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Sexing Empire: The Ontology of Racialized Gender and Sexuality in the Hemispheric Southwest through Mexican American and Chicana Narrative

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Literature

by

Bernadine Marie Hernández

Committee in charge:

Professor Rosaura Sánchez, Chair
Professor Gloria Chacón
Professor Fatima El-Tayeb
Professor David Gutiérrez
Professor Shelley Streeby

2015

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2015

DEDICATION

In memory of mis abuelos, Phillip and Eleanor Barreras & Antonio and María Guadalupe Hernández and my cousin, Marcus Antonio Barreras

and

For my family, whose love and devotion feed my soul and sustain me in my darkest hours.

EPIGRAPH

Only that historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past who is firmly convinced that *even the dead* will not be safe if the enemy wins

Walter Benjamin

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Studies in Gender and Sexuality
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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Sexing Empire: The Ontology of Racialized Gender and Sexuality in the Hemispheric Southwest through Mexican American and Chicana Narrative

by

Bernadine Marie Hernández

Doctor of Philosophy in Literature

University of California, San Diego, 2015

Professor Rosaura Sánchez, Chair

This dissertation sets out to trace the material and social relations and legacies of racialized gender and sexuality from 1870 to the contemporary moment in the hemispheric Southwest through Mexican American (Californiana, Tejana, Hispana) and Chicana narrative by examining multiple empires and governances, Spanish, Mexican, and U.S. This dissertation aims to trace the sexual economies of the Southwest in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to interrogate how gender and sexuality is materially used for production and reproduction and how historical relations inform notions of racialized gender and sexuality for Chicana bodies in the contemporary moment. This study traverses a long historical period not to trace a colonial historical moment, but rather, to trace a colonial and then imperial legacy of productive to

unproductive racialized sexualities between dominant and subordinate populations in the Southwest. It intervenes in Chicana/o Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, and American literary history as it traces the shifts in economic systems and sexual economies and how those shifts after 1848 produce gender and sexual norms. In addition to this examination, this dissertation utilizes decolonial and Chicana feminist theory to interrogate how Mexicana gender and sexuality is informed by black and native bodies and how sexual economies produce material relations and racialized gender and sexuality.

The literary narratives of the Mexican American and Chicana works I examine trace matters of sexualization, sex, and gender in the late nineteenth, early twentieth, and the contemporary moment, particularly the critical role sexual and gender arrangements have in creating categories of differentiation and distinguishing the subjugated from the subjugator. The social classification that racialized gender and sexuality regulates is not a fixed and/or ignored act, but rather a perversely critical one. Imperial governance in the nineteenth-century depended on the regulation and surveillance of sexual economies and their changing histories of productivity. This is the first significant point this dissertation makes. Wrestling with is the ever-evolving comparative framework between Mexican American/Chicana, Native, and Black Studies and the co-constitutive relations between these different "groups" throughout history, I argue that the tensions and literary strategies used in the Mexican American narrative and legal cases I examine uncover the contradictory and co-constitutive position of Mexican American female. Lastly, the dissertation has a long historical lineage, which frames the last chapter and the discourse of the excessive Chicana in the contemporary moment. Tracing a history of gender and

sexual norms in the Southwest that informs the processes of differentiation and the regulation and management of certain bodies, I utilize multiple historical flashpoints to untangle how racialized gender and sexuality informs proper subjects of the borderlands and forgets the historical elements persistent in forgetting how violent structures were formed up and against deviant and excessive racialized bodies.

INTRODUCTION

"Our Lady" (figure 1) by Chicana feminist, Mexican-born Chicana, and LA-based artist Alma López appeared in Santa Fe, New Mexico during Holy Week in 2001 and was part of an art exhibition in the Museum of International Folk Art (MOIFA) called *Cyber Arte: Traditions Meets Technology.* The exhibition intended to fuse "computer-inspired art…[with] elements traditionally defined as "folk" with state of the art computer technology to create a new aesthetic for the 21st century" (MOIFA 2000). "Our Lady" was a digital collage representing López's re-interpretation of the Virgin of Guadalupe, which as she states, "expressed the multiplicities of…lived experiences" (14). The digital collage of the artists' interpretation of Our Lady of Guadalupe, wreathed in roses, held high by a bare breasted butterfly angel, and draped with a cloak engraved with symbols of the Aztec moon goddess, Coyolxauhqui, was showcased with four other Chicana/Hispana/Latina artists at MOIFA in 2001. As reported by multiple news outlets and López herself, the New Mexican community was up in arms before the exhibit even opened because in September of 2000 a brochure had been sent out by MOIFA to announce the exhibition and community activists and the Catholic community protested its removal from the exhibition. From that moment on, protest rallies, prayer vigils, letters, emails, and phone calls infiltrated the historically rich space of New Mexico. López tells of three men in particular who were at the center of the protest against her risqué "bikini virgin," the volunteer chaplain for the Santa Fe City Police, the deacon of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Santa Fe, and the Archbishop of the Santa Fe Archdiocese. Protestors demanded the firing of the curator

of the exhibit, Tey Marianna Nunn, MOIFA Director, Joyce Ice, and director of the Museum of New Mexico, Tom Wilson. The removal of the piece was taken to the museum's Committee on Sensitive Materials. The committee ruled that Our Lady was not a "religious object" or "denigrating" and that the artwork should remain displayed, but the art show still managed to close 4 weeks early (4). Alicia Gaspar de Alba in *Our Lady of Controversy: Alma López's Irreverent Apparition* states, "Regardless of the Committee on Sensitive Materials' eventual decision not to censor "Our Lady," the very fact that the controversy went on as long and as far as it did attests to the power that was wielded by the alignment of church, state, and community against a twenty-first century Malinche, or "traitor" to her race, culture, and gender" (4). López stated that for New Mexicans (men and women alike), she was an "outsider" that was wrecking havoc on the small town of Santa Fe. For Chicano nationalists, she was betraying their culture. To the supporters of the Catholic faith, she was risqué and sacrilegious. Gaspar de Alba notes that through this scandal, López had her first amendment rights violated (4). While the position of a Chicana is always in contention within the U.S. legal and social fabric, it is also always culturally vulnerable before heteropatriarchal institutions too, which makes the scandal so rich.

I begin with the "Our Lady" scandal not to adhere to either side of the debate or even to interrogate or investigate the sides that became legible through media and news cast stations. This study begins with the story of "Our Lady" as an entry point in examining how racialized, gendered, and sexualized discourse gets reproduced through the logics of colonial conquest and U.S. imperialism, while what Fredric Jameson calls the cultural logic of modernity is in constant conflict with antiquated cultural

expressions[1]. The discourse that animated the "Our Lady" controversy depended on the legible constructions of modern-day sexuality and notions of proper femininity. While looking at both sides of the debate, this controversy sets up the main questions of my dissertation: How does racialized gender and sexuality cohere in this contemporary moment? What are the historical conditions that allow the discourse of the "hypersexual" Chicana to be leveraged? How do gender and sexual norms get tied to land, inheritance, and reproduction in the Southwest and when do they shift? Luz Calvo in "Art Comes for the Archbishop," states that López's art is "psychic geography" or cartography, though "not that of the rational, imperialist cartographer but rather the layered space of the unconscious, where past and present, here and there, can exist in one image" (111). This moment of controversy is built upon the historical conditions of sexual economies in the Americas and the production of differential value. The historical entanglements of "Our Lady" are the historical entanglements that this dissertation sets out to interrogate.

This dissertation sets out to trace the material and social relations and legacies of racialized gender and sexuality from 1870 to the contemporary moment in the hemispheric Southwest through Mexican American (Californiana, Tejana, Hispana) and Chicana[2] narrative by examining multiple empires and governances, Spanish, Mexican, and U.S. Where gender and sexuality have often times been theorized as only

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[1] See Fredric Jameson's *Postmodernism, Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,* Durham: Duke UP, 1992.

[2] I utilize the term Mexicana to examine nineteenth-century, pre-1848 narratives. I understand that in Spanish "mexicana" does not require capitalization, but for this dissertation I will capitalize it. I utilize regional identity markers, such as Californios, Hispanas, and Tejanas, to examine early twentieth-century texts and sometimes I will switch from Mexicana to Californio because of the political context of the California text I am using.

discursive and cultural categories that supplement material historicity, my dissertation aims to trace the sexually economies of the Southwest in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to interrogate how gender and sexuality is materially used for production and reproduction and how historical relations inform notions of racialized gender and sexuality that shift to unproductive representation for Chicana bodies within literature in the contemporary moment. This study traverses a long historical period not to trace a colonial historical moment, but rather, to attempt to trace a colonial and then imperial legacy between dominant and subordinate populations in the Southwest. This dissertation intervenes in Chicana/o Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, and American literary history as it traces the shifts in economic systems and sexual economies and how those shifts after 1848 produce gender and sexual norms. In addition to this examination, this dissertation utilizes decolonial and Chicana feminist theory to interrogate how Mexicana gender and sexuality is informed by black and native bodies and how sexual economies produce material relations and racialized gender and sexuality.

The historical shifts in the Southwest inform the organization of the individual chapters. Utilizing decolonial theory to examine nineteenth-century narrative by Mexican Americans, particularly María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, the first chapter culturally and materially traces a narrative of sexualization and the production of gender and sexual norms in the hemispheric Southwest that co-constitutively constructs the Mexicana up and against white and black femininity, which are all shaped by settler colonialism in the newly annexed U.S. The second chapter begins my work on sexual economies in the hemispheric Southwest and examines two elite land-holding

narratives, one by Hispana Fabiola Cabeza de Baca and the other by Tejana Jovita González. I contrast these two narratives with recovered WPA stories regarding debt peonage in New Mexico. This chapter interrogates the social relations between elite land-holding Mexican Americans and the mestizas/os, peons, and natives on communal land, ranchos and haciendas. I argue that these relations reproduce and negotiate how racialized sex, gender and sexuality are used in production of the nation and as a function of U.S. capitalist structures, while the elite land-holding Mexican American female reproduces the U.S. nation-state in contradictory ways. The last chapter of this dissertation interrogates contemporary Chicana narratives marked by sexual excess that get marked as "unproductive" and become devalued through racialized sexuality in contrast to positive representation. The main author this chapter engages with is Ana Castillo and her newest novel *Give It To Me*, but it historicizes gender and sexuality from a Chicana feminist theoretical lens and situates the novel in between two narrative trends in Chicana and Latina literature, represented in the works of Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez, Stella Pope Duarte, Cherríe Moraga, and Sandra Cisneros. In thinking about the shift from productive racialized sexuality to unproductive, I examine postmodernist theory in order to map out how the "uncivil" other is produced in this neoliberal, global moment. This dissertation provides an arc of the Chicana body politic and subjectivity in relation to history, memory, race, gender, sexuality, class, and the nation. I utilize multiple cultural artifacts, such as the historical novel, the novel, memoir, short stories, legal cases, and the archive, to interrogate how the effects of colonialism and imperialism are (dis) articulated through trauma and violence and how they shape the history, memory, and cultural production of the Southwest.

First, this project analyzes the construction, negotiation, and contestation of modern Mexican American and Chicana femininities and argues that their novels, memoirs, testimonios, and short stories offer important theories of gender and sexuality that examine and interrogate how these processes of differentiation structure social, cultural, political, and economic relations in the construction of nationhood. Decolonial feminist theory emphasizes an ideological and discursive understanding of gender and sexuality through a colonial and settler colonial framework. Said differently, decolonial theory imagines the continuation of hegemonic notions of gender and sexuality along "racial lines" as a colonial construct that develops and maintains structures of violence against women of color. Latina decolonial feminist scholar, Maria Lugones traces the genealogy of "woman" under colonization and states that the experience along racial lines looked different in the Americas than it did in Western Europe. Daphne V. Taylor-García in "Decolonizing Gender Performativity," states that Lugones proposed gender itself, as defined by patriarchy and heteronormativity, as a colonial and settler colonial construct. Understanding the features of the organization of gender (and sexuality) in the modern/colonial gender system, to use Lugones' coined term – or the biological (presumed) dimorphism, and the patriarchal and heterosexual organization of relations – is crucial to an understanding of the differential gender arrangements along "racial lines." By no means am I attempting to trace a Chicana subjectivity that does not take into account the multiple histories of colonialism that shaped the violent and inchoate negotiations of race, place, and power between native populations and Mexican Americans. However, I am attempting to trace how these relations and structures collide and construct gender and sexuality along racial lines.

Lugones is working within the framework of decolonial theorist Anibal Quijano's conception of the "coloniality of power." While Quijano's conception of "coloniality of power" introduces the basic and universal social classification of the population of the planet in terms of the idea of 'race' (which replaces the relations of superiority and inferiority established through domination), it takes hegemonic gender arrangements of male and female at face value and does not interrogate their construction in the New World (Lugones 2). Quijano's concept that race structures the hierarchies of colonialism lacks an analysis of gender, sexuality, and class, which this dissertation examines. Gender cannot be understood as the universal socialization of biological difference; the limitations of the analysis of sex and sexuality focus on heterosexual understandings of those constructions. Lugones states that these differential gender arrangements are inextricably linked to sex, sexual violence, labor, and subjectivity/intersubjectivity (resources: i.e. land and products) which structure/construct gendered racialization, which for this dissertation is seen in relation to the Mexican American and Chicana female. This model attempts to interject a conventional periodization of history while thinking as decolonial theorist Walter Mignolo has argued, that colonialism and modernity are parallel and interdependent systems of knowledge and power that carry ideological weight throughout history. While my project examines Mexican Americans and Chicanas in the Southwest through a decolonial lens, meaning I trace the ideological and discursive systems of gender and sexuality that are a product of economic and social relations of the modern/colonial system, I also understand the importance of examining specific historical moments for

their material conditions, a place where decolonial theory cannot be fully applied in the contemporary moment.

Besides decolonial feminist theory, the additional theories at the foundation of this dissertation are Chicana feminism, Queer of Color Critique, Women of Color Feminism, Settler Colonialism, and Marxist Feminism. Together these theories allow me to interrogate historical and hegemonic notions of gender and sexuality that mark Mexican American women and Chicanas, situate them in their social positionality, specify how racialized gender and sexuality inform and structure material economic conditions throughout history, and interrogate the interlocking systems of oppression that Kimberle Crenshaw and women of color feminists of the 60's and 70's state is the methodology of studying "the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relationships and subject formations." As the dissertation closes with a contemporary example, decolonial theory is supplemented with a theoretical lens that engages with late-capitalist conventions. As Roderick Ferguson states in *Aberration in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique*, "Queer of color analysis presumes that liberal ideology occludes the intersecting saliency of race, gender, sexuality, and class in forming social practices" (4). In thinking about how racist practices articulate themselves as gender and sexual regulation I place this theoretical lens in conversation with postmodern theory to expand the dissertations reach in thinking about how gender and sexual difference inform racial formation. These theories work together to help me examine how social relations, structures of violence, and "identity" markers are historically constructed discursively and materially. The site of entrance for theorizing

the Mexican American and Chicana body politic differs greatly at distinct historical moments.

This dissertation also expands upon Marxist feminist theories of production and reproduction to theorize sexual economies. Marxist feminists interject in the analysis that the ideological and discursive continuation of gender and sexuality is embedded in different economic moments. Marxist scholars Silvia Federici disagree with (Radical) feminists, who only " account[ed] for sexual discrimination and patriarchal rule on the basis of transhistorical cultural structures, presumably operating independently of relations of production and class" (7). While decolonial feminist theory would not fall into Radical feminism, Marxist feminists see racialization as imbricated in capitalist development. Decolonial feminists attempt to untangle the hegemonic notion of "woman" as constructed in relation to colonialism/modernity while Marxist feminists take the already constructed category of "woman" and acknowledge the sphere of reproduction and feminize labor as a source of value-creation and exploitation for specific historical moments. This dissertation expands on Marxist feminism in thinking about the dual function of the mestiza peon through the examination of racialized gender and sexuality. Breaking down the distinction between productive and reproductive labor altogether, the mestiza peon reproduces the labor power for the *patron* and produces the subsistence that maintains her family when her husband does not bring home any wages.

This project is in conversation with these various theories and particularly Chicana feminism to argue that Chicana (and Mexican American) narratives are key sites in examining how histories of the Chicana body politic, through sex, sexuality,

gender, and sexual violence, delineate social processes. I ask: How does the history of sexualization, sexual violence, and sexual economies fall out of the discourses of contemporary sexuality? Women of color feminism and Chicana feminism have been main sites for thinking through the contentions in these various fields. Woman of color feminist Neferti Tadiar states that what Marxist feminists miss is that their analysis privileges a universal political subject with agency. My project considers Mexican American women and Chicanas who take up the subject positionality for different reasons and are not in contradistinction to those that fall outside of the privileged form of political agency. Tadiar does however stress that race, gender, and sexuality are material relations embedded in the economic just as the economic is reliant upon the construction of categories of differentiation. Just as capitalism is reliant on the production of commodities, the exchange of commodities relies on differentiation. Value requires the production of difference. If quantifying difference requires the assignment of value, then we can never separate the discursive processes of differentiation from the material processes of the assignment of value.

The historiography of Chicanas and their respective literature exemplify how they engage historically with the discursive production of gender and sexuality and the material conditions that these discursive categories have on variegated sexual economies. Expanding upon Adrienne Davis' definitions of sexual economies in "Don't Let Nobody Bother Yo' Principle: The Sexual Economy of American Slavery", I define sexual economies as modern/colonial structures, enacted through sexual and economic systems (in certain historical moments over determined by racial miscegenation and violence), which build racialized civility and racialized capital. The

narrative of Malinche becomes the flashpoint of debates within Chicana/o Studies regarding gender and sexuality. The young multilingual translator who translated for Cortés in 1519-11521 bore the first “mestizo” child and was named a traitor. The violent colonial conquest through miscegenation lays the groundwork for the discourse of racialized gender and sexuality and mestiza women as “hypersexual.” In “Malinche, Calafía y Toypurina” Antonia Castañeda states, “Chicana scholars and writers, whose research and writing has re-membered Malintzín/Malinche since the early 1970s have reclaimed this symbolic mother of mestizo peoples from the opprobrium of patriarchal Mexicano/Chicano history that condemned her sexuality, devalued, and dismissed her as Cortés' “'Indian whore'” (78). Departing from this flashpoint and beginning at a much later time, this dissertation utilizes the myth of Malinche indirectly in framing the theoretical framework of sexual economies that I deploy.

I am utilizing Chicana feminist Antonia Casteñeda's definition of racialized gender and sexuality, where she defines gender as denoting the social construction and performativity of masculinity, as well as of femininity – and thus the social construction of distinctions between male and female. (230). Riffing off Judith Butler, but examining how gender and sexuality is always racialized and not universal, Casteñeda distinguishes gender as structuring relations while sex is only produced as a stable category because of hegemonic repetitions that fall into gendered regulatory schemes (x). Gender gives sex its coherence, but following Casteñeda, gender and sexuality are dimensions of “subjectivity that are both an effect of power and a technology of rule, that analyze colonial and settler colonial domination in relation to the construction of subjectivities – meaning forms of personhood, power, and social positioning” (231).

Therefore, I argue, Chicana sexuality is linked to historical sexual economies and processes of racialized sexualization that situate the utility of their bodies to the particular historical moment and maintenance of racialized gendered social roles. The history behind the different formations of differential technologies helps us understand Chicana sexuality as not limited to identity markers. I am utilizing Chicana sexuality not as a " regulated and polymorphous incitement to discourse" that is specific to the individual and a linking of bodies, desires, identities, and acts as Foucault states in *The History of Sexuality*, but rather, as a social process that marks bodies as a technology within structures of racial capitalism. For this dissertation, the centrality of racialized Chicana sexuality moves from securing capitalist economies and production in the nineteenth and early twentieth-century to excessive and unproductive literary representation in the contemporary moment.

There are multiple layers and histories that make up this dissertation of the U.S. Southwest. While this dissertation begins in the late nineteenth century, it examines the multiple empires and governances that existed before U.S. empire and imperialism. The continued ideologies of Spanish and Mexican governance inform not only the residual modes of economies that inform gender and sexual norms, but also the historical legacies that merge with U.S. imperial ideologies. Gender and sexuality have historically been used as a technology of control and management, but they have not always carried the same meanings and "normative" understanding as we see in modern sexuality. The link between gender and sexuality during U.S. empire and sexual economies allows me to examine the disarticulated labor of economic systems, U.S. empire, and residual modes of economic systems and epistemology from colonial

conquest. I argue that communal land, the hacienda, and individual land grants were the key sites of producing sexuality in the Americas, particularly the Southwest. Foucault states, “The appearance in nineteenth-century psychiatry, jurisprudence, and literature of a whole series of discourses on the species and subspecies of homosexuality, inversion, pederasty, and "psychic hermaphroditism" made…” sexuality perverse, visible, and/or natural. (96). For Foucault, sexuality remains linked to the discursive and the control and maintenance it produces. Scott Morgensen reminds us in “Settler Homonationalism: Theorizing Settler Colonialism within Queer Modernities,” that for Foucault, sexuality was constructed where the “norm of discipline and the norm of regularization intersect” (110). But Morgensen redefines modern sexuality in the context of the Americas and settler colonialism, stating, “The terrorizing sexual colonization of Native peoples was a historical root of the biopolitcs of modern sexuality in the United States. Colonists interpreted diverse practices of gender and sexuality as signs of general primitivism among Native peoples. Over time, they produced a colonial necropolitics that framed Native peoples as queer populations marked for death.” (106). This settler sexuality that Morgensen introduces is a white heteronormative sexuality that regulates indigenous gender and sexuality that violently interpellates them into a system of modern sexuality through sexual violence and constitutive “normative” and “management” aspects. Morgenson resituates modern sexuality as produced through the sexual violence constitutive of settler colonial conquest in the Americas. Expanding on Morgenson’s intervention, this dissertation examines how settler society and sexuality is multiply constituted through sexual economies of the Southwest, the (re) production and ungendering of black bodies under

chattel slavery, and the production/invention of land-holding Mexican American bodies after 1848.

In *Epistemology of the Closet*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick traces the nineteenth-century crystallization of homo/heterosexual binary that set out a mapping "world-making" through sexual relations in the world. She states,

> Every given person, just as he or she was necessarily assignable to a male or a female gender, was now considered necessarily assignable as well to a homo-or a hetero-sexuality, a binarized identity that was full of implications, however confusing, for even the ostensibly least sexual aspects of personal existence. It was this new development that left no space in the culture exempt from the potent incoherences [sic] of homo/ heterosexual definition. (2).

The binary didn't leave room for much analysis and lends itself to a critique of an intersectional approach that is static and not historical in nature. For if we cannot think about how mutually co-constitutive these categories are, there is no way to untangle them from each other precisely because of their relationship to capital. In *Imperial Leather: Race Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest*, Anne McClintock states that, "[K]nowledge of the unknown world was mapped as a metaphysics of gender violence—not as the expanded recognition of cultural difference—and was validated by the new Enlightenment logic of private property and possessive individualism"(13). Prior to sexuality becoming a calcified term that had "normative" modern meaning, sexual norms in Europe decriminalized rape against peasant women, witch hunts took place regularly, and enclosures of land fostered the divide between gender and working class lines that constructed the domestic "home" space in regulating ways. McClintock states, "European colonists deployment of sexuality and gendered discourse to define people in the Americas was also being deployed in their European communities, albeit

in a distinct manner" (14). The tracing of sexual and gender norms is one goal of this dissertation, but it also interrogates as McClintock states, "In other words, the story is not simply about relations between black and white people, men and women, but about how the categories of whiteness and blackness, masculinity and femininity, labor and class came historically into being in the first place" (16).

Many studies have been done that look at the ways in which gender and sexuality frame and inform Chicana subjectivity. However, this dissertation is engaged with how the racialized gender and sexuality of Mexicans, Mexican Americans and Chicanas are co-constitutively informed by the black feminine and indigenous tropes of the "Indian" and constructed in cultural texts. This dissertation not only engages with subjugated histories of Mexican Americans and Chicanas, but it is also informed by theories of settler colonialism and black feminist studies. I am using Lorenzo Veracini's definition of settler colonialism in *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview,* he states that "A colony is both a political body that is dominated by an exogenous agency, and an exogenous entity that reproduces itself in a given environment" (3). Simultaneously, while engaging the black feminine, Hortense Spillers maintains that blackness is a historical positionality and traces an "American grammar" [that] begins at the "beginning," which is really a rupture and a radically different kind of cultural continuation" (63). As the impasse between human and non-human, the black "female" body is neither acknowledged nor discoursed away and through the "interiorized violence of body and mind" and extreme acts particular to male brutality, "this materialized scene of unprotected female flesh – of female flesh "ungendered" – offers a praxis and a theory, a text for living and for dying, and a

method for reading both through their diverse meditations" (62). This dissertation ontologically traces how Mexican gender and sexuality is constantly informed up and against the black feminine and the native.

Space is a critical theoretical lens that informs this dissertation as well. In thinking about how the racialized gender and sexuality of Mexican American and Chicanas is a product of sexual economies and leveraged against black and native bodies, the geopolitics of space is central because the history of the southwest, land stewardship, land tenure, and the drawing and redrawing of state boundaries is at the center of shifting relations of capitalist production. Because of this inseparable relation between the transforming understanding of land and capitalist relation production, I utilize critical geography in order to talk about how sexuality is tethered to land and settler colonial and colonial relations. As Chicana critical geographer Mary Pat Brady states in *Extinct Lands, Temporal Geographies: Chicana Literature and the Urgency of Space*, "Viewing space as produced, productive, and producing means viewing it as interanimating and dependent in part on narrative for its productive effects, as active and generative rather than inert and transparent" (7). Space is always social but under the guise of the non-formative or as background. However, this dissertation explores the significant role of narrative in the production of place and the importance of using narrative to comment upon spaces in the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries. Brady states that Chicanas write with a sense of urgency about space because "displacement and dislocation are at the core of the invention of the Americas" (9). This production of space coincides with the Cartesian subject as "the subject of the state, as holder of property, as 'I conquer'" (9). This western philosophical idea "de-

spaced" peoples and has an ongoing effect on Chicanas/os. However, when I get to my reading of the Castillo's contemporary novel, space becomes seemingly irrelevant as the main protagonist traverses many different spaces with the same sexual issues.

As the title of the dissertation suggests, this is a study of the "hemispheric Southwest." I am defining the Southwest from Northern California to Colorado down to Houston, Texas. I utilize the term hemispheric to denote not only spatial continuities between the modern-day U.S. and Mexico (north and south) but also historical changes of borders and boundaries that are central to this dissertation. In an attempt to de-center the U.S., I am interrogating the multiple empires and shifts in space while also focusing on the local. As José Limón states in "Border Literary Histories, Globalization, and Critical Regionalism, "Critical Regionalism is…a praxis for recognizing…but also linking cultural and socioeconomic localized identities, especially as these stand in antagonistic, if also negotiated, relationships with late capitalist globalization" (167). Limón establishes parallels to separate locales that exist worldwide, while maintaining a stance of critical selectivity ultimately in the name of the region. While the dissertation is attentive to both, the hemispheric Southwest examines the US-Mexico border region and decidingly situates a paradigm of crossing, resistance, and circulation of American Studies and their transnational connections.

Critical Memory Studies is central to this study in multiple ways. First, the nineteenth-century novel I examine is written as a historical novel that engages the conditions that produce displacement of "elite" Mexican American females. Secondly, the twentieth-century writers I examine in this dissertation are all looking back and (re) membering the nineteenth-century to comment on their current social status as

subjugated women of color. Jenny Edkins states in *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, "Contemporary US devices of memory production…produce a particular form of memory. Words and images are frozen, framed, and rendered mechanical and impersonal. This means that 'an inherently and pre-eminently temporally constituted process like remembering is thus detemporalised" (35). The static representation of memory production calls for the "product" to unsettle the linear historical timeline, while at the same time colliding political, social, and cultural relationships. We see this non-static representation of memory production in all the works I engage with and examine in this dissertation, as problematic as they are. Kerwin Lee Klein in "On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse" states, "In academic and popular discourse alike, memory and its associated keywords continue to invoke a range of theological concepts as well as vague connotations of spirituality and authenticity" (130). The collision of the romanticized and factual past of California, New Mexico and Texas comment not only on the changing space, dispossession, and displacement of Californios in California, Hispanos in New Mexico, and Tejanos in Texas, but also comment on gender and sexual norms through the racialized labor systems of the past.

Part one of the dissertation, "The Gendered and Sexualized Historical (Re) Construction of the Southwest and the Archive," includes Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. As previously indicated, Chapter 1 of my dissertation begins in the nineteenth-century and examines *Who Would Have Thought It?* by María Amparo Ruiz de Burton and argues that this early Mexican American texts allow us to culturally and materially trace a narrative of sexualization in the hemispheric Southwest by co-constitutively constructing the Mexicana female (gender and sexuality) through a certain colonial and

settler colonial lens up and against the white and black femininity. Chapter 2 moves to the twentieth-century but vacillates between the past and the present to examine Fabiola Cabeza de Baca's *We Fed Them Cactus* and Jovita González and Eve Raleigh's *Caballero,* and recovered WPA Debt Peonage short stories. I argue that the residual (sexual) economic systems of communal land and the hacienda '"fantasy" reveal how gender and sexuality played a role in the construction of the nation, "where 'the proper (white) femininity is enshrined as both the symbolic center and boundary marker of the nation as 'home' and 'family," while simultaneously negotiating how Mexican American femininity form against contradictory lines of the nation. This chapter interrogates the sexual economy of the debt peonage system in the Southwest, where the mestiza wife/peon serves a dual function through racialized gender and sexuality in relation to the elite land-holding wife/daughter to the *patron.*

Part two of the dissertation is "The Historical Present of the Southwest Borderlands" and includes Chapter 3, which positions Ana Castillo's novel *Give It To* Me in between two trends within Chicana/Latina literature. One trend constructs literary characters as integrated into the American cultural mainstream and as gendered and sexually "positive representations." The second trend focuses on Chicana/Latina narratives critically engaging with gender and sexuality to construct intersectional difference, not only through spatial and historical specificity, but discursively as well. In the specific textual example from Ana Castillo's *Give It To Me*, I find a third trend that constructs Chicana sexuality as excessive and unproductive, producing the "uncivil" other. I offer the term "uncivil" other as a concept that I apply to contemporary Chicana narratives marked by sexual excess in contrast to discourses of

positive representation and by characters that get marked as "unproductive" and become devalued by racialized sexuality. But putting these two sections and historical moments together in this dissertation, I am able to confront and challenge the construction of racialized gender and sexuality in order to expose the long roots of the historical misusage and management of the bodies, sexuality, and intimacies of women of color. In the same vein, putting this historical lineage together allows me to interrogate and undermine the very logic that upholds standards of "woman" and proper femininity.

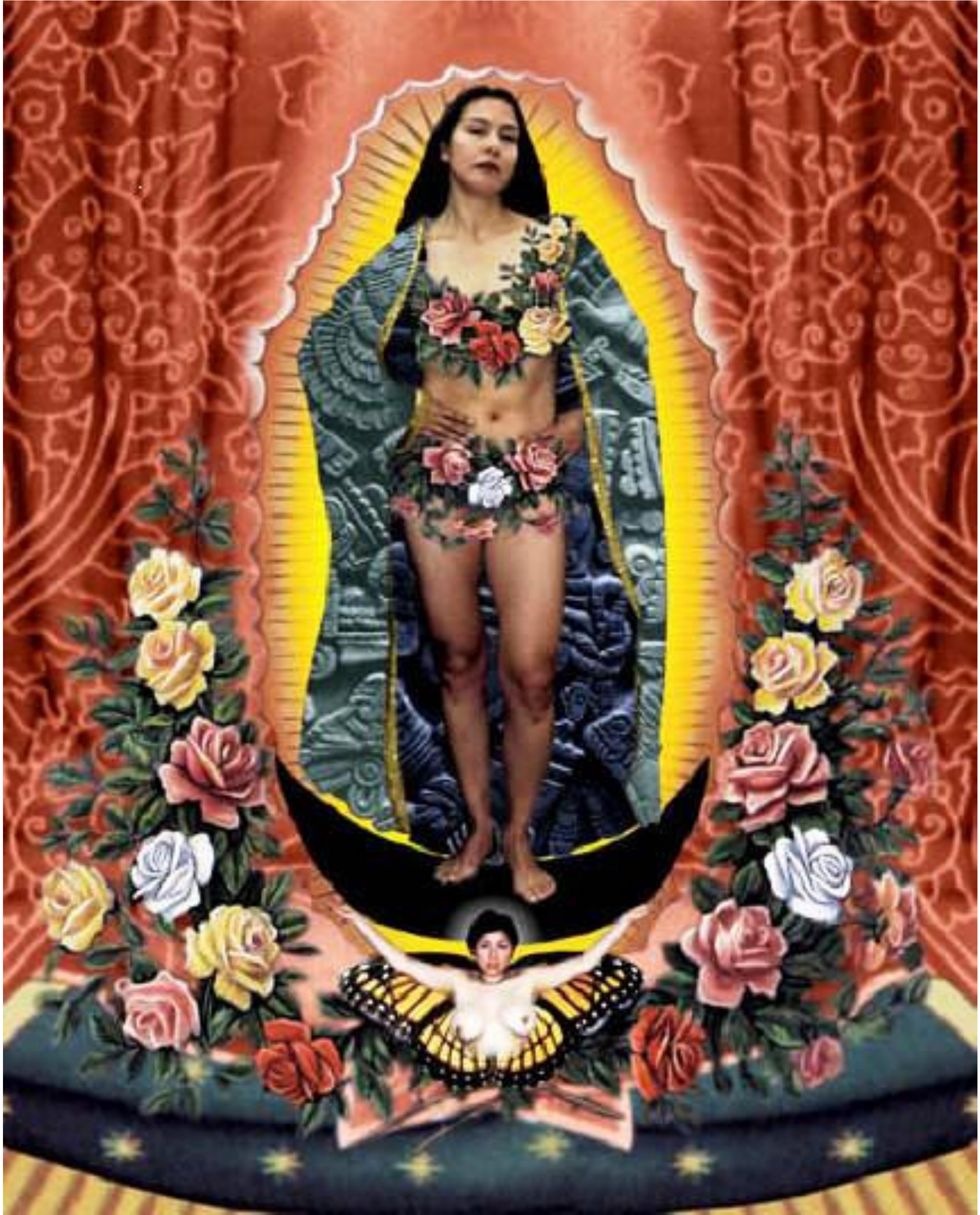

Figure 1: "Our Lady" by Alma López

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CHAPTER ONE

(Re) Constituting Gender and Sexuality Within U.S. Empire: Sexual Violence, Settler Colonialism, Land, and Wealth in Nineteenth-Century Mexican American Writings

"We soon, however, by the motions accompanying the commands of the wife of the chief, came to understand that they were going to tattoo our faces…The process was somewhat painful, though it pained us more for two or three days after than at the time of its being done. They told us that this could never be taken from the face, and that they had given us a different mark from the one worn by their own females— as we saw— but the same with which they marked all their own captives, and that they could claim us in what tribe so ever they might find us"
-Olive Oatman, *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls Among the Apache and Mohave Indians* (1875)

Olive Oatman and her sister Mary Oatman were taken into captivity in 1851 by the Apaches and later sold to the Mohaves, where they remained until Olive was returned back to her white family in 1856 while Mary died of starvation in captivity. The Mohave tribe gave the girls a chin tattoo (figure 2) that both male and female captives received and represented their belonging to the tribe. This would be the marker of recognition if the Mohave captives were to be stolen by another tribe. As the quote above exemplifies, the captives were given different tattoos from those of the indigenous[3] women in the tribe, marking their difference from the tribal members. While captivity narratives did exist that told the stories of Mexican and Indigenous women (told from the third person perspective but never from their first-person

[3] I use the term Indigenous interchangeably with *Indios,* Indian, and Native American as these terms were constituted in the Southwest from Spanish colonialism to U.S. Imperialism to talk about people indigenous to certain geohistorical spaces. As Menchaca states, "Though *gente de razón* became a widely used and inclusive label, the Indian category did not completely fall out of use. This category…found that to be enumerated as an Indian an individual must (1) be of homogenous decent, (2) retain the aboriginal culture, (3) speak the aboriginal language, and (4) be a member of a tribe or an Indian corporate community who recognized two sovereignties, the tribe and the royal government. This enumeration, of course, applied only to the peaceful Indians of México. Nomadic Indians were not included as part of the national nineteenth century censuses" (167).

perspective) being held in captivity by one another, the conventional/traditional captivity narrative revolved around white women[4] taken into captivity by "savage" primitives.

With all the problematic discourses and ideology that the captivity narrative brings up, scholars have found the Oatman captivity narrative uncannily similar to the Doña Theresa and Lola captivity by the Apache Indians who later sold them to the Mohave Indians told in María Amparo Ruiz de Burton's 1872 romance novel *Who Would Have Thought It?* Andrea Tinnemeyer states in "Rescuing the Past: The Case of Olive Oatman and Lola Medina" that Ruiz de Burton utilizes the Oatman captivity narrative as the basis for the captivity of Doña Theresa and Lola in her novel as a way to, "Redress grievances after the U.S.-Mexican War. Ruiz de Burton's revision of the captivity narrative operates under a different geographical and racial imaginary than the one commonly animating captivity narratives. It focuses attention on the Southwest Territory [and] on the broken promises of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo" (181). While I believe Ruiz de Burton was writing and advocating very much within the historical moment and positionality that she belonged to, her attempt to negotiate her subjugated positionality within U.S. Empire and Imperialism reinscribes not only

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[4] Popular captivity narratives span the decades between the seventeenth-century, with Mary Rowlandson's *A True History of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* published in 1682 to the late nineteenth-century, with Emeline L. Fuller's *Left by the Indians. Story of My Life* in 1892. Although they span various geographic locations, the traditional and conventional captivity narratives focus on white, pure femininity. Thus, we can trace the spatial evolution of this genre from east to west, as we trace an ideology that suggests indigenous peoples need spiritual redemption or as savage brutes, need to be tamed or removed as justification for westward expansion. The ideological underpinnings of the captivity narrative create possibilities for U.S. Empire through "Indianness." However, Latin American writers influenced Ruiz de Burton. There was the Latin American captivity narrative, such as *La Cautiva*, an epic poem by Argentinean writer Esteban Echevarría in 1837 and *Cumandá* by Ecuadorian writer Juan León Mera in 1877.

racialized undertones of U.S. imperialism, but also gender and sexual roles for the Mexicana up and against the native and the black feminine.

The Olive Oatman captivity narrative has two stark resemblances to the captivity narrative of Doña Theresa and Lola. The first is the location in which the Oatman sisters were taken captive, at the Gila River in between Arizona and California. The second is how the captives in both tales are "marked" as belonging to their respective tribe, the Mohave tribe for the Olive and the Apache tribe for Doña Theresa and Lola. Olive is given a black and blue tattoo that marks her position as captive within the Mohave tribe and Lola is "dyed" black to keep Doña Theresa and Lola from escaping or attracting attention. This chapter begins with the captivity of Olive Oatman for two reasons. The first reason, through their similarities, allows me to think about how the captivity narrative, attributed mostly to white women crossing racial, religious, and civilized boundaries, functions when a Mexicana is positioned in the place of the white woman. Tinnemeyer states that, "Ruiz de Burton's reframing of the captivity narrative shifts the geographical and racial imaginings of the nation…" (180). But I am arguing that this is not necessarily a reframing of the captivity narrative but a reconstruction of Mexicana positionality within history. It is through Doña Theresa' character that the negotiation of the Mexicana body politic, through white femininity, becomes the proper site of femininity as exemplified through gender norms established by colonial relations. I am deploying the term Mexicana body politic as a trope and metaphor in this novel that considers Mexicana gender and sexuality as a unifying entity, in order to prove the "properness" of this particular group. Usually deployed to talk about the nation, I am utilizing it here to interrogate the unifying trope that is

mapped onto Mexicana bodies. Doña Theresa's sacrifice of her life for Lola sets up the particularities of gender relations between Lola, the Mexican American, and the white women in New England. Through the captivity narrative and Doña Theresa's martyrdom, Ruiz de Burton establishes the trope of the "savage" Indian. She reproduces the logics of settler colonialism through a historical amnesia that marks the "Indian" as one who could be dispossessed, while simultaneously negotiating what it means to be "Mexican American" within the racial grammar of whiteness. The second reason allows me to juxtapose Olive Oatman's tattoo with the blackening of Lola. Lola's black markings set up the terms of anti-blackness, the black feminine, and black mutability in the novel.

María Amparo Ruiz de Burton's historical romance *Who Would Have Thought It?* has a geopolitical landscape that traverses regional borders and covers three distinct historical periods: The Civil War (1861-1865), Reconstruction (1865-), and the Mexican-American War (1846-1848). But what is most distinct about the novel is how it sets up histories of the Chicana/Mexicana body politic and gender and sexual norms in the hemispheric Southwest. As I explained in detail in the introduction, I am utilizing the term hemispheric Southwest not solely to focus on the U.S. nation-state construction, but as a historically evolving and forming space where cultural, political, social, and spatial borders shift throughout the multilayered histories that cannot be contained. The scholarship on María Amparo Ruiz de Burton's life and novels is abundant and has varied, from discussions about how her biographical background influenced her historical/romance novels to the complicated arguments her characters make about U.S. exceptionalism, Manifest Destiny, Mexican American dispossession,

slavery, the indigenous population, and particularly Mexicana females. This chapter argues that María Amparo Ruiz de Burton 's novel *Who Would Have Thought It?* allows us to unpack how gender and sexual norms, as a product of colonialism and settler colonialism, construct the Mexicana up and against white and black femininity. Ruiz de Burton utilizes the historical romance not only to disparage the rogue Yankees, but also to exemplify how sex and sexual violence set up the ambiguous relations of land and wealth through histories of colonialism and settler colonialism in the newly annexed U.S. However, Ruiz de Burton does this at the expense of the captivity narrative in which the "savage" natives kidnap and rape the pregnant Doña Theresa, negating the intersecting colonial conflicts that prompt the kidnapping in the first place: Spanish colonial displacement of native or *Indio* peoples, Mexico's recognition of natives as full citizens with land rights after 1821, and the U.S. expansion into what was formally Mexico, displacing landowners, and making the new northern frontier vulnerable to indigenous attack by dispossessed native people deprived of their land, labor, and resources. The gendered racialization and racialized sexuality of Doña Theresa and Lola Medina are the primary examples that I use in this chapter. Grappling with the contested relationship that Ruiz de Burton has to identity and wealth, she remains an important historical and literary figure for Chicano Studies for her contradictory critique of American democracy. As Jesse Alemán states, "Her novel shake[s] the foundations of Chicano/a literary history, for [her] narrative play[s] out problematic ethno-racial romances that claim white racial identity for Californios at the expense of nonwhite racial Others, Native Americans, and blacks in particular" (61). While Mexicanos were displaced of their land and position, they were not exempt from

attempting to establish their whiteness and/or take part in reproducing violence again black and native people. Ruiz de Burton was contradictorily attempting to position herself as an "elite" Mexican. This chapter is joining an already rich conversation about Ruiz de Burton's claims to whiteness through the critique of American democracy and Northern American exceptionalism. However, what this chapter aims to intervene in is the discourse of gender and sexuality that remains static in most scholarship regarding Ruiz de Burton. This chapter interrogates how sexualization within empire and expansion in the nineteenth century Southwest (and the residual modes of sexual colonial violence and conquest) laid the foundation for our basic understandings of gender and sexuality and thus our modern day understandings of properly raced, gendered, and sexual subjects. I ask: Why are Chicana subjects (depending on the time period, Mexicanas, Californias, Tejanas, Hispanas, etc.) interpellated in the U.S. nation-state through citizenship, national identity, and racialized, sexualized violence?

Part One: How the Historical Informs the Biographical

Ruiz de Burton not only comments upon and critiques multiple U.S. policies of displacement, and dispossession of racialized subjects in *Who Would Have Thought It?*, but she also leverages a critique of U.S. exceptionalism, expansion, and Manifest Destiny that begs for scholars to engage with the multiple histories of settler colonialism and remarks on what it means for her, as a Mexicana writer, to take on such a task. Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita in *Conflicts of Interests: The Letters of María Amparo Ruiz de Burton* comment upon Ruiz de Burton and state, "Her novel would be the first published narrative written in English from the perspective of the conquered Mexican population that, despite being granted full citizenship by the Treaty

of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848, was, by 1860, a subordinated and marginalized national minority" (7). Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, one of Ruiz de Burton's friends and fellow *californio* stated himself that she was a "fissured subject" (Sánchez and Pita x). Sánchez and Pita claim that the political environment contributed to her fissured subjectivity: a figure that was attempting to disparage those same hegemonic forces within which she felt a privilege to be incorporated (xvii). Working within and against the structures of violence that continuously oppressed and dispossessed her, Ruiz de Burton held a contradictory positionality within the growing U.S. empire. Many of her biographers claim that Ruiz de Burton was born to an elite, land-holding family in Loreto, Baja California, Mexico in 1831. Herein lays her fissured subjectivity. Ruiz de Burton, by all accounts, was able to maintain some aspect of her "elite" façade within society and after her death; however, it was mostly an act.

Born María Amparo Maytorena to Jesús Maytorena (also spelled Maitorena) and Isabel Ruiz, she used her maternal last name, as it carried the most "prestige and influence" (Sánchez and Pita 4). There are many speculations as to why she did not use her paternal last name but one was that "[her grandfather] was not a propertied man and held no influential position" (Sánchez and Pita 17). Her grandfather, Captain Ruiz an attendant in patrolling the Northern Baja area, was later appointed governor of Baja California, while being *teniente de fronteras*. While being *teniente de fronteras* in Baja California sounds prestigious, the frontera, at that moment was nothing but a ranch. As Sánchez and Pita remind us in *Conflicts of Interest*, there was a mission on the ranch and Ruiz de Burton's grandfather, Captain Ruiz, would capture native missionized runaways. As a result of his service, the king gave him land in Ensenada. He gave this

land to his son-in-law to work, and left northern Baja to retire poor and tired in Loreto. In October of 1822, he was appointed interim governor of Baja California.[5] This brief stint as governor and his position as a Spanish solider and criollo[6] gave Ruiz de Burton the clout she needed to move along in the world with prestige, even though she possessed no money, land, or wealth. She witnessed the 1846 U.S. invasion of La Paz, Baja California, at the start of the Mexican-American War and three years later married the Captain of the invading army, Henry S. Burton, a West Point graduate and native of Connecticut. When the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the war, the U.S. gained upper California, along with other Southwestern states, but left lower California to Mexico. Captain Burton arranged to have over 400 "friendly" Mexicans transported to Monterey, California, granting them full citizenship rights guaranteed by the treaty. Among them was María Amparo Ruiz de Burton. Her husband later purchased property on Rancho Jamul (in California) with three other people and the family moved to the east coast because Burton was transferred as a military officer to New York. Ruiz de Burton returned to California in 1869 after the death of her husband to find squatters sitting on Rancho Jamul with some parts sold off. The Land Act of 1851, contrary to the 1848 Treaty, required all Mexican land grants to be validated by the Land Commission or the state courts. Ruiz de Burton, although not an original Californio landholder would in time, after much litigation, gain her Jamul property as a homestead,

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[5] Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita have done extensive research on Ruiz de Burton and her family in *Conflicts of Interest: The Letters of María Amparo Ruiz de Burton,* Houston: Arte Público Press, 2001. See Chapter 1 *Baja California* in the book for a more in-depth examination into her life.

[6] Marta Menchaca states in her book *Recovering History, Constructing Race: The Indian, Black, and White Roots of Mexican Americans*, "Though by law the *criollo* racial category was reserved for whites, it was common for parish priests to register *mestizo* children of means as *criollo* by including in the baptismal registry only the race of the father (65).

land that she mortgaged several times, before she died in Chicago in 1895. She hired a lawyer to take care of her Ensenada land claim case after she died and he was able to gain an award from the Mexican government for her children years after her death. The historical persona and legacy that she left behind as an "elite" landholding Mexicana/Californio wasn't dependent as much on her access to old money as it was to her keen sense of networking and to positioning herself as something other than a "mongrel Mexican."

Thus, Ruiz de Burton is not unproblematic in any sense of the word. She was a Mexicana in the nineteenth-century, negotiating her position within the U.S. geohistorical and geopolitical space where laws and legislation are built on, as Denise da Silva states, "racist ideas [that are not] foreign to the modern conception of Justice" (424). Ruiz de Burton could never obtain or occupy a position within U.S. democracy that she thought she morally deserved. For the U.S. was predicated on the foundational ideology of white supremacy and the ungovernability of difference camouflaged under the guise of disseminating civility and order. It was not only the exclusion of difference but also the regulated laws that established personhood based on whiteness and justified by Heidegger's "instrumental rationality[7]" that Ruiz de Burton was attempting to negotiate. She, in the end, was less concerned with the foundational ideology of the U.S. and more concerned with how the laws were implemented and affected her. For this reason, she learned how to manipulate the system with little or no critique of the overarching racist ideologies that spurred settler colonialism and anti-blackness.

[7] I deploy this term because I intend to prove how Ruiz de Burton attempts to act upon the most efficient solution for her historical positionality within the novel *Who Would Have Thought It?* without reflecting on the value at the end of her "solution." For more on this see Martin Heidegger "The Question Concerning Technology" (1950).

A copious writer, Ruiz de Burton penned two historical romances: *Who Would Have Thought It?* (1872) and *The Squatter and the Don: A Novel Descriptive of Contemporary Occurrences in California* (1885), one play: *Don Quixote de la Mancha: A comedy in Five Acts* (1876), and penned copious letters throughout her life. Her two historical romances have been the topic of recent scholarship regarding the annexation of northern Mexico to the U.S. in 1848 and land dispossession of Mexicanos. Her second novel focuses on California (formerly Mexican) land dispossession more intently. Ruiz de Burton published *The Squatter and the Don: A Novel Descriptive of Contemporary Occurrences in California* in 1885 but it was set in 1872. The novel critiques the overarching emerging monopoly capitalism that is displacing Californios. Ruiz de Burton utilizes the romance genre to consolidate Californio culture and Anglo capital and mark the beginning of a "white" citizenry that will construct a softer and enlightened form of Manifest Destiny. Scholars have found that Ruiz de Burton has to "forget" mestizo and Indian identities all together to write a novel that examines the dispossession of Californios (Alemán 63). I argue that her first novel, *Who Would Have Thought It?,* and the topic of study in this chapter sets the groundwork for her second novel *The Squatter and the Don*. While *Who Would Have Thought It?* does not deal directly with the topic of land dispossession for Californios, but it does take to task the American exceptionalism and democracy that would stop Ruiz de Burton from fully realizing incorporation, benefits of citizenship, and clear property rights within the newly annexed U.S.

In both her novels, she writes about how things need to drastically change within the hypocritical U.S., but also about the importance of whiteness. Since the inception of

the United States whiteness has been coupled with private property and as Cheryl I. Harris states in "Whiteness as Property," has historically been "rooted in white supremacy and economic hegemony over Black and Native American peoples" (1714). The artificial morality promoted by U.S. democracy is one of the many reasons Ruiz de Burton is being dispossessed of her land and status; for this reason she must counter this with a historical amnesia regarding Indian displacement and an ideology that has a consciousness of how power relations play out through her black or "dark" characters in her first novel *Who Would Have Thought It?* to get to a place of imagining "rightful" possession of property in *The Squatter and the Don*. Ruiz de Burton is negotiating what it means to be Californio within the racial grammar of whiteness in the U.S and within the primary "conceptual nucleus of the right to exclude" (Harris 1714). Functioning off the very notion that the U.S. operated not on the concept of race but the *"interaction* between conceptions of race and property…and a system of oppression [that involved] the seizure and appropriation of [bodies] and labor [and] the seizure and appropriation of land," Harris speaks to how whiteness was treated as treasured property that allowed access to a whole set of public and private privileges in relation to Black and Native subjectivity (1713, 1716).

The fact that often falls to the wayside regarding Ruiz de Burton is that she was not necessarily an elite land-holding Mexicana. She created a fabricated persona as she went along in life. The argument that Ruiz de Burton attempts to achieve whiteness in her novels at the expense of other subjugated groups is nothing new. My intervention, however, is that Ruiz de Burton interrogates categories of whiteness in *Who Would Have Thought It?* through racialized gendering and sexualization and through a

femininity of difference that took shape during Spanish colonialism and solidified during U.S. imperialism. Utilizing tropes of the “savage” Indian and blackness (amalgamated through chattel slavery at the end of the nineteenth-century[8]), Ruiz de Burton comes to conceptualize gender and sexual norms for Mexicans in the newly annexed Southwest through Doña Theresa and Lola. Through the historical romance and Lola’s inevitable marriage to a white New Englander (as she herself becomes white by the end of the novel), Ruiz de Burton takes the major historical events as the background to invoke her own disapproval of the changing social fabric that was becoming the United States.

Who Would Have Thought it? is a historical romance novel that follows the protagonist, a Mexican girl by the name of Lola, as she is born into captivity, rescued by New England geologist Mr. Norval, raised in New England by the Norvals, and “returns” back to Mexico with her fiancé, Julian Norval, to be reunited with her Austrian father. All this is happening while the Civil War is in the backdrop, with little mention of slavery, expect for the hypocritical Mrs. Norval who is an “abolitionist”. The U.S.-Mexico war of 1846-1848 was also in the backdrop as it had ended six years prior, changing the geohistorical space and border of former Northern Mexico. Sánchez and Pita maintain that Ruiz de Burton pens a historical romance novel that “constructs an allegory of modernization of the U.S. attained through plunder, corruption, and war” (lviii). The novel for Ruiz de Burton follows a romantic narrative that is based on the “not so black” protagonist Lola finding her way to a better way of life as a “white”

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[8] See section in this chapter titled Part Four: Black Face and Anti-blackness for a discussion on how I am utilizing “blackness” as an ontological and ideological technology of violence that was solidified in the U.S. through chattel slavery.

Spanish-Austrian woman with a New England, white male amidst a corrupt New England while exposing the historically scandalous ways of American exceptionalism in the characterization of Mrs. Norval, Mr. Hackwell, Mrs. Cackle, and Mr. Hammerhead. At the beginning of the novel, Mrs. Cackle exemplifies the complex history of westward expansion when she states,

> To me they are all alike – Indians, Mexicans, or Californians – they are all horrid. But my son Beau says our just laws and smart lawyers will soon 'freeze them out.' That as soon as we take their lands from them they will never be heard of anymore, and then the Americans, with God's help, will have all the land that was righteously acquired through a just war and a most liberal payment of money" (11).

As we see, Ruiz de Burton is negotiating her position in the newly annexed Southwest and through this complicated history, *Who Would Have Thought It?* delineates a place for herself in not only rewriting American literary history, but in providing us with a complex understanding of how racialized gender and sexuality were co-constitutively constructed in the nineteenth century through brown, black, and native bodies.

Following Fredric Jameson in his foundational essay about the historical novel titled "The Historical Novel Today, Or, Is It Still Possible?" he states, "The historical novel seems doomed to make arbitrary selections from the great menu of the past, so many different and colorful segments or periods catering to the historicist's taste, and all now, in full globalization, more or less equal in value" (260). Ruiz de Burton is attempting to debunk the myth of American democracy and exceptionalism and she utilizes Mexican nationalism as her vehicle to comment upon the status of the United States during the height of expansion and Manifest Destiny. But, the historical novel seems to serve a toxic nostalgia, a fantasy gratification in images of hierarchal social

relations and by-gone systems of privilege. Kings and queens dominated the historical novel, until more modern forms of nationalism (people of the nation) took their place and the lower class began to make sporadic appearances. This is the historical romance novel we get from Ruiz de Burton, except she sympathizes with the huge historical event, the Civil War. All historical novels likely harbor conservative sympathies and have a deep ontological investment in the old ways of life, as we see with Ruiz de Burton. She does not attempt to call into question the structures of colonial violence that put her in the positionality she was in as a Mexican woman. While Ruiz de Burton dismantles the inherited illusions of the historical heroes, she does this at the expense of black and native bodies. Jameson warns that it is tempting to characterize the historical novel as the intersection between individual existence and History. These texts do not always have to be historical novels. Rather, the historical novel is historically a narrative form generated by the passage from the old order to a bourgeois society, as well as the representation of that historical passage. His conclusion is that our true historical novel, today, is not the historical novel at all but rather realism as such.

Part Two: The Spatial Geo-Politics of *Who Would Have Thought It?*

New England is where most of the novel takes place and where Dr. Norval, who embodies the idea of southwestern expansion, takes Lola. While he is "exploring the newly acquired US space, Dr. Norval finds himself surrounded by" Indians" who need his medical assistance. Here he meets Doña Theresa, the mother of Lola, and a captive of the Mohave Tribe. Here we are seeing the constant flux of borders and Indian warfare against Spanish Hacienda culture/privileged Spanish/Mexicans. Doreen Massey reminds us that space is a product of interrelations and is "the sphere of

possibility…[and] always under construction…a simultaneity of stories-so-far" (9). These distinct spaces are constructed against the backdrop of U.S. Empire and Manifest Destiny. Insofar as Massey undoes the static notion of space in order for us to think, Neil Smith and Cindi Katz challenge us to critically engage with spatial metaphor. They state, "'Theoretical spaces' have been 'explored,' 'mapped,' 'charted,' 'contested,' 'colonized,' 'decolonized,' and everyone seems to be 'traveling'. But perhaps surprisingly, there has been little, in any, attempt to examine the different implications of material and metaphorical space" (68). Smith and Katz explain that spatial metaphors assist in reducing the unfamiliar to the familiar. The spatial metaphor acts a bridge between the "unknown" and the imaginative territory. Ruiz de Burton is writing in response to the deterritorialization of space and attempts to render the unfamiliar familiar in the context of her novel.

To understand this deterritorialization not only as metaphor under U.S. Empire, Katherine McKittrick and Linda Peake in "What Difference Does Difference Make to Geography?" charge us to rethink how we conceptualize geography in relation to processes of differentiation through race, gender, sexuality, and class. The changing borderlands is also a warfare zone/site because of the aftermath of the US/Mexico War. From this space we are taken into New England where American ideals are constantly a point of critique for Ruiz de Burton and where most of the novel's action takes place. If we saw actual warfare going on in the borderlands where Dr. Norval found Lola, New England becomes the site of domestic warfare enacted not only on Lola, but anyone who comes in the path of the hateful white Mrs. Norval. Mrs. Norval has possessive and racist claims that rule her household. The overarching domestic war we see

occurring throughout the novel is the “dominant ‘cult’ of women’s ‘moral authority’ that will be parodied through a plot of ‘fallen republican motherhood’” (Sanchez and Pita xi). Lola’s blackness unmasks the image of the “fallen republican woman” and the blatant racism. She also unmasks a colonizing nature that is allegorized by the appropriation of Lola’s wealth. Lastly, the space of the “Civil” War is present, but intermittently. This Civil War space is the space in the South that is the Civil War and also the “civil War” that is occurring in New England as a war on American exceptionalism and/or ideals. The culmination of both these “Civil War” spaces come together when Isaac Springs, brother of Mrs. Norval and Lavinia, is taken as a prisoner of war in the South and is literally forgotten because of Northern/government evilness. Lavinia, in attempting to get word back from Washington about her brother states, “But the policy of making it a rule, as you suggest, to leave our brave soldiers there because they help to consume the resources of the South – that I can’t understand” (114).

Part Three: History of Colonialism, Theory of Coloniality, Settler Colonialism, and Gender and Sexual Norms

While there is not a lack of scholarship on María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, there is not a lot of scholarly work done on how gender and sexuality are taken up in her work. Sánchez and Pita comment on the role gender and the domestic space play in the novel *Who Would Have Thought It?*. They state that the novel “does not adhere to the precepts of the typical domesticity, for it takes women from the domestic sphere into public domains…a sphere from which nineteenth-century women were to a large extent excluded…” (ix-x). Sánchez and Pita bring up that the novel functions as a type of parody that is the vehicle for Ruiz de Burton to bring up issues of gender and the

domestic space to satirize how nineteenth-century "socio-political structures and practices in the United States" were comedic and reduces them down to "caricatural representations…' (x). While I agree with Sánchez and Pita that Ruiz de Burton utilizes gender in ways that were contradictory to the times as a method to confront the real historical situation of dispossession and displacement of racialized others, I maintain that Ruiz de Burton is also working within and against the confines of colonial structures of violence through "gender" and "sexuality." As Spanish colonial forces intruded upon territorial and bodily space of indigenous peoples in Mexico, historical sexual violence and miscegenation occurred; sexuality is tied to the religious practices the Spanish were attempting to institute. As a way to "civilize" the free body and contain the sexual practices that the Spanish found when they came to the Americas, the discourse of the "perverse" was used to discipline the population, justified through Catholic norms of gender and sexuality.

My intervention is not only that Ruiz de Burton utilizes gender and sexuality in a non-traditional way for her time, but that the category of gender and sexuality, as María Lugones states in "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System," is utilized "as a colonial concept and mode of organization of relations of production, property relations, of cosmologies, and ways of knowing" (186)[9]. Lugones states that understanding the differential gender arrangements along "racial lines" is to understand a modern/colonial gender system that interrogates biological dimorphism, the patriarchal and heterosexual organization of relations that structure the colonized and

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[9] See Introduction to this dissertation for a more in-depth analysis of decolonial feminism and the ways in which I am deploying it in the Southwest.

the colonizer and the material effects it has on sex, labor, collective authority, subjectivity, resources, and products (189). I should clarify that I am not attempting to trace a genealogy of "women" under the structures of colonialism and settler-colonialism, although Lugones does take up how gender and sexual systems differed in a period of pre-colonial contact of the Americas. What I am concerned with in this dissertation and through this text is *how* differential gendering and sexualization structure material relations and are co-constitutively constructed up and against other racial or marked bodies and proper femininities. Also, to push Lugones further, this chapter aims to think about processes of gendering through a racial lens after imported gender and sexual norms were imposed during and after colonialism and settler colonialism. The use of decolonial theory in this chapter is to think about how race, gender, and sexuality were enunciated through the colonial encounter and how they were materialized and systematized through colonization in a different way than they had been before.

One of the first articles to appear after the recovery of Ruiz de Burton's text is "Contradictory Impulses: María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, Resistance, Theory, and the Politics of Chicano/a Studies" by José F. Aranda Jr. This essay examines María Amparo Ruiz de Burton's imagined intervention in the U.S. colonization of North America and delineates her contradictory responses to the post-1848 realities of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Ruiz de Burton constructs her interventions through her two novels; however, she also reproduces the logics of settler colonialism through her trope of the "savage" Indian. As Jodi Byrd states in *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*, conditions of "Indianness" created conditions of possibility

for U.S. Empire to manifest its intent and demonstrate "how 'Indianness' has served as the field through which structures have always already been produced" (xviii). The logics of settler colonialism structure the Indian as external to the social fabric that make up the United States, as something that existed in the past. As Aranda examines Ruiz de Burton's response to land dispossession as she attempts to write herself back into history, he fails to imagine how colonial and settler colonial relations informed her contradictory position. As Westward expansion began to dispossess different populations, Mexicans, after annexation became susceptible to being compared to the indigenous populations of the areas and the discourse of the "mongrel" Mexican began to take hold. Elite-land holding Mexicans began to assuage these notions by making claims to a white, European heritage. Tomás Almaguer states in *Racial Fault Lines*: *The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California,* "Spanish colonization of the Southwest has conferred upon Mexicans a "white" racial status, Christian ancestry, a romance language, European somatic features, and a formidable ruling elite that contested "Yankee" depredations. Less cultural distance existed between European-American immigrant and "half civilized" Mexicans than between whites and other racialized groups" (4). Ruiz de Burton was not a property owning Californio after annexation. But the ideals these elite-land holding *rancheros* held in relation to the very constructions of blackness and "Indianness" allows her to leverage a fake persona, which held tight to notions of the *casta system* that I go into greater detail about in Chapter 2. To see the distinctions of difference, Lugones reminds us, "The sense is that the reduction of gender to the private, to control over sex and its resources and products is a matter of ideology, of the cognitive production of modernity that has understood

race as gendered and gender as raced in particularly differential ways for Europeans/whites and colonized/nonwhite peoples" (202). It remains my argument that Ruiz de Burton attempted to hold onto the notion of racial and gender superiority through co-constitutively positioning herself against white, black, and native bodies and femininity, even as her pseudo-power and wealth were falling through her hands. Unable to control how things were going to pan out in the newly annexed U.S. Southwest, Ruiz de Burton penned two novels that utilized the colonial notions of racialized sexuality and gendered racialization against Indian and blackness in order to construct the superior character of Lola, the Austrian-Mexican who is white and within the realm of proper femininity. Lugones states, "It is part of history that only white bourgeois women have consistently counted as women so described in the West" (202). While not all white women were bourgeois in reality, the novel is aware of the superiority of white femininity and attempts to dismantle it with a more proper form of white femininity, through Lola who is morally and culturally the opposite of the crude white women of New England and wealthy.

In order to understand how I am deploying Lugones' modern/colonial gender system, a quick reminder of Anibal Quijano's concept of the "coloniality of power" needs to be rehashed. Quijano understands that all power is structured in relations of domination, exploitation, and conflict as social actors fight over control of "the four basic areas of human existence: sex, labor, collective authority and subjectivity/intersubjectivity, their resources and products" (2001–2002, 1). This power is organized around two axes: the coloniality of power and modernity (2000b, 342). So, for Quijano, the disputes/struggles over control of "sexual access, its resources and

products" define the domain of sex/gender and the disputes, in turn, can be understood as organized around the axes of coloniality and modernity. While Quijano's conception of "coloniality of power" introduces the basic and universal social classification of the population of the planet in terms of the idea of 'race' (which replaces the relations of superiority and inferiority established through domination), it accepts the Eurocentered, capitalist, hegemonic understanding of gender arrangements divided into male and female and does not interrogate their construction in the New World[10]. In truncating the historical and material features of colonialism, we cannot understand how differential gender and sexual arrangements cover up the ways in which women of color have been subjugated and disempowered. Lugones picks up what is missing in Quijano and states that gender does not need to organize social arrangements, including social sexual arrangements and need not be either heterosexual or patriarchal. Understanding these features of the organization of gender in the modern/colonial gender system—the biological dimorphism, the patriarchal and heterosexual organizations of relations—is crucial to an understanding of the differential gender arrangements along "racial" lines.

Colonial and settler colonial constructions of gender and sexuality depended on the historical time period, the perspective, the type of (travel) narrative, and the type of attempted ideological construction at hand. As Sylvia Wynter states in "1492: A New World View," the celebrants of exploration narrate it as "a triumph for the Christian West that was to liberate the indigenous peoples from their Stone Age, deprived existence without the wheel" (5). When the Americas were first colonized in the 16th

[10] In my work, I will refer to 'coloniality' as the racist condition that is utilized in the Americas as a hierarchical categorization. Race and racism is the distinctive trait of the 'coloniality of power,' but I will also be adding additional factors to my analysis of 'coloniality,' particularly gender, sexuality, class, and national identity.

century, religion was the main method of justification for conquest and missionization of indigenous people. Glenda Riley states in *Women and Indians on the Frontier* that during the colonial period, religious documents were concerned with "salvation" of indigenous people because the Spanish believed the indigenous populations to be without soul and "savage." Martha Menchaca states in *Recovering History, Constructing Race: The Indian, Black, and White Roots of Mexican Americans,* "By 1646 sexual relations between Spaniards and Indians had produced a *mestizo* population estimated at 109,042…" (57). While there were not as strict miscegenation laws during the colonial period, by the end of the eighteenth century, the anti-indigenous sentiment became strong and "salvation" was not the discourse surrounding the *indio.* In addition to the colonizing project of hierarchal inferiority (which later becomes realized as a project of racialization), the gendering and sexualization of indigenous populations took modern form. As Scott Morgensen explains, settler sexuality regulates Indigenous sexuality and gender by not only marking their diverse gender and sexual practices as "primitive," but also by supplanting them with the sexual modernity of settler subjects and always marked for death by their "difference" or queerness (106).[11] Sexuality was a form of difference that constructed the indigenous body as perverse, therefore in need of "saving." Depending on geographic location, Patrick Wolfe reminds us that U.S. settler colonial logic depends on an "elimination [that] has manifested as genocidal" (387). The connection between land, life, biopolitics, and gender and sexual colonization come full circle and were intricately tied to justifications of genocide and displacement through the trope of the "savage."

[11] I go into this notion of "settler sexuality" more in my introduction and framing of the project.

When Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821, the political economy of gender and sexuality had shifted through miscegenation and Mexican "women's" place within the home. Antonia Castañeda states in the "Political Economy of Nineteenth-Century Stereotypes," that variation on the construction of the Mexican "woman" "correlate[s] with the changing need of the capitalist and imperialist system, its shifting relations to Mexicano culture and economy in California and the evolving ideology of the nature of women" (39). Before and after the U.S.-Mexico war, travel narratives of white men stated that Mexican women were "profligate, without virtue and morals, whose excesses are only kept in check by a husband's vengeful wrath" (Castañeda 41)[12]. The trope that Mexican women were sexually excessive fell under the racialization of Mexicans as mongrels in nineteenth-century expansion discourse. White femininity ideals were imposed upon Mexicana women not only because some of them claimed whiteness as a form of political agency, but also because of the assumed inferior position that Mexicana women occupied. The romanticization of the "Spanish woman" was always couched in opposition to the "Mexican women." Particular to California, during Spanish colonization, this binary construction was linked to racialized gender and sexuality that is tied to historical violence. For example, in attempting to implement Catholic religion, the archive treats sexual and other violence towards women as a conflict between the institutions of church and state and the degeneration of racially mixed people (Castañeda 145).

In the "1492" article, Wynter speaks to how the continuities of colonization as

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[12] For travel narrative of this sort, please see Richard Henry Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast* (1840), Thomas Jefferson Farnham's *Travels in California and Scenes in the Pacific Ocean* (1844), and Alfred Robinson's *Life in California (*1846).

an ideological structure and historical moment are centered mostly in the Americas. In order to de-center this and think co-constitutively about how the Mexicana is set up against black, native, and white bodies and femininity, we must also think about how racialized gendering and sexuality and gendered racialization were constructed in travel narratives of the colonization of Africa. In *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* Jennifer Morgan states that, "While descriptions of naked native females evoked desire, travelers depicted black women as simultaneously unwomanly and marked by reproductive value both dependent on their sex and evidence of their lack of femininity" (14). The reproductive quality and value of the black female coupled with the "grotesqueness" of her failed femininity was what structured black gendering. Morgan goes on to say, "…Black women's monstrous bodies symbolized their sole utility – the ability to produce both crops and other laborers" (14). Gender becomes a universal category that does not take into consideration the nuances of anti-black racial/sexual violence and the "unmarking" of certain bodies for certain ends. In "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," Hortense Spillers maintains that blackness is a historical positionality and traces an "American grammar" [that] begins at the "beginning," which is really a rupture and a radically different kind of cultural continuation" (63). As the impasse between human and non-human, the black "female" body is neither acknowledged nor discoursed away and through the "interiorized violence of body and mind" and extreme acts particular to male brutality, "this materialized scene of unprotected female flesh – of female flesh "ungendered" – offers a praxis and a theory, a text for living and for dying, and a method for reading both through their diverse meditations" (62). Under the violent conditions of the

"Middle Passage, gender could not be and was never taken into account; only quantity and the reproductive value of the black "female" body. Black life becomes legible (and illegible) in terms of capital. The fraught category of black women and the history it cites puts under erasure the historical process that shifted from the black woman's reproductive lives/identities from being signified by their location (private vs. public) through capital accumulation to being a burden to the US nation-state through deviance and excess.

Part Four: Mexicana Captivity Narrative

Coming back to the juxtaposition with which I began, I find that the Olive Oatman captivity narrative and Doña Theresa captivity narrative provide a solid foundation to examine how Doña Theresa and Lola are marked as properly female as well as possessing proper characteristics of femininity. This can only be achieved through the dialectic. Tinnemeyer states,

> Upon the narrative of Olive Oatman, an Anglo American captive whose return to Victorian society hinged on repeated renunciation of miscegenation, desires to return to Mohave society, and the indelible mark of a chin tattoo, María Amparo Ruiz de Burton grafts a tale of a Mexicana whose moral and class standards far surpass those of her adopted New England community, whose chastity is endangered by a former clergyman, and whose physical markings of captivity prove temporary (169).

Ruiz de Burton utilizes the captivity narrative, a type of narrative strategy that has been conventionally reserved for telling the tales of white women's captivity into native tribes, to establish the Mexicana's superior femininity. She also takes up the captivity narrative in her romance novel at the expense of a type of historical amnesia, reproducing colonial and settler colonial tropes of the native, which were used for

continued dispossession, genocide, and relocation. As Tey Diana Rebolledo states in "Las Hijas de la Mexicana/India Captivity Narratives in the Southwest, Subverting Voices," "[Captivity Narratives]…illustrated the alleged barbarity of Indian tribes and inhumanity to their captives, rationalizing the subsequent taking of lands and annihilation of native peoples" (129). I argue that Ruiz de Burton utilizes the problematic convention of the captivity narrative in her romance novel for three different reasons.

First, she utilizes it is to dislodge white femininity further from its tainted position. While she does this very clearly through the characters of Mrs. Norval, the Norval daughters, Mrs. Cackle, and Emma throughout the novel, she sets up this denunciation through the very usage of the captivity narrative. Olive Oatman was "rescued" from captivity from the Mohave tribe in 1856. She has to maintain that she did not have sexual relations with the Mohave Indians, that she never wanted to return to them, and that she renounced the tattoo on her chin they had given her, which was permanent. In complete juxtaposition to Olive's captivity narrative, is that of Doña Theresa, Lola's mother, found on the Gila River where she was taken after being taken captive in Sonora, when she was already pregnant, by the Apache tribe and later sold to the Mohave tribe. Dr. Norval finds Lola during his voyeuristic exploration of the Southwest as a geologist looking for gold and minerals and Doña Theresa begs him to take her daughter, Lola, back east with him to New England and give her a better life. Dr Norval embodies the idea of southwestern expansion and settler colonial sovereignty when the text states, "We were on our way down the Colorado River, intending to follow its course to its junction with the Gila, or perhaps to the Gulf of California, and

we had encamped to take a two days' rest, when we were surrounded by a large party of Indians" (34). Through Dr. Norval and the characterization of the Indians in the novel, Ruiz de Burton establishes who can be dispossessed in her reproduction of racist tropes, lack of critique of native dispossession, and portrayal of a white man "exploring" territory even if it was already settled. Lorenzo Veracini states in *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview, "*Settlers do not discover; they carry their sovereignty and lifestyles with them" (98). The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 and The Gadsden Purchase in 1854 were the primary reasons that allowed for Dr. Norval's exploration of the Gila Region, near the Colorado River. Sanchez and Pita state, "In the novel, these imperialist practices of the republic, justified as part of a "manifest destiny" are closely linked to nativism, racism, regionalism and economic interests" (xlix). When he meets Doña Theresa Medina after he helps the tribe that holds her captive, she explains to Dr. Norval "That she had been carried away from Sonora, in Mexico, ten years ago, and she had never had an opportunity to escape until now" (35). I return back to my point of juxtaposing the two captivity narratives, because by the end of Doña Theresa's testimonio about her captivity, Dr. Norval agrees to take Lola with him, "She did not wish to see her family now, after ten years of such life as had been forced upon her" (35). Doña Theresa dies in captivity, unlike Olive who is returned back to white society, as she knows that her daughter will be safe with New Englanders on the East Coast. Doña Theresa becomes a martyr up and against the conventional captivity narrative. She refuses to be returned back to her family in Mexico or escape with Lola and Dr. Norval as a "sacrifice" because she has had sexual relations with the tribe members and is tainted by the "savages." Doña Theresa tells Doctor Norval to "take her

child away from among savages and bring her up as a Christian, and educate her…in case [he] should not be able to find her father" (Ruiz de Burton 35). Doña Theresa absorbs the trope of the sexually licentious Mexican women typically seen in Southwest travel narratives and proves her courage and exceptionality in relation to white femininity that could be read as weak. Ruiz de Burton calls out white femininity in the text through her portrayal of the rogue white female northerners in the text, but she also does it by saying how superior the Mexicana is through the conventional genre of the captivity narrative. Doña Theresa remains an idealistic Mexicana character in the novel. She is pure, upper class, Spanish, heroic, moral, ethical, intelligent, and proper.

Secondly, as evidenced from the descriptions Doña Theresa gives of the tribe who took her captive, it is apparent that Ruiz de Burton reproduces the "savage" trope in her novel. Doña Theresa establishes her aristocracy apart from the "horrid savages" when she tells him she utilized their labor to extract their very own resources for her benefit and wealth. Dr. Norval tell his wife the story of the gems and gold that Doña Theresa gave him when he returns home and states,

> She picked it up, and, as she had some knowledge of precious stones, she saw it was a large diamond, though only partly divested of its rough coating. Then, she looked about for similar pebbles, and found many more…Afterwards the Indians bought her emeralds and rubies, seeing that she liked pretty pebbles. Thus she made a fine collection, for she took only that largest and those which seemed to her the most perfect (36, 28).

Doña Theresa establishes her femininity and aristocracy in relation to the Indians by making them labor over the resources that were theirs in the first place. The captivity narrative presupposes Doña Theresa's nobility by downplaying the fact that she establishes her superiority through the trope of the "savage" and the native who are

unintelligent about “real” wealth. This concern demonstrates Theresa's refinement, nobility, and "self-sacrificing devotion," qualities that reflect her identity as a "lady" of "pure Spanish descent" and differentiate her from her captors (28). Sánchez and Pita note that, “The wealth Doña Theresa hoards as her daughter’s ‘dowry’ is entirely naturalized and masks the plunder of Indian lands and resources” (lxi). Sexuality, and particularly Lola’s Mexican sexuality, gets tied to wealth when she gets to New England, which I will return to in the next section. The trope of the “savage” and “uncivil” Indian works to justify continued control, removal, and dispossession of native bodies. What the narrative doesn’t fully articulate but gestures towards is sexual violence by the Indians when Doña Theresa states, “She only wished to save her daughter from a similar fate, and then to lie down and die” (35). The threat of sexual violence is articulated throughout the novel, by the Indians and the New Englanders, but is exemplified as more violent through the captivity narrative, as it cannot be verbalized and figures in absentia in the novel. The trope can only hold together by articulating a historical amnesia that forgets *why* the Indians took captives in the first place.

Thirdly, Ruiz de Burton utilizes the captivity narrative to forget the historical materiality of dispossession, genocide, and removal in order to construct her exceptional Mexicana figure. When Don Luis Medina, Doña Theresa’s husband and Don Felipe de Almenara, Doña Theresa’s father hear her testimonio and that she had died, the novel reads, “If Mexico were well governed, if her frontiers were well protected, the fate of Doña Theresa would have been next to an impossibility. When it is a well-known fact that savages will devastate towns that are not well guarded, is there any excuse for a government that will neglect to provide sufficient protection?” (201).

Neither the U.S. nor Mexico could control the narrative because Doña Theresa is captured on a Mexican hacienda in Sonora, which signals that Spanish colonialism is also the problem and not only U.S. imperialism. It was Spanish colonialism that displaced indigenous populations before Mexico recognized them as citizens worthy of land rights. After the Apache Indians take Doña Theresa from her hacienda in Sonora and she gives birth to Lola, the Indians decide to dye Doña Theresa and Lola's skin black so they will be unrecognizable for rescue. Olive Oatman was also marked with a tattoo on her chin that was only given to captives by the Mohave Indians. Olive and Lola both have markings that their captives gave them, but Lola's is temporary and Olive's is permanent. The only way for Lola to go back East to unmask the hypocrisy of American democracy and Northern abolitionists is to be "dark" or "black," but she cannot stay that way because she needs to regain her whiteness at the end, a whiteness that elevates her above the white, black, and native. Lola not only rises above tainted white femininity, but as evident in my juxtaposition of Lola and Olive, she functions in the narrative to suggest a new version of the captivity narrative to prove Mexicana femininity superior to U.S. femininity and whiteness and Indianness, which she deems improper. Lola's blackface takes her down a complicated path of mutability, fungibility, and desire.[13]

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[13] Other recovered works of Mexicana writers in the nineteenth-century are rare but also examine issues of life in the newly annexed Southwest territory, formally Mexico. For example, "Eufemia's Sopapillas" told by Catalina Gurulé and Patricia Gallegos, a story that was orally passed on through family tradition, is a short story about when the forefathers of the Placitas people lived in the walled town of Las Huertas, a mile North of the present Placitas. Eufemia is home alone while the men went to the mountains to hunt. Fear is on the horizon and a band of "wild" Indians come into the town. Eufemia was making sopapillas when the Indian stuck his spear down the chimney to spear someone. When he realized there was no blood on the spear, he would come into the house and kill her. She kept him busy by putting a sopapilla at the end of his spear every time he entered the house. When she didn't have any more sopapillas left, she threw the hot tinaja at the Indians face and burned him. He ran away but the men of Eufemia's

Part Five: Black Face, Black Mutability, and the Black Feminine

Olive Oatman was marked in captivity just as Lola in *Who Would Have Thought It?* was marked in captivity at the beginning of the novel. Scholars have been quick to compare these two captivity stories because of the similarities of the narratives and locations, but more importantly, the markings that the women in the narratives received. However, in thinking about Olive Oatman's captivity narrative and Doña Theresa and Lola's captivity narrative together, I am attempting to tease out constructions of race, gender, and sexuality that get naturalized within U.S. Imperialism. First, I have interrogated how Ruiz de Burton utilized the captivity narrative to elevate Mexicana femininity above white femininity through the genre of the captivity narrative. I have looked closely into the issues of settler colonialism, expansion, and the novel in the previous section. Now, I turn to the markings in these two narratives. Olive Oatman's captivity marking was a tattoo on her chin and Lola's marking was her being dyed black by the Mohave or Apache tribe. As previously established, Ruiz de Burton sets Lola up as a superior Mexicana character because her markings disappear at the end of the novel. The dying black of Lola works to establish gender and sexual norms during U.S. imperialism up against white femininity, which fails at all costs by the end of the novel. Just as Olive Oatman is forever "marked" in white society, the white women in the novel, which I will examine in the next section, are marked morally. As Lola traverses

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village caught the Indian and cut his throat. This is another prime example of how Mexicana subjectivity is positioned against the band of "savage" Indians with no historical context of why the Indians were roaming in the first place. The private domestic space of Eufemia's kitchen juxtaposed with the public rural space that the Indians were roaming gives readers a sense of the closing of the commons and the extrication and dispossession of native lands. For more short stories from the nineteenth-century, see *Infinite Divisions: An Anthology of Chicana Literature* by Tey Diana Rebolledo and Eliana S. Rivero.

spaces to relocate to the East, she is subjected to the hidden racisms of Northern abolitionists.

In her writings Ruiz de Burton attempts to challenge the racist U.S. imperial ideology and stereotypes that displaced Californios and were integral to justifying not only the Mexican-American War but also the continued injustices and oppression of subjects on the borderland. She witnesses the slippage in the ideals of American democracy and exceptionalism, but assumes that racist ideas and laws are foreign to the modern conception of justice. Because she sees herself as being displaced and not protected by U.S. democracy after the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, but shunned, because of her national and thus racialized identification, Ruiz de Burton deploys racist strategies in her writing to prove her own positionality within U.S. imperialism. Harris states,

> Captured Africans sold in the Americas were distinguished from the population of indentured or bond servants – "unfree" white labor – but it was not an irrebuttable presumption that all Africans were "slaves" or that slavery was the only appropriate status for them. The distinction between African and white indentured labor grew, however, as decreasing terms of service were introduced for white bond servants (1717).

Hence, I am thinking about blackness not as "black people" within the institution of slavery or free within the U.S., but as Saidiya Hartman states in *Scenes of Subjection* "As mark[ing] a social relationship of dominance and abjection and potentially one of redress and emancipation; it is a contested figure at the very center of social struggle" (57). Hartman goes on to state that even the status of free blacks was shaped and compromised by the existence of slavery (25). There was no moving in and out of blackness, even for the free black men and women. However, for Lola, she is able to

transfer in and out of blackness, as she not only gets lighter as the novel progresses, she also maintains a certain level of whiteness and privilege while in blackface. Blackness was immutable and was about social positionality. Lola is discriminated against during the first part of her stay with the Norvals; however, when Mrs. Norval finds out about Lola's wealth, she no longer occupies the position of social degenerate.

When Lola gets to New England, a small Massachusetts town, with Dr. Norval, she is in blackface or as the novel reads "dyed black" (17). While the Civil War is in the background, Jesse Alemán states in ""Thank God Lola is Away from Those Horrid Savages": The Politics of Whiteness in *Who Would Have Thought It?,*" "The absence of slavery in the novel more tellingly reveals the narrative's attempt to valorize the South" (107). The absence of slavery, but the presence of blackface, reveals the narrative's consciousness about how power relations play out within U.S. Imperialism. Said differently, the novel is not only conscious about race relations in the U.S., it also consciously utilizes the trope of blackness as fungible, not as a critique of blackness in the nineteenth-century in regards to the institution of chattel slavery, but as a way to make a significant point that revolves around inclusion and exclusion. In the novel, the Norval's greet Lola with the prejudices often not associated with "abolitionists."[14]

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[14] In Shelly Streeby's chapter "The Hacienda, the Factory, and the Plantation," in *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture,* she states that Northern anti-slavery men and white Northern abolitionist's "hatred of slavery was quite compatible with a disdain for slaves and free blacks [and is] made clear by the frantic efforts of Republicans to refute the Democrats' charges that the Republican program would mean equal social and political rights for black people" (190). Streeby goes on to talk about the North/South division of slavery. While Northerners had a "disdain for slaves" and most were not looking for any type of equality between men, there was also the issue of labor systems that divided the North and South. Northern sentiments touted "free labor" systems of the North, that as Streeby states, "tended to define it as freedom of contract and the opportunity to achieve economic independence," while land reformers and Southerners were using the language of wage or white slavery (190). Abolishing slavery was a many-headed hydra for most anti-slavery men/women and abolitionists that very rarely revolved around white and black equality.

Mattie Norval, Mrs. Norval's daughter, is the first to see Lola and states, "Goodness! What a specimen! A nigger girl!" (17). In examining Lola's blackface in the text, it is clear, that while blackness is defined in terms of "social relationality rather than identity," Lola's "blackness" is mutable, where as, during the nineteenth-century in the U.S., free or enslaved, blackness was an ontology that was an inescapable institution of violence. However, after they examine how black she is, they all notice how unlikely her features are for a black girl. Mattie goes on to state, "How pretty her little hand is, and all her features are certainly lovely! See how well cut her nose and lips are. And as for her eyes, I wish I had them; they are perfectly superb" (17). Ruiz de Burton utilizes anti-black sentiments through the mutability and fungibility of blackness in the novel, but in this scene, she establishes Lola in advance as having "white features" thereby setting up her impending departure as a Spanish-Austrian woman married to a white New England male.

Hartman states, "Just as the peculiar and ambivalent articulation of the chattel status of the enslaved black personhood or subjectivity in which all the burdens and few of the entitlements of personhood came to characterize humanity, so too, the advent of freedom and the equality of rights conferred to blacks a status no less ambivalent" (117). Unlike the ontological construction Hartman is speaking to, Lola is able to move back and forth between racist ideology and her whiteness. However, while in blackface, Lola falls out of this violent ontological violence of blackness because she maintains her whiteness throughout the novel. Mrs. Norval does not want her staying in the house because of the color of her skin so she sends her to sleep with the Irish chambermaid and cook. Lola establishes her whiteness and states, "Hannah, the

chambermaid, was not so repulsive to look upon. Still, the thought of sharing her bed was to Lola very terrible" (31). Lola is disgusted with the Irish workers and cries the entire night while sleeping at the doorway of Dr. Norval's room where he finds her. As Lola moves in and out of her whiteness throughout the novel, the fungibility of her blackness should not be overlooked. Hartman states that, "The fungibility of the commodity makes the captive body an abstract and empty vessel vulnerable to the projection of others' feeling, ideas, desires, and values; and, as property, the dispossessed body of the enslaved is the surrogate for the master's body since it guarantees his disembodied universality and acts as the sign of his power and dominion" (21). Hartman is thinking through the fungibility of the slave as commodity, where the slave is used universally for the needs of the master and does not function as anything specific. The slave as commodity is a vessel for the master's use in whatever way possible. However, the glaring absence of slavery and the presence of blackface in the novel marks Lola's fungibility, not within slavery, but through her ability to mutate and slide in and out of blackness through her dying and wealth. Lola's black dying also set the groundwork for establishing Mexicana "femininity" and sexuality.

Harris notes that passing is well known among Black people in the United States and is a feature of race subordination in all societies structured on white supremacy (1712). She goes on to say that the persistence of passing is related to the historical and continuing pattern of white racial domination and economic exploitation that has given passing a certain economic logic (1713). While Ruiz de Burton did not write Lola in blackface to transform her into a black character, the notion that she is dyed "black" and eventually gets "whiter" as the novel progresses speaks to how she writes to challenge

the notion of "Mexicanness" as only dark. Lola doesn't pass for white because she is donning black face, yet she maintains her whiteness throughout the novel. Blackness is the only way the narrative could be propelled forward to unmask the hypocrisy of white New Englander's and American democracy. During her presentation to the Norval family when she first arrives in New England, Ruth Norval states, Lola is a "baboon," since she is the daughter of "Indians or Negros, or both…Anyone can see that much of her history" (17). Mrs. Novel sees her as "a true emanation of black art!" (17). There is obviously a sentiment of racism and anti-blackness the characters exude. In order for Ruiz de Burton to establish her point in the novel regarding the rogue American ideals, it is necessary to deploy the anti-blackness. Ruiz de Burton is not making a critique of blackness for black life; she is using the trope of blackness to mark the fundamental injustices Mexicans are experiencing after 1848. And even further, she does this through logics of gender and sexual racialization. For not even the white New Englanders can live up to the ideals of whiteness for her. For Ruiz de Burton, setting up a standard of whiteness that was above what white New Englanders could achieve meant controlling the critical aspects of her life, which were property relations, wealth, private life, rather than being dominated.

Wealth is at the center of Lola's move from the Southwest to the East, as well as her blackness. Mrs. Norval refused to allow Lola in the house because she was nothing more than a "black" girl. But everything changed when Mrs. Norval finds out that Lola comes with a great amount of gold and rare gems and is overwhelmed with the desire to acquire Lola's wealth. When Dr. Norval finally reveals what is in the boxes, she "stood up, uttering a cry of delighted surprise, then clasping her hands, remained silent, with

open mouth and staring eyes, transfixed by her amazement and joy" (25). Lola's wealth becomes the reason Mrs. Norval desires her. Mrs. Norval states, "The despised black child she now would give worlds to keep. She would go on her knees to serve her, as her servant, her slave, rather than let her go" (30). Not only establishing slavery as the most degenerate position available, she is willing to serve Lola to get control of her wealth. And unlike the colonial construct of the black female, Lola's reproductive value lies in her wealth, not in her body. Morgan states of the black female body, "Writers who articulated religious and moral justifications for the slave trade simultaneously grappled with the character of a contradictory female African body – a body both desirable and repulsive, available and untouchable, productive and reproductive, beautiful and black…the shape of her body marked her deviant sexuality and both shape and sexuality evidenced her savagery" (16). Lola reproduces Mrs. Norval and her entire family not through her reproductive bodily value, but through her reproductive wealth value.

This is another way Lola is able to mutate her blackness during the nineteenth century. We immediately see a shift in their economic status when "All the Norvals wore new dresses to church, new cloaks, new furs, and new bonnets, again. There seems to be no end to their money" (42). The Norval girls are sent off to Europe in all of Lola's finest diamonds and Mrs. Norval continues to lavish in Lola's wealth. Later, Mrs. Norval cannot bear the thought of Lola possessing that type of wealth and states, "And would that little nigger be so rich, and her girls so poor? Mrs. Norval thinks to herself" (49). Ultimately, Lola's "whiteness" (European ancestry) is the most ideal. Whiteness functions as not only a cultural and racial formation for Lola, but also as a

mark of gender and sexuality in the end when she embodies white femininity through the Mexican female body politic. Lola's 'whiteness' evokes innocence, naturalness, and wealth. Lola's whiteness is Spanish and Austrian, which evokes moral, economic, social, and political authority.

While Lola is dyed black and gets older, her wealth and sexuality get combined as the novel progresses. This is another point where the mutability of her blackness comes into play. Reverend Hackwell, the rogue who drinks whiskey behind closed doors and blackmails mostly women throughout the novel, lusts after Lola. While the novel comments on her beauty underneath the blackness, her wealth and "white" beauty become inextricable. At this point in the novel, as her blackness begins to rub off she is becomes "spotted" as if with some sort of "disease" (78). But by this time, Hackwell has already plotted a legal scheme trap to Lola into a common-law marriage and claim her wealth. Her sexuality is not tied to her over-sexualization or monstrosity or grotesqueness as the feminine is described in early colonial writings. However, it is only when Lola turns white that Julian solidifies his love for her. Julian does not notice her until she turns white. Lola states, "No one but your father was kind to me. I could bear all this, but I could not bear to think that to you, too, I was an object of aversion because my skin was black. And yet I was too proud to tell you that the blackness of my skin would wear off, that it was only stained by the Indians to prevent our being rescued…I hated to think that you *might* suppose I was Indian or black" (100). Lola is aware of the position her blackness puts her in and she knows that she will be able to escape that once it finally wears off. Finally, as she comes full circle into her whiteness, Lola's blackness fades and she is able to marry Julian, the white New

Englander and son of Mr. and Mrs. Norval who moves back to Mexico with Lola. As she embodies pure whiteness at the end of the novel readers get to witness the incapability of American white femininity to compare with Lola's.

Part Six: The Decline of White Femininity

The withering of white femininity comes at the expense of unveiling how Mrs. Norval is not the strong-willed, proper white female leader of her private domestic sphere. Sánchez and Pita state that the portrait of the Norval home presents a critique of the "cult of domesticity" and I would extend it by noting that it particularly focuses on white femininity. White femininity is the model of pureness, properness, and morality. Beth Fisher states in "The Captive Mexicana and the Desiring Bourgeois Woman: Domesticity and Expansionism in Ruiz de Burton's Who Would Have Thought It?": "By portraying Jemima Norval as the source of savage desires that transform Lola's residence in the Norval home into an experience of captivity, the novel indicts domestic womanhood as a discourse of class and racial dominance" (60). While I think that Fisher is posing a critical intervention in examining the domestic sphere of white femininity, she fails to link how the white feminine within the domestic space maintains her position in society while simultaneously being buttressed by a Mexicana that can obtain a "more" proper form of femininity than the Norval's because of their ideologies of dispossession and anti-blackness that enter the private, white domestic space in the first place. Lola embodies the impact of these ideologies and the novel is conscious of the power dynamics that are at play during U.S. Imperialism. This counters popular reformist account of domestic womanhood, while maintaining Lola's culturally superior

Mexican positionality. I am not concerned with white femininity, as it will be upheld even after a fall from grace, as we see in the novel. What I am concerned with is how Ruiz de Burton leverages notions of white femininity up and against the pure Mexicana figure that has to replicate racist notions of black and native bodies in order to claim a certain type of proper femininity. She reinforces the tropes of blackness and "Indianness" that carry a long lineage of historical meaning with them to prop Lola above a failed white femininity.

It seems ironic for the novel to create the very downfall of the white feminine through the dis-idealization of the Protestant church, where Mrs. Norval attempts to "follow" the strict moral traditional values touted by the minister of her church, Reverend Hackwell. Both these characters serve as the catalyst for everything that is wrong with the ideology of American exceptionalism, for towards the end of the novel and while Dr. Norval is away but thought to be dead in Africa, the two have an affair, secretly get married and move to New York. White femininity becomes disabled but not completely rebuked in the process of this novel. While Dr. Norval is away in Africa, almost as a self-exile, Reverend Hackwell seduces Mrs. Norval. The novel reads, "And who was the man who had the power thus to thrill her whole being and set her heart throbbing in such unmatronly, unpresbyterian tumult? No other than her spiritual advisor, the name trusted by their congregation and held in reverence" (173). She secretly marries Hackwell and they relocate to New York. They run with the elite families in New York and have parties and galas with Lola's money. But it is no secret that Reverend Hackwell sexualizes Lola in a particular way that is tied to her wealth. Just as Doña Theresa maintains a martyr position by dying in captivity, above white

femininity, the novel reveals at the end that Dr. Norval is in fact not dead. As Sánchez and Pita explain Mrs. Norval goes insane because she cannot deal with her sins. "In Mrs. Norval's case, unlike Theresa, the matron's debasement is presented as self-inflicted" (xxxiv). While this is true, the establishment of Doña Theresa's martyr status is at the expense of the trope of the Indian and the anti-black ideologies of black mutability. In the end, it is not a question of Lola being above white femininity in many ways, however, since the conditions that produce her superior gender and sexuality revolve around the historical and social positionality of native and black bodies.

There are other white female characters in the novel that serve to debunk or maintain the less than perfect position of white femininity in relation to the Mexicana in the novel. Lavinia, or Lavvy, is Mrs. Norval's sister and is described as somewhat of a spinster. Hackwell seduced her, they got engaged, and he abandoned her shortly after. She was engaged another time after that but never married. Consequently, she is the only white female character that goes outside of the domestic space to serve a higher purpose. She becomes a nurse in the Civil War and when her brother Isaac Sprigs is taken hostage in the South, she goes to Washington to get information from the War Department. She possesses strong characteristics considering she is among white women who are morally inept. When she gets to the War Department she states, "What a miserable, powerless thing woman is, even in this country of glorious equality!" (106). Coming from a white woman, who has rights and visibility, gender becomes something that hinders her ability to get things done. However, the complicated relationship between gender, sex, and wealth in this novel uncovers how morally degenerate white femininity is in comparison to Mexicana femininity. Lavvy embodies

the characteristics of an honorable person, if there is one in the novel. However, her naïve notion of "rights" and her understanding of hegemonic discourses of "equality" occupy a white positionality that lacks consciousness of how race and class are functioning within the U.S. She doesn't need to be aware of the situation and treats Lola decently when she interacts with her, but she still is unaware of how racialized gender and sexual relations function. Of the other white women in the novel, Mrs. Cackle, the gossipy white neighbor, whose sons are involved in politics, believes very much in the ideals of the U.S. and American exceptionalism and is just as racist as Mrs. Norval. She is a "good American woman" but tends to let her curious mentality get the best of her at times (159). While she is not as bad as Mrs. Norval in terms of morals and values, Mrs. Cackle is a white female character that upholds the negative discourse surrounding white femininity in the novel. All of these white women attempt to position themselves against a "savage" or black femininity and they end up reinforcing Lola's proper white (er) femininity, as they are oblivious to the historical conditions that create their positionality in the first place.

Part Seven: Conclusion

In the end, María Amparo Ruiz de Burton was a writer far beyond her time. Ruiz de Burton utilized the literary technique of the captivity narrative along with penning a narrative that was conscious of racial and class power relations during U.S. Empire and expansion. *Who Would Have Thought It?* is a novel that not only unveils the hypocrisies of American democracy and exceptionalism, but also as this chapter argues, constructs and interrogates gender and sexual norms for Mexicans after the annexation of Northern Mexico. Through the trope of the Indian and blackness, Ruiz de

Burton writes Lola Medina as the pinnacle of proper Mexican, white, upper-class femininity that is always in relation to white, black, and native bodies. Her sexuality and gender depend on the disavowal of white U.S. femininity and the establishment of the grotesque black feminine and the savage Indian. Lola's sexuality is conflated with her wealth and her reproductive capacity is present in the wealth she produces for the Norval family. Her mutability in blackface speaks to the historical condition of blackness and her mother's death in captivity allows us to interrogate the limits of white femininity in conjunction with the moral failure of the white female characters in the novel.

María Amparo Ruiz de Burton 's novel *Who Would Have Thought It?* allows us to unpack how gender and sexual norms, as a product of colonialism and settler colonialism, construct the Mexicana up and against white and black femininity. Ruiz de Burton constructs the Mexicana body politic through the characters of Doña Theresa and Lola, which ultimately positions them as exemplar figures through blackness and "Indianness" and above white femininity. At the beginning of the novel, Ruiz de Burton extends the captivity narrative to center a Mexicana captive, Doña Theresa, who later becomes a martyr figure in the face of the "savage" native bodies. In order for Ruiz de Burton to accomplish the portrait of femininity she paints in the novel, she reproduces the logics of settler colonialism through historical amnesia. I argue that she does this for three distinct reasons. First, she utilizes the captivity narrative to dislodge white femininity further from its already defective postionality within "U.S. Democracy." Secondly, she needs to utilize the "savage" Indian trope in the captivity narrative to establish Lola and Doña Theresa's aristocracy. Thirdly, in utilizing the

captivity narrative, she is able to forget the historical materiality of dispossession and genocide of native populations. In relation to the captivity narrative, Ruiz de Burton also utilizes blackface to enunciate how racialized gender and sexuality are informed by the social relationship of abjection that marks blackness in nineteenth-century U.S. empire. Through Lola's black mutability and eventual "coming out" as white, Ruiz de Burton challenges the notion of "Mexicanness" as only dark and positions Lola's reproductive value squarely on her wealth and not her body. Lola's body always remains pure and virginal throughout the novel in relation to the white female characters, who are not "moral." Lola unmasks the deceptions of white femininity, particularly through the character of Mrs. Norval. María Amparo Ruiz de Burton penned a rich historical romance that was controversial and traversed many historical time periods and locations. While not unproblematic in any sense of the word, this novel has allowed me to unpack the historical relationality of gender and sexuality for Mexicanas in the nineteenth-century.

Figure 2: Olive Oatman courtesy of National Women's History Museum

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CHAPTER TWO

Producing Nationhood: Sexual Economies and the Negotiation of Space, Gender and Sex in Cabeza de Baca's *We Fed Them Cactus,* Jovita González and Eve Raleigh's *Caballero,* and Recovered WPA Debt Peonage Stories

"And while Mateo struggled on, hopelessly bound to a debt and his patron's sheep, Raquel carried on at home, struggling to feed, cloth, and teach her children. She taught them how to run raw materials into necessary things which made their existence possible…[she also sent her] son Juan to take his [father's] place and assume the just debt to the patron, and likewise add to the account at the store"
-*Mateo y Raquel,* WPA 5-5-49

The U.S. Southwest has certainly experienced many contested economic and spatial shifts throughout history. The different social, cultural, and political perspectives and historical interpretations in the greater Southwest, particularly New Mexico and Texas, constitute a contested site fraught with different perspectives and interpretations. For this chapter I am defining the Southwest from Northern California to Colorado down to Houston, Texas. As I continue to think of the "Hemispheric Southwest," I am not only thinking about geospatial, geopolitical, and geo-historical shifts throughout the three governances in which this definition of the Southwest have in common, I am also engaging with the common physical terrain of the countryside which has determined the history of the Southwest as hemispheric. New Mexican and Tejano[15] identity was constructed within and against a complex history of colonialism, structures of violent dispossessions and economic systems, and the discursive processes

[15] Hispanos, New Mexicans, Nuevo Mexicanos, and later Mexican Americans are all terms used to describe the people of New Mexico that occupied (genealogical) spaces during Spanish colonialism, Mexican rule, and finally U.S. Empire. I will be using the term Tejano(s) as a marker of native Texans who were racially constructed as Mexicans and shifted as citizens while the geographical location of Texas changed power throughout history but had long ties to the land because of family history. I will also use native Texan(s) interchangeably with this term. I know Native Texan socially and culturally has been an Anglo-American connotation, but for Anglo Texan (first) immigrants into Texas, I will be using the term Anglo-American Texan or Anglo-American Texas immigrant.

of differentiation. The past, especially that constructed through critical memory, becomes a space to examine the ideological discourses generated by a series of social, cultural, and political dimensions that are still present in New Mexico and Texas today and are imbricated within racial, gender, and class construction. The complex ways in which race, gender, sexuality, land, space and labor were entangled from the 1840's through the 1860's sets the foundation for this chapter.

This chapter examines how history and memory, written in the twentieth-century but looking back at the nineteenth century, through short stories, memoir, and the novel, forges links to examine and interrogate how residual economic systems in the Southwest and expansionist ideologies of U.S. imperialism are tied to historical and material constructions of racialized gender and sexuality. This notion of gender and sexual differentiation is realized through racialized and classed labor systems. The enclosure of land, whether through individual or communal land grants in the Southwest or through quasi-feudal lands associated with hacienda aristocracies that utilized debt peonage labor, was the main economic mode of production. And while the U.S. was taking land through the discourse of expansion and manifest destiny, debates on free labor vs. slave labor and coercive labor "divided" the U.S. and gave justification for negating statehood to New Mexico seen as filled with "mongrel" Mexicans, unfit to be citizens, while Texas became a state in 1845. As the residual and emergent economic modes of production coexisted together and clashed, to use Raymond Williams' phrasing, the sexual economy of the debt peonage system on lands enclosed by *patrónes* continued to utilize racialized and classed gender and sexuality for production purposes. As we trace how racialized gender and sexuality operated through

history, transitions become evident as we go from a mode of productive and reproductive capacity, as women both worked and reproduced the labor-power through their children, to what often is a representation of the "unproductive mode" in this neoliberal moment. This chapter interrogates the social relations between elite land-holding Mexican Americans and the mestizas/os, peons, and natives on communal land and ranchos. I argue that these relations reproduce and negotiate how sex, gender and sexuality are used in production of the nation and as a function of U.S. capitalist structures. The reproductive capacity and sexuality of landless mestiza/o peons were a central function for racialized capitalist accumulation. The dual function of the mestiza peon not only produced labor and domestic work, but also reproduced children who could work at a young age to more quickly alleviate debt to the patron, as noted in the quotation heading this chapter. I also argue that the residual (sexual) economic systems of communal, land grants and haciendas that were still evident in New Mexico in the late nineteenth-century reveal how gender and sexuality played a role in the construction of the nation. Racialized gender and sexuality in the Southwest played a different role to that assumed in "white America," "where 'the proper (white) femininity is enshrined as both the symbolic center and boundary marker of the nation as 'home' and 'family" (McClintock 354). In the Southwest, Mexican American femininity played a contradictory role in respect to the nation. Fabiola Cabeza de Baca's memoir *We Fed Them Cactus*, Jovita González and Eve Raleigh's novel *Caballero: A Historical Novel,* and Recovered WPA Debt Peonage short stories centered in the nineteenth-century are being recalled and written in the twentieth-century and we begin to understand the intersections of narrative, history, economic

systems, and identity (i.e. constructions of race, gender, and class) as they converged along the geographic and cultural boundaries of shifting spaces in the U.S. Sexuality is linked to historical sexual economies and processes of racialized sexualization that situate the utility of women's bodies to the particular historical moment and maintenance of racialized gendered social roles.

Part One: The History and Sexual Economy of Debt Peonage and Archival WPA Short Stories

While conversations surrounding westward expansion were happening regarding the place of slavery in the newly annexed territories of Northern Mexico after 1848, many did not know how to categorize or think about debt peonage, or involuntary labor, in the Southwest. Debt peonage became a mainstay in the Southwest by the 1800s. Thought of as a geo-specific residual economic system in Mexico and Latin America that was not limited to race and as David Weber in *The Mexican Frontier, 1821-1846: The American Southwest Under Mexico* states, "was viewed as a condition of class and bad fortune" rather than enslavement, debt peonage was also present in the newly annexed U.S. Southwest (212). Historians have questioned the institution of debt peonage in the Southwest and some say it was not fully established under Spanish and Mexican governance[16] but recalled in oral testimonies. What was fully established before debt peonage were the *encomienda* and *repartimiento*[17] systems under Spanish

[16] I am speaking of colonial rule under Spain and Northern Mexican governance in what is now the U.S. Southwest. Shelley Streeby states, "Although "Southern [Mexican] plantations" were the "great bastions" of classic, coercive debt peonage, [Knight] argues, "traditional peonage, in which the worker was not necessarily tied to the hacienda by extra economic coercion and in which debt did not always function as a bond, was more common, especially in Northern Mexico" (193).

[17] *Repartimientos* involved the Spanish crown distributing native labor, so they could regulate labor relations more specifically. *Encomiendas* were the granting of land and the use of the people on it by the Spanish crown, which was formally abolished in 1730 but was ineffective much earlier.

colonialism, which spanned from British Carolina to French Louisiana, Spanish New Mexico and Alta California and was different than debt peonage. The Spanish crown needed cheap labor and targeted the indigenous populations for Indian slave labor. Particular to the Southwest was Indian slavery, which resulted in the *genízaro* population that settled mostly in Abiqui, New Mexico. Elite land-holding families kept these Indian slaves, which were different than peons, well into the 1880s, as the *encomienda* and *repartimiento* systems became extinct because of disease and the transfer of private enclosures, haciendas, and ranchos. Tey Diana Rebolledo in "Las Hijas de la Malinche: Mexicana/India Captivity Narratives in the Southwest, Subverting Voices," states that from the sixteenth to the late nineteenth-century,

> The use if these Indian servants was rationalized, unlike the African slave experience, by the fact that they were "adopted into the family" and their souls saved by Christianizing. These "slaves" were kept within the family, were not sold from person to person, and were sometimes able to barter for their freedom. Many of those released became detribalized Indians, called *genízaros*, who later formed townships… (132).

The Spanish crown renounced the *encomienda* and *repartimento* system in the 1600s (not Indian slavery particularly), but *patrónes* on haciendas, ranchos, and communal land property needed human labor at cheap prices. Debt peonage was one of the fastest growing labor sources. In the Southwest, William S. Kiser in "A ''Charming Name for a Species of Slavery': Political Debate on Debt Peonage in the Southwest, 1840s-1860s" states, "Peonage lay at the interstices of slavery and free labor and characterized work in agrarian and pastoral areas, and in its earliest Latin American manifestations it targeted Indians, mulattos, and mestizos" (171). Before New Mexico would become a state, racist undertones of letting the minority-majority territory in as a state before and

after the Civil War was at the forefront of political conversations. Some scholars have cited that debt peonage was a main reason why New Mexico was not granted statehood. The so-called "repulsion" for the "savage" coercive labor practices of New Mexicans was actually a racist attempt to control equal social and political rights from the "mongrel" Mexican. While Congress was split on the slavery debate in New Mexico, many Congress members wanted New Mexico to become a slave state. "New Mexico's representatives to Congress were issued a warning – unless New Mexico supported slavery, proslavery legislators would vote against New Mexico becoming a state" (Menchaca 226). New Mexico would not become a slave state, but they didn't abolish Indian slavery or debt peonage[18]. Debt peonage was prohibited in 1867 by the Federal government and did not end with the signing of the thirteenth Amendment in 1865, which supposedly liberated all persons subjected to slavery and involuntary servitude. However, convict leasing and debt peonage remained a practice into the twentieth-century in the South.

Shelley Streeby states in *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture* states that debt peonage appears in "English in the mid-nineteenth century as a way of describing an array of labor arrangements" (192). She goes on to quote Alan Knight to say that from the late colonial period to the early nineteenth-century there were two forms of peonage: coercive and non-coercive, or traditional (192). In the Southwest, peons performed tasks and the *patrónes* (landowner/overseers) or "masters" "paid all their laborers' tributes, advanced them money, clothed them, gave them medical attention…and thus kept permanent debt

[18] The old order under Mexican governance abolished black slavery in 1834, but not Indian slavery.

accumulating" (Kiser 171). The debt peonage in the Southwest was coercive and functioned as a form of bondage and while Weber maintains that peonage could "end his obligation by paying off him debt and his condition was not hereditary," it was not voluntary servitude and family members, particularly sons, were indebted once a father or mother died with a debt.

Many elite families in the Southwest attempted to mask peonage as a "system of apprenticeship or voluntary servitude," as territorial representative of New Mexico Miguel A. Otero wrote in his letters.[19] Congress and other elected official of the U.S. did not have the intentions of banning peonage because it was completely misunderstood in the discourse of slavery and free labor. They justified keeping New Mexico, which was mostly Hispanos, at bay for statehood given the "mongrel" actions of bondage or peonage. This was obviously a ruse that had racist underpinnings, as the U.S. settler nation-state was not looking for equality for black or native people. Kiser states that Lieutenant Philip St. George Cooke, accompanying General Stephen W. Kearney's expedition of conquest in August 1846 noted that "the great boon of American citizenship [is] thus thrust… upon eighty thousand mongrels who cannot read – who are almost heathens, - the great mass reared in real slavery, called peonism" (173). The fact that this feudal system set the foundation for other modes of production to come would produce other tensions that was not clearly stated or analyzed. The capital invested in peons were very minimal, and thus provided more leverage for the debt system based on the use of the patron's store fir healthcare and clothing; the landowner also gave them small tributes, which the peons could never pay off and

[19] See Migue A. Otero's letter to the editor printed on January 12 1861 in *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette.*

added to the debt incurred throughout their life. *Patrónes* did not own a peon's physical body, like in slavery, only their labor, thus peons were valuable for their productive work and were not a commodity. Kiser states,

> Unlike most Southern slaves, peons did sometimes receive monetary compensation for their work, but their meager earning went toward satisfying the debt owned, and compounding interest ensured permanent bondage. Average adult male peons earned between $2 and $5 per month…Such stipends never came in the form of hard currency, but were instead applied directly toward the cost of food and clothing at the master's store (175).

The *patrónes* inflated the prices in their store and in this way increased a peon's debt rapidly holding them in bondage for a longer period. Peons in the Southwest could also be transferred, but usually in an open forum, like slaves were. In 1850, the courts in New Mexico defined peonage strictly as "a class of servants…bound to personal service for the payment of debts due their masters…" (Jaremillo 206). There was legislation passed in 1851 that attempted to outline peonage in "stricter terms" (Kiser 176).

I am deploying the term sexual economies in this chapter as it is tied to the debt peonage labor system. Adrienne Davis first coins the terms sexual economy in her article "Don't Let Nobody Bother Yo' Principle: The Sexual Economy of American Slavery" and states that under slavery, reproduction is integral to the plantation economy. Black reproduction yielded economic profits creating value for the slaveholding class. Enslaved black women gave birth to white wealth. Masters established enslaved women as sexual outlets to perform sexual labor. Davis states, "Black women's "sexuality and reproductive capacity [was] for white pleasure and profit" (104). Black women could be sexually terrorized in order to coerce economic work or discipline enslaved men. The unrapabilty of black women and their differently

gendered process under slavery were all part of the sexual economy of slavery. Davis defines sexual economies as "reproducing the slave workforce through giving birth and serving as forced sexual labor to countless men of all races" (105). The sexual and reproductive exploitation of the institution of slavery helps us understand that it was a violent economic structure that was gendered and sexualized as well as a racial institution for economic and market relations. In the institution of slavery, Davis states that "crossing gender boundaries" through physical labor marks a differentiation of "feminine" and "masculine" within the institution as ungendering.[20] This violent mode of production still foregrounds the slave woman's gender and demonstrates how embedded their sexuality was in slavery's economic market. The usefulness of land "increased in proportion to the availability of black slaves" (108). The children of slaves followed the mother and were foundational for the economy to reproduce itself. This converted enslaved women's reproductive capacity into work serving economic interests and producing the workforce in the U.S. (109). The slaves in the South served as the labor supply and also as capital assets, where the law and market converted reproductive capacity into capital creation (109). By utilizing Jennifer Morgan and Kristen Fischer's "Sex, Race, and the Colonial Project," I define sexual economies for my use as modern/colonial structures, enacted through sexual and economic systems (in certain historical moments over determined by racial miscegenation and violence), which build racialized civility and racialized capital. I link sexual violence, colonial/expansionist conquest, and economy to the production of settler subjectivity in

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[20] See Spillers and Chapter 1 where I discuss the structures of colonial violence, like slavery, perpetuated on black females whose gender is not taken into account, only the quantity and the reproductive value of the body.

New Mexico, where idealized femininity and the fraught social figure of the elite land-holding "Mexican American" woman are sites through which empire and nation-state are reproduced in contention with subjugated native bodies.

Expanding upon black feminist Adrienne Davis' definition of the sexual economy of slavery, I deploy the term to think about the system of debt peonage and the lasting effects it had on racialized gender and sexuality in the Southwest. The tasks that peons had to do under bondage depended on their gender, age, and strength. It was not always the case that women and children performed the menial tasks and domestic work, while the men did the hard labor outside, as herdsmen and field hands. Males made up most of the peons in the Southwest, but if they were peons, their family was indefinitely in debt because of him. When the male could no longer work or needed more hours than he could provide individually, the *patrónes* used his family, mostly sons, to continue payment to this account, which could never be rectified. While the majority of the stories regarding debt peonage in the Southwest center on the male peon, using a reading strategy that interrogates the gaps and silences, it becomes clear that debt peonage not only affected the male, but very much affected the wife of the male and shaped her gender and sexuality.

Two unpublished WPA storied filed in 1949 but recalling the debt peonage system in the nineteenth-century in New Mexico are under examination in this chapter. The first one, "The Panic of 1862" is about the Perea Family in Las Placitas, New Mexico. The constant threat of Texans raiding New Mexican *ranchos* because of tensions that could not be resolved revolved around the joining of New Mexico with Texas; this raid is at the forefront of this story. But what is most interesting about this

short story is the narrative about the peons who worked on the Perea *rancho*. The narrative reads, "A small army of natives at and around the town of Bernalillo were practically in bondage to Don José Leander Perea, head of the family" (1). The household has native slaves and also peon workers in bondage. The narrative goes on to read, "In fact the room was a store, which supplied the needs of the Perea household, and at which every peon round about had a charge account. The peons lived in little adobe houses of their own, on land outside the Perea estates or in the native villages in the vicinity. What they earned was applied on their accounts at the Perea store. Eight dollars a month was standard wage for the men" (1). As the story lays out the conditions of the peons, we get a glimpse into how the family of a male peon is utilized. After the small town hears of the Texans coming into New Mexico to raid it, the Pereas all flee to Colorado and leave the peons to protect their *ranchos.* The peons helped with the packing of bags and the carriages. They also helped barricade the house and they were given orders as what to do when the Texans arrived. "The youths of the peons were left to guard the house and the adjoining property. They were to stick to their duties, no matter what" (3). Although it was illegal to utilize the family of the indebted peon, this did not stop most New Mexicans that held peons. As Kiser states, "Should the debtor die without satisfying the debt, his wife and children are required to assume its payment…and this generation after generation, are liable for a debt contracted between persons whom they never saw" (174). While the condition of debt peonage was not supposed to carry a hereditary element to it, it did nonetheless. The children guard the house and while the mother is not present in the story, it is her reproductive capacity that reproduces the labor force of those in bondage, therefore utilizing her

sexuality through an economy from which she is removed. When the Perea family comes back home after the Texans leave New Mexico, the Don comes to find out that someone has stolen a fortune that he and his son buried in the middle of the *rancho.* They automatically blame the children for taking the treasure. "Without warning the youths left to guard the house were dragged into the fearsome presence of the Don José and his son Pedro. They were scared half to death…" (4). While no one is every found to be guilty, they get the punishment of guilt, along with having to out peons that were never even at the *rancho* to begin with and those men were flogged.

The next story, "Mateo y Raquel" is a story about a man named Jose María who was held in bondage by Don Jose Leander Perea. This was a debt left to Jose María by his father that left him in bondage and a debt that would be carried by his son, Mateo. Here again, we see the reproductive capacity of the peon's wife, even if she is not in bondage with her husband. The story states that Jose María received five dollars a month; an average of about sixteen and two thirds cents a day. With no days off because he was a sheepherder, the other *rancho* hands had Sundays off if there was no urgent work. Food was provided to them but was minimal and just enough to keep them going. The "debt" to the *patrón's* store was what kept the institution of debt peonage going, because it was the law that the peons purchase whatever they needed from the *patrón.* The story reads, "It was the privalege (sic) and the custom of the rich dons to see to it that such [debt] grew rather than diminished. The law was on the side of the rich dons, in fact, they were the law unto themselves. They must have the labor of the poorer class (los peons) and they laid down all the rules of the game" (1). The

condition of debt peonage being hereditary was illegal in the Southwest, but as the passage above states, the rich *patrónes* made the laws.

It wasn't until 1857 that the hereditary condition of the debt peonage went to New Mexico Territorial Supreme Court. One case, *Marcellina Bustamento v. Juana Analla* paved the way in interrogating the sexual economy of debt peonage, kinship ties within the institution, and the legality of bondage of a minor. The case stated that Catalina Bustamento was a child born out of wedlock between a *patrón,* Carpio Bustamento, and his peon, Juana Analla. Carpio's wife, Marcellina, took Analla to court because she claimed the child belonged to her and wanted to keep her in her care, in all probable cases to utilize her labor. The judge, James J. Davenport,

> Adjudicated that the biological mother, despite her marginalized social status as a peon, retained legal guardianship over her child and that neither the father nor the surrogate mother could claim the girl as a servant…Thus, Davenport granted protection to the bond between mother and child and in so doing rendered a stunning legal blow to a tradition of servitude and fictive kinship that had proliferated in the Southwest for over two centuries (Kiser 182).

While this decision in 1857 began to shed light on the condition of debt peonage in the Southwest, the implementation of laws was slow moving. The "Mateo y Raquel" story was set in the nineteenth-century, pre-1948, but the conditions of debt peonage had hardly changed by the 1860s. As the story progresses, Jose María goes in late to work and gets flogged and beaten by the *patrón*. He cannot take the conditions of his bondage any longer and escapes. He "knew all about his debt to his patron and how his patron held money far above the life of any peon" (3). When he is captured and hanged, his son, seventeen-year-old Mateo, took his fathers place in 1836. By the time

of the American invasion, the institution of debt peonage was so embedded in the Southwest it would not be until 21 years later that the peons would see their freedom.

While Mateo is at work acquiring more debt, it is his wife, Raquel, who becomes the center of the story, as she raises their family, clothes them, teaches them, and raises goats for sustenance for her family. Mateo could not do anything but work for the *patrón* and use his labor to build the landowners *rancho* and the goods and animals he traded and sold, but Raquel is the one producing and reproducing for not only her own family, but for the family of Mateo's *patrón*, even as she is not an indebted peon. While Mateo's five dollars a month was applied to his store credit, Raquel literally kept her family alive with clothing and bedding from the goatskin and milk and meat from them as well. Her productive labor produces a livable situation for her family. Raquel utilizes not only her labor to sustain her children and husband, but her reproductive capacity to reproduce the free labor force of peons. The productive capacity of racialized sexuality is utilized as an exploitative tool. Marxist feminist Leopoldina Fortunati attempts to unpack reproductive labor as she examines the transition from pre-capitalism to capitalism. Like Fortunati, I am thinking about an older economic form, debt peonage, and the reproductive labor capacity inherent to it that constructs the sexual economy constitutive of the emergence of capitalism, while acknowledging that it is a pre-capitalist condition. However, the institution of debt peonage, the *rancho* and hacienda systems on land grants were involved as well in capitalist accumulation. How then do we think about the condition of racialized lower-class women, like Raquel, within the institution of debt peonage?

In "Production and Reproduction: The Apparent Antithesis of the Capitalist Mode of Production," Fortunati thinks through the previous modes of production, where the aim within specific communities was the reproduction of individuals and the *production of use-value;* and in these modes of production the aim is the *production of exchange value,* that is, the creation of value for value. Fortunati takes a close look at where production appears "as the creation of value [while] reproduction appears as the creation of non-value…posited as natural production" (2). In an attempt to expand upon Marx and rethink female reproduction, Fortunati thinks through how the reproduction of individuals implies the reproduction of labor power because bodies have exchange-values only and cannot create value for themselves. Thus, bodies can only "present themselves in relation to their capacity to produce" and are offered as a "commodity by [the person in] exchange for [the body's] exchange-value" (5). Debt peonage, while a residual mode of the economy, reproduces the conditions for capitalism and exists within it simultaneously. This allows us to rethink Fortunati's critique of Marx's production by remapping how mestizas within debt peonage (whether a peon or a wife to a peon) have a dual characteristic through not only her gendered, racialized labor, but through her racialized sexuality and reproductive function. The peon is not a commodity, but occupies a unique position where he earns a low wage but never sees it as it goes directly towards his bill at the *patrón* store, who moderately clothes and feeds him. Raquel's reproductive capacity, as the wife of a peon, yields economic profit for the patron, by producing children who will become peons. Even though it is illegal to force the children into bondage after their parents are dead or cannot work, reality tells a different story as we see in the narrative. As the

story comes to a close, "Mateo became very ill. He could not work. His pay was cut off and he was told to "get out." And as all the curandera's yerba failed to cure him he was ordered to send his son Juan to take his place and assume the just debt to the patron, and likewise add to the account at the store" (8). The sexualized and gendered economic status of mestiza women within a system of debt peonage pre-1848 and after produces the workforce in the Southwest.

Part Two: Genre, History, and Memory

Memoir is a genre able to map these contested spaces and times. Space and place become the key sites for examining, as critical geographer Edward Soja states, "our geographies, [that] like our histories, take on a material form as social relations become spatial but are also creatively represented in images, ideas, and imaginings" (18). The genre of memoir, then, occupies a distinct space in the (re) membering of history and space that attempts to not only weave together a violent historical past, but also rearticulate residual modes of production through literary voice. This (re) construction, cannot be contained within a binary discussion of history and memory, but can be considered, as Genaro Padilla states in his foundational work on Mexican American autobiography after 1848, an exploration of the "rupture[s] of everyday life…[that] arose as part of discursive necessity: memory – shocked into reconstructing the past of another socionational life set squarely against experience in 'an alien political system in an alien culture'" (4). Memoir, for Mexican Americans after 1848[21],

[21] The invention of Mexican America, as Padilla comments upon, does not have categorical (i.e. identity) distinctions that parallel the shifting of boundaries after the ceding of Northern Mexico in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. Because the West, and particularly the Southwest, was sparsely occupied (mostly by water sources) and not until the 1825 were there American settlement in Texas, open trails on the Santa Fe trail leading into New Mexico, and coastal exchange in California, an over-arching Mexican

is a genre where the individual experience and collective historical identity are inextricably bound. It should be stated here that this (re) mapping, (re) construction, and/or (re) membering of space and history is not an attempt to recover some utopian vision of the past or the way things were. I am taking cues from critical geographer and Native feminist Mishuana Geoman when she states, "(Re) mapping is not just about regaining that which was lost and returning to an original and pure point in history, but instead understanding the processes that have defined our current spatialities in order to sustain vibrant Native futures" (3). The (re) mapping of social space under U.S. Empire and Westward expansion is reflected in the literary strategies of memoir. A geohistorical approach to the racial, gender, and sexual grammar of the Southwest, particularly New Mexico and Texas, takes shape in *We Fed Them Cactus* by Fabiola Cabeza de Baca, Jovita González and Eve Raleigh's novel *Caballero,* and Recovered WPA Debt Peonage short stories, that both romantically and factually recall a past New Mexico and Texas to comment, not only on the changing space, dispossession, and displacement of Hispanos in New Mexico and Tejanos in Texas, but also to comment on gender and sexual norms through the racialized labor systems of the past. Juxtaposing these two narrative that focus on elite-land holding families that recall the past to the short stories of the peons aids in interrogating the social relations between elite land-holding Mexican Americans and the mestizas/os, peons, and natives on communal lands and *ranchos*. As Padilla states, narrative formations of subjects, who

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American identity in the U.S. is difficult to pin down and think about as exclusive to the Southwest after 1848. Localized identities were much more prevalent, even more so than nationality claiming ties to the changing flags of Spain to Mexico and Mexico to the U.S. Please see Padilla's discussion on geopolitical constructions of identity in *My History, Not Yours: The Formation of Mexican American Autobiography* and a later section in this paper.

later come to occupy the position of "Mexican Americans," heavily depend upon, "Ideological, identitarian, and rhetorical issues [and]…In autobiographical literature, we see again and again a narrative ground (often a battleground) upon which an individual is contending with social, cultural, and ideological forces that simultaneously so disrupt identity as to unfix it yet, paradoxically, in disrupting identity establish identity as a destabilized condition (6, 10-11). Whereas identity has been the key element in informing conversations regarding different literary discourses and genres, this paper seeks to interject land, sexuality, gender, and race in that conversation and think about how social space is key to thinking about subject formation and thus literary discourse and genre. Identity is constructed in relation to social spaces and positionalities by discourses that are spatially configured and give rise to what Louis Althusser calls interpellation. Ideology or ideological discourses construct the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence and hails or interpellates them as concrete subjects (Althusser 12). These ideological discourses give rise to different constructions of identity that are very much connected to space.

Padilla examines the dual genre memoir/autobiography and states, "Beginning at mid-nineteenth century, the autobiographical narratives composed out of a need to reconcile the cultural "self" to a radically discontinuous history assume numerous forms of expression" (16). He reminds us that Mexican American autobiography post-1848 navigates the contradictory position that Mexican Americans occupied in American society after the Mexican-American War. He categorizes memoir and autobiography of Mexican Americans as a collective project, rather than an individual's autobiography. What Padilla doesn't fully engage with is how the many different class positionalities,

regional differences, and economic systems informed literary discourse and literary genre in Mexican American autobiographies and memoirs across time and space (even before 1848). Because as Padilla states, "In the period after the American conquest, the life histories of Mexican American women and men articulate an interregional and even interclass sense of individual and communal disjuncture" (10). While I do not agree with this statement, the way Padilla takes up memoir as a collective force allows me to think about the nuances of space and positionality within the literary genre. While Padilla addresses spatial shifting (vis-à-vis shifting borders and changing national displacement) and, to some extent, regional specificities, a narratological interrogation of cross-national temporal and spatial displacement during shifting times (pre and post-1848) is required to think about how social space informs literary genre across space and time. Autobiography, and its close relative memoir, differs from other literary genres. Whereas novels and the short story attempt to fictionalize events, people, places, and time (although this is up for discussion because some would argue that fiction and short fiction comment upon reality), autobiography and memoir attempt to explore the discursively embedded reality.

Autobiography and testimonio scholar Rosaura Sánchez defines autobiography according to Gusdorf Georges and states it is a "self-generated/agential discursive construction of "self" within particular social spaces. This agency, this awareness of the singularity of self, and the structural capacity to construct a "self" textually, that is, to textualize the various discourses structuring this identity, clearly defines and constitutes an autobiography" (8). Autobiography differs greatly from testimonio because,

> Collaborative efforts of the type generated under "sponsorship of members of the dominant culture" would not then enter within this definition of autobiography, as their production is mediated and filtered through a second, more powerful agency, that of the interviewer/editor…In its very production the mediated testimonials introduce a disjuncture, a doubling, a split voice, an overlay of subaltern and hegemonic narrative spaces, perceptible in its dual modality: oral and written (Sánchez 8).

While the differences between autobiography and testimonio are distinct and large, the nuanced distinction between autobiography and memoir are less. Treated as a minor form of autobiography by scholars, memoir occupies a position within and against the literary genre of autobiography. Autobiography and memoir scholar Georg Misch states that memoir is the recording of a memory or sketching where a particular person is not the center of the memory as in autobiography. Misch states, "In memoirs [the] relation is passive in so far as the writers of memoirs…introduce themselves in the main as merely observers of the events and activities of which they write, and if they join the active participants it is only in minor parts…The autobiographer concerns himself with such things only in so far as is necessary for the understanding of his life-story" (15). Misch states controversially that in memoir there is not a centered subject that moves through time and space with focus. Rather, memoir is a confluence of events (sometimes just one) where multiple people are involved during different times and spaces. Current scholarship, on the other hand, suggests that memoir "is in the process of becoming a byword for autobiography, particularly as this form of non-fiction grows in popularity" (Rak 483-84). The way memoir gets talked about in scholarship positions it as less (aesthetically and otherwise) than autobiography, that is, as a popular culture literary form. The distinction between autobiography and memoir sees memoir

as more tightly focused on a specific event that generates the discursive construction of "self" and community, while simultaneously pushing genre and stylistic limits. The connection of autobiography to conventional, restricted, and elite writing allows memoir to move non-statically through memory and history. Memoir is examined as "life writing" that includes non-fictional writing such as diaries, journals, and letters. It is oftentimes multi-genre in style and not considered to be as formal as autobiography.

While a whole dissertation could be written that explores the categorization of many Mexican American texts as memoir and not autobiography, my project is invested in a geohistorical approach to the racial, gender, and sexual grammar of the Americas that considers different literary forms and historical moments that aid in tracing the rationality of the current-day neoliberal U.S. nation-state. Padilla would add that the by-product of Mexican American autobiography, memoir, attempts to "reconcile the cultural "self" to a radically discontinuous history…" within and against the collective voice. There is a distinct (re) membering of the social fabric and space that distinguishes ethnic minority, particularly Mexican American, autobiography and memoir. But Padilla also explains that these narratives display an "articulatory schizophrenia," that "they must articulate ambivalence and divided loyalty because they occupy the historical site where divided subjectivity is formed" (44-45). In an attempt to engage with the post-modern theorist, Fredric Jameson, in thinking about the breakdown of the signifying chain and Mexican American texts, Padilla takes seriously the context of U.S. Empire within the context of Mexican American autobiography. If we consider the regional specificity of "Mexican American" subjects in the nineteenth-century, we can begin to interrogate the notions of "articulatory schizophrenia" and

subject fragmentation as they relate to space. While borders and nations were shifting, it becomes crucial to examine local spatialities in the larger context. Padilla starts his study of Mexican American autobiography in 1836, but the history of displacement, dispossession, racialization, and gendering in the Southwest and New Mexico far supersedes that date.

The historical novel and short stories are also specific genres that carry history and memory within them in unique ways, but are a more acceptable or a highbrow form of literature. As I stated in Chapter 1 and following Frederic Jameson, the historical novel or romance, tends to grab from many "great" historical events that have occurred and is arbitrarily doomed. In a turn to post structuralism, Jameson asks: How can we have stability of any alleged world-historical figure when we have lost our own? (260). As a genre that is nostalgic and serves nationalist ends, the historical novel is an exploration, comment, or interrogation of the old world order within a new mode of production or new bourgeois society. Attempting to deconstruct the leading scholar regarding the historical novel, Georg Lukacs, Jameson states that Lukacs is actually mapping the realistic novel onto the historical novel. The historical novel is thought to contain a moment of radical change, which lifts content out of placid continuities of mere customs and of picturesque daily life. All historical novels harbor conservative sympathies and have a deep ontological investment in the old ways of life. The prototypical content of the historical novel has been war. Jameson intervenes and states that all historical novels cannot exist without the dimension of collectivity, which marks individual characters into a greater totality. If not written from this unbiased position, History is reduced to conspiracy and privilege. This is the form history occupies in the

novel, which is why he is taking Lukacs to task. This is particularly important in thinking about *Caballero,* particularly because there are different interpretations of the transitions from one mode of production to the next. *Caballero* takes on an elite positionality that is concerned with land and displacement when in reality it collapses histories together. While we still get a clear portrait of the time passed, Jameson notes that the historical novel, demands a multiplicity and differentiation of standpoints that precede the revolutionary moment. In romanticizing the old ways of being, the historical novel lessens the excessive forms of multiple violences and leads to pathologizing and/or exceptionalism.

In Kerwin Lee Klein's essay "On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse," he states, "Where we once spoke of folk history or popular history or oral history or public history or even myth we now employ memory as a meta historical category that subsumes all these various terms" (128). Memory went from an archaic mode of being to a remaking of historical imagination. Memory, and more specifically a critical memory that intervenes within a conventional historical narrative, maintains close ties with other forms of folk, myth, oral, and popular histories and establishes an inextricable link between a past, present, and future while (re) mapping history. Because American history is fraught with such one-sided and limited viewpoints, a critical memory that establishes links to the past is crucial. Geographically speaking, the U.S. Southwest is a location where multiple histories collide as a result of colonization and settlement. Memory is oftentimes paired as an antithesis or antonym to history. This erroneous pitting of the terms suggests that memory is positioned to counter history at any moment. Or on the complete opposite spectrum, memory can

serve as a synonym for history, often times "softening" the term "history" while giving it a relatable connotation. While memory can certainly add depth and context to traditional historical accounts, Klein suggests, "We need to reconsider the relationship between historical imagination and the new memorial consciousness, and we may begin by mapping the contours of the new structures of memory. Memories appeal to us partly because they project an immediacy we feel has been lost from history" (129). By reconsidering the relationship between traditional historical representation and memory, we can begin to think about memory as a legitimating experience that as Joan Scott states in "The Evidence of Experience" does not merely, "reproduce [but] rather…contests given ideological systems – those that assume that the facts of history speak for themselves and those that rest on notions of a natural or established opposition… (368).

Thus, memory complicates structural systems of oppression but does not necessarily function completely outside of these ideological systems. Pierre Nora states in *Realms of Memory* that memories are "vestiges of a recovered history constructed in response to a modern world that no longer values memory or tradition" (6). We can begin to think of memory as a method of (re) membering multiple pasts, while still available to function within certain system. As Walter Benjamin writes in "Theses on the Philosophy of History," history is not a linear model of isolated events and states, "The Angel of History is turned towards the past. A storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress" (258).

As Benjamin notes, history has collapsed into the present and the past is fraught with non-linear modalities. He reminds us that the attempt to make sense of history is fraught with multiple memories that do not reconcile legitimate history. Thus, memory functions as an ever-forming idea that is not static, homogenous, or retrievable but becomes something that informs both the past and the present continuously. Memory, then, is not only a site where we understand how the past is connected to the present and visa versa, but it becomes a site where we can discover unrealized opportunities that create space for alternative futurities. With New Mexico occupying such a conflicted historical space in the Southwest, it seems necessary to turn towards a politics of critical memory to interrogate the (mis) constructed histories of violent colonization, racial, gender, and class conflict, and dispossession.

Part Three: Women and the Space of the Nation

The women writers that I am examining in this chapter, Fabiola Caebza de Baca and Jovita Gonzáles, both attempt to position themselves in relation to the nation. Cabeza de Baca attempts to romanticize an earlier time when her family had more power over the land, but still negotiates her position within the U.S. nation-state in ambiguous ways. From an elite land-holding Northern New Mexican family, Cabeza de Baca was an agent of the modernization project where she worked for the Agriculture Extension Service that helped people ease into modernization while retaining their culture. Jovita Gonzáles, a fifth-generation descendent of a land grant family, collected folklore in the Rio Grande valley and was highly educated. Nicole Guidotti-Hernández states in *Unspeakable Violence: Remapping U.S. Mexican National Imaginaries* that, "Gonzales maintains the racial hierarchy of dispersed peoples that originated within the

Spanish ideological framework of social and racial inequality whereby the *gente decente,* or *criollos,* were at the top of the racial and social hierarchy, mestizas/os were in the middle, and Indians (both Mexican and North American) and African Americans were at the bottom" (141). Gonzales, like Cabeza de Baca, attempts to maintain her position above those whom she thinks inferior within the U.S. nation-state that sets them up to uphold the nation in problematic, yet ambiguous ways. While many scholars have praised the critique of gender inequality and racism that existed between Tejanos/Hispanos and Anglos from these two (Mexican American) women, their writings and positions are not unproblematic but rather racist/classist towards other subjugated people. In attempting to maintain and critique, what Norma Alarcón, Caren Kaplan, and Minoo Moallem call in their "Introduction "to *Between Woman and Nation,* "notions of the "Rights of Citizens," they fall short in thinking about the "problematic relationship to the modern nation-state [women of color had in the] construction of subjectivity" (1). The relation and link between the debt peonage short stories and Cabeza de Baca memoir and Jovita Gonzáles' novel rests in the examination and interrogation of racialized labor through gender and sexual norms in the Southwest. While they attempt to make a place for themselves within the U.S. nation-state, the "nation-state sharpens the defining lines of citizenship for women, racialized ethnicities, and sexualities in the construction of a socially stratified society" (Irigaray 171). The double bind and contradictory position of bodies that occupy sexual or racial difference becomes the denial of the very term "difference" and the simultaneous universalization of these differences. The "subject" in question is included for labor purposes but excluded for everything else (i.e. protection, health, etc.). It became clear to me that the

nation-state always needs these "subjects" but denies them simultaneously. This doubleness serves to "speak simultaneously in the name of the people 'inside' and those who are outside…Consequently, the notion of borders refers to two heterogeneous boundaries and not to a 'single' line" (Alarcón, Kaplan, Moallem 5). In thinking about this double bind of the "citizen-subject," the doubleness of the border generates contradictions that constitute the nation as always hybrid.

The nation is a spatial construction that, for women in the Southwest, has constantly been fluctuating throughout history. Thinking about how Hispanas and Tejanas have navigated the space of the nation in regards to their class position has informed the politics of racialized gender and sexuality that has either utilized their sexuality and social construction of gender for the production of the nation through geospatial modes of production or has attempted to utilize a "normative" notion of gender and sexuality in reproducing the nation through problematic laws and discourse regarding their subject "position" and identity. Scholars like Angie Chabram-Dernersesian in *The Chicana/o Cultural Studies Reader* or Paula Moya in *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism* explore cultural identity and interrogate problematic uses that do not take into account difference, production, and positionality. Understanding subject position (and identity) as relational and grounded in the historically produced social categories that constitute social locations is key in interrogating memoir and autobiography. Thus, critical geography as theoretical framework allows us to "understand difference through socially produced markers (such as race, class, gender, and sexuality) and *their*

attendant geographies (colonial geographies, non-white geographies, cross-cultural geographies, and so on)" (McKittrick and Peak 2).

Critical geographer and woman of color feminist Katherine McKittrick remind us that these markers and their attendant geographies are dialectical. In thinking of how space and place inform our very existence, Edward Soja asks us to examine "spatial expression that is more than just a background reflection or set of physical attributes to be descriptively mapped" (1). Space is not static and empty. On the contrary, space is constantly fluctuating and interrelated. How can we begin to interrogate the multiple dimensions of power that are embedded in geography? How do the cultural artifacts of the past help us in examining the social relations and places intertwined in those structures of power?

Part Four: History of Texas and Jovita González' *Caballero*

In the late seventeenth-century, the Spanish turned their desires towards Texas and Arizona and created *entradas*, that were missions in Texas built to civilize and Christianize the Indians. The colonization of Texas began in 1690 when there were two missions established and at the end of the Spanish colonial rule, there were 29 missions total. The French did not recognize Spain's claim to North America and the 1493 papal bull. Spain averted the French by establishing missions and established the first civilian colony in 1716 after a successful French colony had been established in northeast Texas (Menchaca 101). Between 1747 and 1773 Spain extended its colonization of its northeastern frontier (Menchaca 107). By the late eighteenth-century the settlers of Texas were in four regions: Nacogdoches, San Antonio, La Bahía, and Nuevo Santander. Settlers did not want to come into the interior of Texas because of Apache

and Comanche raids and fertile land. Under the law of the Indies, Perez states, "all provincial lands occupied by Spanish settlers belonged to the Crown and were awarded in the forms of grants or concessions either to institutions, such as missions and pueblos, or to individuals" (27). These land grants developed into *ranchos* and ranching societies of the hacienda system. In the "Introduction" to *History and Legends of the Alamo*, Richard Flores states that when Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821, "its search for a political and national identity was forged through fractionalized political strife" (viii). The main source of this tension was the political ideology of the post-colonial government. While Mexicans and Texans alike (immigrants to Texas and native Tejanos who were Mexican nationals) favored a federalist government that allowed each region more autonomy to its member states, General Antonio López de Santa Anna, dictator and president of Mexico, was trying to enforce a centralist regime, where the power was centralized to one location. This tension eventually caused Mexicans and Anglo-Americans alike to call for an independent Texas, when in reality, Santa Anna discarded the Constitution of 1824 and efforts to curb the Anglo-American immigrant population into Texas failed, heightening the tensions between the Mexican government and new Anglo-American immigrants to Texas. After a bloody Texas Revolution, The Republic of Texas convened in 1836, but Mexico refused to recognize its independence. In 1845, the U.S. Congress passed a bill to annex the Republic of Texas if it was endorsed as a slave state and the if the U.S. paid off their huge debt. When this happened, Mexico broke peaceful ties with the United States and both nations declared war in 1846, which resulted in the Mexican-American War, where

South Texas was annexed to the United States. In 1860, thirty percent of the total state population was enslaved.

Perez points out that the Mexican American literary romanticization of the hacienda has two interdependent themes: the dispossession of Mexican landed elite and an organic community of hacienda owners (31). This disavows the internal social hierarchy of this "semi-feudal agrarian institution" that enables Mexican American writers (or for this chapter, Tejanas) to contradictorily place themselves up and against the U.S. nation state. The hacienda was an institution that held peons in bondage and functioned alternatively between feudalistic and mercantile/capitalist, and was capable of significant capitalist accumulation through paternalism and patriarchy. Perez takes note of David Montejano and states that there were certain social stratifications on the hacienda that likened it to the plantation and states, "Within this society relations between landowner, or *patrón*, and peon were marked by paternalism as affective bond of reciprocal obligations between the two without which the social hierarchy could not have been maintained" (32). This paternalism symbolized status and wealth, but was exploitative in nature as was the new capitalist order[22]. Scholars have commented that there were kinship ties between the *patrónes* and their peons in an attempt to assuage the power dynamics that were fundamentally in place and created conditions for the construction of Mexicana/Tejana construction of proper femininity and the racialized gender and sexuality of their peons. This economic system was interested in its self-

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[22] Vincent Perez states that *patrónes* possessed a "seignerial" worldview, where the hacienda, the peons, and their labor were not for him to accumulate wealth or profit, but for social and cultural capital, which is both in correct in the ways the *patron* did accumulate wealth and profit from their peons and the goods he sold them, but also in terms of the distinct ways that the sexual economy produced the labor-force that the *patron* accumulated for capital.

maintenance and structured "seigneurial-based opposition to (U.S.) capitalism and intrusion of "modernity" into semi-feudal Mexican society" (Perez 34). What Perez fails to take into account is how gender and sexuality are not only cultural and discursive markers that function anachronistically across time, but construct material relations specific to the historical moment of the hacienda and visa versa. After Mexico's independence from Spain, it did not create the conditions for semi-free wageworkers. Weber states that in Texas, debt peonage was strengthened by the "influx of capital, its concentration in the hands of a few, and the demand for labor stimulated by the vitality of the economy of the frontier" (211). Debt peonage was coercive in Texas and New Mexico. During U.S. invasion and settlement, the hacienda system was transformed by U.S. settlers and through economic competition, but continued long after it was abolished.

Jovita Gonzáles and Eve Raleigh's *Caballero* remembers the Rancho de la Palma hacienda, the pre-modern agrarian community that the Mendoza y Soría live on a ranch, set up and against the landscape of U.S. modernity. The novel was recovered by María Cotera and José Limón and published in 1996, but was written by Jovita Gonzáles and Eve Raleigh[23] in 1938. *Caballero* is set in South Texas, across the border from Matamoros, at the close of the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848 and the "historical" romance narrative attempts to examine and interrogate the geohistorical past of Tejanos in the South, but was written in the twentieth century. For González, the politics of looking back is an attempt to solidify a certain positionality in twentieth-

[23] Eve Raleigh was her pen name. Her real name was Margaret Eimer who was a white Missouri transplant to Texas.

century U.S. The novel follows the decline of Don Santaigo Mendoza y Soría's hacienda, Rancho La Palma, and the ranching families of Spanish "nobility roots." It examines the union of his daughters and their impedance as the novel ends. His "queer" son and his daughters all engage in "unconventional" relationships, which includes the marriage of a daughter to a white American male who is the symbol of the American capitalist order. Don Santiago, the grandson of one of the first Spanish colonists who founded Rancho la Palma in 1748, faces the dispossession of the elite landed class as the agrarian and paternalistic rancho system is replaced with capitalist modes of production. Scholars have engaged with the publication process of this novel and its unfinished manuscript production, the co-authorship with a white woman by the name of Margaret Eimer, and decentering this text as a proto-Chicana feminist text. The novel remembers the hacienda as a better time in Texas history and as Vincent Perez has noted places the novel in the context of 1930s plantation novels and "recovers the Southwest's own 'premodern' agrarian socioeconomic institution – the semi-feudal hacienda – to negotiate a cultural and political path in the modern era for a population that…had been conquered in the mid-nineteenth century by the United States" (474). But as Monika Kaup states in her article "The Unsustainable *Hacienda:* The Rhetoric of Progress in Jovita González and Eve Raleigh's *Caballero,"*

> It is crucial to realize that *Caballero* synchronizes the intermarriage plot with another development that, in South Texas, does not occur until half a century later: the collapse of Mexican ranch society with its feudalistic class structure and paternalistic work arrangements and the full displacement of the old Mexican landowning elite as a result of an agriculture revolution that violently displaced ranchers and ranching. (565).

This means that while González and Raleigh attempt to piece together a history of dispossession and negotiate a position within and against U.S empire and, they were historically inaccurate. Since the *rancho* in South Texas prevailed after U.S. invasion, elite land-holding Mexicans maintained and upheld racist ideologies against mestizos and lower class Mexicans, their *peons*. While the many debates surrounding Jovita González are inspiring and add much to this chapter, I argue that Jovita Gonzáles and Eve Raleigh's *Caballero* cannot be read as a foundational Chicana text, precisely because it negates issues of labor and production for women of color as it attempts to reinscribe a sexual economy that set the foundation for racialized gender and sexuality and functioned as a deployment for constructing elite land-holding Tejanas' identity through proper femininity.

Jovita González was born in 1904 on her grandparent's *rancho* near Roma, Texas. As Pérez notes, "She was in part descended from the landed Spanish elites who had come to the colony of Nuevo Santander in the eighteenth-century" (9). She was well educated with a B.A. and M.A. in Spanish. She was a pioneer in collecting Mexican folklore in the Rio Grande Valley and was the only Mexican-American women to serve as president of the folklore society. She was a student of renowned ethnographer J. Frank Dobie. Gonzalez's position of privilege is seen as the novel opens in the sala of the hacienda with the "relics of a former splendor in Spain" (13). As *Caballero* opens with a sketch of the Mendoza y Soría hacienda, the spatial configuration of hierarchical positioning coupled with the opening statements of Doña Dolores, Don Santiago's sister, stating, "We do not choose to be [dirty] *Americanos.* We are Mexicans, our mother land was Spain. Not all of their laws can change us, for

we are not them," we see a foreshadowing of conflict ahead (9). As the novel fights itself to portray a more egalitarian U.S. society over the patriarchal and paternal Mexican society, it buckles under its own criticism while attempting to maintain some sense of gender and sexual norms that would incorporate the Tejana female body into the U.S. nation-state in a manner that upheld her discrete properness.

The two main female characters that are meant to embody a sense of rebellion and individuality against Mexican patriarchy are María de los Angeles and Susanita. Both female characters act as cultural brokers in the text, as they both marry white males; Maria marries Red McLane, a transplanted Yankee entrepreneur who marries her to enhance his political career and Susanita marries Lieutenant Robert Warrener, a solider in the U.S. army and Virginian planter and slaveholder. Both these marriages occur in one sentence, but their disobedience and attempt to break Mexican gender norms occurs throughout the novel. As I stated before, this novel is in tense contradiction with itself and hinges on a double bind, as it attempts to disavow Mexican patriarchy but reinforces class positionality through the unconventional marriages. Both the girls marry rich white men. They resist the patriarchy and marry the Americanos as a form of rebellion, but they are liberated by the Americanos, only to accept other "proper" forms of paternalism. The females in the text look down on their peons, even as they think they are part of the "family." When word of Americano invasion gets to the Mendoza y Soría hacienda, Paz, the family nurse and housekeeper ask, "What is it going to mean? Would they still be *peons*..? *Peons* – why fool, what else could we ever be, when we were born so. A *peon* is a *peon,* from birth to death" (12). At one point in the novel, they tell an older peon woman not to worry about the

Americanos violently attacking her, for she is old and poor. The hierarchy of racialized gender is at the forefront of this novel. Susanita, named after her paternal grandmother, Susana Ulloa, the first Doña of the hacienda, functioned under the same Mexican patriarchal rule as her granddaughter, but Susanita often questions the structures in saying "Do you know, Angela, I often wonder if there isn't a part of us that's completely ours given to us at birth which cannot possible belong to anyone else." (212). Like her light grandmother, Susanita is described as the prettiest shade of white and Don Santiago, "Marveling anew at the spun-gold fineness and sheen of this heritage from his Austrian ancestors—already so rare among his people that it seemed a gift from heaven. Lovely was the cream skin, delicate the molding of the red lips. And her eyes were like limpid green water upon which a vagrant cloud had left a remembrance of gray" (5). Susanita embodies the same gendered, racial, and sexual politics that we see in María Amparo Ruiz de Burton's novels; however, Susanita doesn't return back to the space of Mexico. Mexican space subjugates females and she rises above this, only to reinscribe herself under another patriarchal system. The culmination of Susanita's rebellion against her father is when she and a peon from the hacienda meet her lover Lieutenant Robert Warrener in an attempt to save her brother Alvaro from the Texas Rangers, who will later kill him. Don Santiago states, "A true lady, Susanita, knows that her honor must be kept unsoiled above all else…Alvaro's death, regardless of its manner, would have been a glory to our name as against the shame you have put upon our family" (279). The masculine time of war is replaced with the feminine time of rebellion, but a rebellion that forgets the history of the labor we see in the background. Gender and sexual norms for the elite land-owning women of the Mendoza y Soría

hacienda are restricted, but the very rebellion of the young Tejanas buckle under the paternal ideology of marriage within the U.S. imperial discourse. Not able to uphold their positionality within the newly annexed territory, Gonzalez reinscribes another system of gender and sexual norms that functions in contention with racialized gender and sexuality of the lower-class mestizos.

As the novel grapples with the breaking of "gender norms," the institution of debt peonage is nonchalantly the backdrop of the novel. The word *peon* appears in the 300-page novel twenty-seven times; however the peons do have a voice in the novel. As Ben Olguín states in "Caballeros and Indians: Mexican American Whiteness, Hegemonic Mestizaje, and Ambivalent Indigeneity in Proto-Chicana/o Autobiographical Discourse, 1859-2008," "González and Eimer situate their chronicle of proto-Chicana feminist empowerment within an elite *criollo* framework in which the native and mestiza/o inhabitants were assumed to be child-like, dark figures standing just a few steps within the gate, hat in hand, head down, trembling, and barely daring to cast their own gaze within a narrative ontological space that did not include them" (40). It is the peon women that have no real storyline in this "Chicana feminist" text. If *Caballero* is a critique of Mexican patriarchy and all its glory, why then do these important characters, who carry out the everyday labor, not get pushed to the forefront? Don Santiago romanticizes his peons and reveals that "sighing a little for the freedom of those who were almost slaves, never bound with the restrictions of those who kept them as such" speaks to his ignorance of the bondage system. At the end of the novel, the peons leave to work for wages with American employers and it seems that capitalism liberates them. They become a threat with the potential to rebel and the sexual economy

of the institution is masked. In *Caballero,* even as the hacienda stands in as a symbol of dispossession that will lead to a transition to capitalism, it also becomes a site of production, and of ambiguous labor relations that shape the role of not only lower class mestizo "men", but of women as well through the need for production of the labor force.

Part Five: History of New Mexico and Cabeza de Baca's *We Fed Them Cactus*

While the entire Southwest has a complex and contested history, New Mexico's history is particularly embedded with dispossession and violent displacement that hinged on racial constructions tied to Spanish colonialism. During Spanish colonization in 1598, Spaniards, *mestizos*, Indians, and *afromestizos* moved north toward Mexico's frontier and what is now present-day New Mexico. Martha Menchaca states, "Although people of color [otherwise known as the restrictions of the *casta* system implemented by Spain] were not in charge of the racial projects instituted by Spain, they participated in the conquest of the indigenous peoples they encountered" (67). Spain instituted racial order through the *casta* system, which allowed or denied legal rights by assigning them racial categories based on (parental) origin. Spaniards, who were born in Spain, received the highest social prestige. Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz reminds us that "The colonization of New Mexico resulted from the continuous northward movement of those explorers, traders, missionaries, miners, and cattlemen who had established Zacatecas in 1546 and Durango in 1563 and opened the silvers mines of Santa Barbara and other northern mining sites before 1580" (31). The irony of this colonialism is that while the colonist of color who moved north with the Spaniards did find better living conditions, it was at the expense of the indigenous populations and looked like the same

colonial order that oppressed them (Menchaca 68). In an effort to keep the landed Spanish elite and citizen soldiers in present-day New Mexico region and to create a buffer against "the marauding nomadic Indian tribes", the Spanish crown often times offered large land grants to keep the region populated and under Spanish control (Westphall 1). But as Westphall reminds us, "Their system was unlike that of the hacienda of Mexico and South America, with large numbers of people controlled by a single land baron (*patrón*). The *patrón* structure that developed was more dependent on closer interpersonal relationships" (8).

During the colonization of the Southwest, there were three major "cycles of conquest" that occurred in New Mexico. One was launched by the Spanish, the second by México, and third was the U.S. annexation of northern México. The multiple levels of settler colonialism in this area are complex and complicated and beg for us to examine the construction of space and how racial construction influences that space under these colonial conquests. As the Spanish attempted to conquer the Pueblo, Navajo, Apache, and Ute Indians, the "Catholic Church had passed laws to *protect* the Indians…[and] by 1608 the friars reported a total of 4,000 Christian converts" (Menchaca 81, 89). The Spaniards conquered most Pueblo Indians by using military force or by coercing alliances against the Navajo and Apache. The Spanish crown also gave the landed Spanish elite *encomiendas*, where indigenous (i.e. "Native Americans") peoples were forced to work the land. This divide and conquer system broke down in 1680 when the Pueblo Indians united with the Apache and Navajo in the "Great Pueblo Rebellion." Spanish colonists fled to El Paso but soon returned to New Mexico when the alliances between the indigenous communities dissolved. Much of the first wave of

colonization happened in Northern New Mexico, where the settlers established communal ranches and farms, *emcomiendas, repartimiento*, and missions.

In the early 1800's, the French, Dutch, English, and Russians coveted the Spanish frontier in the Western Hemisphere. Menchahca states, "France attempted to invade Spain; the United States encroached upon Louisiana; and England challenged Spain's control over South America" (157). Spain's control over Mexico, and particularly the Southwest, was diminishing. In 1821, after much conflict having to do with the racial and land systems in place and the economic instability of Spain's future, Mexico gained independence from Spain. For a short 25-years, the people of the Southwest were Mexican nationals, but things basically remained the same in present-day New Mexico, as a few laws, like an interpretation of the Law of Cadiz of 1812, which attempted to dismantle the *casta* system and proclaimed Indians (enumerated to include only "peaceful" Indians who were a part of a tribe and recognized the two sovereignties, the tribe and the royal government), mixed-blood, *criollos*, and *peninsulares* as equal. The overarching construction was based on the idea of *gente de razón*, an inclusive label that incorporated through cultural affiliation (most) Spanish-speaking peoples practicing Catholicism but in opposition to *Indios*[24]. In theory, *criollos and Spaniards* of this region were no longer to be privileged because of race but in fact racial categories continued to prevail while simultaneously the government

[24] I use the term *Indios* interchangeably with Indigenous and Native American. As Menchaca states, "Though *gente de razón* became a widely used and inclusive label, the Indian category did not completely fall out of use. This category…found that to be enumerated as an Indian an individual must (1) be of homogenous decent, (2) retain the aboriginal culture, (3) speak the aboriginal language, and (4) be a member of a tribe or an Indian corporate community who recognized two sovereignties, the tribe and the royal government. This enumeration, of course, applied only to the peaceful Indians of México. Nomadic Indians were not included as past of the national nineteenth century censuses" (167).

stated that they were gone. In practice, this "colorblindness" was embedded in a historical racial discourse that justified the colonial methods of dispossession based on the "inferiority" of certain peoples and the relationship of the Indians to the land. Because the lay people and the (Pueblo) Indians did not own farmland, landless racialized peasants had to enter the debt peonage system, where they would work for shelter and food without receiving wages. However, property laws changed after the U.S. won the U.S.-Mexico War in 1848.

Narratives of the Southwest region, particularly New Mexico, are (re) constructed on the basis of history and memory, positioned within and against the community, and on the basis of geohistorical documents that allow us to examine race, gender, and class intersectionally. During the colonial era, the "West" was primarily identified as west of Pennsylvania or West of the Appalachians. Understanding the history of Westward expansion is the crux of the history of the Southwest. Conventional geography defines the Southwest as the terrain (basin and range) of Southern California, Nevada, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, and the Texas panhandle, but as stated at the beginning, I am defining it in larger hemispheric terms. After 1821, México gained its independence from Spain and from 1821-1846, the New Republica de México was established. In February 1848, the United States signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo with México which "ceased" hostilities between the U.S. and Mexico, ceded former northern Mexico to the U.S., and declared that all residents of the "Southwest" (former territory of Mexico) who remained north of the new border within one-year of 1848 would automatically become citizens of the U.S. Before 1821, New Mexico was Spanish territory and after Mexican independence from Spain, it

became the territory of Mexico. With the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (as a result of the Mexican American War from 1846-1848) Mexico ceded New Mexico (along with part of CA, AZ, NV, UT, CO, and WY). The treaty granted all residents of the Southwest (the former territory of Mexico) who remained north of the new border within one-year of 1848 automatic "citizenship" of the United States. In the 1780's the U.S. constitution had been ratified and defined citizenship on the basis of a white-male-propertied status. The Treaty did not change this exclusionary U.S. citizenship status but this was the first time the U.S. granted a racial exception to the rule. This "exception" thus confused the meaning of U.S. "citizenship " from then on and created a racial line of division that was always present but was now presented as de jure legislation and further drew the lines between included and excluded subject-citizens. Article IX of the Treaty states that Mexicanos would be granted full U.S citizenship and their property, lifestyles, and religion would be protected at all times.

This provision linguistically calls for the protection of Mexicanos/Hispanos/Tejanos, yet it historically does something completely different. The provision actually did not protect Mexicanos/Hispanos/Tejanos and their property because without written legal documentation, which most Mexicanos/Hispanos/Tejanos did not have, their property was taken over by the U.S. government and they were said to be sitting on "vacant" land. The protection of this property is full of contradictions given that Mexicans had an intimate relationship with the land as possessive individuals in an area marked by multiple layers of settler colonialism. Within and against this, thousands of Anglo migrants violated the treaty by squatting on Mexican land they did not own. The Homestead Act of 1862 blurred the lines of property ownership and

converted occupied land into "vacant" land. The treaty recognized claiming Mexico's sovereignty over the land so many Mexicanos/Hispanos/Tejanos began fighting for their land that was settled or stolen. Because of litigation and legal fees, which they could not afford, many Mexicanos/Hispanos/Tejanos were dispossessed and displaced. In the U.S., the right to vote was based on property ownership; dispossession not only displaced people, but began drawing the lines of class and racial subjectivity because without some sort of property and white male status, Mexicanos/Hispanos/Tejanos fell outside of the de jure provisions.

As Grace Hong states in *The Rupture's of American Capital*, "Racialization is the process by which the differential incorporation of laboring subjects by capital leads to a distanced, contradictory relationship to the state, and to nationalist notions of subjectivity that attempt, unsuccessfully and violently, to resolve and erase difference" (8). This process of differentiation and dispossession was much different for the elite New Mexicans that came from "prominent" families as they accepted the dominant racialized, gendered, and classed ideologies of U.S. Empire and imperialist space. Citizenship was being redefined after 1848 for Mexicans north of the new border, but the relationship between race and expansion (space) was becoming prominent and complex. Analysis of *We Fed Them Cactus* allows for the examination of construction of space and place in relation to gender and sexuality in the production and negotiation of U.S. Imperialism.

It should be noted that the (re) membering of New Mexico history, colonization, and violent displacement and dispossession in this chapter focuses on the "Northern" New Mexican experience. Because Northern New Mexico was more vastly populated

than other regions in New Mexico because of water sources, land capabilities, and the merchant trails, the history of this area comes front and center in the discussion of New Mexico spaces throughout history. The memoirs and other literary forms discussed in this paper are all written from the perspective of Northern New Mexicans. There is a great need to think about the different regional spaces of New Mexico (central and southern specifically) that present us with many different ways to conceptualize land that are not tied to ownership, processes of racialization and gendering, and different economic systems of the Southwest.

In the abstract conceptualization of land, Cabeza de Baca idealizes the land and her narrative is tied to nostalgia. Other texts offer material conceptualizations of land that interrogate the material ownership (and thus how we think about settler colonialism) of the land and how that is tied to racialization and gendering. The history of New Mexico is the story of colonized and dispossessed communities but this version erases many different forms and layers of settler colonialism, ethnic minority groups, and local histories. Through literary production in New Mexico, memory becomes a leveling force of power relations that produces a type of historical amnesia that conflates histories. As this chapter thinks through different relationships to land and the multiple forms of settler colonialism and constructions of race, gender, and sexuality as informed by spatial discourse, Northern New Mexican memory becomes crucial for interrogating the very violent systems and structures within which the writers are implicated.

In what follows, I will be examining Fabiola Cabeza de Baca's *We Fed Them Cactus* as an interrogation of how "elite" land-holding Hispanas conceptualize and

position themselves in relation to the nation through their gender and sexual norms. Cabeza de Baca, nostalgically looks back at a "better time and space" in New Mexico to comment upon normative gender and sexual roles and examine communal land space and the employees that work the land. Cabeza de Baca utilizes a temporal framework to examine a lost past even while New Mexico was being thrust into a nuclear landscape in the mid 1940's with the testing of the first atom bomb; in this way New Mexico was thrust into an age of modernity controlled by U.S. empire. This changing landscape was not new for most New Mexicans, as they had been witnessing distinct shifts throughout time and space, the most prominent being in 1848 when the actual territorial boundaries shifted, first when the U.S. annexation of northern Mexico after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and then with the Homestead Act of 1862 when the U.S. government granted settlement at no cost on Hispano cattle grazing land. At the end of the novel, Cabeza de Baca refers to El Llano as nothing more than a "dustbowl," signifying her positionality within a space of atomic renown and modernization. Looking back on a past landscape that has completely changed, *Cactus (*re) imagines spaces of possibility that are immediately foreclosed because of the new nuclear landscape, subject positionality, and multiple histories of loss.

The power of how place influences and shapes memoir and the relationship of place to colonialism, race, and gender is palpable in *We Fed Them Cactus.* While Cabeza de Baca is not unproblematic in any sense of the word, *We Fed Them Cactus* provides us with the material to rethink how we conceptualize space within U.S. empire, how the relationship to land and other bodies allows us to examine multiple sites, places, and spaces of colonization and modernization, and how we might be able

to trace a trajectory of gender and sexuality in the writings of a New Mexican Hispana. The language of *Cactus* that qualifies it to be a memoir in the first place contributes to the distinct spaces and places of (im) possibility within the text that structure memoir and autobiography and focus on different contexts, spaces and places that were completely foreclosed because of the violent history of loss. The language rests in the temporal or nostalgic glance back at a spatio-temporal shift that geographically, politically, socially, and culturally changed the lives of New Mexicans during the process of U.S. westward expansion. These foreclosed spaces, of kinship, gender construction, and women's relations, are what Cabeza de Baca constructs in her nostalgic descriptions of geographic locations but constructions that are simultaneously contained within her class positionality (elite and landholding) as she explores histories of loss and dispossession within U.S. Empire. Nostalgia, while very much tied to the temporal, utilizes space as a (re) mapping yet simultaneous erasure of certain violence that Cabeza de Baca cannot and will not recognize in the context of her own subject-position.

Keeping in mind that *Cactus* is a nostalgic text, we must rethink how we view this nostalgia. Geography becomes a strategy for thinking about relations to land and relations to others within and outside of the domestic space, as Cabeza de Baca's *We Fed Them Cactus* remembers the ambivalent histories of New Mexico, specifically El Llano, while foreclosing spaces of possibility. However, we should not be too quick to justify the erasure and subject-position of the "critical" memory Cabeza de Baca chooses in her memoir. Cabeza de Baca's memoir is structured in terms of remembrance. Remembrance that as Gayatri Gopinath states in her examination

surrounding nostalgia, desire, and diaspora, "evokes from the vantage point of exile an idyllic, coherent…past shattered by…dislocation" (467). Remembrance is Cabeza de Baca's way of traversing and a (re) imagining time. While Cabeza de Baca's nostalgia is predicated on U.S. Empire, dislocation and dispossession, it is also very much predicated on her subject-position as part of an elite, land-holding, female Hispana in the twentieth-century. We have to ask the questions: Whose space/place are we talking about in *Cactus*? From what privileged vantage point is Cabeza de Baca narrating time, space, and history? How does the dependency on discourses of modernized subject-citizen function within this text?

Published in 1954, *We Fed Them Cactus* tells the story of the shifting space and evolution of El Llano, New Mexico. Landscape and people are weaved tightly together in this narrative of a heterogeneous past. Cabeza de Baca writes her memoir as she witnesses the shifting of her very own social space as a result of a shifting nuclear landscape in New Mexico, ongoing racial stratification, and economic decline in 1945. Her writings reflect this tension between the past and the present. In the face of this nuclear wasteland, Cabeza de Baca retreats back into a New Mexico of the past. She narrates the social landscape of El Llano and states, "In the pre-Hispanic era, the Llano Indians walked – with Spaniards came horses and the life of the Indians changed. Then came *Ciboleros* using *carretas* pulled by oxen to go into the Llano for their meat supply, and later wagons with horses began to wind their way over the Llano's rough roads" (139-40). She packs this multi-genre autobiographical memoir with residual, dominant, and emergent modes of production for different groups and employees on El Llano. She also briefly acknowledges the many histories of colonization and loss. And

while she doesn't go into a historical account of the discrete erasure of "Indians" (as she terms them) in the text, she speaks to how social relations between groups literally configured the spaces on El Llano. In thinking about the construction of voice in *Cactus,* I turn to Padilla as he states,

> Yet traces of Mexican American lives do indeed reside in autobiographical narratives that transform life into history into textual permanence: memoirs so long out of print they are nearly forgotten; social and cultural histories in which the "I' encloses itself in a language of topographic identity, cultural practice, and political intrigue; diaries, family histories, personal poetry, and collections of self-disclosing correspondence (4).

This construction of autobiography, or in this case memoir, assumes a subject position above, against, and within social, cultural, and political spaces and relations in the U.S. In an antagonistic relationship to the community, the "I" in *Cactus* predates the historical displacement of Hispanos with the coming of Anglo settlers after 1848 and speaks from a position of privilege and erasure of indigeneity that goes back to Spanish colonial times.

Not only does *Cactus* erase the settler colonial historical period and its impact on indigenous peoples, but it also very discretely constructs the different relationships to land that the Hispanos and indigenous people had. In brief and fleeting moment, Cabeza de Baca exemplifies this as she states, "From the Indians we learned to observe the number of snow falls of the season" (12). She then goes on to state, "I never went to bed without praying for rain…Good [rain] years meant fat cattle and no losses, and that, we knew would bring more money" (11). The distinct relationship to land as an economic source is apparent in Cabeza de Baca's remembrance of place. She gives accolades to the "Indians" who helped them sustain their economic and spatial

advantage, but the sentiment and attachment to land are very different in their core construction. As Chicano scholar and critical geographer Raul Homero Villa states, "The consequences of deterritorialization for Mexicans in the newly annexed territories literally put them in their designated place within the emergent social space of Anglo American capitalism" (2). This quote is very telling and while this conception of land dispossession and displacement is correct, it privileges time over space, just as Cabeza de Baca privileges time over space in her memoir. As a progressive narrative that links space to temporal frameworks of reproduction, gender, family and inheritance, the very notion of land displacement and dispossession without a critical consideration of the multiple layers of settler colonialism is at work. As tied to a progressive linear timeline, we can see the distinct difference and shift in the way the "Indians" conceptualized their relationship to space and in Cabeza de Baca's relationship to the land. Feminist critical geographer and Chicana scholar Mary Pat Brady examines Chicana's longstanding engagement with social space. Brady examines how "the politicality of space reveals a battle over how to characterize [it] and how to produce places that almost magically become background or setting, and thereby hide space as formative, intimate participants in the pleasures and work of sociality and subject formation" (13). Furthermore, in examining the shifting boundaries, Cabeza de Baca's multi-genre autobiographical memoir is itself grappling with the shifting contradictions of space, as we see in the collision of voice and narrative strategy and tone in the book.

This collision of voice is apparent in her literary strategy and usage of *El Cuate*, the story-telling ranch cook, who mediates Cabeza de Baca's voice vis-à-vis the stories she remembers him telling her when she was young. She states, "We were always glad

when El Cuate spat out his tobacco. We knew he was in the mood for storytelling. What stories he could tell! There were stories of buffalo hunts, Indian attacks, about Comanche trade, of rodeos and fiestas" (15). From here on, we are receiving the narration through El Cuate, but from the perspective of Cabeza de Baca. This is very telling of her gender politics. The stability of traditional gender roles is upheld in her decision to have El Cuate narrate more than half of the memoir with his stories about how things "used to be" on El Llano, which also upholds the *rancho* that Cabeza de Baca is writing about. Later, when she takes the text back into her own voice (the first time her "autobiographical" voice reverts back), she talks about the traditions of the "home" and domestic life, she states, "The women on the Llano and Ceja played a great part in the history of the land. It was a difficult life for a woman, but she had made her choice when in the marriage ceremony she had promised to obey and to follow her husband" (59). The heteronormative family structure remains front and center in her analysis of El Llano and the domestic space, which is very much tied to maintaining a Hispano/Nuevo Mexicano national identity. The woman figure within this discourse acts as a "primary marker of an essential, inviolable communal identity of tradition" (Gopinath 468). Within her conversation on nostalgia, desire, and diaspora, Gopinath examines the important body of feminist criticism that has emerged in the past decade that examines the complexity of national discourses with gender hierarchies. The conversation surrounding an Hispano nationalist voice leads us to interrogate, as Anne McClintock states in her examination of nationalist discourse, how gender reveals the construction of the 'nation' in terms of familial and domestic metaphors, "where 'the woman' is enshrined as both the symbolic center and boundary marker of the nation as

'home' and 'family" (Gopinath 468). Furthermore, the discourse that surrounds the domestic space and the nation utilizes the vocabulary of motherland, something that one is 'naturally' tied to. This association of women with the private space reinforces the merging of nation/community as the woman occupies the role of selfless mother and caretaker in the household. Cabeza de Baca does not question this role but rather utilizes this very nationalist rhetoric in, not only, her discussion of the home space on El Llano, but also in her (re) membering of hierarchical social relations, where the employees in her grandfather's ranch were all "family." This privileged positionality allows us to understand, while not conflating, how the distinct economic systems in the Southwest and South are connected in terms of establishing alternative kinships. Her staunch stance on creating a New Mexico "Hispano" voice exemplifies the collision of colonialism, racism, empire, and sexism.

Chicana/o scholarship first criticized *We Fed Them Cactus* for being an elitist and imperialist text while simultaneously negating the many histories of settler colonialism and dispossession. Current Chicana/o scholarship is taking a different lens to the text. Utilizing a discourse of resistance in the context of U.S. Empire and dispossession, Chicano critic Genaro Padilla states that *We Fed Them Cactus* is complicit on the surface and resistant on the subtext. Padilla states that *Cactus* resists Anglo colonization through "the dense texture of language and reified memory" (44). Stating that we get small "whispers" of resistance throughout the novel, Padilla argues that, "In such whispers we discover those gaps in the narrative where the native cultural

"I"[25] voices itself against the imperial "Other" to speak through the bars of the ideological prison in which it is confined" (Padilla 44). From a feminist perspective, Tey Diana Rebolledo suggests that Cabeza de Baca's nostalgic and romantic view of New Mexico that some Chicano scholars claim to be an internalization of class, sexual, and racial attitudes because of her socialization process should be reevaluated and pushed even further than Padilla's critical limits. Rebolledo maintains there are "narrative strategies of resistance" that are visible in the text through Cabeza de Baca's recognition of her colonized identity, her sense of a communal sentimental past, and her blurring of various literary and other genre forms (136). While these perspectives are valuable and have merit, the running narrative of resistance in early Hispano, Mexican American, and contemporary Chicana/o literary discourse must be troubled by the multiple forms of power that are not all equivalent. In attempting to attend to the multiple histories of dispossession and power structures in *Cactus* while simultaneously thinking about spaces and places of (im) possibility, it becomes productive to think about the critical geography of *Cactus*.

Fabiola Cabeza de Baca was born near Las Vegas, New Mexico on May 16, 1894 into a distinguished, land-owning, ranching family. After her mother passed away at the age of four, her paternal grandmother raised her on her grandfather's hacienda across the Gallinas River from the village of La Liendre, eighteen miles southeast of Las Vegas. As someone who was intellectually curious and had a family with the means to support her interests, Cabeza de Baca received her teaching certificate in 1913 and later received her bachelor's degree from New Mexico Normal in 1921. In 1927

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[25] The native "I" is not indigenous, but rather *criollo.*

she joined the Agriculture Extension Service, where she served as an extension agent. A copious writer, Cabeza de Baca published articles for local newspapers, published two cookbooks, *Historic Cookery* in 1939 and *The Good Life: New Mexican Food* in 1949, and *We Fed Them Cactus* in 1954. As an agent of the state's project of modernization, Cabeza de Baca also occupied a space rooted in the preservation of traditional Hispano culture while simultaneously undertaking, as Maureen Reed states, "work that required her to inform clients about the benefits of making modern changes in the way they managed their homes" (Reed 122). Rebolledo states, Fabiola Cabeza de Baca came from an "old, landed, upper-class New Mexican family. [She] extols the Spanish (and not the mestiza or Indian) heritage, and sees the past as a utopia in the pastoral tradition where humans were integrated with nature and tied to the land" (201). As with any conflicted colonial subject, Cabeza de Baca's desire to position herself within a Spanish colonial past speaks to multiple histories of loss, violence, and domination. It is a method to map her way through her elite land-holding class status, a racist class structure, and the ever-changing land relations in the geographic Southwest.

Far from being the "utopic" homeland Cabeza de Baca remembers, the actual geography of *Cactus* reminds us that El Llano, New Mexico, was a heterogeneous place. There are sites of tension within the book where Cabeza de Baca attempts to romanticize the past, but the ideals buckle under the concrete geographical sites she writes about. *Cactus* delineates distinct geographical places that are permeated with meaning as a result of social interactions and cannot deny the significant relations occurring as Cabeza de Baca maps the past onto the present. Critical feminist geographer Doreen Massey writes that space becomes a place when it becomes infused

with history and meaning. Place incarnates the experiences and aspirations of a people. And while there is a distinction between space and place, Massey informs us, "Space is a product of interrelations, as constituted through social interactions…and the sphere of possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality" (9). This interrelated sphere of possibility is always under construction. With this concept of space and place as always interrelated, multiple, and constantly changing in mind, Cabeza de Baca moves us from the utopic "wide open spaces" of El Llano, where her connection to land is immense and almost religious, to places of interrelatedness as well as to spaces of complete foreclosure that impede any type of utopia from taking place. She writes, "Then, of course, herding was one of the few kind of employment available in New Mexico. If a man became indebted to a *rico*, he was in bond slavery to repay. Those in debt had a deep feeling of honesty, and they did not bother to question whether the system was right or wrong" (6). And neither of course does she question this system of bandage. Later she tells us that her paternal grandfather was one of the *patrónes* who held the indebted people accountable on El Llano.

Constructing memory for Cabeza de Baca depends on certain ruptures of time in her narrative. These ruptures express a spatial relationship to the land that changes with modernization; relationships of dependency on the land, resources, communal uses, personal attachments, contradictory uses of land, and history making are just a few of the uses of space we see in *Cactus*. El Llano becomes a type of Foucauldian heterotopia, where "mixed [and] joint experience[s]" are juxtaposed with each other in one single space/place (25). From the dependency on the wet and ripe landscape, in which she states, "I began to understand that without rain our subsistence would be

endangered," to the communal use of land for food when "…caravans met on the way…" to hunt for buffalo, she writes, "…It became a small world, this big land of New Mexico" (11, 41). Detaching space from time, the geography of *Cactus* fetishizes these past sites that are infused with meaning. Critical feminist geographer Goeman theorizes, "Conceiving of space as a node, rather than a linear time construct marked by supposed shifting ownerships, is a powerful mechanism in resisting imperial geographies that order time and space in hierarchies that erase and bury…connections to place and anesthetizes settler-colonial histories" (24). While some might say that Cabeza de Baca ideally and nostalgically (re) imagines these places and sites, I would suggest that she instead reminds us of what is not possible as space and place have become irreversibly transformed. Cabeza de Baca, in moments far and few between, prioritizes space over time but utilizes a language of inheritance and sexual norms throughout *Cactus*. The moments of geographic nostalgia and ruptures of time acknowledges the spaces of kinship impossibility while simultaneously reimagining those very spaces. We can thus identify nostalgia in the context of *Cactus* as reimagining and reconstituting her particular fraught relation to multiple sites of power and rethinking the very notions of "home" and nostalgia. Negotiating multiple geographic sites that have been permanently ruptured by U.S. Empire, Cabeza de Baca narrates the transformation of space and place, or as Brady states, "the turn from the lived, embodied space to the abstract space of capitalism" (5). El Llano shifts from an imagined "abundant" space where "different communities…banded together for protection against the building of fences on their grazing land and to help each other with crops and farming" to a place of Homesteaders that saw New Mexico as the "land

of promise" (89, 147). When we prioritize the space of the feudal mode of production over time, we begin to rethink the limits of spatial inheritance tied to a capitalist political economy committed to "progress."

While Cabeza de Baca provides us with moments where she positions land, space, and place as a priority over time, shifts to discourses of land ownership and inheritance are much more abundant and confirm her status as a descendent of the landowning class. She states, "My grandfather inherited Baca Location Number One, known as El Valle Grande, near Los Alamos of atomic renown" (81). She also inherited certain gender norms, including the inheritance of a paternal language of sexual norms that limits the possibility of space and place for women. Her positioning within the context of an elite subjectivity while simultaneously working within a conflicted context of colonialism and modernity is evident throughout the memoir. There are three main frames that contextualize this memoir: the colonial time, the changing time during the rise of the U.S. Empire, and her present, modern time. We can also refer to them in relation to residual, dominant, and emergent modes of production. Cabeza de Baca's present modern time is examined from the perspective of the shifting times during the consolidation of the U.S. Empire. But she also offers a perspective of the past during the emerging U.S. Empire, through the memoires of El Cuate who recalls the pre-1848 colonial times. The ideology of private property, tied to U.S. ideologies and white supremacy, serves to introduce the new emerging modernity of the Southwest. These multiple time frames allow us to see colonialism and modernity running parallel to each other. Through gendered and temporal discourses, Cabeza de Baca seeks to make known her entitled position, and for this reason, given

New Mexico dispossession, reinforces bloodlines. At the same time, and as if in contradiction, she attempts to establish a romanticized, ruptured time of communal land not tied to inheritance on El Llano by stating, "There have been many class distinctions in the larger towns, but the families on the Llano had none; the *empleados* and their families were as much part of the family as the *patron* and his own children. It was a very democratic way of life." The power politics involved in this nostalgic representation ignores the very real power structures under the guise of alternative kinships within the domestic space (60**).** As stated before, while the *patrón/peones* system was structured around dependent interpersonal relationships, the land clearly belonged to the *patrón* and there was a definite, if non-transparent, hierarchy with divisions of labor based on racial constructions that go back to Spanish colonial times. In Cabeza de Baca's memoir, identity is a flattening notion that does not take into account the discourses of private and public space nor the division of gender and sexuality tied to social location. Identity becomes problematic because "the home" space, where her family and the *empleados* live, have different meanings.

While Cabeza de Baca's notion of a Hispano identity is tied to a particular elite space of home, where the *patron's* wife upholds the space of the hacienda, the identity of the *empleados* is tied to the space of the workers' quarters, the space of and production and reproduction. Thus, identity is a problematic site to interrogate literary discourse and genre because difference, production, and positionality do not get fully interrogated. As critical sites of political, ideological, and discursive struggle through which hegemonic tendencies are questioned, the spatiality of individual autobiography and memoir aims to work out the very constructions of social space that inform

processes of racialization, gendering, and class positionality. Even though the *casta* system was abolished long before the U.S. took control of the lands that were Northern Mexico, the racial sentiments of those who owned the land and place were still dominant.

In this memoir, Cabeza de Baca utilizes a discourse of heteropatriarchy and paternalism that is very much invested in biological affiliations and inheritance, a positioning that forecloses a space of alternative kinships that dismantles uneven power relations. While she forecloses this space, she simultaneously constructs a domestic space where the family structure remains centered. It is out of the family home and the traditional family structure that the stories emerge and are paternalistically told within the familiar/familial place. The concept of the nation also remains centered, which is nostalgically tied to the home, communal identities, and inheritance. The woman maintains the family and "…held a very important place in the villages and ranches on the Llano," as discussed previously (60). Keeping places intact and maintaining a specific order of the nation, gender plays an important role in precluding spaces of communal possibility and alternative kinships. This type of discourse from Cabeza de Baca's memoir also concretely fixes normative gender roles imagined as pure forms of an archaic past, a sexual purity, as Gopinath quotes M. Jacqui Alexander, that is "imagined within a geography and a home that only heterosexuals inhabit" (469). "Deviant" bodies that fall out of this construction of a Hispano identity are obviously not included in the literary form of this memoir, but more importantly, the queering of Cabeza de Baca's voice as she takes on the persona of El Cuate, engenders a form of "resistance" that falls into the nationalist logic: a woman speaking on behalf of the men

of El Llano disguised as a male ranch hand. In her fraught and complacent positionality within race, class, *and* gender, Cabeza de Baca chooses to nostalgically (re) member the places of the past that are informed with discourses of racism, colonialism, and sexism in complex and contradictory ways. Ruptured in a myriad of different ways, nostalgia enables Cabeza de Baca to (attempt) to confront these confluences of violent structures in an idealized past while she is occupying violent spaces in the modern present/future.

Fabiola Cabeza de Baca wrote *We Fed Them Cactus* as a twentieth-century New Mexican woman in the Southwest on the brink of modernization. While it seems like a purist longing for a past New Mexico, we can see through the geography of the sites, landscape, places, and spaces that she writes about that it is as much a commentary on the past as a reflection on her present situation; as it is a guide that explicates the spaces and places of (im) possibility within a history of loss, dispossession, empire, and modernity in the U.S. This complex narrative/autobiography of contradictory histories and spaces influences a genre of writing that offers a spatial memory that layers multiple narrative forms such as autobiography, memoir, critique, and narrative as well as the multiple constructions of history and settler colonialism. While much work needs to be done on the construction of New Mexico as a site of contested and contradictory spaces and history (with more focus on central and Southern New Mexico as different sites of economic, racial, and gender construction), Cabeza de Baca's memoir allows us to examine how social space and place influences the literary genre of memoir and why space and place become key theoretical and methodological concepts for the untimely interrogation of how the multiple processes of differentiation (i.e. race, gender, and class) carry on into the present-day social fabric of New Mexico. Ultimately, the (im)

possibility of space that Cabeza de Baca narrates allows us to (re) map processes that have defined our current understandings of the spatiality of the Southwest.

Part Six: Conclusion

This chapter has engaged with three different genres of literary work to interrogate how the institution of debt peonage on the land was a (re) productive site where racialized gender and sexuality were negotiated in relation to emerging U.S. capitalist structures. Simultaneously, this chapter engages with elite land-holding Hispana and Tejana writers that negotiate their racial, gender, and sexual positions within U.S. empire through the construction of social relations that enable U.S. capitalist relations to unfold. The WPA short stories, "Mateo y Raquel" and "The Panic of 1862," are key sites in examining the dual function of the mestiza woman within debt peonage. She produces children to take the place of her husband and his debt while reproducing the indentured servitude system in the process. The *patrónes* and the peons are both encapsulated in this chapter. *We Fed Them Cactus* by Fabiola Cabeza de Baca and *Caballero: A Historical Novel* by Jovita Gonzáles and Eve Raleigh narrate the story of the landed classes that participate in the construction of the 'nation' in terms of familial and domestic metaphors, "where 'the woman' is enshrined as both the symbolic center and boundary marker of the nation as 'home' and 'family" (Gopinath 468). The discourses that surround the domestic space and the nation utilize the vocabulary of motherland, something that one is 'naturally' tied to. This traditional association of women with the private space reinforces the naturalization of nation/community as the woman occupies the role of the selfless mother and caretaker in the household and, of the reproducer of citizens. But, while both these authors utilize this very nationalist

discourse to construct the notion of a classless society where the employees are said to all be part of the "family," there is a contradictory subtext that allows for an alternative reading of how racialized gender and sexuality form along the contradictory lines of the nation.

The tension in these four narratives reveal and then attempt to hide the inherent contradictions in Mexican female subjectivity and the economic systems that revolve around the historical conditions of racialized gender and sexuality. The sexual economies of colonialism set the foundation for capitalist economies of U.S. imperialism. The elite land-holding Hispanas and Tejanas juxtaposed with the mestiza peons exemplifies a rich history of social, economic, and political entanglements that were constructed by Spanish colonialism and sustained by U.S. Imperialism. This chapter has argued that the dual function of racialized gender and sexuality informed by the sexual economy of the present-day Southwest is always in contention and relation to the elite land-holding Mexican American women who later become dispossessed by U.S. empire. The collision of the romanticized and factual past of New Mexico and Texas comment not only on the changing space, dispossession, and displacement of Hispanos in New Mexico and Tejanos in Texas, but also comment on gender and sexual norms through the racialized labor systems of the past.

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CHAPTER THREE

"Reproducing the Unproductive: Sexual Excess, Racialized Sexuality, and the "Uncivil Other" in Chicana Narrative"

In 2014, Ana Castillo published her latest novel, *Give It To Me*. As a Chicana writer of prominent publishing history who has been known for her politicized novels, her novel completely about sex sent reviewers roaring. Many book reviewers were calling Palma, the main protagonist of the novel, sexually liberated, while others claimed she was just making bad decisions for herself. To end this dissertation with Palma is to not only jump to our contemporary historical moment to think about racialized gender and sexuality, but also to interrogate how sexual economies have drastically changed throughout history and read gender and sex for Chicanas as something that is always tied to social and material processes. In an attempt to trace racialized gender and sexuality as Chicana feminist and Marxist scholar Rosaura Sánchez states in "Reconstructing Chicana Gender Identity," as a "cultural and…discursive…site of political and cultural struggle," in Chicana literature, this chapter also attempts to not focus solely on individual or discursive particularism of gender and sexuality, but also attempts to interrogate social relations in order to uncover how they are embedded in our racial capitalist system today. This chapter interrogates racialized sexuality and the sexualization of the "uncivil" other within the context of Chicana narrative. Ana Castillo's novel *Give It To Me* is a new literary style for not only Ana Castillo, but also Chicana writers in general. This chapter argues that her latest novel fits in between two trends within Chicana/Latina literature. One trend constructs literary characters as integrated into the American cultural mainstream and as

gendered and sexually "positive representations." The second trend focuses on Chicana/Latina narratives critically engaging with gender and sexuality to construct intersectional difference, not only through spatial and historical specificity, but discursively as well. In the specific textual example from Ana Castillo's *Give It To Me*, I find a third trend that constructs Chicana sexuality as excessive and unproductive, producing the "uncivil" other as critical commentary. I offer the term "uncivil" other as a concept that I apply to contemporary Chicana narratives marked by sexual excess in contrast to discourses of positive representation and by characters that get marked as "unproductive" and become devalued through racialized sexuality. I am aware that the term "uncivil" is loaded with meaning within academia today. However, I am utilizing this term in the context of nineteenth-century American Exceptionalism discourse, where the mongrel Mexican is used up and against expansion. I am arguing that the term is still valid today as it describes Chicanas/Latinas marked by sexual excess.

Within our current moment of globalization and US multiculturalism, we are witnessing the fetishized media representations of racialized Latina and Chicana bodies that are reduced to currencies of desire and disgust, economy, and death. Castillo's novel speaks to this contemporary moment of intersectional analysis and structural violence. The novel interrogates this late-capitalist moment of globalization and multiculturalism as it relates to racialized gender and sexuality. In *A Brief History of Neoliberalism,* David Harvey states that neoliberalism is the "first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade"

(2). Neoliberalism has come to equate "individual freedom" within a civilized society. Harvey states, "We can, therefore, interpret neoliberalization either as a utopian project to realize a theoretical design for the reorganization of international capitalism or as a political project to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites" (17). This last chapter grapples with how gender and sexuality for lower-class and upper class Mexican Americans and Chicanas, over historical time, has shifted from being productive to unproductive in some instances for the sexually excessive Chicana within racial capitalism[26]. I interrogate neoliberalism in this chapter to grapple with the vapid and non-legitimate sexual economy of the racialized Chicana. As Juana María Rodriguez states in *Sexual Futures, Queer Gestures, and Other Latina Longings,* "As Latin@a and as queer, we are often represented, if not identified, by our seemingly over-the-top gestures, our bodies betraying – or gleefully luxuriating in – our intentions to exceed the norms of proper corporeal containment" (2). She goes on to say that Latin@s "racialized excess" is read as "queer" or outside of what is "useful or productive" (2). The sexually excessive and unproductive is what I grapple with in this chapter. The surplus sexuality in a late-capitalist "free market" that marks what is legitimately productive and unproductive rests at the core of this chapter.

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[26] Scholars like Melamed, Hong, and Kandaswamy have argued that under neoliberalism, the desires of capital become fraught as racialized bodies become marked as both a source of labor-power as well as surplus populations as unproductive. The latter is where the main protagonist and representation of the sexually excessive as "unproductive" falls and is the focus of this chapter and analysis However, the sexual excess of other racialized Chicanas/Latinas, such as domestic workers and garment workers, while productive to the U.S. nation-state, relegate a different relationship to racial capitalism.

First, the chapter historicizes how Chicana feminists have theorized gender and sexuality to make visible violent structures of power. This chapter interrogates and grapples with the shortcomings of decolonial feminism, which has proven useful for my former chapters, and looks at queer of color critique and the theorization of sexual economies in the neoliberal moment to account for a novel like Castillo's. While I utilize decolonial concepts to interject in a conventional periodization by examining how Chicanas are structured by colonialism/settler colonialism and situated within contemporary structures of U.S. imperialism, migration, and the racialized gendered positions it produces, this chapter has required me to confront how the racialized postmodern subjectivity and neoliberalism (multicultural liberalism) engages with and allows openings to interrogate histories of Chicana sexuality. I argue that these processes of differentiation are constituted through historical power structures that manifest in contemporary work. The twentieth-century writers I interrogate in Chapter Two not only emphasized Mexican American cultural whiteness, but they (re) member the past using a literary technique that position their social and economic position within U.S. imperialism and empire in different, albeit precarious ways. At risk of being completely ousted from their elite social status, Cabeza de Baca and González attempt to rewrite history to quell the subjugation of their own twentieth-century time period. Gonzalez's attempt to write between two conflicting male discourses, Texan-Mexican nationalism and paternalistic Texas-Anglos, allows her to, as Erin Murrah-Mandril states in "Jovita González and Margaret Eimer's *Caballero* as Memory Site," "enter [into] a new economy of intellectual identity in the 1920s and 30s" (148). As an educated and elite Tejana, Gonzalez attempts to navigate gender and sexual norms

within her intellectual community. Similarly, Cabeza de Baca, an agent of modernization in New Mexico, looks back in order to reorganize a past foreclosed by white settlers and the nuclear landscape of the 1940's.

In their writings, these two Mexican American females outline the racialized productive gender and sexuality of peons in the nineteenth century and embody a contradictory position within U.S. empire. However, their realistic present shapes their narrative past, but does not absolve them of the hierarchal racial capital that fills their writings. As we move to our contemporary moment and historicize what has happened since the 1950's for Chicanas, the move from productive racialized gender and sexuality to this particular discursive representation of unproductive Chicana racialized sexuality in Castillo's newest novel marks a historical shift in capital. *Give It To Me*, I argue, focuses on racialized Chicana sexuality by unveiling the "uncivil" Chicana sexually excessive body in the contemporary moment.

Part One: Historicizing Chicana Gender and Sexuality

After the 1950's, the regional identities of Californios, Tejanos, and Hispanos shifted into a full-fledged political movement that was sown in the Chicana/o Movement and the political struggles of "women" in the 1960s and 70s[27]. However, these movements lacked the necessary critical intersectional approach that interrogated the historical connection between race, class, gender and sexuality and how these markers were not merely identity categories but processes of devaluation that shifted social, material, and political matters. As gender and sexuality became markers of

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[27] For white women, this took place in the women's liberation movements but for women of color who could not find a place in the over arching category of woman, the third-world liberation movements brought an intersectional approach.

identity, it became harder to map out the connections that the process of class and racialization had on the very function of racialized gender and sexuality. In an effort to combat "gender oppression," the women's liberation movement was, as Antonia Castañeda states in "Women of Color and the Rewriting of Western History," "rooted in a middle class political liberalism that subscribed to including the excluded as long as they fit within the existing norms" (104-5). This liberation movement was deeply rooted in the suffrage movement for women's voting rights in the mid-nineteenth century, a movement as Castañeda notes, "that never reconciled its origins in abolitionism with an abiding belief in white racial superiority" (105). The Women's Liberation Movement utilized an over-arching banner of "woman," while minority nationalisms attempted to align themselves with third-world struggles and those like the Chicana/o Movement, "interpreted the exploitation and oppression of third-world peoples in the United States as an extension of the historical, global colonial, and neocolonial relations that tied Europe and subsequently that United States to third-world countries" (Castañeda 105). Utilizing the discourse of *internal colonialism*, cultural nationalism prevailed in these movements and usually supported a class and race based analysis of structures of power, but failed to recognize the intersections of gender and sexuality. Jodi Melamed states in "Reading Tehran in *Lolita:* Making Racialized and Gendered Difference Work for Neoliberal Multiculturalism," "Minority nationalisms rejected racism and its differential schemata without challenging patriarchy [and] nationalism…as normative systems" (78).

Despite the fact that scholars have written about the absence of women in the Chicana/o Movement, there were many Chicanas addressing the divide within the

Chicana/o movement and the discontent of Chicanas with conversations regarding gender and sexuality. Anna Nieto Gomez was one of the main voices during this time period that spoke to these silences. In "La Chicana – Legacy of Suffering and Self-Denial" in *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writings,* she begins the essay by addressing the "roots of the psyche of la Chicana [that] lies deep within the colonial period in Mexico" (48). Like decolonial feminists, Chicana feminists were calling the recognition of how legacies of colonial violence perpetuate and shift throughout history and modern times. María Lugones states that, "Colonialism imposed a new gender system that created very different arrangements for colonized males and females than it did for white bourgeois colonizers" (186). The normative constructions of feminine and masculine that are tied to constructions of "female" and male" are in need of a poststructuralist reading of racialized gender and sexuality, which interrogate the meaning, historical positionality, and performativity embedded within these notions of differentiation. Chicana feminists were calling for a decolonization of gender and sexual performativity and took seriously not only how economic systems in place shaped gender and sexuality, but also how "the conquest, the encomienda system and the colonial Catholic Church were to a play a major role in formatting the sexual-social roles of the Mexican women" (48). The multiple tools of colonization like rape, marriage, the church and the peon relationship to the *patrón* all aided in creating structures of violent oppression through the biopolitical and necropolitical. Mirtha Vidal in "New Voice of La Raza: Chicanas Speak Out," states, "The inferior role of women in society does not date back to the beginning of time. In fact, before the European came to this part of the world women enjoyed a high position of quality with men. The

submission of women, along with institutions such as the church and the patriarchy, was imported by European colonizers" (31-33).

While I don't wholly agree with this framework of a romanticized past before colonization, I am more interested in what racial, gendered, and sexual hierarchies that formed part of colonial ideologies were brought to the Americas. Bernice Rincón in "La Chicana: Her Role in the Past and Her Search for a New Role in the Future," comments on the problematic discourse that the term "woman," as used within the Women's Liberation Movement and the Chicana/o Movement, has on Chicanas. She states, "Women are considered inferior beings…Their inferiority is constitutional and resides in their sex, their submissiveness, which is a wound that never heals" (15-18). These were the beginning thoughts of the implications of being racially gendered and sexualized as a Chicana in the 1960s and 70s. Ellie Hernández writes in *Postnationalism in Chicana/o Literature and Culture* on Chicana feminism, " [As] the first critique against a nationalist-based discourse began in the Chicana feminist movement…[it] led to a discourse on gender and sexuality and came under the additional pressures exerted by an advancing global expansion transforming gender and sexuality structures" (55). Obviously not fleshed out to their full potential, these Chicanas set the foundation for conversations of race, gender, sexuality, and class to come. The fact that early Chicana feminists aligned themselves with decolonial feminist thinkers in interrogating the colonial and settler colonial subjugation along racial lines raises the issue of dimorphism in the colonized experience; the sexual divisions of humans gives rise to the subordination of certain groups defined as masculine and feminine. Central to this theory is the virgin/whore dichotomy emerging

during missionization in the Southwest, defined by Catholics in terms of chaste and unchaste women.

Chicana feminist Norma Alarcón states in ""Chicana Feminism: In the Tracks of "The" Native Woman," that when it comes to the Chicana body, "the story of Chicanas/os has not turned out to be a 'definitive' culture as some dreamed. Rather the term itself, in body and mind, has becomes a critical site of political, ideological, and discursive struggle through which the notion of 'definitiveness' and hegemonic tendencies are placed in question" (184). Chicana feminism evolved and looked towards historical materialism, Marxist theories of labor and capital, and began to craft its own intersectional approaches to gender and sexuality. Chicana feminist and novelist Emma Perez (re) writes Chicanas into historical representation. In her novel *Gulf Dream* she examines how dislocated history of Chicanas can be traced to contemporary discourses of sexuality. In signifying historical memory as desire, her claim reveals how Chicana sexuality is formed and suppressed in historical discourse. However, Chicana feminist Rosaura Sánchez states that only focusing on the historical continuation of violent legacies of colonialism is not a productive way to begin analysis. The decolonial feminist model is limited in that it considers the colonized-colonizer relationship or colonized-colonized relationship and does not consider how the positionality of many Mexicans were that of colonizers nor does it consider the migration of Mexicans to this country after 1900. She states, "Life under a racist class structure is not, however, equivalent to colonialism. Nor is the situation of Chicanos/as within the United States a case of an internal colony, for it is more complicated than that" (1043). As I continue with this chapter, I am utilizing both points from Chicana

feminists to think about sexual economies in our contemporary moment. In examining the ongoing structures of settler colonialism, while attending to the various ways in which the processes and institutions of settler colonialism shift across time and space, I am looking at how Chicanas are structured by colonialism and situated within contemporary structures of U.S. settler colonialism, imperialism, global capitalism, and migrations and the racialized gendered and sexual positions it produced.

As I have pointed out in the introduction, I am utilizing Chicana feminist definitions of gender and sexuality, where these markers are not only cultural constructions, but also should be "interpreted as a relational dimension of colonialism and as one aspect of the imperial power matrix within which gender, sexuality, race, class, and culture operate" (Castañeda 230). Chicana sexuality, therefore, is linked to (sexual) violence and maintenance of gender and sexual social roles. The history behind the different formations of differential technologies helps us understand Chicana sexuality as not limited to identity markers. Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherrie Moraga went on to explore Chicana sexuality in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical women of Color (1981)* and *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza (1987)* in the context of interlocking and co-constitutive systems of oppression.

In *The Sexuality of Latinas* edited by Norma Alarcón, Ana Castillo, and Cherríe Moraga, they state that the self examination of "five-hundred-year-old status as silenced labor and sexual beings…[and] sexuality has been hidden, subverted, distorted…[and] understanding sexual desire often comes through the reality of sexual violence" (Intro). In "Sexuality and Discourse: Notes From a Chicana Survivor" in *Chicana Lesbians: The Girls Our Mothers Warned Us About*, Emma Pérez takes sexuality as the marker of

many of the problems Chicanas face. The racism and sexism Chicanas face is not the only problem, however it is the racism that Chicanos face that adds layers of struggle to an already hostile situation. She utilizes a "conquest triangle" that builds off the Oedipus complex but adds that in addition to the white father, who is the colonizer, and the *india* mother, who is imbricated in the violence of miscegenation, there is a castrated mestizo Chicano son, who "will never match the supreme power of the white man" (168). This complex maintains histories of colonialism and its legacies and brings about a measure of racial privilege that negatively impacts Chicanas already racialized sexual and gender practices.

I identify racialized sexuality from Abdul R. JanMohamed's essay "Sexuality on/of the Racial Border: Foucault, Wright, and the Articulation of 'Racialized Sexuality." JanMohamed reads the archive for laws and miscegenation and describes racialized sexuality as the "point where the deployment of sexuality intersects with the deployment of race" (94). In "the confines of United States slave and Jim Crow societies, racialized sexuality exists at the point where the virtual powerlessness of certain subjects intersects with the massive prohibitive power of various states and civil apparatuses, power that, it must be emphasized, is always underwritten by the actual or potential use of massive coercive violence" (97). The miscegenation that he traces comes to bear on the conception of racialized sexuality and the laws that evolve from it. For JanMohamed, he sees racialized sexuality as more than Foucault's "incitement to discourse" and the discursive power that comes with it, but more as something that falls outside of the discursive power of normative "sexuality" because it is maintained and regulated by law and prohibition. What one can say versus what one never says is the

distinguishing factor between white sexuality and racialized sexuality. I intend to build off this definition, not in thinking about how the law affects sexuality or how hierarchies function through sexuality, but how social and material relations of power structure the productive and unproductive nature of the sexuality.

Part Two: Queer of Color Critique, Neoliberal Multiculturalism and Sexual Economies

Interrogating racialized gender and sexuality in this global capital and neoliberal moment requires a close examination of how gender and sexual difference variegate racial formations as not interlocking identity categories, but as a process of racialization that is produced in relation to gender and sexuality. These processes of differentiation are co-constitutive and not separate identity categories but technologies that work to subjugate. Queer of color critique takes this up and particularly Roderick Ferguson's *Aberrations in Black: Towards a Queer of Color Critique.* Ferguson states,

> Queer of color analysis, as I define it in this text, interrogates social formations as the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and class, with particular interest in how those formations correspond with and diverge from nationalist ideals and practices. Queer of color analysis is a heterogeneous enterprise made up of women of color feminism, materialist analysis, poststructuralist theory, and queer critique." (2; 149)

A queer of color analysis adds to the layers of this contemporary chapter because it intervenes in the racist practices by articulating itself as gender and sexual regulation. As I interrogate and examine the representation of the racialized sexuality as unproductive for Chicanas in literary texts, I needed to reengage with how the materiality of race, gender and sexuality has been concealed in late-capitalism. Ferguson disidentifies with historical materialism, as he sees Marxist theory blaming

social disorder not only on capital, but also on nonheteronormative populations. However, I do not intend to “disidentify” with historical materialism, but rather engage with the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality in conjunction with capital. He states that liberal notions of the human "took normative heterosexuality as the emblem of order, nature, and universality, making that which deviated from heteropatriarchal ideals the sign of disorder" (6). He states, for Marx, capitalism is equated with artificial forms of desire, and man becomes feminized through his subordination to commodification. Capital then spreads social disorder, and sexual transgressions become the sign of capital's disruptive effects. Pointing to the way that both Marx and bourgeois discourses of the day figured the prostitute as a symbol of the damaging effects of commodification on the family, Ferguson claims that "the universalization of heteropatriarchy produces the prostitute as the other of heteropatriarchal ideals, an other that is simultaneously the effect of racial, gender, sexual, and class discourses" (9). However, what Ferguson fails to note and what this dissertation examines is how modern notions of normative heterosexuality (progress) and non normative gender and sexual practices (disorder) emerged historically and have not always been a constant or transhistorical and how racialization has helped to articulate heteropatriarchy as universal, as he points to this phenomenon happening in the 1920s and not historically. As my study begins in 1860, this study asks: How do we understand the productivity of mestiza and Chicana sexuality and what are the shifts in capital that constitutes that? The material and discursive management of racialized sexuality shift. I turn to queer of color critique to think about how pathologies are individualized without considering the already sexualized structure of global capitalism.

Now, as I turn to my close reading of Castillo's novel*,* I want to remind readers of how I am utilizing Chicana sexuality as a historical social process that marks bodies**.** The particular social process I engage with through the novel is one that explains racialized sexual excess produces the "uncivil" other, who is unproductive in global society within this neoliberal moment. I am utilizing David Harvey's definition of neoliberalism where he states that it is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. This neoliberal ideal gestures to what Jodi Melamed in "The Spirit of Neoliberalism notes: "Conditions upon which any racial/cultural deviations from the ideal national culture are grounds for legitimate exclusion" (7). Melamed goes further in examining the roots of racial liberalism and neoliberal multiculturalism, finding that racial liberalism is what makes transnational capitalism function, which in turn enables neoliberal multiculturalism, to promote US ascendency. She states, "The difference between racial liberalism and neoliberal multiculturalism is that the latter appears more consistently as domination, not hegemony" (19). Racial inequality intersects with global capitalism and race then becomes invisible under neoliberalism. Taking cues from Melamed and queer scholars Lisa Duggan and Jasbir Puar, I argue that in this neoliberal moment, the significance of sexuality is best exemplified by a depoliticized queer culture that is tied to the maintenance of reproductive, heteronormative values which are produced against sexually deviant, racialized populations. Thus,

heteronormativity is capable of including a non-racialized sexual difference at this moment.

Jasbir Puar states in *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* that sexualized racism, racialized nationalism, and gendered practices that have informed current political movements and national policy, which constitute homonationalism. She states,

> National recognition and inclusion, here signaled as the annexation of homosexual jargon, is contingent upon the segregation and disqualification of racial and sexual others from the national imaginary. At work in this dynamic is a form of sexual exceptionalism – the emergent of national homosexuality, what I term "homonationalism" – that corresponds with the coming out of the exceptionalism of American empire" (2)

This inclusion of queerness depends on the desirability of the white, queer, upper-middle class as a newly identified market niche. Palma Pierdas, the main character of the Castillo novel, functions against heteronormative ideals and her racialized sexuality marks her as excessive and non-situated. As will become evident in my close reading of the text, Palma's queerness is not located in her desire for both men and women, but in her racialized sexual excess and the sexual economy she participates in, that mark her outside of both white heteronormativity and homonormativity. Unlike the sexual economies of the communal land system in the nineteenth-century that are localizable and build racialized capital and civility, Palma's excessive sexuality and the sexual economy she engages in is not legible or localizable as productive, thereby marking her as "uncivil."

This reading is situated between the previous two Chicana and Latina trends. *Give it To Me* is a novel that vacillates between critically engaging with Chicana sexual

excess while simultaneously positioning the protagonist of more than twenty sexual escapades as partially disengaged with any social, historical, or political moments. The novel, then, becomes interesting for how we can read it as a postmodern piece of work that is fragmented and, one can argue, without depth, but allows for openings of critically engaging with how racialized gender and sexuality are a result of violent structures of power that are symptomatic of the postmodern condition.

Part Three: Gender and Sexuality in Chicana and Latina texts

As previously stated, I situate Castillo's novel *Give It To Me* in between two Chicana/Latina narrative trends: one that utilizes an integrated into the American cultural mainstream as "positive representations" and the other as critically engaging with racialized gender and sexuality within a historical context. I interrogate both Latina and Chicana texts in this section because I am extending my analysis to how the Feminist Press, the publishing company that published *Give It To Me,* markets the text. They switch between Latina and Chicana themselves in the marketing of the book. I critically engage with Latina literature, a term that is itself about mainstream consumability, and interrogate how Castillo disavows these mainstream conventions. Distinguishing Latino as anything Spanish/ Latin American background in the United States allows for this identity marker to act in relation to marketability and as Arlene Dávila maintains in *Latinos Inc.: The Marketing and Making of a People,* "Latinos are continually recast as authentic and marketable, but ultimately as a foreign rather than intrinsic component of U.S. society, culture, and history, suggesting that the growing visibility of Latino populations parallels an expansion of the technologies that render then exotic and invisible" (4).

I am not thinking about the texts within these two trends as one being more authentically political over the other. However, one does cater to assimilated Latina/Chicana sexuality while the other contests how Chicana sexuality is imagined. The first trend constructs Latina and Chicana characters as integrated into the American cultural mainstream as "positive representations." These texts grapple with how to position Latinas and Chicanas against proper white femininity. For this trend, I am engaging with two texts, *The Dirty Girls Social Club* by Latina (Cuban American and Hispana/Chicana) author Alisa Valdes Rodriguez and *Let Their Spirits Dance* by Chicana author Stella Pope Duarte. *The Dirty Girls Social Club* was published in 2003 where it exploded on the mainstream and spent 21 weeks on the New York Times bestsellers list. Dubbed one of the best "chica lit" novels written that represented real Latinas with careers and education, it touted upper-middle class hegemonic (reproduction of the social in securing the means of production) values. Sidestepping the materiality of being Latina, the novel constructs race and sexuality as the medium within which Latinas could participate in the global, capitalist economy, by turning these things "on" when needed to get ahead in American society. The six Latinas, who met at Boston College, all gather together twice a year and all of them have sexual secrets in order to maintain a good image within their upper-middle class positioning and we follow them through their lives in the novel. Lauren Fernandez, a syndicated columnist, Cuban-American, the narrator and main protagonist of the novel jokingly speaks about how she got her position as a columnist. She states, "Money talks, see. Hispanics are no longer seen as a foreign unwashed menace taking over the public schools with that dirty little language of theirs; we are a domestic market. To be

marketed to. Thus, me. My column. And my billboards" (9). Later, she states, "In reality, we *sucias* are all professionals. We're not meek maids. Or cha-cha hookers. We're not silent little women praying to the Virgin of Guadalupe with lace *mantillas* on our heads. We're not even like those down-trodden chicks in the novels of those old-school Chicana writers, you know the ones…" (11). Lauren re-imagines what it means to be Latina in the contemporary moment. This rearticulation separates the *sucias* from racialized, lower class labor and into a class of American high-achievers. Elizabeth, one of the other *sucias,* is a news reporter, the most naturally beautiful, and Colombian. She is outed by a tabloid because she is a lesbian. The girls rally around her and Elizabeth is able to easily slide in and out of proper femininity by being a tomboy one moment and a bombshell on television the next. Sexuality, and racialized sexuality in particular, is evacuated of its historical meaning and replaced with representations of successful Latinas within the global society.

Let Their Spirits Dance (2002), a novel by Stella Pope Duarte, highlights the Chicano family experience during the time of the Vietnam War. Most of the plot in Duarte's novel takes place in Phoenix, Arizona, in the barrio, El Cielito. This semi-autobiographical text follows the journey of the Ramírez family and all their multicultural friends connected to their son Sergeant Jesse Ramírez to the Washington, DC Vietnam Memorial. In an effort to fulfill a *manda* that Alicia Ramírez, mother to Jesse and guadalupana, has made to herself and her son Jesse, who was killed in Viet Nam during the U.S. invasion, the family embarks on a cross-country trip to 'The Wall.' Jesse was killed during the war and his body was sent to the wrong home address when he was sent back so Alicia Ramírez receives $92,401 from the U.S. government for the

mix-up of the body, which allows the family to take the trip cross-country in vehicles to 'touch' the Viet Nam wall. While most of the text takes place in Phoenix, AZ and other numerous sites throughout the United States, readers are taken periodically to Viet Nam through Jesse's letters. At the end of the novel, the family and all the friends they picked up along the way reach the Vietnam Memorial Wall and they feel like they are finally a part of the U.S. social fabric. The novel finds solace in the national collectivity and enjoys a multicultural solidarity that is conformist. However problematic this novel is in regards to the U.S. national conformist agenda in *Let Their Spirits Dance* racialized gender and sexuality are a degraded position in the novel; however it is not the Chicanas that are marked; it is the Vietnamese women. The portrayal of the Vietnamese female body in this novel is objectified in ways that reinforce the normative "proper" construction of the female body that fit neatly into the virgin/whore dichotomy while functioning only through reproductive futurity.

When Chris, Jesse's friend, tells Teresa, Jesse's mom, about Thom and Jesse in Viet Nam she states, that Thom must have been "delicate, fragile, almost a child…The stuck-up American kind didn't attract [Jesse], and I could see how a gentle woman like Thom could have won his heart" (264). Chris responds and states, "Thom, "wasn't one of the whores" (261). Establishing the either-or virgin/whore dichotomy precludes any other outcomes for the Vietnamese female and, once again, objectifies her within a static space that can only change with the help of an American soldier. But Chris says, "What could he say about her anyway? That he fell in love with a Vietnamese girl, not the kind of girl he could bring back home to Mom? Not that Thom was a whore, or any of that, just that it took guts to get married to one of their women and to bring her back

to the States" (263). In *Beyond Combat: Women and Gender in the Vietnam Era*, Heather Marie Stur states, "At times, South Vietnamese women were cast as "damsels in distress," representative of a nascent democracy…in need of protection from Communist despoilers. At other times, Americans viewed Vietnamese women with suspicion…sex objects whose purpose was to satiate the carnal desires of American troops" (3). As Chris reminds Teresa, Thom was not a "whore," she was a good girl. She accepted Jesse's marriage proposal after she got pregnant with his son and Jesse was going to save her from the imperial hands of the U.S. nation-state and her own sexist culture. Constructed within normative space and normative time, Thom was on her way to being a model minority. As Stur states, "The women were emblems of exotic sexuality, but also of Vietnamese modernity, objects of desire whose superficial familiarity masked their inextricable otherness" (18).

This desire of heteronormative space gives way for the limited construction of the virgin/whore dichotomy. As the novel closes, readers find out that Thom is Jesse's Vietnamese wife. But before Thom makes her presence known to the family, Teresa states, "Did Jesse fall in love with one of them? So different from our warm round bodies. Their faces tell you nothing, our faces tell you everything. Some of them became whores. War always plays havoc in women's lives…I know Jesse saw whores. They're a product of war, man's violence erupting from his sex splitting a woman in two, any woman, anywhere in the world" (78). Arlene Bergman in *Women of Vietnam* reminds us, "At the height of U.S. troop occupation, there were four hundred thousand prostitutes in South Viet Nam" (80). While this was a reality for some, the binary construction limits and precludes other possibilities. And we must not forget that

because the U.S. was in Viet Nam in the first place, "Unemployment, inflation, and corruption are terms which hardly begin to describe the Saigon-controlled economy where…Thieu's Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Revolutionary Development is a pimp" (Bergman 82). The conditions that caused this sex work are completely effaced in the novel and 'normative' judgment is passed on the women of Viet Nam. While we later find out that Thom was not a "whore," she still fits into the binary because she was a virginal "good-girl"; a girl in need of rescue by someone higher up on the minority hierarchy; a Chicano. The Vietnamese women, like in most creative portrayals, becomes an either-or figure, a construction which limits her in terms of character and plot development.

If we recognize that there are Latina and Chicana literature writers that tackle mainstream representation for the purpose of showing how "civil" and integrated they can be, there are also Chicana and Latina writers that examines how gender and sexuality are tied to other historical, political, and social moments. Sandra Cisneros' *Women Hollering Creek and Other Stories* published in 1991 and Cherríe Moraga's *Heroes and Saints* published in 1994 are two texts that utilize the literary tradition to critically engage with how racialized gender and sexuality function in the contemporary moment. Moraga is a critical voice in Chicana literature and her examination of social injustices through gender and sexuality has been at the forefront of all of her work. *Loving in the War Years, The Hunger Woman, and a Xicana Codex of Changing Consciousness* are just a select few of her writings that deal with Chicana subjectivity. In *Heroes and Saints,* a play based on real events that examine the effects of pesticides on workers and children, racialized gender and sexuality is interrogated within this

historical event. Cerezita, one of the lead characters in the play, is without body and only a head because of the effects of the pesticides. Cere represents the Chicana body politic through her head and more importantly, her tongue, which is all she has to mobilize. Cerezita's head is tied to the notions of language and political mobility. While she longs to help her community by being out in the open taking action, she is stuck inside, without body, while the Chicano men in her town remain stagnant. When she has sexual relations with Father Juan, whom she thinks lacks political agency, we can observe that her sexuality is tied to her longing to have a body to organize**.** I read Father Juan as representing the men within the Chicano movement and Cerezita is not only contesting a conventional sexuality that has been imposed upon her within her community, but is also contesting the gender conflict within the Chicano Movement as a whole. We see a clear internal conflict arising within the men of the Chicano Movement because of their disavowal of gender and sexuality and early Chicana writers are responding to not only this conflict, but the negative impact of outside structures of violence, specifically the agribusiness sector and the police state. Cerezita musters political language with her tongue. She states, "I'm sick of all this goddamn dying. If I had your arms and legs, if I had your dick for christsake, you know what I'd do? I'd burn this motherless town down and all the poisoned fields around it. I'd give healthy babies to each and every childless woman who wanted one and I'd even stick around to watch those babies grow up!...You're a waste of a body" (144). Speaking to Father Juan and his incapacity to mobilize and organize, Cerezita is not only using her tongue to muster political language, she symbolically emasculates the Chicano body politic. This political mobilization via the sexually awakened Chicana voice is the beginning of

an emergent Chicana Movement. Men play a very minimal role in the lives of these strong women. While this is evident, there is also a Chicana consciousness that we see emerging that is creating a collective community of marginal subjects. This emerging Chicana mobilization/consciousness is a political activism that is not focused solely on Chicano nationalism.

Like Moraga, Sandra Cisneros too establishes a fluid poetic voice in her works that allow her to break with convention and challenge the traditional literary model of the short story or novel to comment on intersectional issues of race, gender, and sexuality. Cisneros plays with the ideas of the "antipoetic" voice in her writings that gives her the flexibility to create a colloquial tone in her writings. This borderland space of hybrid cultures and unusual poetics, offers a double vision of signifying systems. Central to this task is the very use of language that examines gender and sexual roles, domesticity, and feminine presence through a space that is able to negotiate fixed gender ideals. In *Women Hollering Creek and Other Stories* plays with the phrase "en el otro lado" – 'on the other side' – which can mean either the U.S. or Mexico. In this story, Cisneros transgresses many different styles and genres (while breaking from genre convention and sliding back and forth between cultures) and exemplifies the postmodern condition, rejecting fixed values, and literary systems that have become obsolete; here the creation of new values and literary systems is critical. This constant negotiating of two cultures is a complex issue that Cisneros uses in her writings to address a double-voice discourse that is non-negotiable in a sole fixed culture. This biculturalism could be categorized as resistance against dominant ideologies or this can be viewed as a break from the conventions to exemplify "real"

life because every Chicana must deal with the confusion of border identities. In an interview with Reed Way Dasenbrook and Feroza Jussawalla that I read some time ago Cisneros states, "I'm not just taken by the linear novel form…I'm much more interested in something new happening in literature"(304). Exemplifying this innovative style, Cisneros is able to construct her writings according to discourses that emerge in reality and push the boundaries of convention. This double-voiced discourse that Cisneros constructs in her work speak from both sides of the border and takes on what I would call a "postmodern voice," a voice that speaks critically to the many identities of the Chicana.

This dialectic discourse between identity, literary form, and genre is quite apparent in *Women Hollering Creek and Other Stories.* The short story "Barbie-Q" centers on the actual Barbie dolls that children play with, but it is also a story that centers on American standards of white beauty that are unattainable. We see distinctly how capitalism, gender roles, and cultural capital are functioning. The lower class begins to aspire for middle class objects and status and the dominant culture begins to trickle down to the lower class through consumerism. When talking about the burnt Barbies from the flea market the narrator states, "So what if our Barbies smell like smoke when you hold them up to your nose even after you wash and wash and wash them. And if the prettiest doll, Barbie's MOD'ern cousin Francie with real eyelashes, eyelash brush included, has a left foot that's melted a little – so?" (16). There is an apparent hybrid form of dominant and marginalized cultures that transform and transport material objects. If we return to language and look at the title of this piece, "Barbie-Q" (burnt Barbie) we can see the process of maturation of our narrator. This

narrator moves from simile to word play. The play on words by our narrator is quite literally a play with dominant culture and gender norms.

In "My Tocaya" we see that our child narrator of earlier sections becomes a politicized woman of various degrees. "My Tocaya" is not only about a namesake, but it is also about an alternative you, *tu eres mi otro yo.* The narrator recalls her namesake who goes missing and is of a lower class, "A girl who wore rhinestone earrings and glitter high heels to school was destined for trouble – not God or correctional institutions – could mend…disappeared from a life sentence at that taco house. Got tired of coming home stinking of crispy tacos. Well, no wonder she left" (37). Everything that the narrator dislikes about her tocaya is self referential to what she fears the most or is self conscious about. We see the narrator closely examining the tocaya's sexuality and occupation as an employee of a taco shop in the story. The narrator, Patricia Chavez, distinguishes between Patricia Benavidez' lower class racialized and gendered "Mexicanness" and the way she attempts to portray herself as "Spanish" in order to cover up her pathologies. The tocaya lives under erasure while "Patricia" is constantly articulating a desire for mainstream; however, the narrator is going through all the same things.

Lastly, In "Woman Hollering Creek," the issue of gendered violence is at the forefront. The Narrative style is a gossip like tone, coupled with moments of ellipsis in the story. We can gather two things from these ellipses. First, the ellipsis functions in the narrative to reveal that there is something haunting the character that is not legible in the story and thus cut out. Secondly, that silence is the gendered violence that is not representable by language. Cisneros utilizes the space of the border and the arroyo to

destabilize any notion that the border is a charming place. Cleofas, the protagonist and victim of abuse, has a vision in her head of the way things will be on the other side and she is greatly disappointed. The text reads: "The stream sometimes only a muddy puddle in the summer, though now in the springtime, because of the rains, a good-sized alive thing, a thing with a voice all its own, all day and all night calling in its high, silver voice" (51). The narrative, the arroyo, the women neighbors (who rent and whose men have violently disappeared) all combine and refuse to surrender to a romantic spatial construction (even though Cleofas attempts to romanticize at first) that erases the consequences of uneven development and gendered violence. Overall, *Women Hollering Creek and Other Stories* critically interrogates social relations of race, gender, sexuality and class.

Part Four: The Literary Lineage of Ana Castillo

These are the two trends within which I am positioning Ana Castillo's novel *Give It To Me.* This section will first look at Castillo's most famous novels and how they negotiate the constraints of racialized gender and sexuality. Castillo has long been praised for her Chicana feminist agenda that attempts to unveil racist, sexist, and homophobic sentiments in her novels and writing. Critics have said that her writing promotes social justice and are written about communities that are underrepresented. Her prose is simple, yet rhythmic. Castillo captures audiences with her outrageous characters, but aims to tell a larger story. Published in 1993 and skyrocketing her to mainstream fame, Ana Castillo utilizes a "conscienticized poetics" in *So Far From God* that interrogates racialized and gendered violence while simultaneously blending and breaking genre form. *So Far From God* imagines queer women of color spaces as a

direct comment upon the violent, neo-liberal dystopia in the novel that is material and real. Castillo challenges genre conventions in her novel geographically set in rural New Mexico while capturing the life of four sisters and one mother in a novel that is framed by gossip and the fantastic.

Sofi, the mother and her four daughters Fe, Esperanza, Caridad, La Loca, all fall victim to the violent systems of the U.S. nation-state by the end of the novel, but through their demise, Castillo attends to the impossibilities of normativity for subjects that are marked as 'other'. The impossibility of normativity is deployed through Caridad who is the most legibly queer female character in the book. Castillo deploys her queerness in juxtaposition to the other female characters that naturalize hegemonic systems of power. As Grace Hong states in her essay "Fun with Death and Dismemberment: Irony, Farce, and the Limits of Nationalism in Oscar Zeta Acosta's *The Revolt of the Cockroach People* and Ana Castillo's *So Far From God,*" "Chicana feminists negotiated [forces of colonialism and neocolonialism, state violence, and labor exploitation] with subtlety and complexity, crafting an alternative political imaginary that took seriously the injuries attendant to racialization…but did not depend on a static and desubjectivizing position for women as the compensation for these losses" (250). Castillo imagines women centered spaces in juxtaposition to the "sacred" Catholic religious institution, magical spirituality of the female-centered household, and the traumatic gendered violence intertwined with their quotidian lifestyle. While scholars have written about *So Far From God* as a postmodern absurdum, where the universe poses no inherent truth or meaning, the calculated representation of death and mutilation purposely undermines the genre form it seeks to dismantle.

When the novel begins, Sofi's youngest daughter, La Loca, has "passed away" of an epileptic seizure. While it is never explained, Sofi's daughter, La Loca, rises from the dead, alive and well during her funeral. While questioning her faith and God at the funeral, Father Jerome, the Catholic Priest giving the mass tells Sofi, "As devoted followers of Christ, we must not show our lack of faith in Him at these times and in His, our Father's fair judgment, Who alone knows why we are here on this earth and why He chooses to call us back home when He does" (22). Father Jerome calls upon Sofi to have faith, but the faith he is forcing upon her is a faith of institutionalized religion. As Sofi shows her aggravation and sadness, "The [coffin] lid pushed all the way open and the little girl inside sat up, just as sweetly as if she had woken from a nap, rubbing her eyes and yawning" (22). La Loca is not able to fly completely away because she is restricted by the male dominated space of the church. But Castillo counters this male dominance in bending genre convention. She opens up her novel with this scene of "magical realism" that can only be explained by Father Jerome as something possessed by the devil. He cannot fathom the how or why La Loca could fly to the top of the church roof with such fervor and fierceness. As a narrative that is rooted in story telling, the novel utilizes gossip to convey major events and characters. In an attempt to bend genre convention through magical realism while challenging the male dominated church, magical realism is turned on its head as we consider that there is nothing magical about gossip. Readers are forced to read this scene for its literalness and symbolism. In an attempt to "fly," La Loca symbolizes the female character that attempts to leave home. While Castillo gives us a magical realist component, she simultaneously undercuts it through narrative. Sofi states, "Don't you dare!' She

screamed at Father Jerome, charging at him and beating him with her fists. 'Don't you dare start this about my baby…hombre necio, pendejo…!'" (23). Juxtaposing the institution of the church, the female centered spirituality, and the violent material conditions of Sofi's life, the female characters in this novel are (re) presented to readers in different shapes and forms as a way to link death with larger structures of power.

Castillo articulates gendered sexual and violent politics through textual poetics. She utilizes death as a vehicle to comment upon the social maladies that plague women of color. La Loca is not the only character in the book that undergoes a complete physical restoration and resurrection only to experience a tragic, untimely death. Caridad, Sofi's middle daughter and the most beautiful of the four, is physically attacked and completely unrecognizable after drinking one night at a bar. The narrator states, "Sofi was told that her daughter's nipples had been bitten off. She had also been scourged with something, branded like a cattle. Worst of all, a tracheotomy was performed because she had also been stabbed in the throat" (33). All the community can do for Caridad is pray for her and she is labeled a "martyr" for undergoing such mutilation. The police blame Caridad for her situation as a consequence of her sexual promiscuity and no one is ever held responsible for Caridad's physical attack and mutilation. Instead of a "man with a face," it is the "malogra…a thing, both tangible and amorphous. A thing that might be described as made of sharp metal and splintered wood…It held the weight of a continent and was indelible as ink, centuries old and yet as strong as a young wolf" that attacks Caridad (77). Francisco, the *penitente* and the man who rapes Esmeralda (the woman Caridad falls in love with) is indirectly linked the malogra. In this indirect link, Castillo is commenting on the Spanish conquest of

the Americas and the soul-less methods used to colonize the land. In her deferral to actually naming a specific person linked to the gendered violence, Castillo implies a larger historical violence that shaped the lives of Sofi and her four daughters.

This text exposes the discursive gender constructions that re-reevaluate the very category of woman after colonization. Gender, in this text, is defined within the context of the social constructions of patriarchy and heteronormativity through its colonial construct. After some time, Caridad becomes completely physically restored. As all the girls in the house were tending to La Loca in her epileptic state,

> Movement in the adjacent dining room caught their eyes at once. Dogs, cats and women, twenty-eight eyes in all, saw Caridad walking soundlessly, without seeming to be aware of them, across that room. Before anyone could react she was out of sight. Furthermore, it wasn't the Caridad that had been brought back from the hospital, but a whole once again beautiful Caridad, in what furthermore appeared to be Fe's wedding gown" (37).

Completely healed and walking again, the image of a "whole" Caridad opens up the possibility for alternative ways of moving through the world. She enters a new spiritual life with curandera Doña Felicia and eventually meets Esmeralda, the woman she falls in love with, during a pilgrimage in Northern New Mexico. Caridad's queerness, not just in regards to her sexuality, but in the ways she positions herself in direct opposition to institutional religion and violent systems of power, allows her to form alternative kinships and women-centered spaces that are in direct contrast to those formed by her neo-liberal sisters. Doña Felicia becomes a mother figure to Caridad. The queerness Caridad evokes in her alternative kinships and ways of living are a production of survival and also in direct contrast with the way her other sisters shape their lives within the violent U.S. nation-state.

As the novel progresses, the deaths of the female characters in the novel are linked together. The female characters in the novel naturalize dominant narratives of U.S. hegemony to comment upon neo-liberal nation-state violences. Fe, the sister who naturalizes U.S. hegemonic ideals the most, dies of cancer by working at the Acme International Factory. The narrator states, "All the stations were situated in an open manufacturing area. Every morning each worker was given a pan…which was filled with some nasty smelling chemical or other that would clean what Fe was told were parts for high-tech weapons" (180). Selling her life to Acme International Factory, Fe was persistent in thinking she would live the "American Dream" one day. Esperanza's death is implicated in Fe's cleaning of the weapons for a corporate military industrial complex. Esperanza is implicated in Fe's military weapon cleaning because her body disappears when she leaves New Mexico to report on the Gulf War. There is a certain level of environmental racism occurring because the space and the people in New Mexico are expendable with a distinct rationale behind the corporate pollution of the environment that is closely linked to race and gender. Fe eventually dies of skin cancer but the text never blames the Acme factory; instead the text jokingly blames Fe's cancerous normalization of violent structures of power that cultivates the very disease that poisons them. Negotiated forces of colonialism and neocolonialism, state violence, and labor exploitation are the causes of Fe's death and these are socially significant because these conditions contradict the expectations of the women of color working at the factory (because of their class, race, and gender) who assist in using up all the environmental resources available, while simultaneously participating in their own destruction, all for the promised of economic mobility. Castillo is able to probe us to

interrogate the multiple layers of oppression that get naturalized. Fe was ashamed of her family, who she thought to be crazy and lazy. In the end, the four sisters die and we are left with a narrative of violent farce.

Ana Castillo's latest novel, *Give It to Me* was published in 2014 and follows Palma Piedras, a forty three year old Chicana from Chicago who resides in Albuquerque, New Mexico, but travels to LA to find her parents who left her when she was young and to Colombia with her ex husband who has her sterilized. College-educated with a Bachelor in Fine Arts degree, she does not often work and constantly finds herself in situations that are destructive and traumatic. The novel follows Palma from her young days in Chicago with her seemingly uncaring and judgmental grandmother to her sexual escapades with her cousin Pepito and various other men and women. When Palma's parents left her to work on the migrant trail, her grandmother raised her and her cousin Pepito, who, ends up not being her cousin at all. When we meet Palma, she has gone back to Chicago to meet up with her primo, Pepito, who has been wrongly accused for murder and in jail for 10 years. She says, "Mucho traffic and a stampede of plebes down below. Above all, Mulch. Mulch was what Palma called the wide and astonishingly ordinary middle class at the start of the twenty-first century" (3). In this contemporary moment of commodification and mass production, exemplified by her comments of "accessorizing her mall dress" or wearing her "plaid Bermuda shorts purchased at Sam's Club," Palma comments on the quotidian forms of life where she is a willing and disconnected consuming participant. Palma is definitely a consumer but her first person narration comments throughout the novel on the "mulch" people, those who over-consume and strive for the American Dream, at

whatever cost. She sees herself as separate from the "mulch" and I argue it is because of her racial sexual excess. Palma certainly functions against the norm of American integration, as the novel is quick to write her as sexually active at the age of twelve, where she and Giovanni "were in the closet…[with] his fingers way up there like tiny miners lost in the catacombs…" (5). But while Palma functions against the norms of American integration discourse, the scenes of sexual vignettes that the novel takes us through with Palma don't follow a plot, therefore don't allow us to become invested in her journey.

Palma's empty attitude towards life, relationships, and sex allows readers to mark her as reckless or liberated, but I am arguing that it is in between these two poles that we can read Palma and her sexual excess. The novel begins with Palma attempting to have sex with her cousin, Pepito, but right before they begin to have intercourse he walks out on her with no explanation. Palma immediately leaves Chicago disappointed and goes back to Albuquerque, where she lives, to continue her sexual affair with her on again, off again girlfriend Ursula. When Ursula gets to her house she tells Palma she will be moving back to Houston to finish nursing school, where she has family. "Palma got caught up. She kissed her mouth, moved down her neck and then each nipple. Her lover had large areolas. They showered together and made love…Palma knew that when she was gone she would not love her anymore" (25-6). Within these two polarities, one can argue that her lack of emotion and knowledge makes her a postmodern character. Fredric Jameson states in *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, that postmodernism is a "historical deafness," which "includes a series of spasmodic and intermittent, but desperate attempts at historical

recuperation" (x, xi). In an attempt to make sense of the moment, the postmodern novel evacuates understandings of historical influence and refuses traditional forms of understanding in the narrative. The postmodern subject has a "breakage in the diachronic sensibilities, the sense of history that links a civilization's comprehension of itself to its past and future," a deathlessness that focuses on multiple surfaces". (16). Chela Sandoval in *Methodology of the Oppressed* takes the vapid and fragmented postmodern positionality to task. For Sandoval, this fragmentation works to attribute the social spaces and structures of power to a fissured sense of being, particularly for racialized subjects. If postmodernism is indeed, as Jameson states, a socio-economic reality where the neocolonial forces of globalization cause a fragmented construction of identity that does not allow us to link the present with the past and future, why then, asks Sandoval do subject-citizens have a differential consciousness that Jameson fails to see or note. The postmodern splitting of the subject is the very condition of conquered and colonized Westerners who utilized survival skills under previous cultural eras and is not particular to the postmodern condition (Sandoval 32,3). We could read Palma as a flat character that engages in sexual activities that have no meaning or we can read her as a product of structures of violence and power against women of color that remove her from her community and political entanglements, while simultaneously confronting the reality of her decentered subjectivity.

Castillo attempts to write Palma out of the racialized gender norms of the virgin/whore dichotomy that is circumscribed by the heteronormative sexual framework set in motion by the deployment of miscegenation and religious conversion during the conquest of Mexico and the settler colonial normative sexuality that disavows racialized

Mexicans during US imperialism. The characters with whom Palma interacts (sexually and not) do not see her as a whore figure (traditional norms are no longer operating among her friends but continue in society) and Palma's Chicana sexuality is elaborated through her exploration of multi ethnic forms of belonging and desire. She has a short sexual relationship with Ed, her gay best friend's cousin, who she never finds sexually attractive and who she thinks is a white guy trying to appropriate Chicano culture. As she comes to find out, "Don Ed…was not white, as it happened. At least not by half. He was, as her abuela would have called mulatto, in the States was known as *mixed race* and soon in the world, *just like everybody else"* (51). Ed wants Palma to be his "Toltec queen." He sees her not only for her sex, but also for her racialized sexuality that she exudes, from which Palma is constantly trying to disconnect herself.

As Rodriguez states, Latin@s "have been repeatedly colonized and violated, have been tricked and traded, have given ourselves over to the allure of erasure through assimilation…" (130). Anna Nieto Gomez likewise wrote in "La Chicana," that the forced sexual and social roles that were mapped onto Chicana women were the product of racialized sexuality that has shifted and calcified over time. Palma travels to Chicago, Albuquerque, Colombia, Wisconsin, Los Angeles and attempts to place herself outside of her race, barrio, culture, and restrictive norms (that are present in the novel through third person narration), but the novel establishes Palma's racialized sexuality through her disavowal of her race and culture. As exemplified in the quote above regarding "mixed raced people," Palma's sexual existence is undercut by her own knowledge of sexual miscegenation that established how racialized subjecthood is embedded in the systems of power and it is the making of racialized subjects that make

her Chicana positionality possible. Aside from this complicated knowledge of herself, Palma thinks, “A brown woman…spelled puta for pay. It wasn’t just the white conservative neighborhood. She had been propositioned, harassed, and even manhandled from Paris to Ibiza, fancy beaches, promenades with expensive shops and tourist night hot spots, taken for a prostitute, for no other reason that Palma could think of except for her so-called exotic features among Eurotrash Mulches”(59). Her excessive racialized Chicana sexuality is legible even as she has disassociated herself from the Chicana/o community, with which she does not have any interaction. This is in stark contrast with the community politics of Cherrie Moraga’s work. Palma is not critical of her fluid movement and class positionality; however she does long to be positioned somewhere. She states, “Either black or white. The in-between thing hadn’t worked out in her most recent incarnation. The brown woman was taken for the chambermaid in hotels or the housekeeper in Alta Mulch homes” (186). But Palma is not producing anything for the US nation-state, like the domestic workers she is mistaken for in her life.

Palma is only a productive citizen through her multiple sexual encounters. The Feminist Press sees this as liberation and calls this text the “Chicana Sex In the City.” On the other end of the spectrum, the *Weekly Publishers* review states of the novel, “Another issue…is the nature of Castillo’s heroine, who invariably makes the poorest choices available and then wonders why things aren’t going better”. The narrative of good and bad choices skews the structural violence that Palma had to endure throughout her life. She comes from a lower socio-economic position where her parents left her to work on the migrant trail, her overly-protective grandmother raised her, and her uncle

who lived in the same household as her sexually desires her throughout her childhood. The agency Palma does have resides in her sexual encounters, while they remain sexualized racially and not in the realm of the "productive" in the global moment.

While the novel does not make clear Palma's subsistence, we do know that she does translation work twice in the novel and for the remainder of it she participates in sex work that makes her illegible to the US nation-state. After she solidifies her desire for her cousin Pepito and has sex with him, he tells her someone owes him money and he "Sent cash…Not literally. It came in a cashier's check. Apparently the forty grand he mentioned that first time they met again had come through. The Post-It attached read, *Your share*. Palma deposited the eight grand into her account" (31-2). Palma doesn't ask questions and she's not aware that Pepito took the blame for a murder a white businessman committed; she just takes the money. Palma and Pepito continue to meet up and have sex throughout the novel, where he once takes naked pictures of her. He sells them for an undisclosed amount of money and gives her thirty two hundred dollars for her cut. He states, "Don't worry, prima. They went to a private collector. They're not going on the Internet. I got a good price…She considered catching a plane and shooting Pepito with his own gun. Instead, Palma deposited the money. Call her 1-800-PUTA. As she saw it, some sex, if not all, was sheer performance. Puro teatro" (103). Pepito gifts Palma with money and trips in exchange for sex, but often times disappears on her because of his involvement with the white businessmen. When Palma is not consumed with Pepito, she meets Austin White, a seemingly successful black man in the movie industry and his boyfriend, Mishu. By the end of the novel we find out that Austin is in jail for embezzlement and extortion; "fancy, white-collar crimes" as

Palma puts it. But before Austin ends up in jail, Palma beds him and his boyfriend. The first time she has sex with them, "Austin's muscle-tight body pressed into her soft one beneath, while Mishu hooked into him – the three were a chorus of grunt, mmms, and eghs…." (80). After their first sexual encounter, Palma is the proud owner of a new star-studded wardrobe and becomes Austin's "assistant." This means he houses her in LA in the Chateau Marmont for the duration of her long stay in LA while she searches for her parents in exchange for her sex and friendship. Aside from these sexual encounters and the financial gain she receives from them, we see her trade sex for a computer from Hector, a young Chicano rapper who works at the Apple store, free yard work from the Mexican landscapers, and a new Mercedes from Chana, a lesbian fling and sexually violent and aggressive lover, who rapes Palma in the bathroom.

Palma's sexuality and sexual escapades place her in stark contrast with proper white femininity, stereotypical sexy Latina prototypes and media representations, and positive cultural representations of Chicanas and Latinas that seek integration into the American cultural mainstream. As an artist without work for most of the novel, "she also (and maybe for reasons unrelated to the progenitor of her eliminated embryo) began to see herself as the heroine of the tragedy that was her life" (11). The third person narration in the novel constructs Palma as tragic and othered, whereas her first person narration is without care for her interpersonal relationships. Palma is productive through the sexual economy she engages in and her side work as a translator. As Marxist feminist Leopoldina Fortunati reminds us, reproduction, the act of reproducing workers, falls out of capitalist value production, but is the necessary condition for production. In Palma's case, although she is not labeled a "prostitute," she gets paid

through money and other deals for her sexual escapades, and is simultaneously unable to reproduce labor power for the society in which she lives through children. Because we get a vacillation between an unbothered first person narration of Palma countered with the third person narration, readers understand that not only is Palma's sterilization a complete violation, but another example of how capitalist hegemonic norms mark her body as "unproductive." While married to her husband Rodrigo and in Colombia, Palma becomes pregnant. She suspect her sexist and controlling husband is cheating and for that reason, Palma goes to the doctor to have her pregnancy aborted, with plans to leave Colombia and move back to Albuquerque. During the procedure, "She ended up in a hospital where they took all her female parts without asking her. They had different rules about consent. Apparently they got it from Rodrigo, who said later he was afraid for her well being so he gave it to them…Rodrigo and she never discussed her being left barren" (241). Palma cannot reproduce in the proper form. Her "unproductive" and "uncivil" embodiment is in contradistinction to but under the same racial project as the welfare queen. In "Gendering Racial Formations," Priya Kandaswamy states that Latina and black women become the "Antithesis of both the good mother and the good worker, [and]…embody excess of sexuality…and irresponsibility that justified state austerity in particularly racialized and gendered ways" (34). Sexually deviant and racialized, Palma is educated, without evident work and unable to reproduce, which she seems unconcerned about throughout the novel. In bypassing critical interrogation of economic, racial, and gender inequality, Castillo utilizes Palma to bring into focus these violent racial and gendered structures, but distorts these structures simultaneously.

Palma is not only the main character of the novel, but she acts as a trope of satire for the over sexualized Latina/Chicana body. Palma is excessive and exaggerated. Castillo weaves satirical elements throughout the novel to interrogate the sexual Latina/Chicana stereotype. In *Satire, History, Novel*, Frank Palmeri states, "Narrative satire sets against each other opposed points of view; it criticizes or parodies both extremes, but typically devotes little to no attention to positions that might mediate or accommodate the difference between them" (11). Ana Castillo utilizes satiric elements to question the legitimacy and usage of stereotypes, by exaggerating Palma's physical appearance. She is not the full-figured and lustful Latina stereotype. She also doesn't embody the racialized good mother, the hard-working domestic worker or as we are seeing more of lately, the upwardly mobile, successful Latina. She had a "Day-of-the-Dead skeleton body," where many of her lovers tell her "You look frail. You need to put on some weight, girl. You don't weigh nothing. Are you even here?" (15, 38, 57). The exaggeration of physical appearance, coupled with excess of sexuality, comically interrogates the solidification of stereotypes and the sexually excessive Chicana body. The other racialized stereotypes/archetypes of Latinas and Chicanas (i.e. mother and/or domestic worker), as racists and violent as they are, justify their exploitation as these women provide the US-nation state with their needed service, even if they are unwanted and undesirable. This distanced and contradictory relationship to the state is needed nonetheless, whereas Palma is not. The language Castillo utilizes to speak to Palma's sexual escapades is anything but erotic. When Castillo writes of Palma having sex, she utilizes nursery rhyme like language. For example, Palma decides to have a fling with the man who is landscaping her yard. The text reads, "Slowly, slowly, sweet peloncillo

going in, out, wiggle-wiggle" (47). The play on words, or one could say, parody, of erotic fiction, doubled with her exaggeration of stereotypes in the text, all work to question how positive representations of Chicanas and the sexually abject are in constant negotiation with each other.

Over-consumption is a constant trope in the novel; Palma, for example, is oblivious to her consumption but the third person narrator in *Give It To Me* underscores her brief critical commentary on how consumption through production is a norm. From this, readers become aware that Palma's sexual excess is non-valued and is not "fitting" or "proper." The third person narration states, "To be at peace without possessions, that was a challenge to the American Dream, wasn't it?" (138). Palma consumes but she does not accumulate wealth in normative ways. She also functions against sexual and heteronormative norms and the regulation and promotion of a heteropatriarchal white family structure as the proper site of consumption and reproduction. Again, the third person narrator states, "These Thirty-Somethings, like Mulches all over the world, were def in the game. Little Mulch mice in a maze, rushing towards parenthood, taking care of aging parents, obtaining mortgages, starting businesses, or getting promotions and establishing pensions" (205). There is no one in the novel that takes Palma to task for her sexual escapades and there is no character that is a foil for her. However, the discourse of being productive is visible through the third-person narration and situates Palma against this discourse. Palma's illegible production and nonheteronormativity firmly put her at the heart of U.S. racial formations and as Ferguson states, links the "multiplication of racialized discourses of sexuality and gender" to the "multiplication of labor under capital" (12). The pathologization of Chicanas coupled with the suturing

of whiteness with heteronormativity can be explained by Ferguson's comment that "as formations that transgress capitalist political economies, surplus populations become the locations for possible critiques of state and capital" (15). At the end of the novel, Pepito finds a woman with whom he becomes involved and leaves Palma for good. She dreads the moment when she becomes the older tía to his kids and his procreating wife. She dreads that they will all feel sorry for her.

While this chapter is focused on the reading and rearticulation of *Give It To Me,* I end with Castillo's 2007 novel, *The Guardians*, as a transition to my study that goes from an interrogation of racialized productive and unproductive gender and sexuality to gendered violence. The sexually excessive and pathologized Chicana/Mexicana, under current structures of power, is illegible, exploitable, and disposable and a discourse circulates time and time again to "justify" the excess and the gendered violence that she experiences. Unlike *Give It To Me, The Guardians* is based on the Júarez border towns of Cabuche and El Paso where people live in constant danger and crossing the border oftentimes results in disappearance or murder, oftentimes in gendered violence and femicide. In *MeXicana Encounters: The Making of Social Identities on the Borderlands* Rosa Linda Fregoso states that in the case of the femicides of Júarez, the Mexican Government emphasized the women's nonnormative behavior, "accusing them of transgressing sexual norms, either of lesbianism or of leading a "doble vida" (double life) – that is, engaging in respectable work by day and sex work by night – as though nontraditional sexual behaviors justified their killings" (3). To end with Castillo's novel of the border is to interrogate and examine how racialized gender and sexuality, throughout history, constructs discourses of disposability through late-capitalism for

Chicanas and Mexicanas. Castillo attempts to write against this gendered and sexualized logic, but while doing so creates a literary framework for Chicana narrative that is transnational in nature.

The story is told from four perspectives, Regina, Miguel, Gabo, and Abuelito Milton. Regina is a 50-year old widowed virgin who lives on a large piece of property isolated from city life in Cabuche, New Mexico. She spends most of her time thinking of 'get-rich' quick schemes and works part-time as a teaching assistant at the local high school. Regina and her family were originally from Mexico but Regina moved to the Unites States with her husband before he left to fight in the Vietnam War. Regina's brother Rafa and his wife Ximena stayed living in Mexico with her family but crossed periodically into the United States to find work. On their last trip back together, Rafa and Ximena got separated and Ximena was found dead and gutted. Through this trauma, Gabo, (Rafa and Ximena's son) attends high school in the states and lives with Regina. Now, Rafa too has gone missing and Regina is on a quest to find her missing brother.

Ana Castillo successfully achieves setting up a Chicana feminist framework in her novels and specifically in *The Guardians*, a work that strays away a diasporic Chicano nationalism and takes the transnational seriously. Castillo utilizes her female character Regina to bring to the forefront a woman of color feminism while at the same time including the femicides that are occurring on the border. Castillo sets up a suspenseful Chicana feminist framework. However in the first few pages, Regina our narrator states, "The problem is the coyotes and narcos own the desert now…the drug traffickers and body traffickers. Which are worse? I can't say" (4). This text sets up

the border violence, as a place of violence, femicides, and narco wars that continue to plague Mexico and the border. Her critical framework interrogates how state-sanctioned violence, globalism, and patriarchy are inextricably linked to each other and border violence. Fregoso states about the femicides,

> Globalism posits an isomorphism between the local and the global that has led to grand generalizations about the demise of the state. This failure to provide a more nuanced approximation about the interplay of 'global and transnational' as well as ' national and local dynamics implod[ing] simultaneously into the everyday experiences of members of urban households' has worked to absolve the state of its complicity and perhaps even direct involvement in the murders of poor and dark women in Ciudad Juárez (17).

Castillo's illumination on all these violent structures working together to foster and continue the gender violence that happens on a daily basis sometimes falls short of critical commentary and the dismantling of structural violence and power. In an attempt to locate and explore the interconnected intricacies of border violence, Regina states, "You just have to keep taking those what-ifs to infinity. What if there had been no war and what if no money could be made on killing undocumented people for their organs? What if this country accepted outright that it needed the cheap labor from the south and opened up the border? And people didn't like drugs so that trying to sell them would be pointless" (29). In what seems to be a deliberate attempt to avoid systematic violations, Castillo explores neoliberal questions that sidestep the real deaths. Although there is a lack of representation, it is almost as if the trauma cannot be artistically portrayed. As Alicia Schmidt-Camacho states in "Body Counts on the Mexico-U.S. Border: Feminicido, Reification, and the Theft of Mexicana Subjectivity," "Precisely because the feminicidio entails a social fantasy that certain women are made for killing, that is,

to be used up to the point of extinction, those invested in stopping the crimes must not collude with any depictions of vulnerable Mexican women as less than fully human, less than fully alive" (24). Castillo avoids the pathologies of the bordertown women, while simultaneously utilizing artistic agency in her text.

The first time readers are confronted with the specific example of the femicides, Miguel, a once politically active Chicano, attempts to examine the politics behind the murders because his ex-wife has gone missing while doing charity work in Mexico. While Miguel yearns to make structural changes he fails to do so because his complicity weighs him down. Miguel states,

> The other day a lawyer was shot in J-town…he represented one of the bus drivers accused of some of the murders of women who worked in the maquilas. The word is that bus driver was a scapegoat. Apparently, the lawyer knew things that would come out in court. Police officials, military, Interpol, state officials – who know who's who, much less what anyone is up to. Oh, what a tangled Frontera we live in (149).

Castillo effectively portrays the complicity that many times weighs the politicized American down. Women are being killed at an alarming rate and the representation of the Femicides here resides in the male lawyer who is prosecuting the "killers" in this case. Reproducing the rhetoric of pinning down one killer, Miguel comes to represents the loss as an injustice that has an end with no one quite politicized enough to end the murders. The law has collapsed and while Miguel begins to think through all the different structures that cause gender violence, there is a distinct gap between representation and loss. Miguel is working through "state officials," "maquilas," and "police officials" but he never takes that next step of interrogation.

Globalism cannot be the only rationalization for the continued gender and border violence that occurs. Fregoso warns us that to link the murders and violence to globalism and the maquilas is to equate exploitation with extermination. Fregoso states, "Much of the problem with the discourse of globalism stems from its portrayal of sexual violence as primarily an effect of global capitalism without accounting for the ways in which global manifestations of power differ from as much as they intensify earlier and more traditional forms of patriarchy within the nation-state" (18). Miguel was at first a prime suspect in his wife's disappearance, but after he gave the police an alibi, which cleared him, Cruzita herself became a suspect because she was seeing a married man at the time of her disappearance. "Since she was involved with someone while we were still married and it was a married dude to boot, it seemed they thought she was capable of any kind of duplicitous behavior…The victim herself was now a suspect" (184). This type of rhetoric weighs down on the murders. For the male patriarchy system of México, the erroneous linking of modernization and globalization with women's newfound independence is a line of thinking that bounds the subject to capital. Fregoso states, "A Spanish criminologist echoed the by now standard "moral panic" about the dangers of modernization: 'As a result of the influence of the United States, women are joining the workforce at an earlier age and therefore discovering independence" (4). By keeping with this logic, had México never became a participator within a global society, then the women would never have left the home and they would not be getting murdered today. While globalism is definitely a key factor when examining the violent structures of gender violence, it cannot be the sole force. In an attempt to substitute the violated body or actions with a critique of systems, Miguel never gives readers an

account of gender violence that is tangible or descriptive. Fregoso states, “Rather than the aberration of a single individual or group, the murders of women are ‘politically motivated sexual violence’ rooted in a system of patriarchy” (2). Fregoso blames the patriarchal state in conjunction with global capitalism and state-sanctioned violence as the main culprits in the gender violence towards women.

In the end, Rafa, Regina’s brother, is found dead in the coyotes house. Gabo, Regina’s nephew, is killed in the drug trafficker’s house looking for his dead father by Tiny Tears, a young female gang member who is in love with Gabo. Miguel finds his ex-wife on drugs and naked in the same house. Regina, takes custody of Tiny Tears’ daughter and goes to visit her in jail every week. The end. The critique of state or global structures becomes a space where Castillo comments on the complicity with Americans, yet produces this critique while reproducing forms of misrepresentation and conflating larger structural violence together. Castillo offers readers a solid Chicana feminist suspense novel of transnational border space where goods and people go back and forth and the relations between the US and Mexico become clouded because of the intricacies of the transnational relations. The end attempts to give hope to the reader as Castillo ends with a reproductive future. Perhaps the next generation can get it right. Maybe, just maybe, Tiny Tears’ daughter will break the pattern of violence because Regina has removed her from the toxic environment of drugs and organ smuggling. I would argue, as a global voice, that Castillo bears more responsibility and should critically examine the deep transnational intertwinements between the US and Mexico. As Fregoso ends her chapter “Towards a Planetary Civil Society,” she examines the crosses that exist on the border in remembrance of the victims. She states, “Crosses

speaking for justice for eyes that cannot see, for women who can no longer speak, crosses marking the threshold of existence" (29). "Justice" is a ruse for that state that does nothing to eliminate having more victims of the femicides, the drug wars, and border violence; women will continue to be subjugated to violence as a result of the violent system. And while all this will continue, there is a great need for voices that speak through the violence, a cultural citizenship that is cognizant of representation, loss, and trauma.

Part Five: Conclusion

In ending, this dissertation has positioned Ana Castillo's novel *Give It To* Me in between two trends within Chicana/Latina literature. One trend constructs literary characters as integrated into the American cultural mainstream and as gendered and sexually "positive representations." The second trend focuses on Chicana/Latina narratives critically engaging with gender and sexuality to construct intersectional difference, not only through spatial and historical specificity, but discursively as well. In the specific textual example from Ana Castillo's *Give It To Me*, this chapter finds a third trend that constructs Chicana sexuality as excessive and unproductive, producing the "uncivil" other as critical commentary. The term "uncivil" other is a concept that I have coined in this chapter and that I apply to contemporary Chicana narratives marked by sexual excess in contrast to discourses of positive representation and by characters that get marked as "unproductive" and become devalued through racialized sexuality. This chapter links the historical to the discursive. Therefore, I argue, Chicana sexuality is linked to historical sexual economies and processes of racialized sexualization that situate the utility of their bodies to the particular historical moment and maintenance of

racialized gendered social roles. In an attempt to trace the relationship between the shifts in capital and gender and sexuality, this dissertation begins in the nineteenth century and ends in the contemporary moment to trace the historical legacy and social roles of Mexican American females. In ending with Chicana narrative, this chapter examines how historical preconditions shape the utility of their bodies within this particular capital economic moment. This chapter demonstrates how Palma, the protagonist of the novel, functions up and against the nation-state through her racialized sexual excess, and is constructed against contemporary notions of fetishized Latina media representation by the hegemonic gaze.

Castillo has written a variety of novels, all focusing one way or another on issues of gender and sexuality. In her last novel, while Chana, Palma's sexually abusive lesbian lover, is beginning to rape her in the bathroom stall, Palma says, "Give it to me, girl" (101). Palma gets all the sex she wants, but the identity imposed upon Palma ultimately constructs how things are given to her. Palma's subjectivity and her failure is carefully crafted up and against those "giving" her value, making her sexual escapades central in order to understand Chicana sexual excess. I argue that *Give It To Me* attempts to engage in the conversation of Palma's historical positionality as a subjugated and racially sexualized Chicana, while commenting on how current conditions of citizenship revolve around productive labor. Ana Castillo arguably uncovers how the Chicana body is used sexually up and against proper femininity, producing the "uncivil" other undeserving of success because of her method of producing value in the global capital economy. I claim Palma to be within the context of Chicana/o Literature because she is rendered excessive under normative legibility and

pathologized through her racialized sexuality. In the end, the political project of this dissertation lies in between the literary lineage of *Give It To Me* and the political project of *The Guardians.* This chapter puts together radical epistemologies that find a way to claim the excess and interrogate what makes life impossible for Chicana and Mexicana bodies.

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CONCLUSION

In 2009, eleven women's bodies and a fetus were found in the desert on the West Mesa of Albuquerque, New Mexico. The desolate area houses a municipal shooting range and the Bernalillo County Metropolitan Detention Center. A woman walking her dog in the West Mesa found a bone of one of the deceased women and called the Albuquerque Police Department. The "open space" where the women were buried in a shallow mass gravesite was actually owned by a home developer, who was making plans to use the land to build swaths of housing. It took the Albuquerque Police department weeks to uncover all the bodies, which were scattered around the 92-acre land. After the weeks of excavating the bones of the women, it took almost a year to identify all the victims. Jamie Barela, Monica Candelaria, Victoria Chavez, Virginia Cloven, Syllania Edwards, Cinnamon Elks, Doreen Marquez, Julie Nieto, Veronica Romero, Evelyn Salazar, and Michele Valdez were the identified women who were buried in that gravesite. The all went missing between 2001 and 2005 and the Albuquerque Police Department made it a point to make statements to the public that these women were all sex workers and involved with drugs. Michelle Valdez was four months pregnant when she was killed. The youngest victim, Jamie Barela, was 15-years-old. All the victims were "Hispanic" women, except for two white females and a black female, who was from out of state.

Albuquerque, known for its high domestic abuse numbers, double the national average, had never been presented with a case of gendered violence on such a large scale. The Albuquerque Police Department promised the public and especially the families of the deceased women that the West Mesa Murders, or as officially named, the

"118th Street Homicides", would be number one priority for them. Six years later, there have been no arrests and the Albuquerque Police Department has been out of touch with the families of the victims for years. They contend they have been in constant touch with the families. The families don't have a clue what is currently occurring with the investigation, nor have they been updated on any leads, if any, the police have made. Coupled with the complete negligence of gendered violence in the state are the Albuquerque Police Department's own internal struggles. In late July 2014, the city announced that the Department of Justice would monitor the Albuquerque Police Department, after a civil investigation revealed the excessive use of force, which resulted in many unconstitutional deaths. The Albuquerque Police Department has also been involved in sex scandals, including but not limited to the harassment and sexual assault of sex workers. Six years later, the Albuquerque Police Department is still airing the records of the sex workers as legitimate reasoning for why they got "caught up" in death.

Officer Tanner Tixier told news outlets this year that he will not necessarily call the West Mesa Murders a "cold case," but stresses that they cannot manufacture evidence. "We can't make people talk to us," he says. As one of the largest unsolved mass murder cases in the Unites States, the Albuquerque Police Department is calling this a "serial" killing with one serial killer to find. What they are saying, which is supposed to put the victims families at ease, is that the number of potential suspects has gone up from two suspects, one who was dead when they made the initial announcement that he was an official suspect, to 20 people who are "potential" suspects. Now, the City of Albuquerque is planning on building a "memorial park"

(figure 3) at the burial site of the victims. As a way to "remember" the victims of this gruesome tragedy and in some ways, as a method for "reparation" for the victims and their families, there will be a park built where their dead bodies were buried and lay for over 5 years, no one, except their families, looking for them during this time. Albuquerque, New Mexico, is by no means the only place where this (racialized) gendered violence occurs. This is reminiscent on a smaller scale of the femicides in Juárez, about 5 hours from Albuquerque. I end with this story of gendered violence not to conflate the distinct geopolitical spaces of New Mexico and the border, nor to say that this is a violent trend that happens to racialized women only. I end with this story to engage with the unproblematized history of racialized gendered violence central to the discourse of proper femininity and sexuality that surrounds the sex workers and the commemoration space that forgets the historical elements persistent in forgetting how these structures were formed up and against deviant and excessive racialized bodies.

The politics of remembering and the memorial park, named Anderson Height Memorial Park, bring up overlapping histories of violence tied to gender and sexual constructions. As I have exemplified in this dissertation there is always a certain politics tied to remembering. We must always ask, why are we remembering this and how is it being remembered? What is the position from who is doing the remembering? The planned memorial coupled with the development of housing projects where the actual bodies were found exemplifies not only the intersection of capital investment and violence, but also the obfuscation of U.S. empire and the consequences of the social relations of properly gendered and sexual subjects in the borderlands. The memorial site could never provide any necessary reparations for the victims and their families. If

one looks closely at the plans for the memorial park, there is no trace of the women actually at the site. Their names will not be visible anywhere. Only a small plaque for the "unborn" child lay at the upper center of the park, with trees and benches surrounding a neatly packaged park that erases the actual violence. As evidenced by the years that have passed by, these women are seen as disposable and this confluence of systems of violence, including the patriarchal state structure and racialized capitalism, unveils just how unlikely it is that one killer will be pinned down for all these murders.

I have argued in the preceding pages that racialized gender and sexuality and their representations through literary narrative and history in Mexican American and Chicana narrative allow us to interrogate and examine how the logics of colonial conquest and U.S. Imperialism in the Southwest get reproduced and calcify over time. I began this dissertation with the example of the "Our Lady" controversy that shook New Mexico to its core because of the sexualized representation of La Virgin de Guadalupe. The aesthetics of the art piece prompted discussions of how and why hypersexualization in the Chicana/Latina/Hispana community evolved and what it meant for that hypersexualization to be leveraged in the way it was. From there, I moved on to reengage with the construction of gender and sexuality in the Southwest through the work of María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, the first Mexican American women to write a novel in English. As I moved along to interrogate the sexual economy of the debt peonage system in the Southwest, I maintained that it was racialized gender and sexuality that was used in a productive, dual capacity, which produced the continual labor-power for the *patrón.* In my last chapter, I interrogated the representation of the sexually excessive Chicana, who is non-productive and "uncivil." Coming to full

circle, I end with the West Mesa Murders to open up new possibilities for future projects and I interrogate the gendered and sexual discourses of Chicana/Mexicana subjectivity that is a lived reality and not just a literary representation.

The texts I have examined in the preceding pages have aided me in bridging the broader literary discussion of gender, sexuality, land, and empire. The multiple empires and governances examined in this dissertation, Spanish, Mexican, and U.S., have set the foundation for my examination of Mexican-American women and the different ways they navigate the U.S. nation-state and Chicana racialized subjectivity. Political, social, economic, and social histories and their entangled continuities have made this an interdisciplinary work at its core. The literary narratives of Mexican American and Chicana works I examine track matters of sexualization, sex, and gender in the late nineteenth, early twentieth, and the contemporary moments, particularly the critical role sexual and gender arrangements have in creating categories of differentiation and distinguishing the subjugated from the subjugator. The social classification that racialized gender and sexuality regulate is not a fixed and/or ignored act, but rather a perversely critical one. Imperial governance in the nineteenth-century depended on the regulation and surveillance of sexual economies and their changing histories of productivity. This is the first significant point of my dissertation.

The second conclusion this dissertation wrestles with is the ever-evolving comparative work between Mexican American/Chicana, Native, and Black Studies and the co-constitutive relations between these different "groups" throughout history. In looking, for instance, at Ruiz de Burton, Cabeza, de Baca, and Jovita González, and their respective literary works, this dissertation has closely interrogated the multiple

histories of contact and the discourses of domination that construct the deviant Mexican American or mestiza women up and against a "pure" Spanish ideology. The tensions these narratives produce, not only in relation to the contradictory position of Mexican American females, but also in the co-constitutive relation between other colonized, racialized, and classed populations exemplify the distinct need for comparative work in literary and cultural studies. In addition, this dissertation utilizes decolonial and Chicana feminist theory to interrogate how Mexicana gender and sexuality is informed by black and native bodies and how sexual economies produce material relations and racialized gender and sexuality.

Third and lastly, the dissertation has a long historical lineage, which frames the last chapter and the discourse of the excessive Chicana in the contemporary moment. As I attempt to trace gender and sexual norms in the Southwest, the history that informs the processes of differentiation regulate and manage certain bodies. As I expand upon this work, I hope to examine the historical relations of the plantation in relation to the hacienda and land grant system, in close engagement with black feminists. A turn to the mission system and the native concubines that were relied upon so heavily in the system of complete violation and trauma is something for future research and in relation to this project. This project engages in discussions that arise in a variety of fields, such as critical gender and sexuality studies, American literary history, and Chicana feminism, fields which do not conventionally speak to one another and which turn to the Chicana body as a site of theoretical intervention. In ending, this dissertation is a small attempt to interrogate and examine the long historical lineage of gender and sexual violence and regulation for Mexican American, mestizas and Chicanas in the

Southwest, in hopes that this won’t only be a piece of academic work, but a work towards social justice.

Figure 3: Anderson Height Memorial Park Final Design

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