Fromm, Thomas Merton and Martin Luther King Jr., hooks asserts "in their work, loving practice is not aimed at simply giving an individual greater life satisfaction; it is extolled as a primary way we end domination and oppression" ("all about love" 76). Love is no longer a mystery but an active force since it is practiced with intention ("all about love" 2001). It is our intention to love ourselves, to remind ourselves we are

whole, and in this re-membering of self, remember our communities by working through our differences (Hurtado 2015). Restoration, much like the notion of wholeness is not something we achieve as an end or quantitative result. Restoration like wholeness is not fixed and immutable. As the demographics of communities change, new ways of thinking will inform new ways of doing dialogue and deliberation to meet these changing needs. Restoration and wholeness is a long term commitment to continuous social change. Ritual, and in the instance of woman of color feminist rhetorical process, rituals of resistance are a conduit which aid our ability to shift consciousness in safe spaces of cross cutting interests.

A woman of color consciousness responds to the call, where is the Love? (Morgan 2000; Jordan 1990; "all about love" 2001) And so she locates, deliberates, and restores herself and her communities with Love ethic as a way of life to sustain a movement for restorative justice and equity in communities of color ("all about love" 2001).

At this point, it should be made clear, that if a vision of social justice is limited to what others have done to us; we fail to look at what we do to ourselves (Keating 2002). Love ethic does not abdicate responsibility or transfer the bulk of accountability to others. Restoration requires we practice "an extensive level of agency" (Keating 2). This extensive agency shifts our focus from what has been done to us to what we are doing to each other and our environment (Keating 2). In this context, intersectional method is a means to engage the numerous intersections of our lived experiences in order to challenge notions of singular identities and complicate the binary of assimilation and acculturation. The ideas is to shape spaces for the interruption of either/or thinking that limits the sustainability of continuous social change work. The intention is: "mov[ing] beyond these categories to understand the interrelationships of ideas and processes that seem to be separate and unrelated" (Barat n.pag.). It is the range of problems

publics are willing to deliberate in order to locate those processes and ideas which function to isolate us from one another.

Love ethic, much as the power of the erotic, and Anzaldúa's path of conocimiento all speak to a way of doing something with intention. It is a way of life that intends to keep change work at the heart of what women of color feminist rhetoricians do. Her rituals are an appropriate rhetorical response to *Black Lives Matter*s as both rest on an awareness of the many publics who are and have been shaping their identity and their movement. Both urge us to view difference as a starting place to make new connections. AnaLouise Keating citing Toni King et al., testifies "'through our words first spoken and now written, we deepen and expand the connections between us...[women of color feminist rhetoricians] believe that words can initiate change and evoke new forms of alliance" (17). The demands of *Black Lives Matter* were first spoken in the streets of Ferguson, Missouri. They were then painted and written on the poster boards of protest. Finally, these demands were articulated and published on their website. What these demands attest to is the desire for their words to change their communities. However, women of color feminist rhetoricians tell us continuous social change requires a long-term and sustainable engagement built on relationships of trust. Therefore, love ethic, the power of the erotic, and the path of conocimiento viewed as rituals of resistance to shape safe spaces whose primary function is to build relationships of trust in order to locate and deliberate constructions of lived experiences to engage publics in sustainable change work. These rituals sung, danced, and told orally are born as feminist performance rooted in feminist spirituality. We may view this deeply spiritual process as the result of the space shaped by intention, rituals of resistance, which allow their process to unfold. These rituals are a framework for other possible trajectories. *Black Lives Matter* identifies as a movement which speaks to many crosscutting interests of multiple publics.

This movement intends to stay at the center of national discourse. Their demands as an expression of rhetorical sovereignty must be engaged and sustained on their own terms. This is what I mean by positing woman of color feminist rhetoricians' rituals of resistance as an appropriate and ethical framework with the capacity to sustain an ongoing dialogue in order to realize continuous social change. It is how we shape spaces to engage a multiplicity of publics that determines the quality of relationships established to sustain dialogue and deliberation. The trajectory I follow, asks us to view self, community, and love as political constructs in order to challenge notions of comprehensive publics and neutral spaces. This trajectory flows through the phases of location, deliberation, and restoration. And from her process, a woman of color consciousness takes shape. This consciousness is one of women of color feminist rhetoricians' contributions to theory.

Now it is important to highlight how what they do manifests as something done *differently*—or what they contribute to praxis. Before I look more closely at examples of community engagement done differently, and how they inform the sustainability of collective dynamics, I would like to first make a shift.

To best understand the necessity of a shift to a woman of color consciousness, and how one can practice it without being a woman or a woman of color, it is important to understand how women of color feminist rhetoricians employ it as:

> emotional, psychic, and social technologies that embody and circumscribe identities necessary for recognizing power, and changing its condition on behalf of equalizing power between socially and psychical differing subjects. These technologies give practitioners an opening that leads to another distinct mode of

> consciousness. This differential consciousness…as [a] connection
> to ‘spirit,’ to the ‘divine,’ or as a practice of ‘love’—la consciencia
> de la mestiza
>
> (Anzaldúa cited in Keating 23-24)

Woman of color consciousness, as Patricia Hill Collins informs it, requires one to identify the complexity within themselves, so too it “opens up conceptual space to identify new connections within the matrix of domination” (n.pag.). The idea of a matrix allows us to make connections between these domains of power which she refers to as: hegemonic, structural, disciplinary, and interpersonal (“Patricia Hill Collins” n.pag.) When we understand how they operate to compartmentalize and keep us fractionated, we are in a better position to challenge any set of beliefs that do not favor a reality of social change. Patricia Hill Collins refers to these systems of inequality as intersecting oppressions (n.pag.). With this new way of thinking, Hill Collins insists that new ways of acting must follow or “offer incomplete prospects for change” (“race, class, and gender” 1993). She suggests our daily behavior must agree with our awareness of how these oppressions operate as a matrix (“race, class, and gender” 1993). The point is to locate how this matrix shapes our lived experiences, so we are able to make connections to others’ lives which are also constructed by hegemonic paradigms (“race, gender, and class” 1993). To do this, we need a replicable means by which to view this matrix. At this point, woman of color feminist rhetorical process contributes to rhetorical praxis in the form of intersectional method (n.pag.). This method allows multiple publics to bring in nontraditional forms of knowledge and their daily lived experiences as a contribution to the creation of a robust democracy. Woman of color consciousness is the intentional application of this method by viewing our differences in

dialogue to make connections to those ideas of power and control restricting the sustainability of a movement for continuous social change.

In the preface to this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation, Anzaldúa situates her new vision of woman of color feminist movement as one which grew out of a time when identity politics was a critical strategy for representation. This earlier struggle is articulated in her reflection on an earlier coedited work This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color:

> Twenty-one years ago we struggled with the recognition of difference within the context of commonality. Today we grapple with the recognition of commonality within the context of difference' 'While This Bridge Called My Back displaced whiteness, this bridge we call home carries this displacement further. It questions the terms white and women of color by showing that whiteness may not be applied to all whites, as some possess women of color consciousness just as some women of color bear white consciousness…the politics of exclusion based on traditional categories diminishes our humanness
>
> (2).

What is significant about Anzaldúa's conviction in one's ability to possess a woman of color consciousness is also her recognition that people of color may not possess this consciousness. Just as bell hooks asserts one is not born a feminist, so too, one does not inherently recognize their lived experiences as a source of knowledge because this form of knowing is historically oppressed as a valid and sound basis for making meaning of the world. With the coining of

intersectional method as the woman of color feminist method, these experiential sources of knowledge gain credibility as differential ways of knowing and being in the world to engage a multiplicity of publics in conversation. For Anzaldúa, the expression of woman of color consciousness symbolizes a commencement of inner and public change work. However, those who desire to sustain a movement for continuous social change do so with an intention to recognize their position of power in relationship to other human beings. As Patricia Hill Collins supports, we are all participants in the act of oppression ("Race, Class, and Gender" 1993). Woman of color consciousness is an expression of our ability to invite a multiplicity of publics and their way of life to shape the spaces in which the deliberation of difference takes place. Through stories, dance, spoken word, or song, relationships of power are challenged as publics negotiate collective identities by making connections between forms of oppression they practice and seek to be liberated of.

Woman of color consciousness resists labels because labels are hard to remove. These are the equivalent to what Patricia Hill Collins refers to as structural and institutional oppression ("Race, Class and Gender" 1993). Rather, many publics are encouraged to treat categories of our experiences as a starting point from which to forge new alliances. Woman of color consciousness is treated here as a significant intellectual contribution by women of color feminists—who became women of words—to rhetorical theory.

In the first half of this discussion, the theoretical contributions of women of color feminist rhetoricians to the conversation of rhetoric and composition is considered. In the second half, examples of how her contributions to rhetorical theory inform how publics can do dialogue and deliberation differently will be considered. From woman of color feminist rhetorical process, to woman of color consciousness, it is imperative to make the shift to how dialogue and

deliberation is done differently, so we understand the value of rituals of resistance as a necessary, initial groundwork to shape safe spaces for this process. From this point of transformational consciousness grounded in ritual, publics are in a position to work through difference as a sure sign the necessary trust has been established to make the long-term commitment to continuous social change. This process is transformational as it requires we shift how we view relationships of power and those points of difference as starting places to forge alliances across multiple publics. Yet, how these constructs inform her outward experience, or how she does theory differently is seen in practice as cypher and circle. Namely, cypher and circle suggest nontraditional modes of discourse that challenge how safe spaces are established with many publics. If rituals of resistance in the their theoretical formations as the "power of the erotic," "the path of conocimiento," and "love ethic," shape a safe place for the individual, then rituals of resistance in their practical and public formations of cypher and circle shape safe spaces for a diverse group dynamic. In the context of collective action, and I lean toward a context of social movements, the notion of safe space affords visions of social justice and equity not only imagined by communities of color but realized via their collectively deliberated actions.

The key, however, to continuous social change is not just a collective plan of action, but the ability of publics to sustain dialogue over time to reflect changing needs and demographics of their communities. As rhetorical praxis, rituals of resistance take the form of cypher and circle, and one may ask what direct connection these forms of resistance have to woman of color feminist rhetorical process and consciousness. Here is where I ask the reader to recall that a woman of color consciousness is not defined by gender, race and class. Even so, the ritual of cypher as one of the elements of Hip hop culture is increasingly expressed in all female groupings. Cypher is presented here as *a way of life* (Ruder 2011). In the context of Hip hop

culture, it is a way of life for many self-identified women of color Hip hop feminists. As such, cypher is the space where the fifth element of Hip hop culture, knowledge, is generated, circulated, and shared. In cypher a safe space is shaped by these particular publics to locate, deliberate, and restore a valuable source of community-based knowledge. Cypher is treated here as the realization of shaping safe spaces on others' terms and according to their way of life. It is a nontraditional mode of discourse to kick off the process of dialogue and deliberation differently. Cypher may function to advance the design of dialogue and deliberation as a commencement ceremony to explicitly establish a safe space where relationships of trust may be nurtured for the purpose of working through difference. Similarly, *Circle* is also viewed as a way of life which preserves and circulates community–based knowledge. *Circle* focuses on shaping safe based on trust. Trust is essential in circle for us to share our personal lived experiences via storytelling. This storytelling works as a guide map to inform a plan of collective action to redress inequities in our communities of color. The connection to woman of color feminist rhetoricians' rituals of resistance is that these forms of public engagement are transformative in the sense they position relationship building as a way of life that must be nurtured and practiced on a daily basis if continuous social change is an outcome of dialogue and deliberation.

Finally, chapter four considers an overarching implication and support for the idea of woman of color feminist rhetoricians' way of life (rituals of resistance) as a best practice to sustain ongoing dialogue. To do this, I overlay what it is women of color feminist rhetoricians are doing, and attempt to make a connection to what they do differently as it informs how publics shape safe spaces as a foundation to keep the urgency of a movement alive. *Black Lives Matter*, "demands" the immediate redress of gross inequities in communities of color. The language of their demands is inclusive of all communities they believe are "criminalized…and brutalized"

(blacklivesmatter.com). They identify with a plurality of publics who historically and currently face discrimination based on their race, gender, class, sexuality, and ability, to name a few. The reality is social change requires a long term commitment to eradicate institutionalized and interlocking oppressions (Patricia Hill Collins n.d.; “Race, Class, and Gender” 1993). When I imagine a connection between a movement and way of life, I see how women of color feminist rhetoricians tell us, for one, how to appropriately respond to these demands, and secondly, how we can keep this dialogue going over time. Again, with so many publics whose interests are involved, what is more important than the resolution of collective action is the ability of a movement to build relationships of trust in order to realize continuous social change. I believe such rituals as cypher and circle reflect a resistance to traditional modes of bringing diverse publics together. And this is exactly what women of color feminist rhetoricians do differently in terms of advancing how we do dialogue and deliberation. It is the invitation to bring many ways of life together to shape safe spaces where these multimodal, rhetorical expressions are viewed as substantial contributions to the deliberation process. It is a connection between a deeply spiritual process, and a movement which explicitly makes the longevity of their intersecting causes their central concern. The ethical response is to sustain a conversation about what social justice looks like in our communities. One such community I will consider is my own. The rhetorical solution is inviting many ways of life into a safe space shaped within a framework of rituals of resistance as a means to meet these demands.

CHAPTER III

THE CYPHER AND CIRCLE AS A WAY OF LIFE: WOMEN OF COLOR FEMINIST RHETORICIANS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION PRAXIS—A NEW WAY OF ACTING

Notions of public and private as with any construction of social reality are shaped by language. The language of individual agency and privacy juxtapose terms such as common good, public sphere, and collective action. These labels are not without their useful function; public organizations determine rhetorical tactics and strategies in the privacy of their own safe spaces on one hand (Mentzell Ryder 2011). On the other hand, notions of private are invoked to limit what is viewed as, and therefore treated as, a public concern. Here, the contributions of women of color feminist rhetoricians to the praxis of rhetoric and composition will be presented in their multimodal forms as rituals of resistance. Ritual here is used to shape a safe space or *gracious* space where individuals, representative of multiple publics, may tell their stories to one another, and from these stories, deliberate an ethical call to action to address inequities in their communities ("chapter one"). Ritual is the explicit intention to invite our differences into a space where sustained change work requires we build relationships before we are able to build capacity of multiple publics to realize long term equity across generations. Working through difference requires we trust one another with our stories, so from a collective understanding of our shared

struggles, we may take actions to redress their causes. When I consider the act of deliberation, this includes how publics interact in, negotiate, and construct these spaces where dialogue happens, and how these happenings challenge the dichotomy of private and public The focus on deliberation is to show how these publics use terms of public and private as a means to determine whose knowledge and what forms of knowledge are allowed to circulate in these spaces. Phyllis Mentzell Ryder speaks of circulating communities as the ability of organizations to get their message publicized via mainstream and alternative media (2011). However, when I consider circulating community here, I do so by honing in on intrapublic designs of deliberation. Rather than the attempts of publics to capture the attention of mainstream or even alternative media, it is significant to understand how they share their message between themselves via a way a life (Ruder et al. 6). Namely, I will look at rituals of resistance in the form of cypher, storytelling, plática, and circle as nontraditional discursive practices reimagining how we shape spaces for multiple publics. These rituals of resistance are proposed here as a way to do dialogue and deliberation differently as they symbolize and embody a need to lay a foundation of trust between and across publics. From this foundation, spaces shaped by many publics are best suited to commence, and further, sustain movements for social change. As mentioned earlier, intersectional method is a means to view categories of difference not analyze labels. We are deliberating connections via our difference, not in spite of them. The dance cypher and the circle are not programs or processes in themselves. They are a way of life. They are informed by woman of color rhetorical process. While both instances of cypher and circle considered here do not explicitly name woman of color feminist rhetorical process behind the change work they do, I attempt to point out, that in fact, woman of color feminist rhetorical process is what they do.

Their rituals reflect the deeply spiritual work she does. Her process is about shaping safe spaces where publics may deliberate difference privately.

However, once they determine a strategy for collective action, they intend to express themselves publically. So what begins as a personal process of identity construction, then becomes the process of reconstituting publics as whole communities.

To begin, Dr. Ruth Nicole Brown's work reflects the woman of color feminist rhetorical process' contribution to doing dialogue and deliberation differently via the Hip hop dance cypher as a ritual of resistance which shapes a safe space for Black girls to deliberate their identities on their own terms (2009). This public space is shaped at the intersections of Hip hop feminism and Black girls' constructions of identity (2009). Dr. Brown, professor of Gender and Women's Studies and Educational Policy, at Urbana-Champaign focuses "her research [on] documenta[tion], analyses, and interrogat[ion] [of] Black girls' experience as it intersects with cultural constructions of Black girlhood" ("Ruth Nicole Brown" n.d.). She highlights rhetorical practices of Black girls such as playing double-dutch, singing rhyming songs to keep time and initiate one another into a space all their own shaped by free expression and the creative use of language and movement (2009). Her intent was to establish an afterschool program which provides a safe space for Black girls to create community with one another as a means of speaking back to their social conditioning by society and Black women. Saving Our Lives, Hearing Our Truths (SOLHOT) was the result. Dr. Brown presents "a framework of a critical hip-hop feminist pedagogy that is inspired by SOLHOT" (17). She defines Hip-hop feminist pedagogy as "a space created to employ ways of being, knowing, and questions that are unique (though not exclusive to) our generation's experiences about what it means to be and grow in-between the intersections of race, class, gender, age, and sexuality as mediated by hip-hop,

feminism, and education" (140). A few central concepts inform SOLHOT's Hip-Hop feminist pedagogy as "gendered (feminine) and racialized (blackness) work of bringing youth together to create dialogue, art, and social change using a strategic mix of political organizing fundamentals, cultured practices, and education" (140). Brown also draws on the idea of "the undoubted love hip-hop has for Black women's and girl's bodies, so love, here, is the source of a humanizing discourse, and it "creates the space for insight to be collectively shared and distributed, for new (other) knowledge to be produced, valuing, and caring for each person who shows up" (140). Lastly, "Hip-hop feminism pedagogy is political because power dynamics shape the need for it, and power over dynamics (specifically) is resisted in the doing" (141). With this understanding of SOLHOT's framework, we are in a position to better understand how they use private space (safe space), to reconstitute themselves as a public (Mentzell Ryder 2011). This means, they collectively rewrite their identity on their own terms. Black girls' lives are celebrated, valued, and made visible in a hypervisible culture saturated with media constructed images of their bodies and experiences which renders them invisible. They determine how they want to be viewed. Moreover, this reconstituted public creates a form of nontraditional democratic participatory culture in cypher as a way of life (Brown 93).

Meet the cypher, a means of circulating and distributing the fifth element of Hip hop culture, knowledge. The cypher is "the process of tapping into your subconscious. A state of mind where thoughts and actions flow from your mind rather than being instrumented" (cypher). In the context of a dance cypher:

> [Cypher is] a jam session in which everyone contributes to the creative experience. Be they DJs, dancers, rappers or graffiti writers, all the different artists that collectively make up the culture

> of hip-hop can have their own cypher. When dancers cypher, you'll see each taking a turn in the center of a circle, contributing a unique style, then resting. The center of the circle is never empty and the energy of the cypher grows as the dancers push themselves into increasing levels of athleticism
>
> ("cipher")

In cypher, knowledge is produced and circulated collectively. While one may occupy the center of the cypher for a short amount of time, it is understood that this knowledge is not complete in and of itself. The idea is to circulate knowledge, challenge it, or respond to it. What is produced in cypher must circulate fully, 360 degrees. It is a safe space where the danger of "falling off" – "a term rappers use to describe moments when someone gets tongue-tied, stutters, and abruptly stops in the middle of a freestyle… 'freestylin,' [is] a type of improvis[ion]" (Lee 307). In a dance or graffiti cypher, it may be the moment the next person in line cannot effectively contribute to cypher and put in in danger of being disrupted. However, Jooyoung Lee documents how the embarrassment of falling off may be ameliorated by another member of the cypher who steps up to help keep the cypher moving (307). Each participant in cypher is responsible for every other. The only rule in cypher is don't let the beat drop. In other words, one is expected to participate once they enter into cypher. The point being, no one individual can be representative of the cypher; cypher is a collective exercise whose completion depends upon a full revolution of 360 degrees. For SOLHOT, "Black girl dance ciphers are critical to understand the power that is embedded in the process by which we have been socialized in our bodies and disciplined out of certain spaces" (93). The girls initiate cypher as a ritual, an act with the intention to express themselves freely; this free expression of embodied rhetoric reconstitutes their own way of

knowing, making meaning of, and being in their communities. Let it be clear, in cypher they are doing what woman of color feminist rhetorical process does: challenging constructions of self and community. This idea is directly supported by Dr. Brown who affirms "Black girl dance ciphers embody and display not necessarily sexual pretense but the erotic as power as defined by Audre Lorde (1984) as sharing deeply any pursuit with another person" (93). This agrees with woman of color rhetorical process as a ritual rooted in the deeply spiritual that does not seek unity but collaboration as a means to work through difference. Cypher as a way of life shapes safe and dynamic spaces for publics to engage their peers, and further, determine to act collectively to engage other counterpublics. It is deeply spiritual and in touch with those sources of empowerment (lines of reasoning) not traditionally viewed as a way to engage in deliberation and dialogue. The cypher too is not a traditional mode of knowledge production or circulation. It is also not the first example of spaces shaped by dialogue and deliberation that we may be aware of. The Black girl dance cypher is a dynamic space which shapes who and what these girls can be when given the opportunity to deliberate self, community, and love on their own terms. Brown supports youth defined spaces shaped by "play" which she claims is also what black girls do in cipher. She cites the ideas of Johan Huizinga (1950) who supports play as a way to make connections:

> The child in making an image of something different, something more beautiful, or more sublime, or more dangerous that what [s]he usually is. The participants in the rite are convinced that the action actualizes and effects a definite beautification , brings about an order of things higher than that in which they customarily live…In play, 'representation' is really identification

(92).

In dance cypher, we witness the reconstitution of this public via self-expression in the form of dance cypher, in the form of play as way these girls connect with one another and relate to the world a collective vision of what is good, beautiful, and possible. For SOLHOT, dance cypher as empowerment agrees with woman of color feminist rhetorical process as an expression of self-love. SOLHOT's definition of Hip hop feminist pedagogy upholds "undoubtedly, hip-hop loves and appreciates Black women's and girl's bodies to the point of no return; hip-hop feminism brings that love and attention back from the perils of objectification and scorn to say 'if it is about love, then I should feel lovely.' Loving Black women and girls is a humanizing discourse, and a hip-hop feminist pedagogy finds ways to demonstrate how" (Brown 140). Our view of this counterpublic's process of circulating its reconstituted identities and worldviews in cypher is not solely a lesson in aesthetic appreciation, nor is it solely a way to view their resistance to power over dynamics. It is a way they negotiate terms of private and public. Who and what they determine to let into cypher, and how they collectively shape this safe space best suited to deliberate constructions of identity.

Another expression of a ritual of resistance is circle as a way of life (Ruder et al. 6). In an Educational Leadership course led by Dr. Francisco Guajardo, I discovered another public which also practices the art of cypher, only they call it circle as a way of life. In circle, an organization's capacity for "collective leadership" is developed through nurturing relationships based on trust and the art of conversation referred to by Dr. Guajardo as "plática" (Guajardo & Guajardo 99). Dr. Francisco Guajardo and his brother, Dr. Miguel Guajardo, recall how a foundation for collective leadership began with an understanding:

> Stories were inseparable from the art of conversation. Knowing how to have a conversation—understanding how to listen, how to ask questions, how to build on what others say—was a key skill set for the storyteller. The ability to have a meaningful conversation was almost a prerequisite to telling a good story
>
> (87)

In circle, stories are the central text from which we are to make connections across and through our differing visions of social justice. From the act of conversation and storytelling, multiple publics shape a space best suited for collective deliberation. The idea "is based on the premise that both the needed leadership and the needed answers will emerge from the collective wisdom of the group" (Nienow et al. 83). Circle, like cypher, is formed with intention; it is a ritual which takes much of its shape from indigenous ceremonial practices. A circle may commence with incense, symbolic totems, a drum in its center, or simply the verbal invitation to those who wish to initiate the process of change work (Roca Inc. 122). Circle forms by those willing to participate. Each member who enters circle understands a level of vulnerability and trust is required as part of the invitation to join (Ruder "chapter one"). This trust is cultivated in a gracious space which is the core of circle (Ruder "chapter one"). Collective leadership theory supports "gracious space can become a powerful method for practicing the pattern of developing deep, trusting relationships that foster loving and supportive environments" (Ruder "chapter one" 30). The gracious space enclosed in circle is the work of dissolving boundaries between individuals, so they may share lived experiences, reflect on their stories, and determine a plan of action, collectively (Ruder "chapter one"). For educational leadership, it is a way to bring educators, administrators, and vested stakeholders together to deliberate what educational equity

looks like for their community--“to get people thinking about what is good education” (Nienow et al. 81). To do this, we are asked to engage in deep listening. We listen to one another’s stories in a space shaped by ceremony and ritual. This ceremony of circle and ritual of storytelling creates a safe or gracious space in which we can reflect on one another’s experiences and allow our stories to guide our collective actions. Drs. Guajardo and Guajardo refer to the act of storytelling “as [the] complex and organic activity at the core of human activity” (94). It is treated in their research as a highly skilled process which includes understanding social context (Guajardo and Guajardo 94). When they refer to storytelling as an activity at the core of human activity, they recognize it as something deeply humanizing. When viewed as a ritual of resistance, we may consider the invitation to storytelling in processes of dialogue and deliberation as a deeply *re*humanizing activity. The brothers further affirm: “story is a product of human agency and formation informed by cultural dynamics, local ecology, and history” (Guajardo and Guajardo 94). Rituals of resistance in the form of circle as a way of life is a community-based rhetorical expression of restoration. The central purpose is not to arrive at some synthesis of individual experiences or a unified front. These rituals of resistance are a means to create safe and inclusive spaces for historically marginalized groups to express leadership and contribute the shaping of public space and the policies that govern them. What is clear throughout the discourse of these many publics whether women of color feminist rhetoricians, Black girls, or educational leaders of predominantly bicultural and bilingual communities, the underlying dynamic is to bring down barriers between publics. Dr. Ruth Nicole Brown articulates what is at the heart of what these publics do is resist power over dynamics. These rituals of resistance are often expressed as embodied rhetorics or multimodal forms of composition. The purpose of women of color feminist rhetoricians’ rituals of resistance is to

sustain movements. These publics go to great lengths to explain what it is they do when they speak of a continuous social change on the path to more equitably shaped public spaces. Their work, processes, and rituals do not reify difference. They work through differences as a source of community-based knowledge. For these publics, it is a consciousness shaped by multivocality, it is the cypher as an embodied, rhetorical argument for the right to take ownership of one's movements, voice, and body. In circle, our stories are shared and reflected upon as guide-maps to inform collective action. It is these ways of life; ways of making meaning of individual and collective crosscutting interests which ask us to engage deeper with who we are, so we may take action toward who we want to become as a community ("Patricia Hill Collins" n.pag.). These rituals draw on intersectional method to recover collective memory. When histories of many publics overlap and share points of intersection, they are in a position to reimagine or remember their collective story as one of wholeness. (Hurtado 2015). Thereby, in cypher and circle, with an understanding of self, community, and love as political constructs, counterpublics are reconstituted as strong publics. The actions they choose to take collectively, the publics they wish to be, are an impetus for a continuous and sustained activism (Fraser 1990). To conclude, collective leadership theory voices "In circle, we restore each other and ourselves to our natural wholeness. In circle, we look at each other without the protection of desks or physical barriers, learn to make ourselves vulnerable, and see our wholeness. This is how boundaries can dissolve" (Nienow et al. 38). Cypher and circle as a way of life nurtures collective leadership. These rituals shape safe spaces for stakeholders to build relationships of trust with one another, share stories, talents, and ultimately determine a collective course of action to redress inequity in their communities. Moreover cypher and circle as a way of life requires an opening of the heart to remind ourselves we are human and others are human too. Gloria Anzaldúa calls her cypher

"conocimiento." It is not about making acquaintances or performing daily acts of acquiescence, but our conscious intention to become more fully human through other human beings. This is intentional change work from the inside out (Ruder 2010).

These counterpublics and their way of life challenge the private/public dichotomy when they determine to open their personal and private experience to a public of their peers, and further attempt to engage in dialogue with other publics in order to deliberate a vision of social justice which informs their collective course of action. The cypher and circle as counterpublic modes of deliberation, shape a safe space to reclaim language that limits thinking; how we view ourselves, others, and the world (Trudgill 2000). The intentional shaping of these safe spaces supports a quality of relationships publics are able to form with one another. As a result, it means increasing their capacity to question relationships of power. The spaces shaped in cypher and circle mirror women of color feminist rhetoricians' rhetorical process. Their contribution to the study and practice of rhetoric and composition—woman of color consciousness and intersectional method—give us a means to grapple with an ecology of contention within and across communities. Intersectionality is a method to view differences on the terms of those who identify with them. In the act of making connections, we push and expand notions of how public spaces for deliberation will take shape. Within these spaces, many publics expand their "potential agencies as a part of an ever-expanding community of struggle" (Barat 2015). We allow ourselves to view other ways of knowing, being and making meaning of the world as valid modes of argument and points for dialogue. We allow the concerns of others to be taken to heart, and we determine to consider other visions of the world not as it is but as it should be. If working through difference is our alternative to assimilation or downplaying differences all together, then

it is in our intentional effort to welcome the contention our differences may cause as a positive indicator of a space best suited to sustain continuous social change.

Finally, Gloria Anzaldúa asks us to move toward a new consciousness, "la conciencia de la mestiza," a woman of color consciousness shaped by a multiplicity of voices informed by her lived experience (Keating 2002). As well, Patricia Hill Collins asks us to imagine community as a political construct in order to envision new approaches to viewing what is often taken for granted and limited to the realm of private life. bell hooks, June Jordan, and Dr. Ruth Nicole Brown ask us to consider what it means to love ourselves as a daily affirmation of empowerment in our personal lives and in our communal lives, when we shape spaces with publics to determine what love as a liberatory praxis will look like. Whitney A. Peoples and Dr. Brown also asks us to view Hip hop culture holistically as a culture that loves Black womens' and girls' bodies when women who identify Hip hop are positioned to shape spaces to feel lovely via the dynamic of cypher. These political constructs serve the purpose of challenging relationships of power as we deliberate a collective vision of social justice. With a shift in our thinking must come a new way of acting in the world aligned with our awareness of self, place, and the needs of a plurality of publics. Sharon Mckenzie Stevens and Patricia M. Malesh articulate how I believe women of color respond to the call to advance the design of dialogue and deliberation: "our task…is to work with others, whether they are colleagues, students, community members, lawmakers, or others, by creating spaces—both material and discursive—for transformative dialogue and action" (16). Woman of color feminist rhetorical process, a consciousness and a method, affords us a best practice to shape safe spaces via a way of life. With difference as a starting place for change work, multiple publics are engaged in a sustained movement toward whole communities.

Similarly, she advances the design of dialogue and deliberation to realize robust democracy as a movement, not a product.

Robust democracy in movement is *Black Lives Matter* because *Black Lives Matter* is more than a moment of transition in postrace America. It is a body of publics whose intention is to work through their differences to transform the project of democracy from one of equal opportunity to one of a genuine interest in “social justice, diversity and equity” in our communities of color (Portelli n.d.). I posit *Black Lives Matter* as robust democracy in movement i.e. in the making. Due to the fact, we have yet to fully witness the precedents for the design of dialogue and deliberation this movement informs. It is currently shaping national discourse on a daily basis, and at the same time, daily demanding we reconsider how we engage a multiplicity of publics to deliberate what equity looks like when the intention is to remain in a state of dynamic dialogue. In other words, this is not to say nothing is going to get done. The realization of restorative justice and equity in our communities is consequential of how spaces are initially shaped in which to deliberate difference. Proof of this lies in a precedent set September 14, 2015 with the online, interactive publication of the Ferguson Commission Report. Although this commission was not intentionally charged by Governor Jay Nixon to recommend how the city of Ferguson, Missouri, and the State of Missouri should respond to the demands of *Black Lives Matter*, they did identify underlying causes of racial tension in the aftermath of the shooting of Michael Brown Jr. They determined to publish their collective report with the intention of allowing as many publics as possible to respond to it and continuously shape it as new ways of thinking, collaborating, and working through differences arise, the report could continue to be an effective framework. Other interactive spaces to sustain the dialogue between multiple publics and a movement are social media forums and websites. Woman of color

feminist rhetorical process both complements and is necessary to sustain this movement for continuous change in their communities. As *Black Lives Matter* is robust democracy in movement, woman of color process and the rituals of resistance she employs to create safe spaces best suited for multiple publics to engage one another in sustained dialogue, are a best practice for a movement that depends on dynamic dialogue to keep it alive. They will require safe spaces to sustain, nurture, and support the rhetorical expressions of the many publics who desire to support it. Woman of color feminist rhetoricians would call this is a movement to keep the stories of counterpublics circulating. Moreover, it is a movement whose stories must keep growing legs (Guajardo and Guajardo 95). Drs. Guajardo and Guajardo state:

> A story with legs is one that lives and moves, could be passed down from generation to generation…[it] begins to contribute to the identity of place, people, and organizations…[it] moves people to action, provokes new questions, and helps identify the work that is connected to the story
>
> (95).

Rituals of resistance are a rhetorical response fit for a movement. For the story of a movement to grow legs requires we engage it, grapple with its message, and face its demands unflinchingly (fergusson commission report 2015). Woman of color feminist rhetorical process puts us in a position to deliberate difference. Rituals of resistance form a safe space by the level of trust it nurtures as we work through our differences via storytelling, dance, song, and plática. It is a movement to build relationships. It is inviting modes of discourse expressed rhetorically from a place of the spirit and body. As our understanding of what rhetoric can do in its multimodal forms continues to be complicated, communities demand we make spaces for them to contribute

to the deliberation of policies and projects which undoubtedly affect their lives. Women of color feminist rhetoricians' rituals of resistance master the shaping of spaces for a sustained dialogue that welcomes complex identities of peoples and places. A moment becomes a movement when we make dialogue and deliberation more inclusive of stories, spoken word, conversation, dance, rap, graffiti, and the testimonial. These rituals of resistance are the ground upon which publics may safely move with the *legs* of their collective and continuous activism.

In a final consideration, *Black Lives Matter* may viewed as a movement to establish love ethic in communities of color. Recalling bell hooks, she reminds us love is not an ambiguous hope or even an intense emotion we feel in our daily lives. It is an intentional action. Love is a liberatory praxis with the power to sustain a movement because it is in this context an intentional act of resistance against power over dynamics. Thereby, as a daily practice to act the way these publics want to feel is to determine to love themselves as whole communities. It is a movement determined to redress a lack of understanding and respect for peoples of color and other marginalized groups. Spaces are shaped by the path of conocimiento, Love ethic, and the power of the erotic as intentional uses of intellectual force. As well, they are formed by the embodiments of these forces, cypher and circle, deeply rooted in spiritual practice. These rituals are best suited to address this lack of love. In other words, a lack of public engagement processes that foster nontraditional designs of dialogue and deliberation where many publics may present their knowledge on their own terms. I argue these rituals are the ethical response to these demands that reflect a question at the heart of woman of color feminist discourse—*where is the love?* When many of ways of knowing and being are invited to shape and inform processes of group deliberation, these spaces will not be without interruption and disagreement. They thrive in a state of tension because at the intersections of seemingly diverging interests is a space for

new connections to be made. However, hooks also recognizes “realistically, being part of a loving community does not mean we will not face conflicts, betrayals, negative outcomes from positive actions, or bad things happening to good people. Love allows us to confront these negative realities in a manner that is life-affirming and life-enhancing” (All about Love 130). If trust is one key to advancing the design of dialogue and deliberation, then this trust is not with the hope of realizing the ideal, but in the least, sustaining a conversation inclusive of our differing visions of it.

CHAPTER IV

THIS IS NOT A MOMENT, BUT A MOVEMENT

February 26, 2012:

17 year old African American male, Trayvon Martin, purchases a pack of skittles from 7 Eleven and walks back to the apartment of his father's girlfriend in Sanford, Florida. A neighborhood watch member calls local police to report "a suspicious person" (CNN library). Trayvon is then confronted by the man who is told by police to wait in his SUV until they arrive. The teen is found dead. The man claims self-defense, is tried for second degree murder, and found not guilty (CNN library).

August 9, 2014:

18 year old African American male, Michael Brown Jr., walks across the street with a friend in the predominantly Black community of Ferguson, Missouri. They fit the profile of two young men who earlier robbed a neighborhood convenient store.

The officer shoots the teen multiple times claiming Brown approached his vehicle and attempted to wrest the gun out of his hands. The boy is dead and a jury decides not to indict the officer. (Chuck 2014).

November 22, 2014:

12 year old African American male, Tamir Rice, walks around a Cleveland recreation center with a toy pellet gun in his hand. A dispatcher receives a call and is told twice that the gun is probably a fake.

The officers who respond to the call are not told it may be a toy. The police car pulls up beside Tamir, and within the first two seconds, the officer is out of the car and shoots the child in the torso causing death (Ly and Hanna 2014).

In response to widespread media coverage of recent protests, President Obama addressed the American public:

> We need to recognize that this is not just an issue for Ferguson, this is an issue for America. We have made enormous progress in race relations over the course of the past several decades. I have witnessed that in my own life, and to deny that progress, I think is to deny America's capacity for change…What is also true is that there are still problems — and communities of color aren't just making these problems up
>
> (the white house blog)

The president then urged police to work with the community and not against them to distinguish between those who just want their voices heard, and those who would use court decisions to justify violence and crime in the streets. He went on to remind officers these "poorer communities with higher crime rates" are the ones who need their help the most. Officers should "enlist the community" in order to arrive at a best practice for working with predominantly communities of color (the white house blog).

Ferguson, Sanford, Cleveland, New York, and cities across the nation marched on December 13, 2014 as part of a national day of action. Organized

protesters gathered together, and a moment became a movement—*Black Lives Matter*. These are their collective demands:

> We Want an End to all Forms of Discrimination and the Full Recognition of our Human Rights:
>
> The United States Government must acknowledge and address the structural violence and institutional discrimination that continues to imprison our communities either in a life of poverty and/or one behind bars. We want the United States Government to recognize the full spectrum of our human rights and its obligations under international law.
>
> We Want an Immediate End to Police Brutality and the Murder of Black, Brown & All Oppressed People:
>
> Every 28 hours a black person in the United States is killed by someone employed or protected by the government of the United States. Other communities are also criminalized, targeted, attacked and brutalized. We want an immediate end to state sanctioned violence against our communities.
>
> We Want Full Employment for Our People:
>
> Every individual has the human right to employment and a living wage: Inability to access employment and fair pay continues to marginalize our communities, ready us for imprisonment, and deny us of our right to a life with dignity. We Want Decent Housing Fit for the Shelter of Human Beings:

Our communities have a human right to access quality housing that protects our families and allows for our children to be free from harm.

We Want an End to the School to Prison Pipeline & Quality Education for All:

We want an end to policies that criminalize our young people as well as discriminatory discipline practices that bar access to quality education. Furthermore, we want all children to be able to access free, quality education—including free or affordable public university.

We Want Freedom from Mass Incarceration and an End to the Prison Industrial Complex:

We want an end to the over policing and surveillance of our communities:

This will hasten an end to the criminalization of black and brown people and hyper incarceration everywhere. Policing in the United States has historically helped to enforce racist laws, policies and norms. The result is a massive prison industrial complex built on the warehousing of black people. We call for the cessation of mass incarceration and the eradication of the prison industrial complex all together. In its place we will address harm and conflict in our communities through community based, restorative solutions

(fergusonaction.com)

The “problems,” Obama acknowledges these communities of color are not just making up, are specifically articulated here by *Black Lives Matter*. If we, as members of a community composed of a multiplicity of publics, view these problems as just a list of demands, we miss their significance as an expression of rhetorical sovereignty which collectively speak to the intention of sustaining solidarity between the crosscutting interests of many publics.

In her extensive research into America’s criminal justice system, Michelle Alexander identifies what is at work beneath the surface of the necessity for these demands in the first place (2012). She points out no real structural changes have occurred since the discriminatory practices known as Jim Crow laws were publically acceptable. There is still institutional discrimination against the poorest and often most marginalized in our communities (Alexander 2012). The shift has taken place in the language (Alexander 2013). A political rhetoric made more palatable to today’s public discourse. Alexander provides an analogy for this shift in language: “mass incarceration, like Jim Crow, helps to define the meaning and significance of race in America. Indeed the stigma of criminality functions in much the same way that the stigma of race once did. It justifies a legal, social, and economic boundary between ‘us’ and ‘them’” (18). Labels of criminal, felon, and delinquent rip at the moral and social fabric of communities of color. A criminal serving his/her sentence or on parole is not eligible to vote. They find it difficult to acculturate to civilian life and find meaningful work due to their criminal record. It is not the length of their sentence but the label that is harmful over the course of their lifetime (Alexander 2012). Inequitable access to basic needs such as those listed in the demands creates cycles of poverty and in their “State of the Black Union,” *Black Lives Matter* asserts: “in cities across the country, profit-driven policies fuel displacement and gentrification, leading to the destruction of entire Black [and Brown] communities. Black and Latinos are about 31 percent of the US

population, but 60 percent of the prison population" (blacklivesmatter.org). In the eyes of folks "deemed disposable—unnecessary to the functioning of the new global economy," whose rights are waived without their consent and due process, a critical political consciousness is not the result of a long history of broken relationships between public authority figures and communities of color alone (Alexander 2012). *Black Lives Matter* tells us it is not enough for the American public to be aware of the historical struggle of Black America for personhood and civil rights; it is now time to face the reality of this struggle today. Moreover, the significance of *Black Lives Matter* is in its explicit solidarity with "other communities…criminalized, targeted, attacked and brutalized." The struggle for civil rights has widened its reaches to include the struggle for basic human rights in these communities of color. In an interview with Fox News anchor, Sean Hannity, Cornel West speaks of historic Black figures who lit the path to freedom from political and economic slavery with a fiery passion and genuine love for humanity (2014). In spite of all history can teach us, I believe this torch could not be passed by testimonials alone. It took the spark of this specific movement of unchecked use of force by public officers against youth of color. To redress this relationship of power, a groundwork of safe space supports a foundation for the quality of relationships necessary to work through difference in the present moment, and ensure the sustainability of a movement composed of many publics across generations.

Black Lives Matter sustains solidarity due to the fact it spans what Patricia Hill Collins refers to as the intersectionalities of this generation ((Patricia Hill Collins 6) —calling for "an End to all Forms of Discrimination and the Full Recognition of our Human Rights" (blacklivesmatter.org). In a growing generation of multicultural, multilingual Americans who are coming out of the shadows, this movement may be referenced as one whose keystone is its ability to speak to these intersecting interests as possible new points of alliance.

What defines the demands as the kairos of America today, a rhetorical moment ripe for public response, is the result of an undeniable misuse of power and policies working against youth and families of color. *Black Lives Matter* is the culmination of decades of “a process of rearticulation” where gender, race, class, and sexuality inform a “continually evolving and negotiated” consciousness ((Patricia Hill Collins 6). The point to be emphasized here is woman of color feminist rhetoricians demonstrate how *Black Lives Matter* may realize their intention to sustain a dialogue across multiple publics in order to redress gross inequities in their communities via rituals of resistance that offer a best practice to create spaces fit for both responding to engaging collective expressions of rhetorical sovereignty. In other words I do not see members of publics quelling a movement, rather, they would locate an entry point at which to join it. It is not a new awareness of tentative relationships in our communities, but an ongoing rearticulation of them which entails with our news ways of thinking must come new ways of acting (“race, class, and Gender” 674). *Black Lives Matter* asserts: the role of people of color in relationship to public authority is changing, so then our actions as members of a community composed of many publics must also change. *Black Lives Matter* chooses to rearticulate ways of knowing and ways of acting in the world as a primary step for our communities toward collectively authoring a language of rehumanization. In the context of a movement, *rehumanization* supports how these communities choose to redress oppression “through community based, restorative solutions” (blacklivesmatter.com).

To say woman of color feminist rhetorical process sustains this movement is to consider a space for deliberation of difference inclusive of those struggles for gender equality, immigration reform, and the movement to recognize the civil rights of the LGBTQ community. It is a complex body of individuals who live between worlds of language, cultures, places, and

contested public spaces. This movement for the rehabilitation and restoration of our communities of color does not wait for bipartisan bills and legislation to cloture. It articulates its own policies. It specifies; state sanctioned violence is not acceptable in the black community or "other communities…criminalized, targeted, attacked and brutalized" (fergusonaction). This movement, is a call for justice across the spectrum of what it means to be recognized as "levelly human" (Combahee River Collective as cited in Peoples 38).

At this moment, the language of our government at every level makes this very basic assertion difficult for many Americans to make, especially, those denied their right to exist without fear of hate, incarceration, deportation, and at this moment, the fear of our families and children losing their life somewhere in the school-to-prison-pipeline. When it is more likely my sisters and brothers will end up with a rap-sheet than a diploma, *Black Lives Matter* is more than a rhetorical statement; it is more than a moment ripe for public response; it is a movement to recover the wholeness of peoples of color and those peoples denied basic human rights due to their status. This movement demands the American public further probe race relations, and the greater issue of human relations through dialogue.

When *Black Lives Matter*s speaks of "other communities," one such community is my own. My community coexists in a complex Hispanic diaspora (Latina/o, Afro Latina/o, Tejana/o, Chicana/o and Mexican American to name a few). Coming from outside this community, the daily issues in the local news were all new to me. Five months after arriving to the Rio Grande Valley, one news story grabbed more than five minutes of my attention.

November 25, 2011:

18 year old undocumented Mexican American male, Joaquin Luna Jr., sits in the bathtub of his family's Mission, Texas home. He holds a gun beneath his chin. He pulls the trigger. He

has left letters of goodbye to his mother, family, and friends. Joaquin writes in one of his letters about the disappointment he feels not able to pursue his dream of becoming a civil engineer. Though he never explicitly states this disappointment is linked to his status as an illegal alien, the youth's brother testifies that Luna was losing hope with every college application denied or asking for documentation he did not have (Fernandez 2011).

News of the youth's death motivated the formation of a new student organization—The Minority Affairs Council (MAC). These students, mostly undocumented themselves, were ready "to come out of the shadows" (the white house blog immigration). Their need to organize was a direct action in response to Joaquin's suicide. Over the next few months, the council, also known as the RGV Dreamers would invite both the university and greater community to remember Joaquin in a candlelight vigil. For those who attended the vigil, as they walked in a large ballroom displays lined the entrance. They were titled "A Walk through the Dream Act." They formed a historical timeline of the Dream Act, and the movement in support of millions of undocumented students to come out of the shadows of their status. What these activists understand is how the testimonio (testimony) functions as a vital part of the process to flesh out what "community based, restorative solutions" will look like in action. The testimonio validates and preserves the knowledge of the local culture. It also serves as a means of healing our community. (Guajardo and Guajardo 2010). The students wanted to remember and testify to their own experiences as undocumented students, and at the same time, they took the opportunity to put their daily-lived experience into a greater context of the Dream Act. "Yo Soy Joaquin," "I Am Joaquin" echoed throughout the campus. The RGV Dreamers refused to let this moment be forgotten. They determined to shape safe spaces for Dreamers to gather and attend teach-ins whose topics ranged from awareness of basic civil rights to public relations protocol. Yet the real

activism was not the workshops or protests, it was shaping safe spaces by sharing their testimonios. Dreamers from across the region, state, and weave their stories together in solidarity via online forums and use them as a guide to map their activism.

Mr. Luna's death was not a political ploy; it is part of the same movement demanding dialogue about the state of human relations in the US. Under their umbrella organizations, Texas Dream Alliance and United We Dream, RGV Dreamers locate local barriers to higher education and citizenship while acting in solidarity with a nation of Dreamers to push for federal Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (Dream Act). What is worth pointing out in this instance of rearticulating modes of public discourse, and the shaping of spaces best suited to generate, circulate, and sustain them, is the ritual of the testimonio functions to support the capacity for building human relationships based on trust. In this safe space, a rehumanizing discourse about immigration reform in our communities of color is possible. The ritual of the testimonio resists the language of government programs, national discourse, and even our local discourse labeling undocumented Americans as aliens, illegals, and more commonly, criminals. More damaging than these labels is the ideology of power over dynamics they sustain. Here, in the most literal meaning of restricting the movements of undocumented Americans.

The label trail leads to a national discourse where the problem of immigration reform is polarized in a bipartisan legislature where both sides propose nothing less than inhumane and untimely resolutions. These resolutions do not provide long-term and sustainable restoration of our border communities. They separate families and fill our prisons. Our communities internalize the problem when these youths' contribution to the discourse is misunderstood because their rhetorical choices do not align with traditional forms of dialogue and deliberation. Therefore, the lesson drawn from our undocumented student population is their testimonio is more than story

that dwells on their individual and cultural circumstance; it is a means to rearticulate a consciousness that is shaped by race, gender, class, and sexuality. In other words, the testimonio is an expression of rhetorical sovereignty. It is a way of knowing and acting in constant dialogue with national discourse. Women of color feminist rhetorical theory and the method born out it—"intersectional method," inform how we view this dialogue of many publics, so we may be in a position to respond to the needs and concerns of the communities we live and learn in.

The testimonios of Dreamers counter the national language of "justice" in proposed legislation such as H.R. 2278, the "Strengthen and Fortify Enforcement Act (S.A.F.E act). If passed it "will create an environment of rampant racial profiling and unconstitutional detentions without fixing the immigration system's problems" (the "so called" safe act). Associate Professor of History at Montgomery College, Dr. Vincent Intondi, speaks along the same line of Alexander's assertion that the only shift in our society, and its treatment of people of color, is one in the language used to keep the public trapped in dehumanizing terms. In his article released a year after the Trayvon Martin verdict came back not guilty he recalls:

> For many of us, this week brought back the painful memory that George Zimmerman was blinded by racism and only saw Trayvon as a thug or something less than human. Of course, this is not new and Zimmerman is not alone. Viewing and treating non-white people as something "other" than human dates back centuries as a justification for slavery and our economic system…one can see the connection when examining those who have been detained on the southern border. Citizens, politicians, pundits and journalists continue to use words like 'illegals' or 'aliens,' rather than calling

> them what they are – children. But make them less than human or
> an ‘other’ and it is easier to call for their immediate deportation,
> suggest sending them to Gitmo, or call for violence against them
>
> (Intondi 2014)

This movement of rearticulation is one which has been in process for many generations. The spark is not recent, the moment has been there. Now, with the unwarranted death and dehumanization of America’s people of color—America’s children of color—this movement will continue to grow, to call-out, to locate, and to rewrite the language used to justify the injustice.

President Obama pleaded with law enforcement officers and their superiors to “enlist the community” in order to arrive at a best practice for working with folks who share it with them. Yet in the same address, he refers to these communities as “poorer communities with higher crime rates.” This reference sets-up our communities to be on the receiving end of the invitation to dialogue. Our communities must rely on public officials to engage us rather than viewing us with the capacity to initiate dialogue on our own terms. *Black Lives Matter*, representative of these “poorer communities with higher crime rates” took the initiative to collectively demand dialogue with public officials. Obama only tacitly addressed this fact-of-the-matter our communities have enlisted themselves due to a lack of initiative on the part of law enforcement to foster interdependent relationships with community members. *Black Lives Matter* addresses what he will not; the institutional discrimination backing the poverty and the high crime rates. *Black Lives Matter* is a movement to rearticulate consciousness and challenge how we view the construct of community much as women of color feminist rhetoricians. Many publics who inform this movement understand working through our differences cannot be done through testimonials alone. Our stories and experiences must grow legs (Guajardo and Guajardo 2010).

This means our stories must be engaged in order to inform collective, strategic activism. This strategy of storytelling does not begin nor end with our individual testimonies, and it is no longer limited to the rhetoric of civil rights but is an expanded notion of our public and national discourse inclusive of human rights. It is one with the capacity to rupture the pipeline of today's actualities. Women of color feminist rhetoricians offer insight into this desire for a rehumanizing discourse. They offer us a rhetorical process—a shift not only in language but also in consciousness. The rhetoric of this movement will keep seeking to make meaning of historic and current traumas sustained in the social fabric of communities of color. It is race relations, immigration reform, LGBTQ rights, and the right to take ownership of our bodies. It is meaning making by pushing the limits of our creative abilities to reclaim language, take back the signs and symbols and peel the codices from the cracks of public spaces.

CHAPTER V

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING WRITING AND WRITING STUDIES: ADVANCING THE DESIGN OF DIALOGUE AND DELIBERATION IN OUR COMMUNITIES BEGINS IN OUR LEARNING SPACES

Women of color feminist rhetorical process, a consciousness and a method, welcome difference as part of the shaping of safe spaces where dialogue and deliberation are sustained. In spaces for writing and writing studies, we deliberate what it is we do when we say we write academically. The emerging writer is submersed in a conversation composed by many voices who claim what writing is and what it does for them. What I suggest for the teacher of writing, or those who view the creation of democratic culture as something inseparable from what academic writing does, is to present voices from counterpublics; third world women, women of color, women of color lesbian, transgender, and queer, and yes, the voices of emerging writers who may identify at some intersections of all the above. Thereby, the emerging writer has an opportunity to view these counterpublics in dialogue with those publics already enjoying the privilege of shaping a course syllabus. This positions the emerging writer to develop their critical thinking in a space best suited to question "unflinchingly" how a multiplicity of publics do writing and what they want from it (fergusson commission 2015; Scott Lyons 2000). What is more significant, it prepares students to leave their respective institutions of higher learning with an applicable means to work with the diverse publics who will employ them, be taught by them,

and share public spaces with them. In the widest sense, it is a means to write *with* community—a collective vision of social justice and equity—a means for our words to create another world. This writing works through difference, "not over, not by, not around, but through" (Moraga xiv).

Rituals of Resistance Shape Learning Spaces

On day one, students will begin to shape the learning space. The desks are arranged in a circle. They may or may not remain this way. We will discuss course purpose, content, and finally its function. An explicit theme is shaping a space for many publics to gather and deliberate what writing can do, for who, and how. The syllabus is passed out. The introduction to the course subject is critical. This is the opportunity to explain the purpose of the composition course to challenge dichotomies of private/public space. What does it mean to write what we see, feel, think about and question in our homeplaces (private/public). How does a place shape our personal experiences or what Patricia Hill Collins refers to as our "personal biographies." Further, how do our lived experiences in turn, shape and relate to the bigger picture of community? In the spirit of intersectional method, a multiplicity of modes and mediums by which publics convey a message between themselves and with the greater community will be presented; from contemporary feminist to third world and global feminisms, from transgendered voices to hociconas (a back-talking Chicana), from theories of public sphere to articles arguing how writing studies can advance the design of dialogue and deliberation in spaces best suited to accommodate multiple publics. After reviewing the potential trajectory we will follow, we will read a statement of equity, the explicit "what we are attempting to do is shape a safe space by working through difference" statement. We will also review a statement referring to a student's right to their own language. This Writing About Writing will not uphold hard rules of style, but it will push the notion of what writing can do when one determines the most effective means to

convey their message considering purpose and audience. We will begin in the place we call home. Taking from Lauren Esposito's Place based writing strategy (2012). To document the ongoing dialogue, a portfolio assessment of their progress would be used. This portfolio may be multimodal and reflective of their lived experiences as it is informed by place, and at the same time, how their experiences inform what can be done to make their place better, more equitable, for who, for what, and how, is up to them (what they know about the publics they have worked with throughout the course of the semester). The portfolio will reflect their process of writing self, place, and a vision of social justice and equity with this place. A public writing project will partner the writer with organizations such as the Edinburg Housing Authority, La Union del Pueblo Entero (LUPE), Edinburg Community Gardens, or The McAllen Creative Incubator Project. The emerging writer will apply their understanding of place-based writing--writing about community—and view it in conversation with the variety of writings about writing we have surveyed and engaged. They will be in a position to view historically marginalized groups in positions of collective leadership to deliberate visions of a restored community. As they consider what they have read, and the audience they are both writing for and with via their participation with these organizations, they will determine the needs of many publics shaping their public message. This message will be informed by the needs of the organization and the people these organizations serve. Further, the writer must consider the social context around the need for these organizations' services and how the organizations' vision of social justice agrees with the lived realities of those they serve. A guiding question for these emerging writers may be who will benefit from their project and who needs to be engaged in order to better inform it? While these questions may fall into the students' further implications for a sustained community engagement, it will allow them to shape their learning space with a multiplicity of publics in

mind with the understanding and intention to sustain a dynamic and critical dialogue about continuous social change in our communities of color. A course syllabus will reflect a multiplicity of publics: For example, rather than dividing readings by subheaders such as Writing About Writing and gender, WAW and race, class, and sexuality, or even WAW and the rhetorical tradition. In the spirit of intersectional method; we understand no matter who or what these writers claim to be writing for and how, they are first and foremost writing from a place of negotiating their social constructioning. Therefore, there is no way any one public has the authority to determine what so many other publics believe writing can do and for who, and how. A syllabus may begin with Lauren Esposito's Placed-based Writing, Guajardo and Guajardo's "Cultivating Stories of Change," (2010) and Gloria Anzaldúa's "Now Let Us Shift…The Path of Conocimiento…inner work, public acts," (this bridge we call home 2002). An introduction to Patricia Hill Collins' ideas about intersectionality, and intersecting oppressions may prove useful. A second round of readings may include voices from bell hooks (excerpts *from Feminism is For Everybody*, and *All About Love*; June Jordan 1990; Andrea Lunsford (2012), Chela Sandoval (2000), and Norma Alarcón (1990). Themes reflect the writings of a multiplicity of publics to transform thinking, and with new ways of thinking, a new way of doing writing with many publics. Every subject has its shifts, and this is a good point to discuss in a writing course. How has our understanding of writing as a subject allowed us to shift from questioning what writing and composition is to what writing and composition can do. A third and fourth round of readings may include: "Transgender Rhetorics: (Re)Composing Narratives of the Gendered Body" by Jonathan Alexander (excerpts 2005), Queer Migration Politics Activist Rhetoric and Coalitional Possibilities by Karma R. Chávez (excerpts 2014), "Transnational Feminist Rhetorics in a Digital World" by Mary Queen (2008), and an excerpt from Girls' Feminist Blogging in a

Postfeminist Age--"Loud Proud, and Sarcastic: Young Feminist Internet Communities as Networked Counterpublics" (2015). The important thing is with the invitation of these writing publics into the learning space to help the emerging writer determine their own notions of what writing can do, it is also important to make student composition a central text contributing to the collective understanding of what it is we do, and how, when we write for continuous social change in our communities.

This Writing About Writing begins with recognition of difference as a starting place, and the invitation to students to use intersectional method to view voices from a multiplicity of publics who inform what writing can do; for who and what purpose. The emerging writer is encouraged to begin with place-based writing: writing about their neighborhoods, what types of writing and messages are given to them about their place. How does this agree or disagree with their personal lived experiences. How might their experiences shape and be shaped by the spaces where publics are free to gather. The idea is that the spaces we shape for learning about writing are spaces where we engage difference as a way to think critically about the many publics we will write *with* when our writing is critical to generating, and more importantly, sustaining a notion of robust democracy.

Rituals of Resistance Advance the Design of Dialogue and Deliberation

First, I believe we cannot idealize what these alternative modes of discourse in the form of embodied and deeply spiritual rhetoric can do. Whether we are looking at cypher or circle, it is clear, participation is up to the individual. If an individual does not desire to participate in this nontraditional forum of public engagement, then the sustainability of dialogue and deliberation beyond traditional modes of public engagement is not viable. However, as *Black Lives Matter* has shown us, if we come to the table of deliberation with the immediate necessity and urgency

to work through difference, I believe the invitation to rituals of resistance to shape safe spaces for many publics to gather will yield a highly productive cycle of deliberation. When people come together with the explicit intention of working through difference, there won't be any unconcluded findings or parked courses of action. Rituals of resistance prepare a foundation for building relationships of trust that can, and for those of us familiar with the process of engaging community members, know will have to go a long way to realizing continuous change work in our communities of color.

Let it also be disclosed here woman of color feminist rhetorical process does not do what I intentionally believed it would. It does not expand a notion of the common concern. I have accepted this "common concern," in reality, is more like a multiplicity of "common" concerns depending on what publics are at the table to deliberate them. What it does do is give us an alternative approach to engaging publics who will show up once invited. I believe what it does to advance the design of dialogue and deliberation is offers a way to engage counterpublics on their own terms. If folks need to tell stories and testify, we as public deliberators, conflict resolution practitioners, and community engagement consultants are in a position (a space) best suited to validate these alternative rhetorics or modes of discourse. We are in a position to respond to these embodied rhetorics and allow them to inform the planning of their communities, and the drafting of public policy, which will impact their quality of life. A design of dialogue and deliberation that views the ways of life of these counterpublics as a means to generate the knowledge necessary, define the causes of problems identified, and arrive at a course action reflective of the needs and visions of many publics, is best suited to sustain change work not as a product but a process of informing and shaping spaces with many publics.

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Her academic life includes her participation in Rhetoric and Composition conferences: The English Graduate Symposium at UTSA—Technologies and Locales of Knowledge: An Interdisciplinary Symposium Exploring Discourse, Meaning, and Power—March 2013
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Her professional life includes training as a Student Learning Assistant in the Humanities and Critical Reading and Writing: University of Texas – Pan American—College Reading and Language Association, Level I—April 2013. She also completed a workshop for educators at The National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies Tejas Conference—"Storytelling as Community-Based Pedagogies, Scholarship, and Activism" hosted by the University of Texas – Pan American—February 2013.

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