

***Latina Histories and Cultures: Feminist Readings and Recoveries of Archival Knowledge.* Edited By Montse Feu and Yolanda Padilla. (Houston: Arte Público Press, 2023. first edition, pp. 345. Illustrations, paintings, photographs, endnotes.) \$25.95 paper, ISBN 978-1-55885-964-7.**

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Monste Feu and Yolanda Padilla emphasize in the introduction to *Latina Histories and Cultures* that “bringing attention to unknown or understudied women is simply the first crucial step, one that occurs in tandem with an interpretive framework” (xi-xii). They argue that new insights about these overlooked Latinas enhance existing scholarship. Recovering these unspoken stories of Latina women is essential, as the field of Latina studies remains relatively underdeveloped, despite a growing interest and need for exploration. Overall, this book contributes to the broader narrative of Latina feminist scholarship. Some essays include a transnational perspective, highlighting how these women’s activism has reached wider audiences. Each essay complements the others by adhering to the book’s theme of recovering these women’s histories and their significance in scholarly discourse. The intended audience includes anyone interested in Latina feminist readings, as well as scholars and students specializing in this area of research.

The book was co-edited by Monste Feu and Yolanda Padilla. In 2011, Feu received a Ph.D. in Hispanic Studies from the University of Houston. Feu’s research primarily focuses on recovery work, and most of her published works consist of research regarding anti-fascism and anarchism in Spain and its transnational journey to the United States. Some of her most recent works include her co-edited *Serving Refugee Children: Listening to Stories of Detention in the United States* (2021) and *Fighting Fascist Spain: Worker Protest from the Printing Press* (2020). Padilla received a Ph.D. in English from the University of Chicago. Her research focuses on the underrepresented stories of Latinx people from various countries in the Americas, as well as their significance and often-forgotten contributions to US history. Padilla’s most recent publications include *Bridges, Borders, and Breaks: History, Narrative, and Nation in Twenty-First-Century Chicana/o Literary Criticism* (2016) and *The Plays of Josefina Niggli: Recovered Landmarks of Latino Literature* (2007).

Feu and Padilla unite a diverse group of collaborators who enhance the scholarship on Latina feminism. Together, the contributors offer valuable insights into underrepresented Latina figures. Scholars and students in related fields, especially those involved in recovery work, will find this book particularly beneficial. It serves to highlight numerous underrepresented Latinas and contributes to the historiography of Latina scholarship.

The book offers, organized into five distinct parts, offers compelling evidence of significant Latina figures from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1980s, examining their importance across various countries in the Americas. It covers themes such as class, public and private spheres, and has a significant emphasis on sex and gender. Each author lends a voice to these women, highlighting their contributions, experiences, and the impact of historical events on their lives. Many of the women featured in the essays have also advocated for themselves and for women in their communities, providing readers with a deeper understanding of the complexities and intersectionalities

within Latina cultures and histories. The book focuses on the narratives of Latina women and their significance during specific historical periods. Each chapter features different Latina figures; for example, there is a chapter on the influence of Latinas in literature that provides a transnational view and other unique perspectives, as well as the role of a Chicana and her activism in the Chicano Movement, and another that discusses and highlights how women serve as foundational figures in community building and enacting change.

Two representative examples serve to illustrate the strengths of the argument woven through this work. In Part IV, "Radical Latina Politics," Pablo Landeros writes about Francisca Flores, an early Chicana activist who experienced significant political change throughout her life, having lived through events such as the Mexican Revolution, both World Wars, and the early stages of the Vietnam and Korean Wars, especially during the rise of the Red Scare in the 1950s. Landeros argues that Flores was a dedicated advocate for the Mexican American community within the framework of radical politics. In Part V, "Reclaiming Community, Reclaiming Knowledge," Anita Huizar-Hernandez provides insights into two Mexican women, María de la Torre and Sor María Guadalupe Muro, who were deeply affected by the Cristero Wars in Mexico. De la Torre mourned the loss of her lover due to the conflict, while Muro, a nun, faced direct impacts from the war. This unique perspective sheds light on the experiences of women during this turbulent time.

Archival sources such as newspapers, letters, oral histories, and literature serve several important purposes. A key theme throughout the essays is the recognition of often-overlooked women highlighted in each chapter and how their stories contribute to the broader narrative of Latina feminist scholarship by addressing historical gaps. Notable figures include Louisa Capetillo, who published works on feminist theory and advocated for women's rights; Maria Jimenez, known for her activism and involvement in Chicano politics; and the immigration of Basque women, who made significant contributions to their communities, influencing a blending of cultures, despite being a minority. Their stories enrich the scholarship and emphasize the importance of these women's contributions to history.

Feu and Padilla have made noteworthy contributions to the field of Latina history, particularly through their recovery work, which is vital to this emerging discipline. Their book serves as an essential resource, expanding access to Latina scholarship and fostering greater engagement in this area. In the introduction, they emphasize the significant gap in queer Latina scholarship and its importance within the broader context of Latina studies. Scholars like William Orchard, who contributes an essay to the book, play a crucial role in addressing this gap by providing valuable insights into "sex and sexuality in early Latina literature" (xvi). While the book showcases a diverse array of Latinas across its chapters, Part II is limited, providing only a brief overview of Chicanas and the concept of autohistoria. This section features a collaborative essay written by six prominent Chicana scholars, each contributing significant research to the piece. However, the inclusion of just one essay in this section feels insufficient. Adding at least one more would enhance the discussion and provide more evidence regarding Chicana experiences and voices.

Latina Histories and Cultures plays a crucial role in advancing the emerging field of Latina feminist scholarship by offering a collection of essays focused on recovery work. This book aims to uncover and highlight the voices of the Latina figures featured within, countering their historical erasure. By employing transnational and intersectional approaches, scholars contribute to a deeper understanding of Latina identities within their political and cultural contexts, thereby aiding in the introduction of new perspectives and bridging historical gaps.