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¡Sí, Ella Puede! *The Rhetorical Legacy of Dolores Huerta and the United Farm Workers*. By Stacey K. Sowards. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2019.

Arcelia Gutiérrez, University of Kentucky

While César Chávez has achieved wide recognition as a labor and civil rights activist, Dolores Huerta's contributions to the farm worker movement have often been overlooked. As a cofounder of what became the United Farm Workers (UFW) union, Huerta proved to be one of the most influential leaders of this movement. Addressing Huerta's erasure from historical and contemporary accounts of the UFW, Stacey K. Sowards's *¡Sí, Ella Puede! The Rhetorical Legacy of Dolores Huerta and the United Farm Workers* explores the activist's rhetorical legacy and iconic status. In particular, this book traces how Huerta was able to negotiate dominant stereotypes of the era, pertaining to gender, ethnicity, race, religion, and language, to become one of the UFW's top leaders. Shifting the focus from male leadership in historical and rhetorical scholarship about the UFW and the Chicano/a movement, Sowards instead centers the role of women and their activism. To achieve this, the book relies on impressive archival research, ethnography, and interviews.

Building on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus, Gloria Anzaldúa's notion of *haciendo caras* (making faces), and Chela Sandoval's theory of differential consciousness, Sowards proposes three arguments to examine rhetorical agency and its relationship to individual actors and social justice activism. Rhetorical agency is defined as "how one uses communication . . . to create space and advance social justice, enabled by contexts and relationships with others" (12). Sowards understands rhetorical agency as the interaction of three facets: "intersectional habitus that shapes identities, identities that solidify public personae through differential bravery, and public personae that enable collaborative social activism" (6). Thus, Sowards attributes the origins of Huerta's iconic status to her habitus—her early family life, her familial and educational influences, and her relationship with Chávez. The second argument explores how private identity lays the groundwork for a public persona, which for Huerta involved her rhetoric of family/motherhood and optimism/justice to construct her public rhetoric and leadership style and a

sense of differential bravery. Finally, Sowards argues that habitus and a public persona, developed first through private communication, become the basis for actors who become icons within social movements.

The first chapter provides a history of the farm worker movement and the inception of the UFW. Chapter 2 presents the main theoretical intervention of this study, outlining the framework of rhetorical agency and biographical information about Huerta's life. Of note is Sowards's attention to how gender, race, class, language, and other social standings—or intersectional habitus—enable and constrain rhetorical agency. The next chapter explores Huerta's private persona through letters she wrote to Chávez and rhetorical themes, such as collaboration, affirmation, and catharsis, that emerge out of these documents. One of the most interesting chapters is the fourth, where Sowards analyzes Huerta's public persona and rhetorical agency through her speeches and negotiation tactics, arguing that Huerta strategically employed emotional excess, motherhood, and *familia* as gendered rhetorical maneuvers to disrupt traditional speaking, negotiating, and bargaining styles and to gain power. For example, Huerta would intentionally cry and act melodramatically, strategically use breast-feeding during negotiations, and involve her children in UFW actions as a way to connect with audiences. Chapter 5 also centers Huerta's public persona and her speeches through the rhetorical themes of collaborative social justice, optimism, hope, and faith. The next chapter explores Huerta's status as a social movement icon, criticisms of her persona, and Huerta's response to those criticisms.

While Sowards brings much-needed attention to how various social identities impact one's habitus, a discussion on how this intersectional habitus impacts forms of capital acquisition would help to frame how Huerta was able to navigate various audiences. In other words, how has Huerta's habitus afforded her various forms of social, cultural, symbolic, and economic capital (in Bourdieu's sense), and how have these forms of capital facilitated or hindered her rhetorical agency, her use of *caras*, and her ability to employ differential bravery? Nonetheless, Sowards's timely book brings to the forefront how women activists have strategically used their varied identities to shape and deploy their rhetorical agency, gain power, and advance social justice causes. Sowards's study is likely to inspire future studies in Chicana/Latina rhetorics, potentially bringing attention to obfuscated figures such as Helen Chávez, Hope López, and Jessica Govea. |