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TRACING QUEER LATINA DIASPORAS: *ESCARVANDO* HISTORICAL NARRATIVES OF ANCESTRIES AND SILENCES

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by

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Abstract

Building on women of color feminists' frameworks that engage the complexities of race, class, gender, and sexuality, "Tracing Queer Latina Diasporas: *Escarvando* Historical Narratives of Ancestries and Silences" analyzes historical, literary, sociological, as well as other ethnic studies and feminist studies scholarship, and uses methods such as oral history and archival research next to analysis of visual representations, art, and museum visits that together map out an emerging analytic interpretive frame to trace queer Latina discourses of creativity and knowledge. Tracing the diasporas of "queer borderlands" highlights the forced migrations and colonizing of Latinas/os and Latin American communities. By racing the "queer" and queering the "Latina/o," the tensions and dialogues manifested in these historically diasporic and transnational identities and communities can be traced.

This project examines the often over looked yet intertwined legacies of Chicana feminisms and queer theory through the work of lesbian of color and queer women of color feminist formations. Tracing silences of non-heteronormative populations of color is a move to address colonial forms of epistemic violence. The chapters in this dissertation form archives to address the overarching question: How do women of color feminists knowledge production, decolonized methodologies, and representations of cultural memory assist in tracing and remembering hidden histories and silences of queer Latina/o ancestries?

Chapter one, "Decolonizing Aztlán: Unraveling Conflicting Colonial Histories of Land and Race to Trace Queer Ancestry" is a historical account that disrupts the

usual story of colonization that is central to Chicano studies and instead searches for connections of race and land and complexities of gender and sexuality to open space for the exploration of queer ancestral histories. This chapter complicates the historical racial formation of the Mexican American through an analysis of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Chapter two, "Gloria Anzaldúa: Altars, Archives, and Opening up the U.S.-Mexico *Borderlands*" argues that Anzaldúa's classic text is an altar that functions as a guide for creativity and ceremony. Through a grounded analysis of racism and colonization, Anzaldúa opens an analysis of decolonization that includes gender, sexuality, and spirituality.

Chapter three, "Queer Latina Cultural Production: Remembering through Oral and Visual Storytelling" focuses on queer Latina and Indígena artists who use enact forms of remembering through their art (i.e. sculpture, film, theater, and painting) to regain cultural ancestral memory and story. The fusion and collaborative methodology of this work is reflective of feminist of color knowledges. While chapter four, "Tracing Latina Lesbiana *Historias* of Resistance, Solidarity, and Visibility" purports the importance of an early generation and network of women of color who did the work to construct visual archives in various forms, such as the production of anthologies, building archives, and documenting through photography, as a mode of establishing visibility for Latina Lesbiana in community and academic spaces.

Para Adela Zepeda,
gracias mami por darme vida
y por creer en mis sueños

This is in remembrance of our ancestors and spirit guides
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Lionel Cantú
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Victoria Mercado
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Preface

If I dare write again,[1]
connect the tongue
to hand
to paper
I will have to tell the truth.

Palabra,
it is a dangerous experience
what a word to soul
can do to the corazon.

Sometimes it is like betrayal
to write down your vergüenza
to admit to your coraje
to intoxicate
delicate sheets of leaf
with a print
or a handwriting
of the truth.

This is why
if I dare write again,
connect the tongue
to hand
to paper
I will have to tell the truth.

During my undergraduate studies in Sociology and Women's Studies at California State University, Long Beach, I set out to map a network of historic and transnational communities that have influenced generations of thinkers, writers, artists, and activists in field of Chicano and Latino Studies. Over the course of my studies, I developed a fascination for writing by women of color that brought together an analysis of race, class, gender, and sexuality in a creative form. I began

[1] "Untitled Poem" by Pablo Alvarez.

articulating and visualizing my research about Chicana lesbians, particularly in relation to the history of influential and radical social movements such as the Chicano Blowouts in late-1960s Los Angeles, the Vietnam War protest movement in the United States, and the struggles for ethnic, feminist, and queer studies. During my research I found it difficult to find reputable research about some of these topics particularly documented information. One of my biggest challenges was the fact that there was very little information regarding some of these topics as they related to Chicana lesbianism. For example, in trying to find out whether Chicana lesbians were involved in the Vietnam War protest movement information proved extremely difficult to find.

Initially, my inquires led me to the Special Collections archives at the California State University, Long Beach campus library. Soon thereafter, I learned about the library's established collection of the L.A. Women's Movement and about the library's oral histories, which were conducted by students. These oral histories provided me with my first listening experience with Maylei Blackwell's oral history interview with prominent Chicana feminist Anna Nieto Gomez and Michelle Moravac's oral history interview with prominent writer and newspaper founder Jeanne Cordova who writes lesbian and queer studies.[2] Listening to these oral histories and viewing the archival materials inspired and simultaneously disappointed me since I could still not locate the stories of self-identified Chicana lesbians. These

[2] For further details of the course, see: Gluck, Sherna Berger in collaboration with Maylei Blackwell, Sharon Cotrell, and Karen S. harper (1998). "Whose Feminism, Whose History? Reflections on Excavating the History of (the) U.S. Women's Movement(s)."

resources proved very helpful to me, as they pointed me in the direction of asking the necessary questions to build a framework of visibility for that which is often hidden.

The death of Gloria Anzaldúa at the end of my first year of graduate school, less than three weeks after I had interviewed with her to be her research assistant woke up many realities for my path of research. Also, throughout the duration of conducting this research two participants I had the opportunity to interview have passed to the spirit world, Yolanda Retter in 2007 and most recently, Tatiana de la Tierra in August 2012. Instead of focusing on the tragedy of the three above-mentioned queer Latinas who all lost their lives earlier than expected, I see this dissertation as honoring their legacies and contributions to queer Latina knowledges and their dedication to building the history and visibility of Latina lesbianas.

Introduction

This dissertation critiques two premises within academic inquiry—that the intricacies of queerness are not central to the field of Latina/o studies, and that Latina/os are not central to academic queer studies.[1] The dissertation therefore examines in particular the exclusion of queer Latinas from the disciplines of Latino studies and Queer studies. It utilizes "queer latinidades"[2]–literary and artistic forms of expression created by people of Latin American descent as a political form of gender and culture–as a lens for examining two concerns: the emergence of queer Latina writing, art, and story as a legitimate body of knowledge in queer studies, and the inclusion of queer Latina's rightful place in academic Latina/o studies.

"Queer Latinidades" is inspired and grown from Juana María Rodríguez (2003) text *Queer Latindad*, where she productively complicates Latinidad and race geographically. Rodríguez (2003) writes,

> …latinidad is about the 'dimensions' or 'the directions in motion' of history and culture and geography and language and self-named identities. Even if individual narratives used to chart these discourses contradict or exclude one another, the site of rupture will itself serve as a new site of knowledge production.[3]

It is the "site of rupture" that is most significant for purposes of this project.

This dissertation works across three fields of knowledge: studies of race and colonization, women of color feminisms, and queer Latina/o history. These sites of

[1] Important to note are the contributions of scholars who have theorized a queer of color critique, including: José Esteban Muñoz (1999) *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics,* Roderick Ferguson (2004) *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique,* and Sandra K. Soto (2010) *Reading Chican@ Like a Queer: The De-Mastery of Desire*.
[2] Juana María Rodríguez (2003) *Queer Latindad: Identity Practices, Discursive Spaces.*
[3] Rodríguez 2003: 22.

knowledge are not congruent. Rather, they are themselves ruptures in the sense that these fields of study emerged through oppositional forms of thought and critiques of systems of oppression. For example, the movement of women of color feminists began as an attempt to fill the gap in the fields of gender studies (women's studies as it was then labeled), which failed to adequately address ethnic and racial concerns, and the gap in the field of ethnic and race studies, which in turn failed to address the issues of gender and sexuality.

I am drawing from Sandoval's (2000) formulations of "oppositional consciousness" and U.S. third world feminism as a distinct component of the emergence of women of color feminisms.[4] Sandoval (2000) says,

> This theoretical and methodological design was developed, utilized, and represented by U.S. feminists of color because, as Native American theorist Paula Gunn Allen put it in 1981, so much was taken away that "the place we live now is an idea"—and in this place new forms of identity, theory, practice, and community became imaginable.[5]

Through Sandoval (2000) and her analysis of U.S. third world feminism, we see how social actors in movements construct forms of knowledge. In this dissertation I am building on "oppositional consciousness" and moving towards another layer of this illuminated knowledge, what I call spirit consciousness, which Sandoval (2000) does not address directly in her text. It is within the space of "spirit consciousness" as

[4] Sandoval 2000: 53-61. Chela Sandoval (2000) *Methodology of the Oppressed.*
[5] Sandoval 2000: 60.

theorized in different variation by women of color feminists like Anzaldúa, Lorde, and Moraga that traces of ancestry can be explored in fuller capacity.[6]

Women such as Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga were notable contributors who produced work that demanded an end to exclusionary forms of thought and practice. The duo's response to these exclusions, entitled *This Bridge Called My Back: Writing by Radical Women of Color*, decried the heteropatriarchy, racism, and sexism found in these fields of study.[7] The anthology, comprised of essays, creative writing, letters, and poetry, simultaneously challenged white women's feminism as ethnocentric and Chicano Studies as andocentric and heteronormative, which disallowed women of color and queer voices. It is therefore necessary to trace queer Latina ancestries, histories, and diasporas through a Chicana focus or center that reflects the knowledge formations of Chicana feminisms that in many ways formed alongside lesbian of color and women of color feminist formations.[8]

In arguing that Chicana feminism is a diaspora, this dissertation traces the forms and histories of the queer "borderlands,"[9] or queer Latina/o ancestries,[10] and

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[6]Ancestry and integration of ancestral knowledges within women of color feminisms is an emerging field. Jacqui Alexander's (2005) "Pedagogies of the Sacred" is a leading essay in her book *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred,* articulates an analysis of spirit and the Sacred. Similarly, AnaLouise Keating's (1996) text, *Women Reading, Women Writing: Self-Invention in Paula Gunn Allen, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Audre Lorde* opens the pathway for speaking about ancestry in lesbian of color writing.

[7] Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, Eds. (2002 [1983, 1981]). *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*.

[8] Latina was a coalitional term that circulated as early as the 1980s in informal sectors.

[9] "Borderlands" is inspired by Gloria Anzaldúa's (1987) *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* groundbreaking text that has inspired various scholars and areas of study, and in many ways is central to this dissertation. Emma Pérez's (2003), "Queering the Borderlands: The Challenges of Excavating the Invisible and Unheard," builds on Anzaldúa's formulation to make the methodological point that a

highlights the forced migrations and colonizations of Latina/o and Latin American communities, a tracing that simultaneously challenges the notion that queer or non-normative sexual identity formation is U.S.-centric. It therefore examines the exclusions by queer theorists of the often-overlooked and intertwined legacies of Chicana feminists and their identification as "*vendidas.*"[11] These *vendidas* create queer theory by theorizing lesbian of color and/or queer women of color formations.[12]

Queer Latina knowledges and women of color feminisms more generally tend to be trivialized in academic debates because of their commitment to creativity and collectivity and because of their work across race, class, gender, and sexuality in such a way as to invite layered academic study. This thesis attempts to point out that the women of color feminist artifacts and epistemes are artistic as well as political and are worthy of rigorous study. The challenge is that intellectual establishments, such as Latino studies and Queer studies, fail to see the academic richness of women of color feminisms. Women of color feminists exist within a hierarchical system while simultaneously working to disrupt it, to effect social transformation, and to expose epistemic violences.

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distinct search is necessary when constructing histories of "queer" or "deviant" sexualities of Chicanas and Latinas or the structures which render them invisible.

[10] I am conceptualizing ancestry and ancestors in two ways: (1) blood relation traceable lineage, and (2) through a political or spiritual identification—ancestors who one is not related to through blood necessarily, yet a familial relation exists.

[11] This phrase is borrowed from Cherríe Moraga's (2000) classic essay, "A Long Line of *Vendidas,*" in her *Loving in the War Years: lo que nunca pasó por sus labios,* literally meaning "sell-outs" to the Chicano Nation or the patriarchal idea of family in Chicano Nationalism. It is also incorporated into the work of other Chicana feminist writers.

[12] Gloria Anzaldúa, Audre Lorde, and Cherríe Moraga are central to the arguments of this dissertation, as is Yolanda Retter.

One can view the work of women of color feminists as a three-part model for social transformation. First, they wished to open consciousness about history by countering the accounts passed down by the American establishment. To achieve this, they exhorted others to become independent thinkers, encouraging individuals to trace their own lineage and familial historical accounts. Second, they sought to shed light on the fact that little progress was taking place in the arena of academic leadership where women of color were tokenized. Third, they fought to reclaim ancestry by creating literary and artistic work that was outside of the norm.

While women of color feminists certainly understood the importance of opening consciousness, they also realized that it was equally important to work collectively as a group to achieve their goals. They saw the benefit of collaboration not only as a means of providing support for each other, but also as a means of gaining political power. The collective played an integral part in the women of color feminist movement, which sought to strengthen its solidarity by avoiding individual tokenism. Anzaldúa's comments regarding the creation of her second anthology reflect these layers of collaboration. For example, while she dedicated herself to fostering a legacy of writers whose chosen genre would be anthology,[13] she also collaborated with others, including Chela Sandoval, who helped with the format of *Making Face, Making Soul, Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Feminists of Color* (1990). Significantly, Judith Baca's painting, "Triumph of the

[13] *This Bridge Called My Back,* co-edited with Cherríe Moraga (1981) was her first anthology. In (2002) she co-edited *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation* with AnaLouise Keating.

Heart," is featured on the front cover of this anthology. Baca's image consists of four *mujeres* who vary in racial and physical features holding lit candles, three with tears in their eyes.[14] This image serves as a remedy for the reader as she or he enters and exits a text that holds and creates space for intense dialogue and discussion of forms of racism and sexism.

Another example of Anzaldúa's political work through anthology comes from *Haciendo Caras* (1990), which expresses collective, yet distinct voices, experiences, and critical assessments of racism and sexism. Its creation coincided with her teaching of "Women of Color in the U.S." in Women's Studies at University of California—Santa Cruz. Anzaldúa comments on the impetus for this text:

> The urge to anthologize, to bring more voices to the foreground, grew stronger. Then, in the spring of 1988, when I came to Santa Cruz to teach for UC Santa Cruz's Women's Studies, I realized there were no recent anthologies of women-of-color writings. I stopped waiting. In the midst of my unpacking, I worked around the clock frantically locating, reading, copying, compiling and organizing material for a class reader which I titled *Haciendo Caras*. On the last day of this whirlwind task, Chela Sandoval and I sat down on my living room floor and together we looked at my six piles of papers. What was left after discarding and rearranging became a framework for this book.[15]

[14] The image is from her participatory mural project located in Los Angeles, "The World Wall: A Vision of the Future Without Fear," also known as "The Great Wall of Los Angeles," which began in 1967. Mesa-Bains (1991) in her article "El Mundo Femenino: Chicana Artist of the Movement—A Commentary On Development and Production," says of Baca's mural, "In its portrayal of the history of Los Angeles the mural presents a panorama of the social struggle and disenfranchisement of diverse racial and ethnic groups" (133). Explaining the collaborative nature of Baca's creative production, Mesa Bains (1991) says, "[h]er conceptualization and production of murals involves historians, cultural informants, storytellers, neighborhood residents, young artists, and others in a collaborative venture to identify issues, images, and narratives" (133).

[15] Anzaldúa 1990: xvii.

In was in spring 1988 that Anzaldúa taught "Women of Color in the U.S.: With a focus on Colored Feminism—Theory and Literature."[16] One key theme of the class was a "[c]ritique of colonization and its ills, especially racism," and potential guest speakers included Norma Alarcón, Paula Gunn Allen, and Cherríe Moraga. Clearly, this course was reflective of a social movement in the making, providing a home and space within the academy.

Whereas women of color feminists sought the inclusion of gender, sexuality, and race as a form of social transformation, their heirs argued for the acknowledgement of the continued presence of "colonial legacies," a term they coined, in different variations, to represent the effects of colonization. Alexander and Mohanty (1997), Pérez (1999), Smith (1999) and Cruz-Malavé and Manalansan (2002), feminist and queer of color theorists, draw on the work of Anzaldúa to argue that colonial legacies represent forms of modernity that seep into Chicano studies and queer studies and reproduce violence in the form of misrepresentation and erasure.[17] The continuous exclusion of queer Latina studies in these disciplines continues to perpetuate the legacy of colonization. These legacies of colonization include silences that exist around queerness, silences containing hidden histories that need to be

[16] The required readings for Anzaldúa's course were: *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* by Gloria Anzaldúa, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* by Audre Lorde, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* edited by: Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, and Colored Feminism—Theory and Literature: A Reader.

[17] M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1997) *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*, Emma Pérez (1999) *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History*, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples,* and Cruz-Malavé, Arnaldo and Martin R. Manalansan IV (2002) *Queer Globalizations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism*.

uncovered for the purpose of social transformation. This uncovering unmasks epistemic violences that fail to see women of color or lesbian of color feminist knowledge formations as anchoring feminist theory and practice. Also, this thesis traces the layers of colonization and the silences that surround and perpetuate them over time in relation to the present-day formations of queer Latina and women of color feminist discourses, which challenge the notion that knowledge should be exclusive to the privileged.[18]

The critical task that emerges from the intersections of Queer, Women of Color Feminist, and Latina/o Studies is a decolonization of societal knowledge and consciousness by unearthing, queering, and disrupting hidden histories, thus creating rooted, ancestral or radical knowledge in a subterranean way.[19] In this project I am queering Chicana/o studies and transnationalizing U.S. women of color, which arrives me at a "rooted" methodology that is critically aware of its own politics.

Building on women of color feminists' frameworks that engage the complexities of race, class, gender, and sexuality, I analyze historical, literary,

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[18] Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) illuminates these colonial legacies by showing the connection and distinction between imperialism and colonialism. Smith says, "The concepts of imperialism and colonialism are crucial ones which are used across a range of disciplines, often with meanings which are take for granted. The two terms are interconnected and what is generally agreed upon is that colonialism is but one expression of imperialism. Imperialism tends to be used in at least four different ways when describing the form of European imperialism which 'started' in the fifteenth century: (1) imperialism as economic expansion; (2) imperialism as the subjugation of 'others'; (3) imperialism as an idea or spirit with many forms of realization; and (4) imperialism as a discursive field of knowledge. These usages do not necessarily contradict each other; rather, they need to be seen as analyses which focus on different layers of imperialism" (21). The most striking part of Smith's delineation of imperialism is her assessment that imperialism needs to be seen as a layering, as does colonialism. There are structural conditions of inequality, which allow these legacies to continue to exist in the modern or contemporary.

[19] My use of the term subterranean is inspired and grown from the urban lesbiana filmmaker collective *Mujeres y Cultura Subterrañea*, who write and document stories of survival and creativity in Mexico City.

sociological, as well as other ethnic studies and feminist studies scholarship, and use methods such as oral histories, next to visual representations, archives, and works of art that together map out an emerging analytic interpretive frame.

Queering Chicana Feminism

Feminist of color historian Maylei Blackwell (2003) reminds us that "historiography is a political practice." Blackwell has opposed the Chicano Studies establishment by insisting upon inclusion within conventional historical narratives, which she says have grossly neglected the Chicana feminist perspective.[20] She rearticulates the political perspectives and ideas of Chicana Feminisms by creating oral histories, gathering archives, and documenting the various activisms of Chicana feminists. She contextualizes the history of the first Chicana feminist journal *Encuentro feminíl* and the participation of the editors in major Chicano conferences including the 1969 National Chicano Youth Conference in Denver, as well as the production of Chicana feminist newspapers like *Las Hijas de Cuauhtémoc*:

> These print communities were crucial sites of political struggle over meaning and provided a theoretical and historical basis for the formation of Chicana feminist scholarship. Movement print cultures were used to rework the discursive frames of social struggle to craft new spaces for women within masculinist registers of nationalism.[21]

Blackwell's intervention in the history of male Chicano politics is significant and creates a path for continued disruptions to accepted Chicano narratives through the

[20] Blackwell 2003: 81. Maylei Blackwell (2003) "Contested Histories: La Hijas de Cuauhtémoc, Chicana Feminisms, and Print Culture in the Chicano Movement, 1968-1973," in *Chicana Feminisms: A Critical Reader.*
[21] Blackwell 2003: 80.

introduction and engagement of queer Latina and Chicana history. Similarly, feminists of color sociologists are helpful in the ways they have argued for innovative forms of integrating a race, class, and gender analysis into feminist sociological research.[22]

This dissertation documents the work of Chicana feminists to change the exclusionary nature of the establishment through the introduction of a new language that reflects Chicano feminist social and political identity.[23] Pérez (1999), Sandoval (2000), and Blackwell (2003), among others, evaluate Chicano Studies from a non-national or non-male-centered perspective. In *Sitios y lenguas*, Pérez discusses the need for Chicana lesbians to project new sources of language in order to better articulate their own realities and histories.[24]

To queer Chicano History requires a revamping of it foundational tenants, not only for the purpose of inclusion, but also for the recovery of ancestral memories and practices of ceremony. These memories and practices are important to the historical formation of Mexican-American identities and forms of racialization. This dissertation understands the western imperialism conceptualized as part of the heteronormative regime that continues colonial legacies and needs to be queered or unraveled.

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[22] Collins (1986, 2002); Martinez (1996).
[23] Peréz (1999), Sandoval (2000), and Blackwell (2003), among others, changed the face of Chicano Studies to one that is not nation or male-centered. These works, particularly in their treatment of history, need to be taken as serious critiques of the field. Chicano movement narratives focus on internalized colonialism with a blind spot to the colonial legacies they were employing through their patriarchy and sexism.
[24] Peréz (1998) "Irigaray's Female Symbolic in the Making of Chicana Lesbian *Sitios y Lenguas* (Sites and Discourses)," in *Living Chicana Theory*.

The concept of "queering" or disrupting the norm is central to this dissertation. Queer scholar Michael Warner (1993) suggests that queer should be thought beyond its connection to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender communities, and as a disruption of the norm—a queering of the heteronormative.[25] Because norms are mechanisms of regulation (often of the criminal or queer), they enforce a particular form of whiteness in the U.S.—an "American" whiteness that demands assimilation. Warner (1993) discusses "queering" as disruptive to the idea of the gender binary, and as an agent which brings the notion of a possible third gender or a non-normative gender to the forefront. Queering as such can call for a societal shift. Part of the work of this dissertation is to suggest that queering can help shift the terrain of Latino studies because it asks the discipline to expand.

Muñoz (1999) discusses the notion of bringing together queers of color as a formation that dis-identifies with the norm. He works extends from *This Bridge Called My Back* to build a queer of color politics of performance that challenges white, mainstream, heterosexual formations. While his work is recognized in the field of Queer Studies, it remains marginal to the field of Latino Studies. Its perceived irrelevance reflects structures of power that centralizes narratives of singular histories and identity formations, neglecting the theoretical importance of differences.

While the concept of dis-identification remains on the margins, there is a slowly growing analytical engagement with the rooted theories put forward by the organic intellectuals whose work appears in the now classic text *This Bridge Called my Back:*

[25] Warner 2003: xvi. Michael Warner (1993) "Introduction," *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory.*

Writings by Radical Women of Color.[26] The themes of racism, homophobia, and colonialism critically engaged and analyzed in this decolonial anthology have provided generations of students in feminist studies, critical race studies, and cultural studies insights into the formation of a productive analytic and political framework, a framework that requires an interconnected analysis of multiple and separate forms of oppression.[27]

The work of these scholars challenges the authority of quantitative methods, which do not adequately address the intricacies of silence or the knowledge formations of Latina lesbians, who have rarely been the focus of quantitative work. Following the methodological insights of queer of color and feminist studies, I found that qualitative methods such as interviews, formal and informal conversations, oral histories, and archival searches were more important methods for accessing historical knowledge about the social networks of lesbians of color.[28] Archival searches in personal collections allowed for a rare opportunity to imagine creative processes and see documentation that reflects their visions.[29] Many of these documents are one-

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[26] Some notable articles and essays are: Alarcón (1990b) "The Theoretical Subject(s) of This Bridge Called My Back and Anglo-American Feminism"; Short (1994) "Coming to the Table: The Differential Politics of This Bridge Called My Back"; Duffield and Cespedes (2002) "Practicing Transgression Radical Women of Color for the 21st Century." Gonzalez (2002) "This bridge called NWSA"; Sudbury (2003) "Toward a Holistic Anti-Violence Agenda: Women of Color as Radical Bridge-Builders"; Alexander (2005) "Remembering *This Bridge*, Remembering Ourselves," among others.

[27] It may seem contradictory to interconnect oppression that are "separate," however, part of what scholars of women of color feminisms see is the productivity of thinking distinct entities together to see their intersections.

[28] For example, I was fortunate to interview Juanita Ramos, editor of *Compañeras: Latina Lesbians* 1994, and Carla Trujillo, editor of *Chicana Lesbians: The Girls Our Mothers Warned us About* 1991. See chapter four.

[29] I cite in this dissertation from the personal archives of: Gloria Anzaldúa (Texas), Yolanda Retter (Los Angeles).

page flyers, newsletters, and booklets, sources that are not academic or scholarly but remain significant in the specific content and context they represent.[30] I searched for or traced the social movements associated with both visible and silenced political formations of lesbians of color and radical women of color. I found that the spaces of resistance used by queer Latina artists and writers held a critique of colonialism, colonization, and capitalism.

Established societal norms such as racism, classism, and heterosexism are scrutinized through story, for example, in *This Bridge Called My Back*. However, it proved difficult to find sociological studies on these women of color who existed at the margins, at the crossroads of normalized categories of race, class, gender and sexuality. It is arguable that women of color, particularly "radical women of color," are part of a "deviant" class within society. By studying a project of queer hidden history, I show how deviant populations are covered up and concealed in dominant narratives of history, and when they are visible they are generally criminalized. Many of these stories have not been because people are not seen as political agents. It is significant then to document stories that illuminate the stories and perspectives of subaltern or marginal populations. I attempt to shed light a specific concern for the case of queer Latinas, Latina lesbianas, lesbians of color, and women of color.

[30] Throughout this document I will note the date of the document at hand since part of my project is to acknowledge the multiple timeframes and emergences of feminists of color, lesbians of color, women of color critiques and formations.

Latina/o Sexuality Literature: Implications for Queer Latina/o History

In this section, I review literature on gender and sexuality as it relates to queer Latina knowledges. There is a small but continuously growing in the field of queer Latinas sexualities. A recent contribution has been the 2010 anthology *Latina/o Sexualities*, edited by Marysol Asencio. Pablo Mitchell's (2010) key essay in this anthology uses two "bookend" historical events, the 1898 Spanish-American War and the 1965 Immigration Act, to map the scarce scholarship on Latina/o Sexualities. Mitchell examines both "sexuality scholarship within Latina/o history" and "the place of Latina/os in the history of American sexualities."[31] Due to his intentional scope of analyzing materials during a specific time frame, Mitchell does not give attention to the "vitality" of scholarship on Latina/o sexuality produced after 1965. His research points to the fact that "for much of the twentieth century, Latina/os sexual practices, understandings, and politics have remained largely from historians."[32] Mitchell continues, "This absence has occurred even as the field of Latina/o history has prospered," and when topics such as "Latina/o labor history" and "the history of Latina/o political activity" receive increasing attention.[33] It is also significant to note that the studies which have been conducted in the field of Latina/o sexuality during the time frame Mitchell outlines have focused on "personal narratives" or "prostitution and other forms of sexual violence, sterilization and birth control

[31] Mitchell 2010: 38-39. Pablo Mitchell (2010) "Making Sex Matter: Histories of Latina/o Sexualities, 1898 to 1965," In *Latina/o Sexualities: Probing Powers, Passions, Practices, and Policies*.
[32] Mitchell 2010: 40.
[33] Mitchell 2010: 40.

research, notions of female sexual purity, and sex in popular culture."[34] He asserts that "some of the field's most thoughtful and compelling historical work" has been based on oral history research.

Mitchell's research is significant for the arguments of this dissertation because it affirms the difficulty in finding research and documentation focused on queer, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender in Latina/o communities. While his larger argument concerning the scarcity of sexuality studies in Latina/o studies of history also affirms claims that have been made by Latina and Chicana scholars about the pervasive silence of sexuality within the field of Latina/o studies, particularly studies that focus on "deviant" sexualities or forms of sexuality which challenge colonial heteronormative roles of sexual expression, such as lesbianism. To study the history of Latina/o lesbianism on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border is to affirm the existence of this form of sexuality prior to the rise of lesbian and gay social movement in the U.S. (or the Stonewall riots of 1969), which gave rise to the mainstream visibility of alternative genders and sexualities.

In her study of Latina lesbian migrants, Katie Acosta (2008) builds on Anzaldúa's formulation of the borderlands space, particularly her notions of mestiza consciousness and the "Shadow Beast." She makes the claim that "Lesbianas build borderland spaces by creating families of choice apart from their families of origin,"

[34] Mitchell 2010: 40.

and builds on Anderson's work to name these spaces as "imagined communities."[35] Acosta suggests that Latina lesbian migrant exist within "imagined" spaces "because lesbianas often romanticize these spaces as intertwined networks of protection and sisterhood without interrogating their hierarchical social and structural features."[36] This points to one area where Acosta's analysis falls short, as she does not engage with the complexities of U.S. women of color feminisms, particularly queer women of color feminisms, which formed from consciousness-raising groups and constantly did the work of acknowledging forms of privilege in the networks they were forming.

Despite this shortcoming in Acosta's analysis, she sheds light on the experiences of Latina lesbian migrants by pointing to a gap in knowledge practices. She writes, "While scholars have advanced a gendered analysis of migrant experience and taken steps in sexualizing and racializing our understanding, the narratives of Latina lesbians are still nearly absent in social science scholarship."[37] As a result, she conducted "15 in-depth interviews with Latina lesbians living in the northeast," seven with "undocumented or non-English speaking Latinas" and therefore added to the literature of sexuality studies in relation to Latina lesbian migrants.[38]

[35] Acosta 2008: 640. Katie Acosta (2008) "Lesbianas in the Borderlands: Shifting Identities and Imagined Communities" in *Gender and Society.* Anderson (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*.
[36] Acosta 2008: 640.
[37] Acosta 2008: 642.
[38] Acosta 2008: 643.

Another important contribution of Acosta's article is her analysis that the migration of these Latinas put them in contact with a "new racial hierarchy."[39] Acosta wrote,

> They become "people of color," regardless of what their prior experiences had been. These Latinas develop a mestiza consciousness after migration, the result of internal contradiction of their original racial/ethnic identities. They are racialized into a U.S. system in which they become "minorities" and are lumped together under the pan-ethnic category of "Latino." The result is a fragmentation of the Self.[40]

Acosta's analysis of Latina lesbian migrants having to adhere to a U.S. racialized system that is distinct from those in their respective countries (including Guatemala, Peru, and Puerto Rico) is helpful in understanding these women's experiences. However, her suggestion that the formation of a "mestiza consciousness" and "fragmentation of the Self" occurs at the point of migration contradicts her own evidence, which shows they left their countries of origin to distance themselves from family who took issue with their sexuality: "By distancing themselves from their families of origin, lesbianas construct a borderland space to express their sexuality."[41] It seems that Latina lesbian migrants would already be experiencing a "fragmentation of the Self" in their process of choosing to leave their families due to fears around reactions of their sexuality.

Like Acosta, Lionel Cantú's "Entre Hombres/Between Men" (2000) focuses on an immigrant queer of color community. He complicates the micro/macro binary

[39] Acosta 2008: 646.
[40] Acosta 2008: 646.
[41] Acosta 2008: 640.

to illustrate the complexities and contradictions within the identity formations of "gay Latino men."[42] His ethnographic work challenges representations of Latinos as a "homogenous entity" and Latino culture as "fixed or static."[43] His analysis is conducted with subjects in the U.S. (specifically a community service organization in Santa Ana, California), yet he employs a transnational migration lens. Countering studies of culture that pathologize "U.S. minorities or non-Western peoples,"[44] Cantú's work offers a theoretical contribution through his analysis of homophobia and sexism as structures that shape society. He suggests, "by examining homophobia and sexism as structural issues, as is done with poverty and racism, [we can] better understand how the social locations of gay Latino men relate to social inequalities."[45] Through his ethnographic data, Cantú maps significant differences around class, language, and migration status that structurally shape the masculinities, identities and every day realities of "*hombres gay*." He concludes by asserting that "What is needed is a move toward a 'political economy of identity' that examines the multiple sites of power with historic specificity at the same time as it unveils commonalities across *intersecting* dimensions of power."[46] This study is helpful to the arguments of this dissertation because it gives attention to the structural implications of homophobia and heteronormativity.

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[42] Building from the fields of feminist studies, anthropology, sociology among others Cantú (2000) shows the promise of an analysis that simultaneously maps the structures of inequality and the everyday experiences of resistance within those structures. Lionel Cantú (2000) "Entre Hombres/Between Men: Latino Masculinities and Homosexualities," in *Gay Masculinities.*
[43] Cantú 2000: 227. Ethnographic methods used included: field notes, participant-observation, focus groups, and in-depth personal interviews.
[44] Cantú 2000: 228.
[45] Cantú 2000: 242.
[46] Cantú, 2000: 242. Original italics.

The methodological work of queering archives and histories within the growing field of Latina/o sexuality studies is also significant to the work of this dissertation.[47] Queer of color scholars have done the work to build this knowledge by undertaking alternative and creative ways of building, re-defining archives, and queering archives. Horacio Roque Ramírez's article, "A Living Archive of Desire: Teresita la Campesina and the Embodiment of Queer Latino Community Histories" (2005), is an important articulation that maps tensions, dialogues, and stories within historically diasporic and transnational communities. Ramírez (2005) argues, "Storytelling, autobiography, and the *testimonio* tradition have a central place in history and theory."[48] He centers his essay on the "life and memory" of Teresita la Campesina (1940-2002), a Latina male-to-female (MTF) transgender performance artist who impersonated Lola Beltrán and was living with AIDS. Ramírez (2005) argues, "Her life history frames a living archive of evidence that responds to both the whiteness of queer archiving practices and the heteronormativity of Latino historiography."[49] To declare Teresita a living archive is to revere her as a carrier of historical knowledge, where the evidence is her lived experience in connection with a mapping of the social and political location or region. Ramírez's approach to studying queer of color history

[47] Yolanda Retter (1997) "Lesbian Spaces in Los Angeles, 1970-90," in *Queers in Space: Communities, Public Places, Sites of Resistance*, Cindy Cruz (2001) "Toward an Epistemology of a Brown Body" in *Qualitative Studies in Education*, Tim Retzloff (2007) "Eliding Trans Latino/a Queer Experience in U.S. LGBT history: José Sarria and Sylvia Rivera Reexamined" in *Centro Journal*, and Jeanne Córdova (2011) *When We Were Outlaws: A Memoir of Love and Revolution*.
[48] Ramírez 2005: 116. Horacio N. Roque Ramírez (2005) "A Living Archive of Desire: Teresita La Campesina and the Embodiment of Queer Latino Community Histories," in *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*.
[49] Ramírez 2005: 113.

is particularly influential in framing my inquiries in chapters three and four of this dissertation.

Transntionalizing U.S. Women of Color Feminism

This project addresses diasporic and transnational communities rooted in parts of Latin America. Anibal Quijano's (2007) conceptualizations of "colonial structure of power" provides an analytic framework from which to map the complexities of histories, memories, and silences.[50] This is part of a colonial legacy that is addressed by the truth-telling writings of women of color feminisms or U.S. third world feminisms. By demonstrating that there is a third-world that lives in poverty, terror, and disease within the U.S. is a significant critique of the nation state. An important component of women of color feminisms has been its long-standing critique against U.S. imperialism, war, colonialism, genocide, slavery and their legacies that continue to exist in the modern world.[51]

Women of color feminisms, particularly radical women of color feminist epistemologies, have made major academic contributions to the fields of Chicano studies, Queer studies, and Women's studies, yet continue to lack recognition, in part due to the hierarchies within the academy that rely on lingering notions of scientific

[50] Quijano (2007), p. 168. Anibal Quijano (2000) "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America" in *Nepantla: Views from South.*
[51] Angela. Y. Davis (1981) *Women, Race, and Class*, Andrea Smith (2005) *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide,* Maylei Blackwel (2011) *Chicana Power! Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement*.

"objectivity" from supposedly neutral locations.[52] Women of color feminists are not trying to figure whether their work is political. It is in fact their "political projects" that call for rigorous methodological designs that are attentive to interdisciplinarity, their own geopolitical location, and complex analyses of difference, the everyday, and the structural. There is a vision of interconnectedness in many women of color feminist frameworks, including explicit linkages to other peoples and lands, as well as connections between capitalism, colonialism, imperialism, law, labor, nation-state formations, policy, and racism that are usually narrated as unrelated. A major methodological intervention of the women of color feminist epistemological tradition is the project of re-mapping dominant historiographies to make visible the tensions of race, class, gender and sexualities.

This dissertation agrees with transnational feminist thinking that argues for a critical analysis of the nationalism of U.S. women's studies.[53] Women of color knowledge formations are not nationalist, although they were formed in relation to women's studies. The very configuration of women of color defies nationalist boundaries. We must remember that certain radical strands of women of color feminisms had links to international movements.[54] Although the term international has been replaced with transnational in the current moment, theorists need to consider the contributions of women of color and U.S. third world feminisms in their

[52] Donna Haraway (1988) "Situated Knowledges."
[53] Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan eds. (2006) *An Introduction to Women's Studies: Gender in a Transnational World*, and Ella Shohat (2001) "Area Studies, Transnationalism, and the Feminist Production of Knowledge" in *Signs*.
[54] Blackwell's (n.d.) scholarship on the Third World Women's Alliance and Francis Beal illuminates this argument.

formulation of transnational feminist theory. Much of the literature that forms the canon or central texts of the women of color feminisms field of study critiques the hegemony of mainstream white feminism by addressing western and colonial forms of thought and practice.[55]

Women of color and U.S. third world feminisms are U.S.-based—a fact which naturally imposes limitations. These limitations, however, do not preclude an attentiveness to relations between peoples, nations, and genders outside their own specific formation. What is exemplary about this site of knowledge production is the reflexivity practiced by these theoreticians—they acknowledge their political and social locations and boundaries and recognize this in their attention to methodology. It follows then, through an awareness of self and difference, that women of color knowledge production rely heavily on analyses that work less within the frame of white feminism and more within world-wide decolonizing movements (Sandoval 2000). The work of women of color has continuously been attentive to relations within, among, and beyond the U.S., as the ancestry of most women of color is traceable to land outside the borders of the U.S. Native and first nation women who are indigenous to the land the U.S. claims as its own are a major exception.

To demonstrate further my understanding of feminisms of color, I turn to Chela Sandoval's early articulations of U.S. third world feminism. An initial articulation of Sandoval's theorizations of U.S. third world women theory and

[55] For example Mohanty's (1992) classic essay, "Under Western Eyes Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," which was republished many times including in her own, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* 2003 as the opening chapter.

method are found in her report on the racism of the 1981 National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) Conference, entitled "Women Respond to Racism" (1990).[56] Sandoval, who served as the Secretary to the National Third World Women's Alliance, explains that the 300 women of color who attended the conference were offered only one option for the Consciousness Raising (CR) session that was required of all attendees, while "white" women "were offered a series of lists signifying their diversity and emphasizing their choices" such as "'white/immigrant,' 'white/upper-class,' 'white/working-class'…and so on," while women of color were only offered one choice: "women of color."[57] Sandoval documents the conflict that arose when women of color were technically placed "under one, seemingly homogenous category" at this predominately white conference that was attempting to confront racism.[58]

According to Sandoval, there was no ready-made framework for dialogue for those 300 women in 1981. What ensued was a critical discussion that interrogated the category "women of color" next to "third world" women. They asked, "Is it possible that our similarities and differences be named under a single name?"[59] Within this intensive space of dialogue they acknowledged "a solidarity amongst the

[56] The version cited here is from a reprint in Anzaldúa's (1990) *Making Face, Making Soul,* where Sandoval's article is titled "Feminism and Racism: A Report on the 1981 National Women's Studies Association Conference." The original article dated 1982 is titled "The Struggle Within: Women Respond to Racism" and was part of the Occasional Paper Series of the Center for Third World Organizing. It is also significant to note that there was a panel featuring contributors to *This Bridge* at the NWSA in Kansas, 1979, prior to the publication of the text. The participation and engagement by feminists of color with the NWSA shows that this was a vibrant place of debate and gathering for critical feminist thought. "The Conference Within the Conference: U.S. Third World Feminism" was inspired from the NWSA in 1981.
[57] Sandoval 1990: 60.
[58] Sandoval 1990: 60.
[59] Sandoval 1990: 62.

group."[60] This political solidarity or "common ground"[61] destabilizes simple forms of unity and sisterhood.

From Sandoval's work we see that the site of women of color and U.S. third world feminisms has historically been a site of coalitions and alliances, where there are no simple answers or frameworks for the paradoxes and contradictions that arise, but there is a commitment to accountability and solidarity centered around radical transformation or root work. Sandoval (1990) further reports:

> Our differing opinions seemed to place us in opposition to one another. *We managed this seeming conflict by considering our differences, not as idiosyncratic and personal, but as a rich source of tactical and strategic responses to power*. This positive perception of difference is not divisive, so there is no need to deny our differences or make them invisible. Instead these once personal responses to racism and oppression can be recognized as new weaponry in the ideological warfare necessitated by power struggle.[62]

Similarly, Audre Lorde (1984a) illuminates the importance of "difference" in the development of paradigms that seek to democratize social transformation.

> Difference must be not merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic. Only then does the necessity for interdependency become unthreatening. Only within that interdependency of different struggles, acknowledged and equal, can the power to seek new ways of being in the world generate, as well as the courage and sustenance to act where there are no charters.[63]

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[60] Sandoval 1990: 63.

[61] Sandoval states, "Many ideas were set forth in the attempt to define the 'common ground' of our unity, although one particular vision prevailed over all the others—a vision which translates into a shared understanding of the workings of power. This 'shared understanding' becomes a theoretical model which identifies the boundaries within which human subjectivity is constituted. Further, this theoretical model has the capability of allowing the connections to be forged across class, race, culture, and gender differences, and it is a model which does not privilege any one of those categories" (Sandoval 1990: 63).

[62] Sandoval 1990: 67. My emphasis.

[63] Lorde 1984a: 111. In her essay, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," in *Sister Outsider.*

Women's Studies as an interdisciplinary field—through its token recognition of women of color feminist frameworks and non-interrogation of its whiteness—struggles to provide students with the necessary tools to engage in productive dialogues and analyses of race, racism, and anti-racist work. In 1982, Sandoval wrote, "For even one year later the question posed by Audre Lorde in her opening speech lingers on: 'Do the women of the Academy really *want* to confront racism?'"[64] Arguably, in our current moment, this continues to be a relevant and revealing question. Frequently, discussions around race, structural forms of racism, and whiteness become extremely personalized or go unquestioned. Yet one of the profound messages women of color feminisms offer is the importance of the critique that holds the tensions of multiple forms of oppression. There is no question that history has been narrated in a manner which excluded the voices of women of color—the key is to proceed in a manner which creates space for that which remains hidden, suppressed, or unseen due to structures of inequality such as racism and homophobia.

Similarly, a search of ancestries is necessary in the context of queer Latinas since processes of racialization, usually projects of the state,[65] continue to shape identity formation alongside roots, language, and culture. This is a question of generational memory, how stories or histories are passed from one generation to another, particularly for people in diaspora whose histories and knowledges have been destroyed, colonized, or co-opted.

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[64] Sandoval 1990: 56.
[65] Omi, Michael and Howard Winant (1994) *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s.*

Decolonized Sites of Knowledge Formations

This dissertation builds on several contested sites of knowledge formation, not to assert homogeneity, but instead to find or excavate links and interconnections for the purpose of mapping complex alternative genealogies and histories which connect queer Latina subjugated knowledges, histories, and cultural production. It is important to critically interrogate U.S. and transnational historiographies, narratives, and politics by showing interconnections in what otherwise *appear* as singular history, of only one group or people. At times, disciplinarity or adhering to canons of knowledge can reduce an engagement with the intellectual sites or critical formations of women of color feminisms, queer of color critique, and indigenous paradigms, therefore this project argues for more direct engagements with these knowledges.[66]

The scholarship and debates around decolonization are central to the arguments of this dissertation. Our current historical moment reflects a world where movements of decolonization exist simultaneously as colonialism continues to spread through global capitalism, neoliberalism, and exploitation. An important starting point for critiquing the emergence of the U.S. is the discourse of manifest destiny, which was responsible for not only a loss of land and resources and a displacement of

[66] Some important examples of this are: Ferguson (2004), Steven Seidman, ed. (1996) *Queer Theory/Sociology*, John Brown Childs (2003) *Transcommunality: From the Politics of Conversion to the Ethics of Respect,* Herman Gray and Macarena Gómez-Barris, eds. (2010) *Toward a Sociology of the Trace*. For example Ferguson (2004) states, "I have tried not to approach sociology as the discrete history of an academic discipline. Instead, we may read sociology as a discursive and ideological formation that has worked to establish the normative character of U.S. national culture, and has helped narrate and regulate nonheteronormative racial formations" (137).

many peoples, but also a destruction of various cultures, languages, and forms of relations. The legacy of manifest destiny still continues to this day.[67]

Colonization has affected language, in particular the disappearing language of Nahuatl. Cultural activists and trans-border scholars like Anzaldúa (1987) and Bonfil Batalla (1996) use this indigenous language in their narratives and artists. Miller (2008) says of "tribal languages," "The loss of language is the loss of a unique worldview that cannot be transferred to English or any other language."[68] This is significant for the study of queer Latinas histories. What is lost from the primary use of English in the U.S. and the Spanish language in Mexico? From a similar perspective Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o starts his *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (1986) by stating that this will be his last book in English. He was recommitting to writing in his "mother tongue" of Gĩkũyũ. Thiong'o (1986) offers an important reflection on his "colonial school" in Kenya and shows how his educational experience was when the "harmony" of language and community "was broken."[69] Signaling to art and culture as a language allows for an expansion of possibility. In this dissertation I turn to artists who use Mayan symbols, and other forms of ancient or ancestral connections for purposes of creating art and language.[70]

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[67] Laura Gomez (2007) *Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race.*
[68] Miller 2008: 15. Susan Miller (2008) "Native America Writes Back: The Origin of the Indigenous Paradigm in Historiography" in *Wicazo Sa Review.*
[69] Thiong'o 1986: 11. Thiong'o, Ngũgĩ wa (1986) *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*.
[70] Elizabeth Hill Boone and Walter D. Mignolo, eds. (1994) *Writing without Words: Alternative Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes*. This is especially the case in chapter three.

In order to understand fully what is meant by decolonization, it is important to define colonization, which is done succinctly by Waziyatawin and Yellow Bird (2005). They suggest, "Colonization refers to both the formal and informal methods (behaviors, ideologies, institutions, policies, and economies) that maintain the subjugation or exploitation of Indigenous Peoples, lands, and resources."[71] They also define the process of decolonization as "the intelligent, calculated, and active resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetuate the subjugation and/or exploitation of our minds, bodies, and lands, and it is engaged for the ultimate purpose of overturning the colonial structure and realizing Indigenous liberation."[72] While these definitions emerged in the context of Indigenous liberation, it seems that this model for transformation is adaptable within this dissertation for the necessary root work of queer Latinas.

The authors continue,

> [D]ecolonization is not passive; rather, it requires something called *praxis*…In accepting the premise of colonization and working towards decolonization, we are not relegating ourselves to a status as victims. On the contrary, we are actively working toward our own freedom to transform our lives and the world around us. The project that begins with our minds, therefore, has revolutionary potential.[73]

Some important aspects of decolonization that are drawn out by these authors is that even though they believe the "existing system is fundamentally and irreparably flawed," they "are not advocating for the immediate taking up of arms or organization

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[71] Waziyatawin and Yellow Bird 2005: 2. Waziyatawin Angela Wilson and Michael Yellow Bird (2005) *For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook*.
[72] Waziyatawin and Yellow Bird 2005: 2. Also see Frantz Fanon's (1963) *The Wretched of the Earth* foundational text facilitates a deeper analysis of colonial processes.
[73] Waziyatawin and Yellow Bird 2005: 3.

or an Indigenous militia." Instead, they are "advocating peaceful, intelligent, and courageous challenges to the existing institutions of colonialism as well as questioning our own complicity in those institutions."[74] There is a self-reflection that is necessary here for an active social transformation that does not only work to change the exterior, what is outside of us.

To decolonize is to have a heightened consciousness of self, community, social location and interaction so as to not perpetuate and reinforce structures of domination: "Decolonization involves thinking oneself out of the spaces of domination, but always *within* the context of a collective or communal process…This thinking 'out of' colonization happens only though action and reflection, through praxis."[75] Decolonization is directly linked to the way peoples relate to each other and experience geopolitical traumas. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), "an indigenous Maori woman from New Zealand,"[76] describes decolonization as "a process which engages with imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels."[77] It requires a critical thinking of what historically has created a disciplinary site of knowledge, who or what is privileged, who or what remains outside? As she argues, "Western disciplines are as much implicated in each other as they are in imperialism."[78]

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[74] Waziyatawin and Yellow Bird 2005: 4.
[75] Alexander and Mohanty 1997: xxvii.
[76] Smith 1999: 13.
[77] Smith 1999: 20.
[78] Smith 1999: 11. She remarks honestly about the state of indigenous "writing, history and theory," "Frantz Fanon's call for the indigenous intellectual and artist to create a new literature, to work in the cause of constructing a national culture after liberation still stands as a challenge. While this has been taken up by writers of fiction, many indigenous scholars who work in the social and other sciences struggle to write, theorize and research as indigenous scholars" (29).

Scholars who build on Anibal Quijano's (2000) "coloniality of power" offer theorizations of "de-coloniality." Mignolo (2007) cites Quijano's "colonial matrix of power" as having "four interrelated domains," they are:

> control of economy (land appropriation, exploitation of labor, control of natural resources); control of authority (institution, army); control of gender and sexuality (family, education) and control of subjectivity and knowledge (epistemology, education and formation of subjectivity).[79]

Interestingly, Mignolo (2007) cites W.E.B. Dubois and Gloria Anzaldúa as scholars from the U.S. that are part of this "genealogy" of thought.[80] De-coloniality offers important contributions to discussions of colonization and decolonization because there is an insistence on naming the power structures of the coloniality with the purpose of mapping alternative histories. Lugones (2008) critiques Quijano for his "too narrow" understanding "of the oppressive modern/colonial constructions" of gender.[81] As she suggests "Quijano's lenses also assume patriarchal and heterosexual understandings of the disputes over control of sex, its resources, and products."[82] Lugones (2008) opens decolonized sacred space for two-spirit and other non-gender conforming people through her formulation of "modern/colonial gender system" and the close reading of feminist literature.[83] Linking women of color feminisms and

[79] Mignolo 2007: 156. Walter Mignolo (2007) "Introduction: Coloniality of power and de-colonial thinking" in *Cultural Studies.*
[80] Mignolo 2007: 164. Also see, Grosfoguel, Maldonado-Torres, and Saldívar (2005) "Latin@s and the "Euro-American Menace": The Decolonization of the U.S. Empire in the Twenty-First Century" in *Latin@s in the World-System: Decolonization Struggles in the Twenty-First Century U.S. Empire.*
[81] Lugones 2008: 2. María Lugones (2008) "The Coloniality of Gender" in *Worlds & Knowledges Otherwise.*
[82] Lugones 2008: 2.
[83] Lugones 2008: 1.

decolonial literatures opens space for histories that become obscured due to colonial legacies.

Tracing – *Escarvando*

When I think about my ancestors, I wonder how "the queer" expressed themselves—the two-spirited, the trans, the girl-boys, the he-shes, *las otras*, *las raras*. I do not question whether they existed, but rather how they negotiated their existence. Were their methods similar to our current strategies of survival and identification? What roles did they play in their communities? What impact did colonization have on their realities? We will never know the exact answers. The work of tracing, however, makes it possible to piece together expressions that have endured or that have been re-imagined by succeeding generations through cultural production . I explore tracing as a queer historical methodology that allows us to re-root ourselves in the past in order to imagine reflections of ourselves and open possibilities for radical transformation in our present and future.[84]

The methodology of "tracing" or *escarvando* (digging) is productive for unearthing knowledge of historical and ancestral truths, particularly because many of the complications of histories and peoples have been violently destroyed or nearly eliminated, including ancestral memory.[85] Prior to significant interventions by gay and lesbian, feminist, and queer of color scholars, silences, erasures, and exclusions

[84] Spivak (1999). Gayatri Spivak (1999) *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present.*
[85] Sturken (1997). Marita Sturken (1997) *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, The AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering.*

would best describe the written and visible histories of queer Latina(o) communities.[86] Tracing silences of communities of resistance disrupts colonial forms of epistemic violence.[87] Silence is not only connected to absent discourses, but also to social and political exclusions of marginal or "othered" populations and voices. My tracing of these historical narratives primarily takes the form of a critical reading of key texts, archival searches, and formal and informal interviews conducted in California between 2009 and 2011 with queer Latina artists, special archives librarians, and others in the queer community. Threaded together, these narratives collectively comprise an alternative historiography that centers the radical efforts of lesbians of color, Latina lesbianas, queer Latinas, or "third world lesbians" to construct another world.[88]

Conclusion

The collection of scholars outlined here provide tools and insights to search for what is hidden, contested, or not easily seen because, as these authors argue in varying degrees, what is not seen or easily traced holds truth in ways that could disrupt a colonial social order or structure. Particularly important are the interventions that hold the tensions of race and gender along with class and sexuality. Collectively, they make space for sacred sexualities, re-memberings and re-rootings

[86] Nan Alamilla Boyd (2008) "Who Is the Subject? Queer Theory Meets Oral History" in *Journal of the History of Sexuality* and Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy (2006) "Telling Tales: Oral History and the Construction of pre-Stonewall Lesbian History" in *The Oral History Reader, 2nd Edition* show important methodological interventions for queer historiography.
[87] Spivak (1999).
[88] My use of the term "radical" is informed by an urgency found in early women of color feminisms in texts such as *This Bridge Called my Back* 1981.

through cultural production, and create communal or community spaces of healing through cultural memory. The decolonizing of a space is a form of clearing energy, where renewed and restored energy can lead to transformation. This thread of decolonization is one that works to piece together the stories that have been fragmented for queer Latinas due to displacement and forced migration, as well as racialized homophobia and heteropatriarchy.

The chapters of this dissertation each address these themes. The first chapter, "Decolonizing Aztlán: Unraveling Conflicting Colonial Histories of Land and Race to Trace Queer Ancestry," is a historical chapter that works to map forgotten discourses of queer sexualities. It challenges the Chicano nationalist imaginary that suggests land was stolen from Chicanos in 1848 with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. I argue that Chicano/o Studies is created from a foundation of constricted historical narratives that must be decolonized. Although the U.S.-Mexico War had imperialist motivations, an analysis of key texts provides clarification that at minimum the land now known as the U.S. Southwest was shared among various indigenous peoples. It is important to examine processes of racialization imposed by dominant forces of both the Spanish and U.S. nations because each nation-state implemented distinct projects to de-indigenize the people and the land for purposes of profit and capital. The unequal relation between Mexico and the U.S. overshadows historical ancestral truths of connection across the imposed borders. These historical connections across pre-national borders allow space to imagine queer Latina historical narratives.

The second chapter, "Gloria Anzaldúa: Altars, Archives, and Opening up the Mexico-U.S. *Borderlands*," builds on the premise that the multiple formations of the subjectivity of queer Latina are in productive tension with women of color feminisms, particularly the early iterations of this historical project. It focuses on Gloria Anzaldúa's work as an artist and visionary, and includes an analysis of her classic text *Borderlands*, as well as a discussion of her altars and the spiritual practice of building *altares*. Anzaldúa offers these materials as examples of creative forms of knowledge that contribute to building language and methodologies that illuminate visual narratives. This chapter argues that Gloria Anzaldúa produced work to decolonize (heal) the borderlands. Like other early women of color feminists, Anzaldúa did the path-breaking work to build language around emerging identity formations and political projects. They insisted upon creative forms of knowledge that reflected their voices, stories, and legacies of resistance, including auto-teoría, testimonio, letter-writing, and manifestos.

The third chapter, "Queer Latina Cultural Production: Remembering through Oral and Visual Storytelling," centers on the organic and inter-generational efforts of queer Latinas to construct their own narratives and histories through visual representations as a form of decolonizing knowledge and regaining cultural memory. The work of re-membering makes it possible to piece together expressions, theories, and stories that have endured and been re-imagined by succeeding generations via alternative (creative) methodologies, representations that engage the complexities of difference and the interconnections of local and global relations of power, and forms

of cultural production that re-tell history through a subaltern historical lens that creates spaces of transformation and healing. Central to this chapter are queer Indígena artists who create sacred space with their respective artworks, including sculpture, theater production, film, memoir, and painting.

The fourth chapter, "Tracing Latina Lesbiana *Historias* of Visuality, Resistance, and Solidarity" centers on the work of archivists, scholar-activists and a photographer, to create a trajectory of Latina Lesbiana histories that counteract the detrimental and heteropatriarchal ideas that do not give lesbians of color ample space to exist, such as Chicano/a Studies. This chapter argues that the international politics of solidarity formed during the late 1970s and 1980s as a response to patriarchy and militarized rule directly challenged remnants of various forms of colonization and colonial rule by building visibility. The building of archives, the reconstituting of databases, the photographing of Latina Lesbians, and the creation of anthologies and magazines focused on Chicana and Latina Lesbiana stories and perspectives shifted the terrain of historical narratives or historiographies that rendered queer Latinas invisible. I examine these critical interrogations to show how women of color and lesbians of color emerged as a force to map history, culture, and knowledge. This chapter addresses the central question of how Latina Lesbianas do the work of tracing and archiving knowledges.

Chapter One:

Decolonizing Aztlán: Unraveling Conflicting Colonial Histories of Land and Race to Trace Queer Ancestry

This chapter offers a historiography that places in tension the historically intertwined legacies of Chicano Studies and the traumas of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo next to Gloria Anzaldúa's legacies and theories of *Borderlands,* and the complex histories of colonization and racialization that have shaped the realities of "Mexican American" people or Chicanas and Chicanos, "people of the Sun," on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. I argue that a series of interconnected constructed legal borders, colonial violences, and racial divisions work to separate people, their histories, and their ancestry. The unraveling or decolonizing of conflicting histories brings to light hidden histories to open possibilities for mapping and seeing interconnected historical identity formations. I frame my work using the theoretical concepts of "the decolonial imaginary" and "decolonization," which are helpful for unraveling historical silences in Chicano historiographies.[1] By fore-fronting decolonization, this analysis disrupts accepted imaginaries and opens up to a feminist of color consciousness of the borderlands.[2]

The intention of this chapter is not to revisit moments of the past to reconstruct them or romanticize an easy harmony. Instead, the purpose is to see how colonial legacies have limited our perception of the geopolitical locations known as

[1] Building on Chicana historian Emma Pérez (1999, 2003) work of "the decolonial imaginary," I move toward a decolonized queer feminist of color frame or lens for the purposes of tracing ancestry.
[2] Anzaldúa (2007 [1987]) argued for the consideration of ancestry and spirit in the form of ancient female *diosas* in *Borderlands/La Frontera* (and other key works) for an alternative historical analysis of identity formations, cultures, and knowledges.

México, Aztlán, and the U.S. Southwest. I am interested in exploring pre-colonial and pre-national racial and gender formations that existed on these lands in contrast to those that were constructed after conquest and the formation of the nation-state (on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border). Constructed borders constrict imaginings and produce a heteronormative or hyphenated naming of a community or a people. Some central questions are: How and why did Aztlán emerge as a central "sacred" site for the Chicano movement? In what ways did the Chicano movement build itself on limited notions of gender and sexuality, spirituality, and land? How do these legacies plague the knowledge formation of Chicano studies? What does focusing on the "loss of land" due to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 obscure in terms of ancestry in Central Mexico and a shared history with Native people?

An historical inquiry into Aztlán is important to the project of recovering silences about queer Latina sexualities because it proposes a decolonizing of the central tenants of Chicano studies—a field of study that tends to tokenize and exclude based on gender and sexuality. Further unraveling the myth of Aztlán will facilitate a tracing of queer ancestry that is not easily visible in colonial and nation-based legacies of history. Particular understandings of land and race are significant components of Aztlán and form the Chicano history imaginary. Critical understandings of Aztlán by Chicana feminists disrupt this nationalist Chicano imaginary and build toward unraveling unseen histories of queer ancestry and redefining complex understandings of land and race.

In *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (2007), Anzaldúa wrote of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, specifically the U.S. Southwest:

> This land was Mexican once,
>
> was Indian always
>
> and is.
>
> And will be again.[3]

In this short poetic interlude, the word "again" brings us back to the future and past of the Southwest. This land was claimed as a territory of Mexico when it became a nation in 1821.[4] Before this, the U.S. Southwest was within the colonial rule of New Spain as a result of the Spanish conquest in the sixteenth century. After the U.S.-Mexico War (1846-1848) and the implementation of the resulting Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, the Southwest became territory of the U.S. The history of this land therefore shows various forms of militarized occupation over the course of hundreds of years.

In the above-cited passage, Anzaldúa acknowledges what very few Chicanos have—that the land known as the U.S. Southwest is indigenous Native land. This land existed as Mexico from 1821-1848, a total of twenty-seven years. Although it is likely that Chicano or Mexican ancestors inhabited this land, it was consistently

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[3] Anzaldúa 2007, p. 25. In this dissertation, I am quoting from the 3rd edition of *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, it is significant to note that this text was first published in 1987. Bonfil Batalla's (1996) *México Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization,* another key text for this chapter, was written in a similar timeframe, "between May 1985 and April 1987" (xix).

[4] Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821, specifically September 16th. It was in 1821 when New Spain became Mexico. Mexico had only been a nation for 25 years before the official beginning of the war in 1846. The "boundaries of Texas" were being negotiated as early as 1828, a mere seven years after the new nation of Mexico had been granted rule over the land (Del Castillo 1990). Richard Griswold Del Castillo (1990) *The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: A Legacy Of Conflict*.

shared with other indigenous peoples, a fact that is elided in discussions of Aztlán. Although Native history is not the focus of this chapter, the work of sociologist John Brown Childs on "transcommunality" alerts us to the possibility of exploring shared histories of distinct peoples to fully understand structures of racism and colonization.[5]

I ground my analysis in a queer feminist critique of Chicano Studies, the Chicano movement, and other representations of heteronormative Chicanismo. I see this historical analysis as building from other forms of "Xicana root work" that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s.[6] The conceptual frame of Chicana with an "X" or Xicana is borrowed from a generation of writers, artists, and scholars who mapped out a feminist critique of Chicanismo and emphasized the indigenous and *la mujer* within this identity formation. The work of this generation includes Ana Castillo's *Massacre of the Dreamers: Essays on Xicanisma* (1994), Moraga and Rodriguez's "Mission Statement" for La Red Xicana Indígena (2007), and Ester Hernandez's art piece that uses the "X" in its title, *La Virgen de Guadalupe Defendiendo los Derechos de los Xicanos* (1975).[7] Artist and scholar Amalia Mesa-Bains (1991) has argued that Hernandez's artwork "breaks the traditional role of the Virgin de Guadalupe as icon and repositions her as a feminist assertation," and that her "Guadalupe Karate Fighter" is one of two "signature pieces of her generation."[8] This vision of Xicana

[5] Brown Childs (2003).
[6] My use of "root work" evokes the Xicana feminist trace of ancestral memories through present day representations or stories that disrupt dominant nationalist or male-centered narratives of history.
[7] Ana Castillo's *Massacre of the Dreamers: Essays on Xicanisma* (1994), Moraga and Rodriguez's "Mission Statement" for La Red Xicana Indígena (2007), and Ester Hernandez's art piece that uses the "X" in its title, *La Virgen de Guadalupe Defendiendo los Derechos de los Xicanos* (1975).
[8] Mesa-Bains 1991: 137.

feminists or queer Xicanas assists in rethinking the histories of land, race, gender, and sexuality.

Critiques of Chicano Studies by Queer Chicana Theorists

The nation-centered heteronormative Chicano movement built itself on limited notions of gender and sexuality, spirituality, and land; these legacies plague current knowledge formation of Chicano Studies. Chicana lesbian scholar Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano (1999) poses a significant challenge to the field of Chicana/o studies by suggesting that Chicano Studies is a site that can potentially do the work of reconfiguring its central tenants and incorporating a meaningful analysis of sexuality instead of the typical "add-on" technique or additive model. She argues that this reconfiguration would require a thorough examination of nationalism. Yarbro-Bejarano's critique of the notion that race equals family is particularly insightful:

> nationalism can simultaneously reinscribe the functions of the state within its own narratives of resistance, by prescribing its own ideas of the ideal social formation and the ideal subject and setting the parameters for acceptable forms and images of national identity. This internal repression often occurs in narratives of the family, in which our self-imaginings are cast in patriarchal and heterosexist moulds that restrict the possible gamut of roles for women *and* men.[9]

As part of her recommendation to the intellectual field of Chicana/o Studies, Yarbro-Bejarano encourages Chicanas and Chicanos "to retain the contestatory critique of U.S. state domination, while exercising increased vigilance over the ways our own

[9] Yarbro-Bejarano 1999: 336. Original emphasis. Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano (1999) "Sexuality and Chicana/o Studies: Toward a Theoretical Paradigm for the Twenty-First Century" in *Cultural Studies*.

narratives can dominate and exclude."[10] In particular, she is concerned with challenging what is considered "normative" in terms of race, class, and sexuality.

Although she does not discuss colonial relations, Yarbro-Bejarano's critique nevertheless undergirds the arguments of this dissertation about the decolonization of Chicana/o Studies because it questions the central historical tenants on which the field and related fields of study were formed. She asserts that "[t]he stakes in the theoretical expansion of Chicana/o studies as an academic discipline are particularly high for lesbians and gays of colour, given the exclusionary politics of domination that have characterized the histories of both women's studies and American ethnic studies."[11]

In signaling the possibilities of this field of study, Yarbro-Bejarano writes, "Chicana/o studies can be an ideal site for contesting rather than reproducing hegemonic scripts such as male or white supremacy, upper-class superiority or compulsory heterosexuality."[12] Chicana and Latina feminists, particularly those who incorporate sexuality into their scholarship, have contributed to revamping the field to the standard that Yarbro-Bejarano proposed here. Yarbro-Bejarano articulates a central tenant of women of color feminisms, that is, the constant analysis of the intertwined hegemonies of race, class, gender, and sexuality in order to reconfigure power relations that tend to favor the nationalist male heteropatriarchal subject in historical narratives.

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[10] Yarbro-Bejarano 1999: 336.
[11] Yarbro-Bejarano 1999: 339.
[12] Yarbro-Bejarano 1999: 341.

Building on Yarbro-Bejarano, Historian Deena González (1991) offers a *testimonio* of homophobia that offers compelling evidence of the need to reform Chicano Studies. In 1991, González reported that her comments at the National Association of Chicano Studies (NACS) were a "strategic intervention" in the organization due to its is "deeply rooted" homophobia, an ideology that is "so pervasive," González argues, "that the needs, desires, ideas, and skills of gay and lesbian Chicanas/os are systematically overlooked, denied, and trivialized."[13] González illuminates her arguments by relaying the story of a Chicana lesbian administrator who was not publically out due to a "horrible attack on her presumed sexuality" in the 1950s. González explains,

> This woman had never revealed to anyone, except her lovers, that she was a lesbian. She said she had never even imagined doing that because in the late '50s she had been silenced, labeled, and harassed by two Chicano colleagues who had written a memo suggesting that her vote on their search committee was founded on her problematic identity as a lesbian. How they knew of her sexual preference, or as she called it, her private life, was unclear, but the fear engendered by the accusation, and her closeted life thereafter, she believed, were the choices she had available, the only choices.[14]

This narrative demonstrates the years of silence around queer sexuality in the academy, particularly when an environment is characterized by "patriarchy and misogyny" and "is supplemented in steady doses" by "heterosexism—that hegemonic

[13] González 1991: 91. This association has been renamed the National Association for Chicano and Chicana Studies (NACCS), due to the struggle to make Chicana scholarship visible within this intellectual space. Deena González (1991) "Malinche as Lesbian: A Reconfiguration of 500 Years of Resistance" in *California Sociologist.*

[14] González 1991: 92. A similar case is found in the narrative of Anna NietoGomez who in her letter in response to being fired from the Chicano studies department at California State University, Northridge alluded to be let go, despite her success in teaching Chicana studies, due to rumors that she was a lesbian. Blackwell (2003) and others have labeled this a form of "lesbian baiting."

ideology that says all people are heterosexual."[15] Although Chicano/a Studies in general and the NACCS organization are now in a different moment than the grim situation González addressed in 1991, her provocative questions have not yet been answered. She asks, "Can you imagine a NACS conference whose topic is queer theory and its impact on the discipline? Where would Chicana literature be without lesbian writers, poetry without Chicana lesbian poets?"[16] González's final question points directly to the arguments of this dissertation, the importance of acknowledging that foundational Chicana writers and poets are queer, and that their lesbianism directly sharpens their critiques of patriarchy and misogyny, which they work to dispel. Chicana lesbian writers, theorists, and poets have historically worked to decolonize Chicano Studies intellectual spaces by complicating its foundation tenants.

Building on this broader context of a decolonized Chicana/o Studies, this chapter places in tension three interconnected legacies or constructed imaginaries: (1) the heteronormative formation of Chicano Studies and its reliance on the construction of Aztlán in the U.S. Southwest, (2) the U.S. colonial history of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the complicated and violent formation of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, and (3) the conquest of central México and the process of "de-Indianization" in larger Mexico. Chicana feminist analyses, including the concept of "*mita y mita*" from Anzaldua's *Borderlands/La Frontera* (2007), are critical in

[15] González 1991: 93.
[16] González 1991: 96.

queering these historic temporalities and imaginings that are often too narrow, and that disregard the "female" and queer forms of ancestry.[17]

My research was a process of digging (*escarvando*) and unearthing historical narratives that at times contradict one another, and in other instances erase one other. I demonstrate how analyses of these layers of the dominant legacies or imaginaries allow for the unraveling of rigid boundaries within Chicano historical narratives. These narratives adhere to a heteronormative conception of the Chicano family and community that tends to tokenize Chicana and Latina women, instead of seeing their work as artists, leaders, and visionaries. Because imaginaries of racialization and "loss of land" were constructed by colonial impulses within the Chicano movement, impulses that close off connections to non-patriarchal histories, the central tenants of Chicano history, like that of the Chicano movement, are dependent on the mythical idea of Aztlán to heal the trauma of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. I argue that the focus on the legacies of the U.S.-Mexico war is limited because it overlooks the Spanish conquest in central Mexico as a significant moment of colonization for Chicanos. Critically revisiting the history of Mesoamerica, particularly from a feminist perspective, makes indigenous and queer ancestry become increasingly makes indigeous and queer ancestry central to the story of the 'Mexican-American.'

Complicating Chicano Histories

Chicano Studies, which was highly influenced by the emerging Chicano movement, centers Aztlán and the Aztecs as foundational narratives. Leading

[17] Anzaldúa 2007: 41. Anzaldúa translates "'*mita y 'mita*" into "half and half" someone who is in between genders (41).

Chicano literary scholar Rudolfo Anaya wrote in his essay, "Aztlán: A Homeland Without Boundaries" (1989) about the importance of naming Aztlán as a "homeland" for the Chicano movement in "the late 1960s."[18] He comments that it "was a spontaneous act which took place throughout the Southwest, and the feat was given authenticity in a meeting that was held in Denver in 1969 to draft *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán.*"[19] Anaya explains the implications of naming the Chicano movement:

> The naming ceremony creates a real sense of nation, for it fuses the spiritual and political aspirations of a group and provides a vision of the group's role in history. These aspirations are voiced by the artists who recreate the language and symbols which are used in the naming ceremony. The politicians of the group may describe political relationships and symbols, but it is the artist who gives deeper and long-lasting expression to a people's sense of nation and destiny.[20]

While this dissertation agrees that artists play a key role in defining community and establishing cultural memory, what Anaya does not address is the conflict, silence, and disconnection that arises when the artists and politics highlighted in the nation support a male heterosexual formation as the norm for an entire Chicano community.

According to Anaya, the "second declaration" in 1969 made Aztlán "the place of origin of the Aztecs of Mesoamerica, the place of the seven caves recorded in their legends."[21] He claims that these statements were "of momentous, historical significance," since "an identity and a homeland were designated once again on the northern borders of Hispanic America."[22] Chicanos, a people in diaspora, who were

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[18] Anaya 1989: 230. Rudolfo Anaya (1989) "Aztlán: A Homeland Without Boundaries" in *Aztlán: Essays on the Chicano Homeland*.
[19] Anaya 1989: 232.
[20] Anaya 1989: 230-1.
[21] Anaya 1989: 232.
[22] Anaya 1989: 232.

forcibly displaced from their lands and tribal identities due to conquest, were searching for a way to assert a political and spiritual agenda, yet this was at the cost of their female and queer counterparts as well as Native American people who also called the U.S. Southwest their place of origin.[23] Anaya says of the historical imaginary that declares Aztlán as homeland:

> In 1848 there was a continued sense of separation when the United States annexed what is now the Southwest from Mexico. Separation from roots created vulnerability because our worldview was centered in community and its relationship to the earth. Even in the endeavor of education where democracy promised equality and access, we felt denied. Thus our search for Chicano roots led to Mesoamerica and Aztec legend, and there we found Aztlán; put another way, Aztlán was waiting for us.[24]

The violence experienced in the U.S.-Mexico war and the resulting Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 clearly left significant scars on the memories and experiences of Chicanos. Yet an uncomplicated embrace of Aztlán as homeland and the myth of the Aztecs was a shortsighted reaction, particularly when the "homeland" and movement were exclusive, and when ancestry in Mesoamerica was not fully explored.

Gutiérrez (2004) suggests that race was the central focus of the nation building theory, "internal colonialism," that highly influenced the Chicano movement. While class was a factor that was incorporated, gender and sexuality differences were not considered central and rarely acknowledged by Chicano

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[23] To his credit Anaya (1989) does refer to the conflict with others who consider the U.S. Southwest their homeland, "The need for a homeland is inherent in the collective memory of any group, it is a covenant with the tribal gods. The spiritual yearning for homeland is encompassing, but because the geography of the earth is limited, homelands rub against each other and create friction" (239).
[24] Anaya 1989: 234.

nationals in the building of a movement to map inequalities. Gutiérrez notes the exclusion of lesbian and gay authors who were "branded" "counter-revolutionaries" because of their sexual identification. He mentions Richard Rodriguez, Cherríe Moraga, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Tomás Almaguer as key authors who were excluded from the Chicano movement. [25]

Furthermore, the collection in which Anaya's piece appeared, *Aztlán: Essays on the Chicano Homeland* (1989), is an example of a male-dominated Chicano historiographical text.[26] Although it proves to be an insightful text, eleven out of the twelve contributors to this anthology are Chicano men. The single interruption to this gender imbalanced academic space occurs through the inclusion of Anzaldúa's "The Homeland, Aztlán/El Otro México," which is a modified version of the first chapter of *Borderlands/La Frontera.* The text is queered to a certain degree with the addition of Anzaldúa's work, but is not disrupted enough to shift the central tenants of the "Chicano Homeland." Here we see an example of a queer Chicana utilized as a token participant in the movement, rather than regarded as a feminist artist, thinker, and visionary expanding the imaginary of Aztlán through dialogue with other Chicanas theorizing Aztlán.

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[25] Gutiérrez's (2004) confirms the arguments of this dissertation when he states, "This nation-building project was misogynist and exclusionary, particularly of women and sexual minorities" (291). It is also notable that Moraga (1993) has an essay titled, *Queer Aztlán: the Reformation of Chicano Tribe*, which critiques the Chicano movement for its negligence of gay, lesbian, and queer counterparts. I build on Moraga's work to disrupt the nation and move towards a decolonizing of Aztlán.

[26] This text was edited by Rudolfo A. Anaya and Francisco A. Lomelí (1989), and includes an essay by John R. Chávez (1984) author of *The Lost Land: The Chicano Image of the Southwest*, as well as "El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán": 1-5.

What is also telling is the inclusion of "El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán" (1969) at the beginning of this collection, which defined nationalism as something that "transcends all religious, political, class, and economic factors or boundaries" and as "the common denominator that all members of La Raza can agree upon."[27] Once again, it is clear to see that gender and sexuality are not central concerns of the emerging Chicano movement or notions of "Raza," which limited the vision and analysis that influenced the knowledge formation of Chicano Studies. As historian of Mexican-American religions, Davíd Carrasco (2008) notes, "[i]n the early days of the Chicano movement that articulated its plans through the Plan Espiritual de Aztlán, most if not all commentators on the Aztlán traditions ignored one major aspect—namely the central role of the sacred mother."[28] Carrasco's insight points out the limitations of the spirituality that was put forward by the Chicano movement leaders. This signals the shortsighted engagement with Mesoamerican ancestry and the gender imbalanced or heteronormative practices of the movement where the male figure was central.

Chicana cultural feminists have argued against the inconsistencies and legacies of this logic within Chicano nationalist framings (Alarcón 1990, Anzaldúa 2007). Catherine Ramírez (2002) offers an important and useful critique of Aztlán through her discussion of Norma Alarcon's *Third Woman*. Ramírez writes, "The

[27] Anaya and Lomelí 1989: 2.
[28] Carrasco 2008: 236. David Carrasco (2008) "Imagining a Place for Aztlán: Chicanismo and the Aztecs in Art and Resistance," in *The Aztec World.* He continues, "As more and more women, especially female artists, have expressed their visions of Chicano history, religion, soul, and existence, the theme of the sacred mother in Aztlán has become a major expression" (236). This is a theme I focus on in Chapter 3, however my focus is Mesoamerica, instead of Aztlán.

concept of Aztlán gained currency among a number of Chicana and Chicano writers, artists, and activists during the late 1960s and 1970s and was championed in 'El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán,' a manifesto produced at the Chicano Youth Liberation Conference in Denver in March 1969."[29] Ramírez's analysis of the publication *Third Woman* exposes "the constructedness of Aztlán (i.e., it shows that Aztlán, like the nation-state, is neither natural nor a given, but created)."[30] Ramírez continues, "It reveals that there is no such thing as a singular Chicano or Chicana homeland, history, or experience."[31] Ramírez's work directly challenges the "carnalismo" or "community of men" that makes up this "Aztlán," and offers a revised Chicana feminist or women of color feminist perspective that challenges the male-centered nation.[32]

Similarly, Fregoso and Chabram (2006) offer important insights about Aztlán. They write,

> [T]he legendary homeland of the Aztecs, claimed by Chicano cultural nationalism as the mythical place of the Chicano nation, gave this alternative space a cohesiveness. Chicano identity was framed in Aztlán. And, Aztlán provided a basis for a return to roots, for a return to an identity before domination and subjugation—a voyage back to Pre-Columbian times.[33]

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[29] Ramírez, C., 2002: 50-1. Catherine S. Ramírez (2002) "Alternative Cartographies: Third Woman and the Respatialization of the Borderlands" in *Midwestern Miscellany XXX.*

[30] Ramírez, C., 2002: 51.

[31] Ramírez, C., 2002: 52.

[32] Ramírez, C., 2002: 52. Ramírez emphasizes a pan-Latina representation, situated as, "third, trans-or-extranational space when situated between the nation-state." She notes that many ways the "borderlands feminism" put forward by theorist like Chela Sandoval are the "antithesis" to Aztlán. (57).

[33] Fregoso and Chabram 2006: 27. Rosa Linda Fregoso and Angie Chabram (2006) "Chicana/o Cultural Representation: Reframing Alternative Critical Discourses," in *The Chicana/o Cultural Studies Reader*. They continue with a critique, "In its most extreme cases, Aztlán was said to be located in the deepest layers of consciousness of every Chicano, an identification which thereby posited an essential Chicano subject for cultural identity" (27).

Fregoso and Chabram (2006) work to reframe the debate away from identity politics and towards a politics of identity: "Our reframing of Chicana/o cultural identity draws from those theoretical insights elaborated by [Stuart] Hall that frame cultural identity within the problematics of difference, production, and positionality."[34] In an earlier article, Alarcón (1990a) also suggested a similar move away from identity politics by pointing to the complexity and fluidity of identity formations. She wrote, "The quest for a true self and identity which was the initial desire of many writers involved in the Chicano movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s has given way to the realization that there is no fixed identity."[35] The works of Chicana cultural feminists invite important critiques of the Chicano movement, Aztlán, and a nationalism that depended on heteronormative forms of family, community, and spirituality. These scholars move us towards an analysis of complexity that unravels or decolonizes the narratives presented by the Chicano movement.

The organizing motive of this section was to bring together distinct yet overlapping critiques of Chicano Studies with the purpose of illuminating the contemporary moment where exclusion, particularly around gender and queer sexuality, still occur. I now turn to a brief discussion of the work of two authors, Emma Pérez and Daniel Alarcón, who assist in rethinking the knowledge formation of Chicano Studies and Aztlán through innovative methodologies that are helpful to the project of uncovering hidden and distinct historical narratives.

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[34] Fregoso and Chabram 2006: 28.
[35] Alarcón 1990a: 250. Norma Alarcón "Chicana Feminism: In the Tracks of 'The' Native Woman" in *Cultural Studies*.

Historian Emma Pérez's *The Decolonial Imaginary* (1999) is an exemplary text in Chicana Studies, which does the work of mapping out new terrain in the field of Chicana/o history. She moves outside of the Chicano canon of knowledge to map alternative or subaltern forms of knowledge.[36] Her research and theorization about particular groups of Chicanas and Mexicanas interrupts dominant historical narratives and opens a space for methodological possibilities that work to decolonize Chicano Studies. Pérez writes,

> Chicana/o historiography has been circumscribed by the traditional historical imagination. That means that even the most radical Chicano/a historiographies are influenced by the very colonial imaginary against which they rebel. The colonial imaginary still determines many of our efforts to write history in the United States.[37]

Pérez therefore brings attention to the way a field of knowledge that represents marginal social actors can still erase or undermine communities of other social positions. Her work suggests the importance of decolonizing imaginaries as an intervention into documenting Chicana/o history, where the voices, actions, and presence of subaltern social actors like Chicanas have not been engaged or analyzed in sufficient ways. In order to decolonize knowledge, it is necessary to critique canons and disciplinary formations that exclude or erase through additive inclusion marginalized populations.

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[36] Pérez (1999) writes, "Breaking out of the borders is like choosing to go outside, into the margins, to argue or expose that which no one will risk. Going outside the accredited realm of historiography means daring to be dubbed a-historical. It means traversing new territories and disciplines, mapping fresh terrains such as cultural studies, women's studies, ethnic studies, and of course, Chicana/o studies" (xiii).

[37] Pérez 1999: 5.

Pérez's "decolonial imaginary" assists in rethinking the methods used to study queer history as well. In Pérez (2003) article, "Queering the Borderlands: The Challenges of Excavating the Invisible and Unheard," building on Anzaldúa's work she argues for "a decolonial queer gaze that allows for different possibilities and interpretations of what exists in the gaps and silences but is often not seen or heard."[38] Pérez suggests then when doing archival work, it is important to look to the margins or the "deviant" to find the untold stories. By queering "the decolonial" and decolonizing the queer, Pérez's work moves toward a radical transformation of patriarchal knowledge formations, including Chicano Studies.

Literary scholar Daniel Alarcón's *The Aztec Palimpsest: Mexico in the Modern Imagination* (1997) offers a theoretical paradigm of "Aztlán as palimpsest" in his chapter called "Aztlán and Chicano Cultural Identity," which facilitates the mapping of different and layered narratives of Aztlán.[39] This project employs his notion in order to facilitate searches for queer ancestry in Mesoamerica and signal an indigenous cosmic vision informed by the critiques of queer Chicana feminists. As Daniel Alarcón (1997) suggests, "Aztlán as palimpsest immediately changes the way we look at the past and the sources from which we have derived our notions of the

[38] Pérez 2003: 129.
[39] Alarcón 1997: 11. Daniel Alarcón (1997) *The Aztec Palimpsest: Mexico in the Modern Imagination.* Similarly, Marez's (2001) research and critique calls for the necessity to introduce "other histories of conflict" to understandings of "Chicana/o popular performance," instead of relying on the usual historical narrative, that is: the Spanish Conquest leads to the fall of the Aztec Empire and becomes the basis for the Chicano movement and Chicano Studies (269).

past, thus offering new resources and new avenues of investigation."[40] He critiques the use of Aztlán in dominant narratives of Chicano studies:

> Stripped of its historical implications, quarantined in utopic myth, Aztlán increasingly appears to be an empty symbol to many Chicanos, one that does not unite as much as divert those who do not wish to consider the very real differences of region, gender, class, sexuality, language, and *mestizaje* within Chicano communities.[41]

When asserted with such certainty, he argues, "[t]he concept of Aztlán, as formulated by Chicano nationalism and Chicano scholarship since 1969, presents an overwhelming number of apparent contradictions."[42] Alarcón suggests that when Aztlán is understood as a palimpsest it is no longer "ahistorical and instead insists on an examination of the Mesoamerican narratives from which it was drawn."[43] It is only with these revised perspectives on decolonizing and queering the study of history and of Aztlán that this analysis can move to the complex implications of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.[44]

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[40] Alarcón 1997: 11.
[41] Alarcón 1997: 10. Original emphasis.
[42] Alarcón 1997: 20. He wrote of the narrowness of the myth of Aztlán: "In restricting Aztlán to just one version, the leaders of the Chicano movement created a nationalist myth so narrow that the nation it offered suffocated many within, and excluded many without, causing them to reject it" (32).
[43] Alarcón 1997: 19-20. I will explore this tension of complicating Mesoamerican history further in the final section of this chapter focused on the Histories of Ancestors.
[44] It is significant to note that Alexander's (2005) chapter, "Transnationalism, Sexuality, and the State: Modernity's Traditions at the Height of Empire," in her *Pedagogies of Crossing,* uses a methodology akin to Alarcón's (1997) palimpsest. Alexander uses this framework to trace representations of "the queer" in previous historical moments, to be exact: the colonial, the neocolonial, and the neo-imperial. Alexander's "geopolitical sites" are: "first, the moment of Spanish colonization of the Americas in 1513, in which the invading army led by Balboa massacred over forty Indian 'cross-dressers' and fed them to dogs; second, the moment of the neo-colonial state's legislating of heterosexuality by criminalizing lesbian and gay sex in Trinidad and Tobago (1986 and 1991, respectively) and in the Bahamas (1991); and, finally, the contemporary moment of neo-imperialist militarization within the United States, which is characterized by a new phase of empire-building in which hegemonic heterosexual masculinity wishes to assert a Pax Americana through imperial violence undertaken within its own borders as well as in different parts of the world" (183). Alexander's readings of these moments together as histories of heterosexualization, methodologically opens linear accounts of

Expanding the Vision of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo

While the field of Chicano Studies emerged from social movement struggles against racism and through narratives of liberation, it remains dominated by colonial legacies of war and limited understandings of race, gender, sexuality, spirituality, and history. The way the Chicano movement of the 1960s and 1970s conceptualized the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848, the resulting "loss of land," and the construction of the mythical Aztlán, is a key imaginary in the knowledge formation of Chicano Studies. The Chicano nationalist imaginary suggests that the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that ended the U.S.-Mexico War marked the colonization of Chicanos by the U.S., when Mexican land was stolen. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, however, is part of a larger U.S. colonial project that creates divisions and invisibilities. As argued in the previous section, the way Aztlán is defined within the Chicano nationalist movement must be considered part of a colonial legacy. This section seeks to uproot or complicate that narrative.

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the U.S.-Mexico war of 1846-1848, which began due to an invasion of the Mexican state by the U.S. imperialist nation that was fueled by philosophies and practices of manifest destiny and the colonial

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hegemonic history to allow for the complexities of gender and connections of violence and masculinity. Her work necessitates dialogue across sites of knowledge and disciplines. What is compelling about Alexander's work is that she theorizes heterosexualization as projects of empire though the invasion of indigenous peoples and killing of cross-dressers, criminalization of gays and lesbians through legislation, and domination of the U.S. through militarization that depends on heterosexual masculinity—all moments which implicate the state directly for placing moral judgment on "queer" lives. Her palimpsest layering analysis that accounts for gender, sexuality, and racialization are methodologically significant for this dissertation focused on tracing queer Latina hidden discourses.

mentality that sanctified the take over of land for economic profit and growth. As Del Castillo (1990), wrote about the start of the war,

> He [Polk] ordered General Zachary Taylor to advance to the Rio Grande to 'possess' the territory for the United States. It was not long before Mexican and U.S. troops exchanged shots and joined in battle, thereby giving President Polk his rationale for a declaration of war. Judging from the votes in the U.S. Congress, there was little disagreement over the correctness of the Texas boundaries: the House of Representatives voted 174 to 14 in favor, the Senate 40 to 2.[45]

Land was forcefully taken and racial hierarchies were established through the divisive language of the Treaty of 1848. This treaty caused a significant shift in political national boundaries, forming the U.S.-Mexico borderlands and re-colonizing the land. Due to the imperialist vision of the United States, Mexico lost about one-fourth of its territory, which was legally re-designated as the U.S. Southwest, including the states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, parts of Colorado, Nevada, and Utah. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo sanctified this "loss" through shattered promises of citizenship and continued access to territory.

The U.S.-Mexico War had imperialist motivations and was guided by a vision of manifest destiny that plagued the birth and expansion of the U.S. The U.S. failure to honor its treaty with the Mexican people is evidence of the racist logic that drives the U.S., a nation-state that repeatedly does not honor treaties over land and territory, particularly with Native people. So while it is important to remember this trauma in Chicano history, it is equally as important to heal from it in a complicated form, so the grieving can be productive. How do legacies of war create, shape, and limit

[45] Del Castillo 1990: 14.

imaginings of history? Building a movement on this colonial imaginary is limiting possibilities for the Chicana/o community, movement, and knowledge formation of Chicano Studies. The implications of the legacies of war are detrimental, especially when not acknowledged in their full complexity, as in the present case of the Chicano movement.

Building on legacies of war shapes social and political imaginaries and allows these colonial violences to structure present discourses of history, memory, and forgetting. Renya Ramirez (2002) argues that "...by claiming their Indian roots through a mythic story of an Aztec Aztlán, this early work of Chicano nationalists leaves out the historical presence of Indian tribes in the Southwest area."[46] The Chicano nationalist movement elides the existence of Native peoples on the land identified by the U.S. as the Southwest. Similarly, Daniel Alarcón (1997) argues that *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán*:

> justifies its goals on the basis of European and Anglo American colonization and oppression, yet does not grapple with mestizo colonization and appropriation of Native American lands in the Southwest during the Spanish colonial period. The colonization is instead transformed into a legitimization of Chicano territorial rights based on Chicanos' roles as "civilizers of the Northern land of Aztlán." To date, competing claims to the region by Native Americans, Asian Americans, African Americans, and the *mestizaje* of these different cultures have yet to be addressed in most discussions of Aztlán.[47]

Complicating the shortsighted historical narratives proposed by earlier generations of Chicanos helps to see how the land known as the Southwest is home to many other

[46] Ramirez, R. 2002: 7. Renya Ramirez (2002) "Julia Sanchez's Story: An Indigenous Woman between Nations" in *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies.*
[47] Alarcón 1997: 24.

people. A closer examination of Native history shows that the land known as the U.S. Southwest is in fact indigenous land that has been colonized by various forces and empires. The Hopi, Navajo/Diné, Comanches, and Pueblo peoples are some of the tribes that are indigenous to this land.[48] It also releases Chicano imaginaries from the fiction that the Southwest is the only homeland for people who identify with the politic of Chicano. Simultaneously, this reformulation opens the possibility of connection to ancient ancestors in Central Mexico, for example, whose structures have increasingly been uncovered over centuries.[49]

Legacies of war have shaped our imaginaries and relations due to colonial notions of land and race. De-centering war makes space for harmony and a revised way of envisioning a relation to land and people that is not focused on property and ownership, or racialized notions of superiority and inferiority. In *Borderlands/La Frontera,* Anzaldúa (2007) parenthetically notes, "The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo created the Mexican-American in 1848."[50] It is to a discussion of the hyphenated identity formation of the "Mexican-American" in relation to laws, regulations, and hierarchies of racialization that once considered Mexicans "white" that I now turn in exploring further the complicated history of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

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[48] Blackhawk's (2006) *Violence of the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* discusses the process of westward expansion and shows evidence of detrimental impact of the Spanish invasion on Native tribes. He convincingly argues tribes went into battle with each other due their access to colonial technologies, such as armor and weapons. Also see Jennifer Nez Denetdale (2007) *Reclaiming Diné History: The Legacies of Navajo Chief Manuelito and Juanita* for a decolonized history of the U.S. Southwest.

[49] Coyolxauhqui's stone was uncovered in a 1978 dig near the Templo Mayor. Carrasco, et al. 2007: 87. Davíd Carrasco, Leonardo López Luján, and Eduardo Matos Moctezuma (2007) *Breaking Through Mexico's Past: Digging the Aztecs with Eduardo Matos Moctezuma*.

[50] Anzaldúa 2007: 119.

Mexican Americans, Law, and Race

The legal struggle for land through the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo is an important case to unravel for Chicano and Native interrelated history.[51] Based on Chicano Historian Richard Griswold Del Castillo's (1990) analysis of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo it is evident that the legal and political discourse of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo shows a compelling connection between Chicana/os and Native peoples in their respective struggles for land, citizenship, and overall recognition by the U.S. government.[52] The southwest was officially part of Mexico for a limited amount of years, 1821-1848.[53]

The longer and misleading title of this Treaty is the "Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Limits and Settlement between the United States of American and the United Mexican States." It is arguable that this treaty was a form of militarized occupation. Its racist divisive demarcations denied the use of Spanish in the U.S., did not allow Mexicans who had territories sufficient time to claim their property, and brought a denigration of the Mexican culture. One of the most upsetting moments of the implementation of the Treaty was the striking of Article 10, which was a significant shift by the U.S. Senate. This was the Article that protected "Mexican land grants." As Del Castillo explains,

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[51] Due to the subject matter, I will primarily focus on the implications of the Treaty for Chicanos, however when the literature allows me to draw interconnections, I do so.

[52] Del Castillo (1990) explains, "The Hopi people, for example, presented a statement at the 1981 Geneva Conference where they cited Article IX and XI of the treaty to support their opposition to the relocation of the Navajo (Dineh) and Hopi elders from their ancestral lands near Big Mountain Arizona" (148). In the statement, the Hopi "assert that their rights as Mexican citizens under Article VIII of the treaty had been violated by the U.S. courts and that their religious rights under Article IX had not been protected" (149).

[53] Forbes 1973: 28.

> This article struck to the heart of a question that would be the basis for hundreds of lawsuits and many instances of injustice against the former Mexican land holders. The treaty makers knew well that most of the Mexican citizens occupying land grants in the ceded territories did not have perfect titles to their lands and that the majority were in process of fulfilling the requirements of Mexican law. Frequent changes in political administrations, the notorious slowness of the Mexican bureaucracy, and many individual circumstances had made it difficult for Mexican landholders to obtain clear title in an expedient way. Article X would have allowed them to complete the process under an American administration. The article specifically recognized the unique condition of the Mexican land-grant claimants in Texas, most of whom had been dispossessed of their lands by Anglo Texans following Texas Independence. The article would allow them to resurrect their claims and fulfill the conditions of Mexican law.[54]

In short, this Article would have protected the rights to land for "Mexican" people; this was a major disappointment for many who were displaced as a result.

On the other hand, Article VIII shifted the citizenship rights for "California Indians." According to Del Castillo,

> The fate of the California Indians is further evidence of the violation of the spirit of the treaty. Under the Mexican Constitution of 1824, Indians were considered full Mexican citizens. Upon the transfer of territory to the U.S. government, however, the Indians received neither U.S. citizenship nor the protections of the treaty as specified in Article VIII. The California state constitutional convention recoiled from the idea of granting Indians full citizenship. In violation of the treaty, the California Indian tribes were deprived of the protections specified in the treaty. Consequently they became the victims of murder, slavery, land theft, and starvation. The Indian population within the state declined by more than 100,000 in two decades. Whites overran tribal lands and people were exterminated.[55]

Del Castillo (1990) suggests that in terms of the fate of California Indians, "Genocide is not too strong a word to use in describing what happened to the California Indians

[54] Del Castillo 1990: 48.
[55] Del Castillo 1990: 70.

during that period."[56] Clearly, the Treaty not only did the work to re-designate (colonize) land, but it also did the work to redefine the boundaries, histories, and destinies of people. As Anzaldúa states, "The border fence that divides the Mexican people was born on February 2, 1848 with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo."[57]

Sociologist Laura E. Gómez (2007) shows another layer of the racism at work in the area of New Mexico.[58] She wrote,

> During this period, the majority of Mexican American men, who had received *federal* citizenship under the peace treaty of 1848, held a kind of second-class citizenship in which their rights were limited because Congress refused to admit New Mexico as a state due to its majority Mexican and Indian population.[59]

The language of the Treaty enforces a hierarchal relation. On the one hand, there are property-owning "Mexicans" and on the other there are "savage tribes" who *occupy* the land. Del Castillo (1990) shows the conflicts around land and the divisive tactics of the U.S. and the Treaty when he argues that "Under Article XI of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the United States was bound to prevent Indian raids into Mexico from the U.S. side of the border."[60] This turned out be very expensive. The U.S. stationed 8,000 troops along the border and this turned out to cost more than the original Treaty.

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[56] Del Castillo 1990: 70.
[57] Anzaldúa 2007: 29.
[58] Gómez (2007).
[59] Gómez (2007), p. 5. For more on New Mexico and Land Loss, see Zentella (2009).
[60] Griswold Del Castillo 1990: 59. "More than 160,000 Indians lived in the border region, and many of them, particularly Apaches and Comanches, had a long history of raiding pueblos on the Mexican side…" (59).

This racialized history that functions through the legality of the treaty, is directly connected to forms of hierarchy or colonial legacies in California, such as white supremacy. Building on Fredrickson's work,[61] Tomas Almaguer (1994) is quite correct in stating that "the attempt to make race or color a basis for group position within the United States was defined initially during the colonial period when notions of 'civility' and 'savagery,' as well as clear distinctions between 'Christians' and 'heathen,' were used to inscribe racial difference and divide humankind into distinct categories of people."[62] This designation as Mexican-American emphasizes a hybrid or mixed-blood, mestizo identity, usually as a "hybrid of Anglo, Indian, Spanish and African Blood."[63] According to Carrigan and Webb, "[T]he majority of Mexicans occupied a liminal position within the racial hierarchy of the southwestern states. The law classified them as white," unless of course one was of a lower class, which then required that mixed-blood people with impure status were "pushed to the margins of whiteness."[64] There is a way in which the language of the Treaty puts these groups into competition and conflict with each other, and a hierarchal relationship is established that inevitably supports and enforces white supremacy (Almaguer 1994, Smith 2006).

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[61] Almaguer (1994) builds closely on George M. Fredrickson's work—a comparative study that was "international" in the sense that he compared white supremacy in the contexts of the U.S. and South Africa. See pp. 219-220, among others. Tomas Almaguer (1994) *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California.*

[62] Almaguer 1994: 7.

[63] Carrigan and Webb 2003: 418. William D. Carrigan and Clive Webb (2003) "The Lynching of Persons of Mexican Origin or Descent in the United States, 1848 to 1928" in *Journal of Social History*.

[64] Carrigan and Webb 2003: 417.

These historical narratives show that there are multiple and complicated layers to colonization, particularly in the way that racialization is connected to these hierarchies, such as ownership of property. For example, in the nineteenth century, Native tribes were outside the legal bounds of ownership, whereas Mexican rancheros were allowed to own property and were classified as "white." This shows the conflation of race and economic status that established an unjustified hierarchy of racialization and ownership. There is an important loss of self that occurs when Mexican people are considered white, an argument that extends and yet compliments Bonfil Batalla's (1996) arguments about de-Indianization.[65]

David J. Weber's edited collection, *Foreigners in their Native Land: Historical Roots of the Mexican Americans* (1973), contributes to establishing colonial legacies that elide Native people's history and misrepresent Mexican American history. He wrote:

> From 1540, when intensive exploration north from Mexico got under way, until 1821, when Mexico became independent of Spain, today's Southwestern states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Nevada, Utah, and much of Colorado formed part of the wealthy Spanish colony of New Spain, as Mexico was then called. Spain had only a nominal hold over this vast territory; permanent colonies were established in coastal California, southern Arizona, the Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico, and in Texas. Yet, the years of Spanish control over the Southwest left remnants of Spanish culture firmly stamped on the area.[66]

Weber (1973) continues,

[65] I discuss Bonfil Batalla's (1996) work on de-Indianization in the next section of this chapter.
[66] Weber 1973: 12. David Weber, ed. (1973) *Foreigners In Their Native Land: Historical Roots of The Mexican Americans*.

> What is most often forgotten is that this colonial period in today's Southwest belonged as much to Mexico and Mexicans as it did to Spain and Spaniards. Although the leaders of Spain's exploring and colonizing expeditions were usually persons born in Spain of pure Spanish blood, the rank and file of those groups consisted of persons born in Mexico, usually of mixed blood, whose culture combined Indian and Spanish elements. These 'Spanish' pioneers were neither Indian nor Spanish, but Mexican.[67]

Weber's analysis of the Southwest and positioning of white "Mexicans" as the owners of the land as much as the Spanish colonizers, simultaneous erases the Indigenous peoples native to the land and places Mexicans in the position of colonizer instead of pointing to a potential tribal relation or connection between the "mixed blood" people who had "Indian and Spanish elements." In many ways, he minimizes the Spanish colonization of these lands that are now separated by a U.S.-Mexico border. This is not to say that Mexicans, especially Mexican rancheros, did not claim ownership of colonized land, but it is necessary to complicate this narrative and show that there are multiple and complicated layers to colonization and that racialization is connected to these hierarchies of ownership. The claim that the land "belonged to Mexico and Mexicans as it did to Spain and Spaniards" gives Chicanos or Mexican Americans the space and reign to claim that their land was stolen through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 as a result of the U.S.-Mexico War, conceptualize Aztlán as this "lost land," and position people like the Hopi, Dine/Navajos, and Pueblo Indians as outside trespassers of their own ancestral lands.

[67] Weber 1973: 12.

Another example of this colonial legacy emerges from General Stephan Watts Kearny's speech in New Mexico in 1846, at the start of the war, in which he maintained that

> I have come amongst you by the orders of my government, to take possession of your country, and extend over it the laws of the United States. We consider it, and have done so for some time, a part of the territory of the United States. We come amongst you as friends—not as enemies; as protectors—not as conquerors. We come among you for your benefit—not your injury.[68]

He insisted in his speech:

> From the Mexican government you have never received protection. The Apaches and the Navajoes (sic) come down from the mountains and carry off your sheep, and even your women, whenever they please. My government will correct all of this. I will keep off the Indians, protect you in your persons and property; and I repeat again, will protect your religion. I know you are all great Catholics…[69]

In this example, the U.S. conquest imposes Christianity through military occupation in the disguised form of a friendly gesture and positions Native people as trespassers.

Gómez also speaks of Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny in her book, *Manifest Destines: The Making of the Mexican American Race* (2007).[70] Her contributions to these debates are significant since she also speaks to the boundaries and legalities of "whiteness" for Mexican Americans. As she insightfully argues,

> Mexican Americans became a wedge racial group between whites and blacks. While Mexican Americans were relegated to second-class citizenship in virtually are all areas, they had access to legal whiteness under a kind of reverse one-drop rule: one drop of Spanish blood allowed them to claim whiteness under certain circumstances.[71]

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[68] General Stephan Watts Kearny quoted in Weber 1973: 161.
[69] Weber 1973: 162.
[70] Gómez 2007: 22.
[71] Gómez 2007: 5.

Gómez (2007) shows yet another layer of division that supports white supremacy when she argues that "The separate racial ideologies that developed with respect to Mexican Americans and African Americans highlight the complexity and contradictions within white supremacy.[72] In their discussion of the "lynching of persons of Mexican origin" after the 1848 Treaty, Carrigan and Webb (2003) point out that due to legal and racial classifications that positioned Mexicans as white, it is impossible to know how many Mexicans were lynched unless one does archival work case by case (between 1848 and 1928, mobs lynched at least 597 Mexicans).[73] The authors make the point, however, that the numbers of Blacks or African Americans are always significantly much higher (between 1882 and 1930, it is commonly noted that at least 3,386 African American died at the hands of lynch mobs).

In Almaguer (1994), he breaks away from "the shadow of the black/white encounter" and maps white supremacist legacies in California.[74] In his formulation of the "racialization process" he argues for "'elective affinity' between material interests of whites at different class levels and the racial ideologies that simultaneously structured the new Anglo-dominated society in California."[75] Although Almaguer does do the work of complicating the idea that there was no "simple binary" or "one principle fault," his approach to the racial "groups" maintains unnecessary divisions

[72] Gómez 2007: 5.
[73] Carrigan and Webb 2003: 412. This is similar to George Mariscal's argument that it is difficult to identify how many Latinos fought in the Viet Nam war because there was no classification for people of Latino, "Hispanic," or Mexican origin. George Mariscal, ed. (1999) *Aztlán and Viet Nam: Chicano and Chicana Experiences of the War*.
[74] Almaguer 1994: 2.
[75] Almaguer 1994: 3.

amongst histories that actually converge in many forms, particularly through their various histories of presence on the land now named California.[76]

It is here that the scholarship of Brown Childs (2002) can be helpful. He suggests that our analysis of structures such as racism in the U.S. can become more complicated if we consider overlapping histories among populations, i.e. Native and Black. He argues that through this frame of shared histories we can map "centuries of genocide, forced removals, slavery, segregation, lynching, and resistance" and ultimately unravel complex histories.[77] For example, a closer analysis of the historical moment of 1848 when the U.S. took over land that previously was claimed by the nation of Mexico would reveal that slavery was a motivating factor to gain more territory for the U.S. When Texas became a territory of the U.S. it became a slave holding state. Mexico had abolished slavery in 1828.[78] The kind of research I am proposing would therefore ask: What are some of the interrelated or "transcommunal" hidden histories of Chicanas/os, Native Americans, and indigenous Mexicanos/as? I now turn to a larger discussion of the histories of ancestors that are often too narrow or non-existent in Chicano movement discourse. I take a particular

[76] I am particularly taking issue here with the division of "parts" in his text, that is one part Mexican, one part Indian, one part Asian immigrants, the one "group" that features throughout the book is the white populations while black people mostly make appearances to reinforce his argument that he is breaking the black/white binary in race studies. The separations seem unnecessary especially because there are significant interconnection amongst the histories of race, racial formation, and racism, particularly in the U.S. context.
[77] Brown Childs 2002: 58. John Brown Childs (2002) "Crossroads: Towards a Transcommunal Black History Month in the Multicultural United States of the Twenty-First Century" in *Écritures De L'histoire Africaine-Américaine.*
[78] Brown Childs 2002: 57.

focus on systems of racialization as colonial legacies and de-Indianization as a result of conquest.

Histories of Ancestors: Racialization and "De-Indianization"

Mexican Anthropologist Bonfil Batalla (1996) argued that while warring and domination were already in motion before the Conquest in Mesoamerican civilizations, the ideologies of whiteness and Christianity that accompanied the Spanish crown were not yet in place. Anzaldúa (2007) wrote about these processes of racialization at the time of Conquest, which did not yet have a name when the Spanish arrived in the early 1500s: "En 1521 nacio una nueva raza, el mestizo, el mexicano (people of mixed Indian and Spanish blood), a race that had never existed before. Chicanos, Mexican-Americans, are the offspring of those first matings."[79] It is this trajectory that Chicanos tend to follow in their conceptualization of ancestry.[80] It was through the conquest that many indigenous peoples in what is now the nation of Mexico lost their ancestral connections and practices.

During these colonial times, in what became New Spain or colonial Mexico, the mixed-blood mestizo had higher authority than the indigenous (pure blood),

[79] Anzaldúa 2007: 27. Translation: "In 1521 a new race was born, the mestizo, the Mexican…"
[80] Jack Forbes (1973) in his text, *Aztecas del Norte: The Chicanos of Aztlán,* complicates this through his understandings of the "Aztecas del norte": "The Aztecas del norte (an Azteca is a person of Aztlán or "the Southwest") compose the largest single tribe or nation of Anishinabeg (Indians) found in the United States today. Like other Native American groups, the Aztecas of Aztlán are not completely unified or homogenous people. Some call themselves Chicanos and see themselves as people whose true homeland is Aztlán. Some call themselves Mexican-Americans (or variants thereof) and conceptualize their status as that of United Statesians ("Americans") of Mexican background. Others view themselves as "Mexicanos" and look to Mexico as the true homeland. Still others call themselves "Hispanos" (in New Mexico and Colorado especially) and choose to emphasize their Spanish language rather than their Mexican blood" (13). Forbes (1973) seems to create a space to hold a multiplicity of ancestral imaginings.

simply because mestizos possessed Spanish blood. Historian Maria Elena Martínez (2008) names this "*Limpeza de sangre*," which translated into the purity of blood. In the Americas, "the colonial discourse of purity of blood was…initially propelled by the Christianization project and by Spanish distrust of the religious loyalties of Jewish converts—by religious utopias and anticonverso sentiment."[81] As she argues, "[s]panish notions of purity and impurity of blood were fictions, ideological constructs based on religious and genealogical understandings of difference that despite their invented nature were no less effective at shaping social practices, categories of identity, and self-perceptions."[82]

Her analysis is particularly insightful because she names this system of "purity and impurity" as a fiction. Within this spectrum of blood characterization, indigenous people were deemed to have "stained ancestry." One of the biggest fears the Spanish held was that converted people, even those who accepted baptism, would not let go of their ancestral beliefs. As a result of this fear based on the fiction Martínez described, Indigenous rulers and Spanish nobles who encouraged the indigenous people to "reject Catholicism and retain ancestral beliefs" were often tried and found guilty of being idolaters.[83] According to Martínez, it was clear that "indigenous people were going to be policed and punished" for religious "transgression."[84]

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[81] Martínez 2008: 129. María Elena Martínez (2008) *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico*.
[82] Martínez 2008: 61.
[83] Martínez 2008: 101.
[84] Martínez 2008: 101.

According to Bonfil Batalla (1996) the process of forced Christianization can be conceptualized as the de-Indianization of a population.[85] As Batalla states,

> De-Indianization is a historical process through which populations that originally possessed a particular and distinctive identity, based upon their own culture, are forced to renounce that identity, with all the consequent changes in their social organization and culture. De-Indianization is not the result of biological mixture, but of the pressure of ethnocide that ultimately blocks the historical continuity of a people as a culturally differentiated group.[86]

A central project of the Mexican nation was to de-Indianize the people, so that indigenous and ancestral roots, including spiritual practices, were not the center of identity formations or understandings of self. Instead, a mixed-blood or mestizo race took form that was legitimated because of its malleability within the imperial world; most importantly for the purposes of colonial strategy, it eliminated the "Indian." As Indigenous scholar Renya Ramirez (2002) argues, "The dominant discourse says that Indian identity must remain silent and hidden" and "In both Mexico and the United States, the Indian is supposed to disappear."[87] Ramirez further argues that

> ...if a criterion utilized in the United States to determine Indian identity were employed in Mexico, almost ninety percent of Mexican population has enough Indian blood to be considered Indigenous, if Mexicans knew their tribal ancestry. These figures demonstrate how the Mexican Nationalist narrative [of] mestizaje has decreased the power of the numerically strong Indian population in Mexico.[88]

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[85] Bonfil Batalla (1996) details, "The colonial enterprise engaged in destroying Mesoamerican civilization and stopped only where self-interest intervened. When necessary, whole peoples were destroyed. On the other hand, where the labor force of the Indians was required, they were kept socially and culturally segregated" (62).
[86] Bonfil Batalla 1996: 17.
[87] Ramirez, R. 2002: 6.
[88] Ramirez, R. 2002: 4.

This knowledge of ancestry is particularly significant in that, as Ramirez notes, "if mestizos in Mexico decided to identify as Indians, it could transform the political and ethnic composition in Mexico dramatically."[89] Ramirez offers an important argument for interrogating the categorization of mestizo, which as a form of identity can homogenize, and for doing the work to trace one's ancestral lineage.[90]

Similarly, Bonfil Batalla (1996) puts forward an argument for the recognition of the Mesoamerican civilization, the indigenous peoples of Mexico that have survived over 500 years of colonial domination. He discusses the sense of "schizophrenia" within Mexican society, caught between two distinct cultures that he characterizes as *México Profundo*, or the indigenous and Western civilization, which entered through conquest.[91] Batalla follows Ramirez's critique of mestizo in suggesting that "*mestizaje*" erases the Indian, disrupts indigenous ancestry of a people, and shifts the relation to the land.[92] He offers a revised "reflection" on the practice of reading history, one that "help[s] us to better understand how we came to be where we are today," and one that traces ancestry, instead of conforming to the nation-centered politics of Mexico.[93] The reading practice that Batalla proposes

[89] Ramirez, R. 2002: 4.
[90] Chicana writer Ana Castillo does this form of ancestral tracing in her 1995 text, *My Father was a Toltec.*
[91] Bonfil Batalla (1996) states, "It is difficult to comprehend many characteristics of Mesoamerican civilization if one does not take into account one of its most profound dimensions: the conception of the natural world and the human being's place in the cosmos. In this civilization, unlike that of the West, the natural world is not seen as an enemy. Neither is it assumed that greater human self-realization is achieved through greater separation from nature. To the contrary, a person's condition as part of the cosmic order is recognized and the aspiration is toward permanent integration, which can be achieved only through a harmonious relationship with the rest of the natural world" (27).
[92] It is telling that Jack Forbes has an unpublished manuscript titled, "The Mestizo Concept: A Product of European Imperialism" (Forbes 1973).
[93] Bonfil Batalla 1996: 59.

remembers the indigenous, and particularly the ancestral practices and existences of what he continuously refers to as *México Profundo*, literally translated as a profound Mexico.[94] As Batalla states, "The viewpoint of the colonizer ignored the profound ancestral perspective of the Indian who saw and understood this land, in the same way that it ignored the Indian's experience and memory."[95]

Bonfil Batalla also rethinks the legacy of the Aztecs by directly challenging the centrality of the Aztec people to the Mesoamerican civilization, which is a significant contribution to the decolonizing of Chicano historical imaginaries. He acknowledges that the Aztecs were a "small, nomadic group." He writes:

> Some Mesoamerican peoples originated as northern hunters and gatherers who migrated to and assimilated the agricultural, urban civilization of the south. Huitzilopochtli, the major god of the Aztecs, presents characteristics that distinguish him in the Mesoamerican pantheon. This is understandable, since he came from that small, nomadic group that, after long wandering, established itself finally in Tenochtitlán and became 'the People of the Sun.'[96]

Batalla does not romanticize the history of the Mesoamerican civilization, and he argues that "The domination of one group by another is a phenomenon that was not absent in pre-colonial Mexico."[97] He continues, "at the time of the European invasion there unquestionably existed a powerful structure of domination, which subjugated many scattered peoples in the central and southern part of the country to the Triple

[94] I understand his formulation to mean the ancestral heart or roots of Mexico, what gets lost when a people or a constructed nation stay within western concepts of racial classification and do not see their existence or way of life connected with the earth any longer.
[95] Bonfil Batalla 1996: 9.
[96] Bonfil Batalla 1996: 9.
[97] Bonfil Batalla 1996: 70.

Alliance, under the hegemony of the Mexica" or the Aztecs.[98] Although the Aztecs were dominant, they did not follow a hierarchy that was based on inferiority and took on the ceremonies and practices of the other tribes. However, to justify the centrality of the Aztecs, "history was rewritten" and then interrupted by the Conquest:

> The old pictographic books were burned and others were painted, describing the Aztecs as the chosen ones, the People of the Sun. This all seems to have created a new situation in Mesoamerican, the possible outcome of which must remain speculative, since the process was abruptly interrupted with the fall of Tenochtitlán at the hands of the Spaniards."[99]

This information complicates narratives suggesting that violence began with conquest, as well as narratives about Mexica-Azteca rule—it was, according to Batalla, "unique, making it difficult to generalize about the forms of domination in precolonial Mexico," but it was also "the best-documented case" which is why it has tended to be the ancestral history with which Chicanos are most familiar.[100] The danger is that this obscures other indigenous tribes, and a result, Indigenous people in Mesoamerica tend to be subsumed, homogenized, or assimilated into the categories of a constructed nation, such as Azteca-Mexica, Mexicana/o, or Mexican-American.

There is a way in which the hypervisibility of 1848 as the significant colonial moment for Chicanos obscures the colonization of Mexico's indigenous people by the Spanish in the 1500s and the imposed hierarchy of racialization and disconnection with ancestry. During the sixteenth century, colonization was a process occurring on both sides of what became the U.S.-Mexico border. The work of historians Ramon

[98] Bonfil Batalla 1996: 71.
[99] Bonfil Batalla 1996: 71.
[100] Bonfil Batalla 1996: 71.

Gutiérrez (1991) and Maria Elena Martínez (2008) shows processes of colonization in and among two distinct geographical locations and peoples at the hands of the Spanish Crown. As previously mentioned, the Spanish crown ruled colonial Mexico through the "*sistema de castas*" or "the colonial hierarchical system of classification that was based on proportions of Spanish, native, and black blood."[101] In her text, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpeza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico*, Martínez discusses the "*sistema de castas*" in New Spain or colonial Mexico and details how this racial hierarchy took form through the "social, political, and religious developments" of Spanish America and the "dynamic interaction of local and transatlantic processes," including the African slave trade.[102] She argues that "[B]lack blood became the main source of impurity almost by default."[103] In the context of conquest, the institutionalization of a colonial system of racialization emerged next to the categorizations of mestizo and mulatto and among other *castas* or namings of mixed-blood ancestry. According to Martínez, this system of race or *castas* was highly unstable and yet influenced "Mexican political imaginaries" for centuries to come.[104]

Martínez's work is helpful is understanding colonial process of racialization in New Spain, her work engages how sexuality and religion are intertwined. Historian Ramon Gutiérrez's *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sex, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846* (1991) is focused more directly on gender and

[101] Martínez 2008: 3.
[102] Martínez 2008: 143.
[103] Martínez 2008: 271.
[104] Martínez 2008.

sexuality in colonial times. His text offers a "social history of New Mexico" that is highly informed by "the institution of marriage," and traces the shifts in heterosexual marital relations among the Pueblo Indians across three centuries, beginning with the Spanish conquest in the 1500s through 1846, the start of the U.S.-Mexico war.[105] Gutiérrez's analysis of marriage occurs within a cultural context and a particular geopolitical location populated predominately by Native Pueblo Indians and the Spanish conquistadores. He suggests that the "entry of Athapaskans and Europeans into the Pueblo world displaced small town, lineages, and clan segments."[106] What was sustained over time, albeit with various shifts, was marriage between men and women. Gutiérrez argues that marriage structured inequalities. As a result of this insight, his study revolves around an analysis of gender and sexuality, along with the implications of marriage for a conquered people.[107]

As a historian, Gutiérrez took a risk to research what is difficult to study—sexuality in a time of conquest, a historical moment where very few records exist. Because, as he asserts, research materials for his analysis were scarce, his work depends heavily on Spanish colonial sources, such as the Spanish Archives of New Mexico and the Archives of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. There are very few sources from Pueblo Indian communities, which reflects the importance of oral histories and oral traditions when other forms of documentation are not available.

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[105] Gutiérrez 1991: xviii. Ramón Gutiérrez (1991) *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846.*
[106] Gutiérrez 1991: xviii.
[107] For critiques of Gutiérrez's study by Pueblo Indian Scholars, see Native American Studies Center (1993).

In writing about gender and sexuality in the sixteenth century, Gutiérrez notes that "Pueblo Indians viewed the relations between the sexes as relatively balanced. Women and men each had their own forms of wealth and power, which created independent but mutually interdependent spheres of action."[108] He also suggests that "[e]rotic behavior in its myriad forms (heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality) knew no boundaries of sex and age" by pointing to "great gods" who "were bisexual" and were "revered among humans."[109] In his study, he tracks the dramatic shifts in beliefs and practices around sexuality as a result of the Spanish conquest and influence starting in 1538. Particularly disruptive of Pueblo society was the "sexual conquest of women" by the Spanish, next to the imposition of the hierarchical Christian religion.[110] Together these rendered "the Pueblo *berdaches*, those half-men—half-women who symbolized cosmic harmony" as "simply *putos* (male whores) and *sodomitas* (sodomites) to the Spanish."[111] By the eighteenth century,

[108] Gutiérrez 1991: 13.
[109] Gutiérrez 1991: 17.
[110] Gutiérrez 1991: 51 and 58-60. Gutiérrez significantly notes a form of colonization through the transference of the Pueblo Corn Mother to the Virgin Mary of the Church, he wrote "In the documented cases that do exist, the padres won female allies by protecting women's rights, by respecting some of the spatial loci of their power, by instructing them that men and women were equal before God, and by allowing them to continue their worship of the Corn Mother, albeit transmogrified as the Blessed Virgin Mary" (78). In addition, the "cross, perhaps more than any other symbol, dominated Christian ritual in seventeenth-century New Mexico" (82). Which signals another form of imposition of religion, in this case Jesus, on the Pueblo Indians (the people of the land) who had distinct beliefs in gods and an array of ceremonial practices that were not honored under Christian rule. Gutiérrez notes, "A century of contact with Christianity had also profoundly transformed Pueblo religious symbolism, though how profoundly beliefs were changed remains harder to ascertain" (161). This argument is akin to Bonfil Batalla's (1996) de-Indianization.
[111] Gutiérrez 1991: 72.

marriage was a product of the Catholic Church and "a sacrament instituted by Christ" in colonial New Mexico.[112]

In addition to this queer ancestry of the Pueblo Indians that Gutiérrez describes, it is also important to point to two-spirit histories as a place from which queer Chicanas and Latinas can build. Two-spirit, as carved out and articulated within Native Studies, offers significant insights to begin to conceptualize queer ancestry in Mesoamerica. *Ometeol* is the Nahuatl word for dual spirit or two energies.[113] The literature on two-spirit assists in the process of remembering indigenous forms of sexualities in Latin America that were interrupted by colonial forms of gender and sexuality.[114] According to the documentary film *Two-Spirits,* people who hold dual energies are revered within indigenous cultures as spiritual leaders.[115] As a result, two-spirit or dual energy people are direct threats to patriarchal formations that thrive on heteronormativity. This is shown in the documentary through the violent murder of Fred Martinez, a Navajo boy-girl, *nádleehí*, "a male-bodied person with a feminine nature."[116]

M. Jacqui Alexander (2005) bravely asks the questions: "Who were my people? How does one know the stories and histories of one's people? Where does

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[112] Gutiérrez 1991: 241. Gutiérrez notes that the "records on the native Pueblo ritual of marriage, discussed at length in Chapter 1 [sixteenth century] do not exist for this period," the eighteenth century (275). The lack of evidence during this time frame parallels his argument of the shifts in marriage for the Pueblo Indians, and then the Pueblo Indians, Spanish, and Hispanos as time progressed.
[113] Forbes (1973).
[114] Walter Williams (1986) *The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexuality Diversity in American Indian Culture*; Brown (1997) *Two Spirit People*, Will Roscoe, ed. (1988) *Living the Spirit: A Gay American Indian Anthology*, Will Roscoe (1991) *The Zuni Man-Woman*.
[115] *Two-Sprits*, (2010). Directed by Lydia Nibley.
[116] Nibley (2010). *Two-Sprits*. Queer Chicana filmmaker, Osa Hidalgo de la Riva made an earlier film on Native and Chicano gay and lesbian communities titled, *Two-Spirit.*

one learn them?" She insists that "we had forgotten that we had forgotten. Missing memory."[117] These questions and assertions are helpful in the search for queer ancestry because the intersections of spirituality, gender, and sexuality are compromised in the heteronormative and war-centered formation of Aztlán that prevails in Chicano Studies. An important effect of colonization is the gender binary that divides the female gender from the male gender. Gender roles are very particular; the roles are so specific that there is punishment for deviating from the norm.

Like Gutiérrez's assertions about half-men—half-women who were not respected by the Church, Anzaldúa (2007) describes how in her *pueblo*, she heard talk of "*una de las otras*," one "of the Others."[118] She also describes them as a "half and half, *mita' y mita*,*"*" someone who is in-between genders.[119] As Anzaldúa argues, "There is something compelling about being both male and female" and identifying with this "entry into both worlds."[120] She names this "the embodiment of the *hieros gamos*: the coming together of opposite qualities within" and simultaneously challenges the notion that queers are "suffering from a confusion of sexual identity, or even from a confusion of gender."[121] Anzaldúa's analysis, although brief on the topics of "half and half" and "homophobia," is a formative contribution to the study of queer Latina ancestral histories.[122] Through her remembering, she names

[117] Alexander 2005: 262-3.
[118] Anzaldúa 2007: 41.
[119] Anzaldúa 2007: 41.
[120] Anzaldúa 2007: 41.
[121] Anzaldúa 2007: 41.
[122] See pages 41-2 of Anzaldúa (2007).

unspeakable sexualities, disrupts gender binaries, and complicates concepts related to queerness.[123]

Gutiérrez's essay, "A History of Latina/o Sexualities" (2010), is helpful to this discussion because he delineates the role of the Catholic Church during the rule of the Spanish empire and how its colonial legacies continue to plague formations and expressions of gender and sexuality. Gutiérrez details sexuality in colonial times by drawing his "examples from colonial Mexico and Peru, which were the hubs of the Spanish Empire from the experiences of *mexicanos* and *mexicanas* who set up residence in what became the United States or who in more recent times migrated there."[124] It is significant that Gutiérrez does not discuss transgender, queer, lesbian or gay categories or forms of identification, noting early on in the essay that the terms we use now did not exist then.[125]

Making clear the dominant role of the Roman Catholic Church in the Spanish Empire, he argues that "For the inhabitants of Spanish America—natives, Africans, and Europeans—the religious discourses of the Roman Catholic Church, then Spain's official state religion, provided the basic categories for the regulation of the human body and its social life."[126] Although he never overtly critiques marriage as a heterosexual institution, Gutiérrez demonstrates the ways in which the Spanish

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[123] Estrada's (2007) "An Aztec Two-Spirit Cosmology: Re-sounding Nahuatl Masculinities, Elders, Femininities, and Youth" in *Gender on the Borderlands: The Frontier Reader,* is an important contribution in delineating this field of study.
[124] Gutiérrez 2010: 14. Ramón Gutiérrez (2010) "A History of Latina/o Sexualities" in *Latina/o Sexualities: Probing Powers, Passions, Practices, and Policies*.
[125] Gutiérrez (2010) says, "In colonial Spanish America, the very concepts that we now take for granted to describe the real of the sexual simply did not then" (14).
[126] Gutiérrez 2010: 15.

Crown enforced a man-woman (heterosexual) idea of marriage, clearly pointing to these restrictions of sex and sexuality as a function of heteronormative rule.[127] Sin was a key factor in determining what was acceptable and what would be punished; sex was for purposes of procreation and not pleasure or desire.[128]

Gutiérrez notes that "[m]ale same-sex sodomy is fairly well documented throughout colonial Spanish America" among various classes, between men of different races (indigenous, Spanish, and African), and "particularly among priests.[129] While women are much less documented, he does point to one particular case where a woman confessed her intimacy with "another beata (pious woman)," yet he writes that there is no known documentation of "the erotic dimensions of the lives of nuns in colonial Spanish America."[130] He shows a gender bias in the documentation of sexuality during colonial times, and perhaps the acceptance of male sodomy versus female "queerness" or expression of sexuality.[131] This non-recognition of women's sexuality silences woman-to-woman intimate relations. As part of his conclusion Gutiérrez 2010 states, "We know a great deal more about make sexual ideology,

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[127] Gutiérrez (2010), "The Church maintained that marriage was the normative institution that assured the regeneration of the species, the peaceful continuation of society, and the orderly satisfaction of bodily desires" (16).
[128] Gutiérrez 2010: 17. According to Gutiérrez, "Masturbation…was said to pollute the body" (18). This reinforces the intense repression of sexuality enforced by the Spanish Crown through the Roman Catholic Church.
[129] Gutiérrez 2010: 19.
[130] Gutiérrez 2010: 20.
[131] Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter, incest, adultery, and rape are significant pieces of the Latina/o sexualities history that Gutiérrez delineates in this article. He contrasts between incest on the bodies of women and adultery committed by women. Incest committed by men was hidden from society with the logic that silencing the incest would serve to not encourage this type of behavior. Yet, adultery committed by women was punishable, a woman could be killed as a result violating the male-female union. While in the case of female rape, the woman and her family would carry the shame, and the male rapist would receive little repercussions and at times would even gain societal power from this violence. For more on this discussion see, Gutiérrez 2010: 24-27 and 30-31.

behavior, expectations, and aberrations than we know about female, particularly when it comes to love and sex between and among women."[132] In *When Jesus Came* (2010), Gutiérrez explains how the Spanish conquistadores disapprovingly viewed the berdache men. His analysis speaks to these relations, where men dressed as women and served other men, as a form of control and even enslavement. This reading of the power dynamics is provocative because it locks the men who dress as women in a place of disempowerment.[133] His reading of the berdache is limited and can be complicated with an engagement with the two-spirit literature.

Conclusion

The current historical memory in Chicano/a Studies does not fully reflect a decolonized search for ancestries, ceremonies, or ways of harmonizing, and leaves very little room for the possibility of queer ancestors. This brief discussion of "half and half," "two-spirit," and the berdache opens historical space for further exploration. Through an interrogation of the formation of Aztlán in the U.S. Southwest, a reimagination of ancestry, and a discussion of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848 and its complex creation of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, I argued that seemingly distinct moments in history must be thought together in order to map complicated layers of interconnected violence and possibility. The purpose of this chapter has been to propose a transformation of the central tenants and historiography

[132] Gutiérrez 2010: 37.
[133] Gutiérrez 2010: 27.

of Chicana/o Studies that allows for the existence of a queer history of *antepasados* (ancestors).

This chapter ultimately worked to unravel a discourse of forgetting of colonial histories and an erasing of ancestral locations such as Teotihuacán, la Plaza de Tres Culturas, el Templo Mayor, Tenochtitlán, and Xochitlcalco (the place of flowers), all located near and around Mexico City. The Aztecs are only one of many ancestral tribal peoples from what is now designated as Mexico (i.e. Olmecs, Toltec), not to mention Indigenous communities that continue to thrive (i.e. Zapotecs, Maya, Tarahumara). Chicanos are a people in diaspora.[134] Inés Hernández-Ávila says to Gloria Anzaldúa in a 1991 interview, "We need to go beyond surface allusions because it's not about romanticizing an Indian past…It's about really coming into touch with what that Indian past means and what it means to have racíes in this continent, in this hemisphere."[135]

Archeology has not been fully considered in Chicana/o or Xicano/a history for purposes of tracing non-dominant narratives.[136] Physical artifacts or ancient structures tell the story of sacred lands that held space for exchange and ceremony. While stories of ancient structures have been imagined, the question that consistently needs to be asked is by whom and through what lens? How do we learn a different history when we enter with a queer Latina and Xicana decolonized vision?

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[134] I develop this idea further in chapter three.
[135] Keating 2000: 184. Ana Louise Keating, ed. (2000) *Gloria Anzaldúa: Entrevistas/Interviews*, from "Quincentennial: From Victimhood to Active Resistance: Inés Hernández-Ávila y Gloria E. Anzaldúa (1991)."
[136] Carrasco (2008).

This chapter served as intervention in the historical context of Chicano Studies, which, since its emergence in the late 1960s, like the Chicano movement, has been a contested site of knowledge. Chicana feminists, and queer Latinas and Latinos more generally, have critiqued this field of study for its sexist and homophobic tenants that typically desexualize race and prioritize nation. This chapter extended these critiques by asking questions of land, ancestry, and the historical formation and racialization of the Mexican American.

Chapter Two:

Gloria Anzaldúa: Altars, Archives, and Opening up the U.S.-Mexico *Borderlands*

> "Decades ago Gloria Anzaldúa comprehended what many of us spend our lives attempting to grasp—that colonization may have destroyed our indigenous civilizations but colonization could not eliminate the evolution of an indigenous psyche."[1]

This chapter builds on the arguments of chapter one by focusing on the work of Gloria Anzaldúa, who is a central philosopher of importance to the theoretical framework of this dissertation. Her writing is a direct response to 500 years of colonization experienced by Chicana/os.[2] As Pérez notes in the epitaph above, Anzaldúa who theorized *mestizaje*, was well aware that the "indigenous psyche" would continue to sustain despite colonization. Chicana/os are indigenous people in diaspora due to different forms of colonization and forced migration. The Spanish conquest and rigid religious views of gender, sexuality, and racial classification have caused Chicana/os to internalize forms of racism, sexism, and homophobia. Anzaldúa's work is an effort to assist Chicana/os in the cultural and historical work to decolonize and remember their indigenous ancestors and familial relations despite centuries of disconnection.

This chapter builds on the premise that the multiple forms of queer Latina subjectivity are in productive tension with women of color feminisms, particularly the

[1] Pérez 2005: 2. Emma Pérez (2005) "Gloria Anzaldúa: La Gran Nueva Mestiza Theorist, Writer, Activist-Scholar" in *NWSA Journal.*

[2] Hartley (2010) argues that Anzaldúa is a "Curandera (Healer) of Conquest." Through an analysis of two her texts (children's book and *Borderlands*), Hartley suggests that Anzaldúa's work confronted the violence of colonialism through healing it. George Hartley (2010) "The Curandera of Conquest: Gloria Anzaldúa's Decolonial Remedy" in *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies.*

early iterations of these collective identity formations. Women of color feminisms are a critical continuance of various historical movements of resistance. The intellectual formation of women of color feminisms narrates a history of creative scholarship and intervention within the field of women's studies and the academy more generally.[3] Early women of color feminists did the path-breaking work to build language around emerging identity formations, political projects, and methodologies. They used creative forms of knowledge to reflect their voices, stories, and legacies of resistance, including autohistoria-teoría[4], testimonio, letter writing, and manifestos. By focusing primarily on the scholarship and art of the visionary Gloria Anzaldúa, this chapter argues that women of color feminisms emerged, in part, by charting a path of knowledge that speaks to understandings only possible through art and visual narratives.[5] Through this articulation of visual culture in subaltern knowledges, creative means became a possibility to express women of color feminists' knowledges.

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[3] Alarcón (1990b), "With gender as the central concept in feminist thinking, epistemology is flattened out in such a way that we lose sight of the complex and multiple ways in which the subject and object of possible experience are constituted" (361). Women of color feminisms insisted on the interconnections and historical layers of race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, etc.

[4] AnaLouise Keating (2009) defines autohistoria-teoría in the "Introduction" to *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader,* "Anzaldúa herself describes this text [*Borderlands*] as 'autohistoria-teoría,' a term she coined to describe women-of-color interventions into and transformations of traditional western autobiographical forms. Autohistoria-teoría includes both life-story and self-reflection on this story. Writers of autohistoria-teoría blend their cultural and personal biographies with memoir, history, storytelling, myth, and other forms of theorizing. By so doing, they create interwoven individual and collective identities" (9).

[5] I trace this knowledge formation through Anzaldúa's work with *altares* (altars). I build my argument through a critical engagement with Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* and her 1982 unpublished essay, "On the Process of Feminist Image Making." An essay I gained access to through my research at the Anzaldúa literary archive at UT Austin. Anzaldúa wrote in her essay, anthologized in Keating (2009), "Border Arte: Nepantla, *el Lugar de la Frontera*," "The altars I make are not just representations of myself; they are representations of Chicana culture" (183).

Perhaps what Anzaldúa is best known for are her theorizations of the Mexico-U.S. Borderlands—"the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country—a border culture."[6] It is a place and space that "is in a constant state of transition," and is home for the "prohibited and forbidden."[7] Demonstrating that the Borderlands are much more than a geopolitical location, Anzaldúa speaks about the multiplicity and otherness of the "inhabitants" of the this cultural and political space:

> *Los atravesados* live here: the squint-eyed, the perverse, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulato, the half-breed, the half dead; in short, those who cross over, pass over, or go through the confines of the "normal."[8]

Anzaldúa's blending of various classifications of race, sexuality, abilities, and deviant positions in society complicates the picture of who resides in the Borderlands. She opens border culture to the queer, the misrepresented, and those whose narratives have not been told in Chicano/a and Women's Studies.

Anzaldúa herself was a misfit in many ways. She was a self-identified lesbiana Chicana writer, who grew up in the small farm town of Hargill, South Texas, where, she remembers that "all the teachers were white" and they "didn't have any music or art," "we just had writing, reading, and arithmetic."[9] Born on September 26, 1942, Anzaldúa was a shape-shifter, someone who in life existed in-between worlds of gender, race, sexuality, and spirit. She theorized based on this practice.[10]

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[6] Anzaldúa 2007: 25.
[7] Anzaldúa 2007: 25. This discussion of the Borderlands is reminiscent of her always shifting formulations of nepantla, the in-between space.
[8] Anzaldúa 2007: 25.
[9] Keating 2000: 25.
[10] See Keating's (2005) edited volume *EntreMundos/AmongWorlds: New Perspectives on Gloria Anzaldúa* for further scholarly discussions of Anzaldúa's spiritual existence in-between worlds.

Although she is one of many feminists of color who were resisting patriarchal and male-centered forms of knowledge, Anzaldúa is in many ways unique to the emergence of queer women of color, lesbian of color, or third world lesbian feminisms.[11] Anzaldúa, like other early lesbian of color social theorists, were informed by the violences of intertwined U.S. structures, and simultaneously challenged nationalist, mainstream feminist, and liberal politics. Gloria Anzaldúa passed at the age of 62 from complications of diabetes. When Anzaldúa's passed in May 2004, huge efforts emerged from communities of Chicana, Latina, and other women of color feminists and allies to honor and recognize Anzaldúa's visionary work.[12]

This chapter begins with a discussion of Anzaldúa's visionary work through her classic text, *Borderlands/La Frontera*. Next, I will examine Anzaldúa's altars and archives, and argue that her text *Borderlands/La Frontera* reveals the structure of

[11] Most notably, she is the co-editor of *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, an exemplar anthology of women of color feminisms. A fuller analysis of this text is offered in chapter 4.

[12] An honoring of her writings and struggle was necessary as part of a collective healing from her unexpected passing. This came in the form of informal altars, virtual and physical, as well as institutional forms of remembering. For example, The Society for the Study of Gloria Anzaldúa was established, next to the two archival collections: Gloria Anzaldúa Altares (University of California, Santa Cruz) and Gloria Anzaldúa Papers (University of Texas, Austin) discussed in this chapter. Also see: Alexander 2005: 285-286. "Coda: Tribute to Gloria Anzaldúa…Because Death Ups the Stakes." Similarly, an archive was established at Spelman College in honor of Audre Lorde. A key text, titled, *I am Your Sister* Byrd et al. was released in 2009 and it contains materials that had not previously been published by Lorde. The establishment of these archives and texts published posthumously has given us a new way to enter into the work of two important (queer) women of color social theorists and visionaries. A recent contribution from Alexis Pauline Gumbs (2011) discusses her search at Audre Lorde's archives as having a "queer ecology to the practice of digging for and growing from *roots*" (17). Gumbs poignantly says, "It's a queer thing (and by queer I mean unlikely, magical, and against the current of the reproduction of oppression) that the work of a Black lesbian teacher mother warrior poet is even preserved in an archive on a college campus, so I take the event seriously" (17). A sentiment that resonated with me as I sat and explored Anzaldúa's papers at the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American collection at the University of Texas, Austin.

an altar, which is the basis of her visionary work. Finally, I investigate the influence of Anzaldúa's writings on ancestry and spirituality on generations of scholars and artists through their own tracing and feminist rethinking of ancient *diosas* or ancestors. For example, I will offer an analysis of Claudia Mercado's queer re-visioning of Coyolxauhqui, the Aztec moon-goddess. Through Anzaldúa's writing, I entertain the possibility of this *diosa* as an elder of decolonization.

Opening (*Abriendo*) *Borderlands/La Frontera*

In the next section, I show various engagements with Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* and signal the contributions she made to particular areas of study as well as engagements and critiques that further her work. First, I briefly offer the context of women of color feminist social movements at the time of release of the text, and then discuss the process of writing *Borderlands* through an interview with Joan Pinkvoss of Aunt Lute. This is followed by an analysis of scholars who engage and critique Anzaldúa's work in *Borderlands/La Frontera* in ways that are productive for this dissertation on queer Latina discourses.[13]

[13] Aunt Lute is currently working to print and release the 4th edition of *Borderlands/La Frontera.* The initial publication of this text was in the year 1987, the second in 1999 with a new introduction by Sonia Saldívar-Hull and an interview of Anzaldúa by Karin Ikas, and the third edition was released in 2007. The 3rd edition includes an Introduction that was produced after Anzaldúa's death and comes in the form of "Ten Voices," they are: Norma Alarcón, Julia Alvarez, Paola Bacchetta, Norma Elia Cantú, Ana Castillo, Sandra Cisneros, T. Jackie Cuevas, Claire Joysmith, and AnaLouise Keating, as well as an editor's note by Joan Pinkvoss. Joan Pinkvoss describes Aunt Lute Books as a grassroots independent publishing house that promotes the writing of marginalized women and women of color writers. She attests that *Borderlands/La Frontera* continues to be a top-selling book. (Interview by author with Joan Pinkvoss, 2012).

Anzaldúa (1987) actively challenged racism and interconnected systems of oppression in her classic text, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. Since this text was published in 1987, it captures writing influenced by the timeframe of the 1970s and early 1980s, as well as her ancestral remembering. During the late 1970s, political terms like lesbians of color, lesbianas de color, and women of color emerged and took form in public spaces.[14] The 1970s is the decade when we began to see organizations like the *Third World Women's Alliance* in New York and the Bay Area, Chicana feminist organizations like *Hijas de Cuahtemoc* at California State University—Long Beach, and the international movement to Free Angela Y. Davis, an outspoken advocate for political prisoners.[15]

This time is also an important moment for feminist publications that mirror these emerging social movements. Anthologies such as *the Black Woman*, *Homegirls*, and *This Bridge Called my Back* were published, along with several others. Sonia Salvídar-Hull (1999) situates the work within the larger context of feminism in writing that "The feminism that *Borderlands* advocates builds on the gendered articulations of women like Marta Cotera and Ana Nieto Gomez, whose early feminist speculations appear in the anthology *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writings*."[16] Salvídar-Hull continues,

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[14] From the Lesbian Legacies Collection, a "Lesbians of Color" flyer, from the Los Angeles area, reads: "LOC was founded in March of 1978 at the founding convention of the National Lesbian Feminist Organization" (USC ONE Gay and Lesbian Archives).
[15] See Blackwell (2003) for more on *Hijas*. For more on Angela Davis' Trial, see Aptheker (1999). Bettina Aptheker (1999). *The Morning Breaks: The Trial of Angela Davis*.
[16] *Chicana Feminist Thought*, edited by Alma Garcia (1997) is a key anthology for Chicana studies, it contains writings as early as 1969 of the Chicana feminist movement.

> Chicanas were theorizing in the 1960s and 1970s, and with Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga's interventions in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of color,* a *transfronterista* (that is, a transnational feminist, *a transfrontera feminista*) consciousness built new coalitions with other U.S. Latinas and U.S. women of color.[17]

Referencing the work of Anzaldúa's earlier co-edited anthology, Salvídar-Hull cites Anzaldúa's contribution to Latina and women of color transnational feminisms who were building solidarity across borders of nation, sexuality, and gender.[18]

In February 1991, Anzaldúa spoke in Dorinne Kondo's class at Pomona College about writing the text *Borderlands/La Frontera*. It was published for the first time in AnaLousie Keating's 2009 edited collection, *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader.*[19] In the essay titled, "On the Process of Writing *Borderlands/La Frontera*," Anzaldúa (2009) says,

> I had a problem because I wanted to produce artworks, to produce knowledge, but I was from a campesina-working class, a woman from a racial minority who's a lesbian. How do you get past all those obstacles? And I wanted to do it *my* way, using my approach, my language.[20]

Part of Anzaldúa's intervention in *Borderlands/La Frontera* was her overcoming the "obstacles" in her life and allowing these struggles to shape her contributions to social transformation. She produced writing that emphasized the epistemological function of art while maintaining a critique of inequalities in society.

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[17] Salvídar-Hull, 1999: 1. Salvídar-Hull, Sonia (1999) "Introduction" to Second edition of *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza.*

[18] I provide an analysis of this text and connected network of Latina lesbianas in chapter four.

[19] I viewed the original document at the Anzaldúa Papers at the Benson Latin American, UT Austin: Box 112, Folder 23.

[20] Anzaldúa 2009: 188-189. Original emphasis. In Keating (2009) *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader.*

In this essay she also speaks of her intention to contribute to the usual mode of sharing knowledge through text, by revisioning the "interaction between reader and writer." Anzaldúa later says,

> I intended to problematize the relationship between reader, writer, and text – specifically the reader's role in giving meaning to the text. It is the reader…who ultimately makes the connections, finds the patterns that are meaningful for her or him.[21]

Keating (1996) also discusses the importance of,

> …transformational dialogue between writer, reader, and text. As we recognize ourselves in the various others we encounter as we read, and these others in ourselves, we define ourselves differently. Binary oppositions between self and other break down. We cross over, rewriting culture, rewriting self, as we go.[22]

Illuminating Anzaldúa's creativity functions as form of social theory based on inner work.

Joan Pinkvoss, "midwife extraordinaire"[23] who is also the publisher and editor of *Borderlands/La Frontera,* notes that Anzaldúa "embodied every thought she had, that is the part that is really hard to explain to people, because her biography was always important in her understanding where she wanted to move to…she would bring all of herself to it, and it would wear her out."[24] Pinkvoss, who is also the co-founder of the grassroots publishing press Aunt Lute, suggested that Anzaldúa did not see *Borderlands/La Frontera* as a text only for Chicanas and Chicanos.[25] During the

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[21] Anzaldúa 2009: 190.
[22] Keating 1996: 186-187. AnaLouise Keating (1996) *Women Reading, Women Writing: Self-Invention in Paula Gunn Allen, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Audre Lorde*.
[23] It is the acknowledgements of *Borderlands/La Frontera* that Anzaldúa names Joan Pinkvoss a "midwife extraordinaire."
[24] Pinkvoss Interview, 2012.
[25] Pinkvoss Interview, 2012.

interview we discussed the way Anzaldúa's multiple subjectivities, in terms of her intersecting identity formations, did not limit but instead informed Anzaldúa's vision and creativity.

Anzaldúa's meditation practice was reflected in her tracing work that necessitated a body, mind, and spirit alignment. She put forward a political "consciousness" that reflected re-envisioned forms of social transformation. She theorized this in chapter seven, *La conciencia de la mestiza/*Toward a New Consciousness of *Borderlands*. Chela Sandoval (1998) writes,

> *La concienca de la mestiza* makes visible the operation of another *metaform* of consciousness that insists upon polymodal forms of poetics, ethics, identities, and politics not only for Chicanas/os but for any constituency resisting the old and new hierarchies of the coming millennium.[26]

It is the spiritual consciousness that deserves sustained analysis; this chapter seeks to address this gap.

Borderlands/La Frontera

The fields of study that Anzaldúa engaged in *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987) included the emerging, social movement-inspired disciplines of Chicana/o studies, women's studies, and queer studies. Her text provided a space of convergence and a layered language for radical ideas, histories, and experiences that did not fit well within rigid frames of thought. She simultaneously offered critical discussions of race, gender, culture, difference, and sexuality. Anzaldúa blended

[26] Sandoval 1998: 352. Chela Sanvodal (1998) "Mestizaje as Method: Feminists-of-Color Challenge the Canon" in *Living Chicana Theory*.

prose and expository writing with poetry next to song lyrics, personal experiences and observations in order to bring theory and history to life. Thematically central for this dissertation on queer Latina discourse in *Borderlands/La Frontera* is the tracing of ancestry, creative myth-making and storytelling, and visual imaginings.

As a result of this innovative work, Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* is widely cited and in some cases has been associated with making a significant contribution to promising areas and forms of study.[27] Salvídar-Hull (1999), wrote in the "Introduction to the Second Edition" of *Borderlands/La Frontera*:

> While *estudios de la frontera* (border studies) certainly were not invented by Gloria Anzaldúa in *Borderlands*, this book signaled a new visibility for academic programs on the study of the U.S.-Mexico border area…This *transfrontera*, transdisciplinary text also crossed rigid boundaries in academia as it traveled between Literature (English and Spanish), History, American Studies, Anthropology and Political Science departments, and further illuminated multiple theories of feminism in women's studies and Chicana studies.[28]

Pérez (2003) notes Anzaldúa "could not have known the impact her book of poetry and essays would have on the field called borderlands."[29] She adds, "Studies by queer cultural critics and theoreticians influenced by Anzaldúa's work continue to proliferate."[30]

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[27] Essays from *Borderlands/La Frontera* have been widely anthologized and influential, one such example is an except from Anzaldúa's text anthologized in Lillian Castillo-Speed's (1995) edited collection, *Latina: Women's Voices From the Borderlands*.
[28] Salvídar-Hull 1999: 12-13.
[29] Pérez 2003: 127.
[30] Pérez 2003: 127. Some of the "Chicana lesbian cultural critics" that Pérez cites as having been influenced by Anzaldúa and whose scholarship is relevant to the arguments of this dissertation are: Calvo and Esquibel (2010), Soto (2005) and Yarbro-Bejarano (1994). In Yarbro-Bejarano (1994) article, Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La frontera*: Cultural Studies, "Difference," and the Non-Unitary Subject" in *Cultural Critique,* she offers an analysis of the "border consciousness" Anzaldúa theorizes about and "its contribution to paradigmatic shifts in theorizing difference, as well as contentious issues in the *reception* of this text: on one hand, the enthusiastic embrace of

Still, Anzaldúa, has remained part of the invisible "other" as a lesbians of color in certain fields of study.[31] Based on an extensive literary reading of *Borderlands/La Frontera,* Linda Garber (2001) clarifies how Anzaldúa's scholarship circulates in queer theory and lesbian feminism,

> Anzaldúa's work has had an important influence on the rise of queer theory, and many people who write about her call her work poststructuralist or queer theory; at the same time, however, most people who write about queer theory ignore her, as they ignore the work of most lesbians of color. Critics who with hindsight place *Borderlands/La Frontera* squarely in the poststructuralist camp ignore Anzaldúa's simultaneous self-naming as lesbian, lesbian feminist, and dyke—and sometimes remove her work from its Chicano/a context in order to discuss it primarily as queer.[32]

Garber (2001) continues her critique of queer theory by suggesting that Anzaldúa's poetry in *Borderlands* is not valued in the way that her essays are.[33] She argues that "poetry is theory."[34] A dedicated reader of *Borderlands/La Frontera* will notice that Anzaldúa did not compromise her poetry for theory. Her writing was continuously formed through creative and expressive means that evoked imagery and emotions. As Garber suggests, "Poetry, itself, is difficult—a code to be cracked, a nonlinear and

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Borderlands/La frontera: The New Mestiza by white feminists and area scholars and, on the other, the critiques voiced by some critics, particularly Chicana/o academicians" (7).

[31] Anzaldúa (1981) wrote in her classic essay, "Speaking in Tongues," "The lesbian of color is not only invisible, she doesn't even exist. Our speech, too, is inaudible" (165).

[32] Garber 2001: 167. Linda Garber (2001) *Identity Poetics: Race, Class, and the Lesbian-feminist Roots of Queer Theory.* Also see Nikki Sullivan (2003) *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory* for a discussion on queer theory and race, particularly helpful is her discussion of women of color feminism and queer theory in her chapter, "Queer Race," pp. 57-80.

[33] According to Joan Pinkvoss, Anzaldúa's editor and publisher, when she first approached Anzaldúa about publishing her work it was after hearing her read poetry. It was at that time Pinkvoss suggested that a book of poetry would not sell very well, and inquired if Anzaldúa had any other writing ready for publication. Her response to Pinkvoss was, "well, I have these essays." (Pinkvoss Interview, 2012).

[34] Garber 2001: 175.

emotive discourse."[35] This is particularly true of Anzaldúa's poetry, which is not only interlaced with her prose, but also contains fluidity around language and moves between English, Spanish, and Nahuatl.

Like Garber's observations about Anzaldúa's relation to queer theory, within Chicano literature, Anzaldúa is understood as a Chicana who theorizes about the border and revises historical understandings of race, yet often the queer and feminist are removed or overlooked in the Chicano/a context. It is precisely her "queer of color critique" or vantage point from the "in-between" space of nepantla that allows for the nuances of her theoretical perspectives of the borderlands. Major exceptions to this slippage are scholars in the field of Chicana and Latina feminisms who explicitly cite Anzaldúa's creative works as influential to their frameworks and research.[36]

In many ways, the academy views subjects as divided and separate, and places what is knowable into categories. An important intervention that Gloria Anzaldúa made (and the field of women of color feminisms more generally) was to insist on how entities viewed as separate are actually interconnected. This understanding calls

[35] Garber 2001: 174.

[36] Facio (2010) in her article: "Writing and Working in the Borderlands: The Implications of Anzaldúan Thought for Chicana Feminist Sociology" in *Chicana/Latina Studies,* critiques those Chicanos/as who cannot see the creative insights to Anzaldúa's work as theory. Facio argues, Anzaldúa's "writings are not considered scholastically legitimate because they are not academic enough, not intellectual enough, not abstract enough; as well, her stories create uneasiness for those who occupy spaces of academic power and privilege. However, Anzaldúa's stories *are* her theory. It is the reader's task to extract theory from these stories" (67). For another critical use of Anzaldúa's works see, Arrizón (2006) text *Queering Mestizaje: Transculturation and Performances* who centralizes, builds on, and expands the work of Anzaldúa in the area of Performance.

for a much more complex understanding of scholarship, art, culture, knowledge, methodologies, and people's histories. Pérez (2005) offers,

> Gloria Anzaldúa forged a new territory, a new intellectual locale, a new spiritual space, a new psychic and psychological terrain. She created fresh symbols, metaphors, and taxonomies to describe a material world where poverty, racism, homophobia are real problems and where a psychic, sacred inner world is as real as the material, tangible world. For her there were no boundaries.[37]

It is the "sacred inner world," building on Keating's (2008) insights that I focus on and analyze explicitly in the next section on altars and archives.

It is the realm of spirituality that feels underexplored or analyzed in scholarly writing about Anzaldúa's work. AnaLouise Keating (2008) writes, "All too often…scholars avoid Anzaldúa's politics of spirit," referring to *Borderlands* and the new mestizo. Keating continues, "they rarely examine the important roles Anzaldúa's spiritual activism plays in developing these theories and many others."[38] Interestingly, Keating states that "In some ways, this avoidance of Anzaldúa's politics of spirit probably seems like common sense. After all, those of us working in academic settings are trained to rely almost exclusively on rational thought, anti-spiritual forms of logical reasoning, and empirical demonstrations."[39] It is from this point that I would like to build, recognizing that Anzaldúa's theories and legacies are

[37] Pérez, 2005: 3.
[38] Keating 2008: 54. AnaLouise Keating (2008) "'I'm a citizen of the universe': Gloria Anzaldúa's Spiritual Activism as Catalyst for Social Change" in *Feminist Studies.*
[39] Keating 2008: 54.

based on a body-mind-spirit alignment, which is often not considered "valid" in research-based writing and scholarship.[40]

The first chapter of *Borderlands/La Frontera*, titled "The Homeland, Aztlán/El otro México," begins her classic 1987 text, which is now in its third edition. This essay is in direct conversation with the Chicano movement's ideologies and notions of racial oppression, internal colonialism, and struggle from a third world perspective. Yet, in the poetry that begins this chapter, Anzaldúa illuminates this battle by showing that creation is a stronger force than the imposed racism and constructed political borders that are attempting to dictate peoples' lives. She wrote,

> But the skin of the earth is seamless,
> The sea cannot be fenced,
> *el mar* does not stop at borders.
> To show the white man what she thought of his
> arrogance,
> *Yemayá* blew that wire fence down.[41]

This is an important example of Anzaldúa's "politics of spirit" and the knowledge that allows her to see the importance of the Chicano struggle, yet push its boundaries

[40] In an interview with Irene Lara (2005) titled "Daughter of Coatlicue," Anzaldúa says that she believes she got diabetes because people would often reject what she her analysis of third world spirituality. Vakalahi and Stark's (2011) "Health, Well-Being and Women of Color Academics" article focused on women of color and health shows the importance of spirituality for women of color to sustain themselves in academia. To have faith in something bigger than the academy that can be a site of betrayal, particularly because stories or histories are fought for in the university space. Certainly, notions of the decolonial, healing, and spirit have entered, however, mostly in Native and Indigenous Studies.

[41] Anzaldúa 1987: 25.

towards an earth or creation-centered analysis.[42] What man imposes to divide and separate people from each other (including structures of racism and heteropatriarchy) are not as powerful as the spirit of the divine ocean.

Altars and Archives

There are two archives that have been established to honor Gloria Anzaldúa at academic institutions. One is held at McHenry Library at the University of California—Santa Cruz, which holds her Altares Collection in a total of thirteen boxes.[43] This was established at the urgings of her writing *comadre* and dear friend, Irene Reti (an oral historian, archivist, and writer). The second archive is the Gloria Anzaldúa Papers at the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection at University of Texas, Austin. This literary archive holds hundreds of boxes, including her birth certificate, photographs, videos, and her drawings that accompany her theoretical insights, plus pages and pages of her unpublished writings. AnaLouise Keating, Irene Reti, and Christian Kelleher organized this archive after her sudden passing in 2004.[44]

My knowledge of Gloria Anzaldúa grew when I spent time with the sacred objects that were a part of her *altares* or altars, as well as her written words in the literary archives. In my search within Anzaldúa's altars and papers, I had a sense of entering into another world; I found a "path of knowledge" that privileged the view of

[42]Keating (2008).
[43] Accessed 2010-2011.
[44] Interview by author with Irene Reti, 2010. As a result of my interviews with Irene Reti, I conducted archival research at the Anzaldúa Papers at UT Austin in September and November of 2010.

the world through a creative and visual lens. Anzaldúa was a writer who used art and visual narrative to express her concepts. I found drawings of theoretical understandings of nos/otras and nepantla for example. In her altares collection especially I saw evidence of sacred objects often associated with the knowledge and work of a *curandera* (healer) as Hartley (2010) and others have named her. It became clear that her practice of building *altares* and her visual imaginings were the basis for her theorizations, and her knowledge or *sabidura* of indigenous practices of interconnectedness.

My spirit research focused on Gloria Anzaldúa began by asking questions of the spiritual realm, of what is not easily explained in words, but is experienced through feelings of connection and alignment with divine energies, such as the cosmos and the earth. This research asked me to turn inward to find resonances and answers instead of searching only outside of me, which is what is usually suggested in disciplinary spaces during the research process. This parallels Anzaldúa's own practice:

> I look for omens everywhere, everywhere catch glimpses of the patterns and cycles of my life…We're not supposed to remember such otherwordly events. We're supposed to ignore, forget, kill those fleeting images of the soul's presence and of the spirit's presence. We've been taught that the spirit is outside our bodies or above our heads somewhere up in the sky with God. We're supposed to forget that every cell in our bodies, every bone and bird and worm has spirit in it.[45]

[45] Anzaldúa 2007: 58.

Anzaldúa further writes that, "Institutionalized religion fears trafficking with the spirit world and stigmatizes it as witchcraft. It has strict taboos against this kind of inner knowledge."[46] It was this inner knowledge that I had to work to understand.

In my research notes and writing, I meditated with questions like: How did you pray Gloria? What words, actions, or rituals did you use to deliver your sacred messages to *el creador/la creadora* or to the universe? What was your ceremony like? These are not the usual questions a sociological researcher ponders. However, after years of working to understand the potential of Anzaldúa's work, I realized that the strength, and perhaps the roots of her work, came from the intangible, what remained unseen by the reader, yet presented itself through phrases in her writing and images of sacred objects in her altars. Anzaldúa's literary and artistic work was a result of her meditative practice to build infinite connections with the universe through her body-mind-spirit alignment.

When I sat with the holdings of her altares, which consisted of thirteen full boxes, I immediately started to see evidence of her search for ancestry, including Mayan and Aztec figures, such as Coatlicue, in bright and bold turquoise green shades. I saw Anzaldúa's deep connections with sacred animals and spirit guides, including snakes, hummingbirds, owls, and *jaguares* (jaguars). There were medicine bags with copal, clear crystals of different shapes, rattles, masks, and fossils—sacred objects that she used as part of here ceremony. Her connection to Yemayá (ocean spirit) was also present through her ocean shells, and an iridescent sea otter. I learned

[46] Anzaldúa 2007: 59.

that some of her sacred items were gifts to her from various friends, and that the natural, earth-based materials (like flowers, leaves) that were a part of her *altares* could not be preserved in the library holdings due to possible infestation.[47]

It was in these instances of sitting with her sacred objects that I was able to connect her writing with visual images of her concepts. I realized her words and theoretical concepts were not only speaking to me, and to many others intellectually, but evoking a connection with the "creative force," spirit. Anzaldúa (1982) wrote, "The altar is the formal site of this connection with the cosmos."[48] A vision of social transformation takes form in Anzaldúa search for inner knowledge that is connected to the spirit world. Laura Pérez (2008) comments that "altar installation and related art forms have inspired Chicana artists" to "be more precisely connected to the search for, and expression of, alternative spiritualities and alternative art practices, particularly those that are visionary with respect to social justice and transformation."[49] To understand the complexities and layers of Anzaldúa's scholarly contributions, it is productive to understand the importance she placed on knowing through art and the visual.

In the Anzaldúa altares collection, there is a large wooden jaguar head that is featured on the cover of Keating's (2009) *Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*. This natural color jaguar is almost life-size with large fangs and a compassionate facial expression. In

[47] Reti interview, 2010. I interviewed Irene Reti on two occasions in 2010, one of them took place at the Women's Center at UCSC where she guided me through a viewing of Anzaldúa's sacred objects that were on display. Key in this collection was a bright yellow and red wooden jaguar woman which Reti informed me sat in a visible place in Anzaldúa's home. The other took place at McHenry Library.
[48] Anzaldúa (1982 - unpublished work): 9.
[49] Pérez, L. 2008: 341. Laura Pérez (2008) "Hybrid Spiritualities and Chicana Altar-Based Art: The Work of Amalia Mesa-Bains" in *Mexican American Religions: Spirituality, Activism, and Culture.*

much of Anzaldúa writing, there is a signaling to the jaguar as a sacred *nahual*, or guiding animal spirit. It has a price tag that reads $90,000 pesos and the artist's name, Franco, most likely purchased in Mexico. Several of her sacred items had their original tag indicating their locality, where they came from, and at times the artist or crafter's name. This is significant because it shows Anzaldúa's awareness of people's geopolitical locations and the interconnections with visual art. It is clear that Anzaldúa saw, in her own words, "the making of images as a way of healing."[50]

It is easy to discredit spirituality, meditation, ceremony, the practice of building *altares*, and the work of healing because it sounds like "new age" script. However, practices that require the alignment of body, mind, and spirit, like yoga, tai chi, and meditation are as ancient as history. Each of these practices has its own traditions. The cosmology and practices that Anzaldúa was tracing to build knowledge are linked to indigenous histories and the land that is now known as Mexico.[51] Mexico, particularly central Mexico, is a geographical place that experienced extreme violence due to colonization by the Spanish Crown and its heirs. Anzaldúa's work to remember and recover cultural memory is a contribution to reestablishing indigenous forms of ceremony, such as burning *copal* (frankincense) to honor spirit.[52]

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[50] Anzaldúa (1982 - unpublished work): 16.
[51] Indigenous scholar, Susan A. Miller's (2008) scholarship on the "Indigenous Paradigm" shows the historic significance of recognizing a relation with the cosmos and their forms of consciousness in the construction of knowledge.
[52] It is significant to note that the Catholic Church uses frankincense in their rituals, however there is no gesture to the ancient practice of burning *copal* (incense). In the Aztec Pantheon exhibit at the J. Paul Getty Museum, a central artifact was a large incense burner that was used during communal ceremonies.

Borderlands as Altar

Anzaldúa's *altares* collection, which is an eclectic set of sacred objects, offer an indication of her spiritual practices that informed her writing and visioning.[53] Gloria Anzaldúa's writing proves to be a guide for tracing ancestry. She remembers through meditation with her altars that hold representations of tracing ancestry and family histories. Anzaldúa's spiritual practices of raising *altares* and writing brings knowledge and visioning of another kind, one that is connected to body-mind-spirit, or knowledge from the heart with the intention of inner healing and greater social transformation. Anzaldúa is a curandera, her practice of building altars and inclusion of images in her writing are evidence of this claim.

Anzaldúa's altars were the sites of her prayers and building connection, as was her writing. Anzaldúa (1982) details that she had altars in every room of her house, even the bathroom. Her home in Santa Cruz was a sacred sanctuary that held space for her creativity, vision, as well as her journey as a *curandera* (healer). Anzaldúa (1982) wrote:

> On my bedroom wall I have a picture of my Nagual, a were-wolf-owl animal and a picture of Tlazolteotl, Coatlicue, and Xochitlquetzal. On the altar I have a woman's Eskimo knife called the ule, curved blade like the moon bound in leather string, a statue of an Earth goddess,

[53] Gloria Anzaldúa Altares Collection at UCSC, viewed by author at McHenry Library, 2010-2012. Irene Reti, who is the curator the Gloria Anzaldúa Altares Collection and was also Anzaldúa's upstairs neighbor and writing *comadre* for 10 years. Reti did the work to preserve and find a new home for Anzaldúa's sacred objects. For more about Reti's profound connection with Anzaldúa, see Reti (2005) "Living in the House of Nepantla" in *EntreMundos/AmongWorlds*. For six years, a small yet significant collection of the altares was displayed at the UCSC Women's Center. Reti placed the sacred objects next to quotes which mentioned them from Anzaldúa's classic text, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, to show the connection between her altares and her visionary writing.

> vase with red roses, shell, rock, feathers, an Objiwa drum to summon the spirits, my serpent staff, a crocheted bag filled with herbs and whatever object I'm trying to charge.[54]

Her vision is reflected in what she held sacred, which included the *diosas* that she uncovered or came to know in her search for ancestry.[55]

Similarly, Anzaldúa's text, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, is an altar. She laid out various interconnected pieces that came together in the form of seven key essays and six sections of poetry. These thirteen pieces ask the reader to search and dig, *escarvar*, as she did in forming the text. There are no easy conclusions, however, as an altar that contains many connections and representations to visual narratives of familial and ancestral tracings of history, the text is complete. Through Anzaldúa's writing and the circulation of this text, she was actively recovering and remembering forms of ceremony for queer Chicanas in particular, and Chicana/os and allies more generally. While making space for the study of Chicana feminism from a queered perspective, Anzaldúa opened a path for tracing ceremonial knowledges and practices.

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[54] 1982: 2, in her unpublished, "On the Process of Feminist Image Making." As previously mentioned, I located this document in the Benson Latin American G.E.A. Collection which was organized after her passing primarily by AnaLouise Keating, Irene Reti, and Christian Kelleher (Reti interview, 2010). "On the Process of Feminist Image Making," is one of the only documents I have found that details a discussion of her altars.

[55] "*Diosas*" is the Spanish word for "goddesses." It is significant to note that in her Altares Collection, among other remarkable sacred objects, there are several figurines of Aztec and Maya resemblance. Most of them have a label of some sort, that reads, "hecho en Mexico," or have the artist name followed by their geographical location which is usually Mexico D.F. In the author's 2010 interview with Irene Reti, she suggested that Anzaldúa did a lot of traveling to Mexico, this travel was also evident in the correspondences the author read in the Anzaldúa Papers at the Benson Latin American. I point this out because although Anzaldúa was a "seventh generation" Chicana in the U.S., she did the work to learn her ancestry in central Mexico. In her essay, "On the Process of Writing *Borderlands/La Frontera,*" Anzaldúa (2009) notes that she partially wrote this book, "for people who had no idea what it meant to be a seventh-generation Chicana who had grown up in Texas near the border" (188).

Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* is an example of a methodological venture into remembering previous generations through stories. Her theorizations unravel silences by putting language to that which is often forgotten and unseen—indigenous ancestry, spirituality, and queer mestiza consciousness. As Paola Bacchetta (2007) says in the introduction to the third edition, "Gloria opens a path for rethinking existence beyond the present forced silenced of racialized, sexual violence of all sorts, through cognitive decolonization."[56] Bacchetta writes that in Anzaldúa's essay, "The Homeland, Aztlán/El Otro México," "Gloria unravels and displaces the official archives of her history. She seeks what is submerged under official narratives. She constructs a different understanding of herself, mentally and emotionally elsewhere" and "evokes a specific genealogy: Chicanas through Indias in Aztlán; Cochises, mestizas."[57]

In many ways, Anzaldúa left us pieces of history that need to be complicated further and simultaneously compel us to do more unraveling (historical digging) of what has been forgotten or partially destroyed, including cultures, languages, histories, and worldviews. Elisa Facio (2010) emphasizes, "the new mestiza consciousness involves recovering indigenous memory and history."[58] Similarly, Salvídar-Hull (1999) suggests that *Borderlands/La Frontera*, "opens up a radical way of restructuring the way we study history" and knowledge.[59]

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[56] Paola Bacchetta (2007). "Circulations: Thinking with Gloria Anzaldúa in Paris," in the "Introduction to the Third Edition" of Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* 3rd Edition.
[57] Paola Bacchetta (2007).
[58] Facio 2010: 76.
[59] Salvídar-Hull 1999: 2.

Decolonizing with Altares

Anzaldúa is also one of the first Chicana lesbian writers to theorize the importance of understanding that Chicanas/os are colonized indigenous people who have become detached from their roots due to violent suppression over the last 500 years.[60] Although she does not use the concept of decolonization in *Borderlands/La Frontera*, she is very much guiding the steps of healing work to undo years of self-hatred, shame, vergüenza for being Indigenous, Chicana, queer, other, and for speaking other languages.[61] In Hartley's (2010) article, "The Curandera of Conquest: Gloria Anzaldúa's Decolonial Remedy," he argues,

> Anzaldúa's healing work in defining Mestiza consciousness functions as a necessary precondition for liberation from below and as the embodiment of a concrete, historically embedded alternative to the colonizing Eurocentric rationality of modernity.[62]

This decolonial mode is exemplified through her mixed use of Spanish, English, and Nahuatl languages in the text.[63] Nahuatl is an indigenous language still spoken in parts of Mexico and beyond and was a dominant indigenous language in las Américas up until 1821 (it is often associated with the Aztecs or Mexica).[64] It is through Anzaldúa's use of Nahuatl that she uncovers traces of indigenous ancestry and begins

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[60] Castillo's (1994) *Massacre of the Dreamers* also makes significant contributions in this stride. As does Moraga's (2000 [1983]) *Loving in the War Years*. Of particular relevance to this chapter is Castillo's (1994) chapter: "Brujas and Curanderas: A Lived Spirituality."
[61] Hartley (2010).
[62] Hartley 2010: 136.
[63] Mignolo (1996) "explores the question of languaging and colonialism," using Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* text in his article, "Linguistic Maps, Literary Geographies, and Cultural Landscapes: Languages, Languaging, and (Trans)nationalism." He wrote, "To read *Borderlands* is to read three languages and three literatures concurrently, which is, at the same time, a new way of languaging" (189).
[64] Forbes (1973). Forbes states, "As surprising at it may seem, Náhuatl actually came into use far to the north of its pre-1522 frontier, partly because of the movement of large numbers of Mexicans and partly because early Spanish policy favored the spread of a single native language" (24).

to rename *diosas* who were previously known through narratives of conquest, and thus contributes to rewriting Chicana history through a feminist lens.[65]

In her foreword to *The Encyclopedia of Queer Myth, Symbol, and Spirit*, Anzaldúa noted that the Encyclopedia "challenges us to read history – the history of sexuality as well as the history of the sacred – differently, giving voice to knowledges that are deeply rooted in the realm of spirit."[66] She defines "spiritual *mestizaje"* as weaving "together beliefs and practices from many cultures, perhaps including elements of Shamanism, Buddhism, Christianity, Santería, and other traditions. Spiritual *mestizaje* involves the crossing of borders, incessant metamorphosis…its central myth being shapeshifting."[67]

With her spiritual practice of altar and feminist image making, Anzaldúa directly challenged the imposed Christianity that came with colonization. The dominant forms of Christian religion enforced by the Spanish Crown preached that "God" or "divining spirit" were outside of human beings, animals, and other creations of nature, exterior to the body or sources of life, including water, and land. In contrast, Anzaldúa, like other indigenous-centered writers and artists, shows how

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[65] Saldívar-Hull (1999) says in the "Introduction" to the 2nd edition of *Borderlands/La Frontera*, "By rewriting the stories of Malinali, La Llorona and the Virgen de Guadalupe, Anzaldúa is strategically reclaiming a ground for female historical presence. Her task here is to uncover the names and powers of the female deities whose identities have been submerged in Mexican memory of these three Mexican mothers. The New Mestiza narrates the pre-Cortesian history of these deities, and shows how they were devalued by both the Azteca-Mexica patriarchs and by the Christian conquerors. In presenting the origins of the Guadalupe myth, Anzaldúa offers new names for our studies—names that we must labor to pronounce: Coatlicue, Cihuacoatl, Tonantsi, Coyolxauhqui" (6). Saldívar-Hull's reference to "names that we must labor to pronounce" obviously signals to Chicana/os (and others) struggle to learn Nahuatl, an indigenous language that became foreign due to conquest and the imposition of the Spanish and then English language.

[66] Anzaldúa (1997) p. viii. "Foreword." *The Encyclopedia of Queer Myth, Symbol, and Spirit.*

[67] Anzaldúa (1997) p. viii.

spirit is held within each life form. To invoke the divine or seek connection was simply a process of going inward, and in some cases, being present or mindful of one's surroundings. The sacred objects serve as reminders or guides to that which is simple and divine.

The creation of home altares emerged in México as a result of colonial Spanish Christianity, which made it difficult for people who practiced indigenous traditions of ceremony to find sacred spaces to pray. Peace scholar and *maestra de sabidura indígena* Estela Roman suggests that sacred altars were built inside the home because connection with indigenous *diosas* or *dioses* and other sacred energies of earth were not allowed or respected in the colonial public space.[68] Amalia Mesa-Bains (1991) wrote specifically about women's use of the family altar and the home altar,

> Established through pre-Hispanic continuities of spiritual belief, the family altar functions for women as a counterpoint to male-dominated rituals within Catholicism. Often located in bedrooms, the home altar presents family history and cultural belief systems…altars allow history, faith, and personal objects to commingle.[69]

Significant in Mesa-Bains's characterization of the altar is the way family history is incorporated next to spiritual beliefs, providing a space in the home for reflection and connection. Anzaldúa (1982) also comments about the making of home altars by women. She says, "The making of altars is one of the oldest art forms devised and perpetuated by women. In Mexico, the tradition goes back at least to 1000 B.C.

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[68] Conversations with author, Temixco, Mexico, 2007, 2009, 2010. Estela Roman is a maestra de sabidura indigena, a distinguished teacher of indigenous knowledges. She is the co-founder of Centro Internacional para la Cultura y Enseñanza de la Lengua, A.C. (CICEL), or International Center for Cultural and Language Studies (CICEL) in Cuernavaca, Mexico.

[69] Mesa-Bains 1991: 132.

Aztec, Mixtec and Maya women used altars at home."[70] Anzaldúa suggests that the "tradition of making altars has been for women a means to connect to the speechless part of ourselves…that talks in images to express itself."[71] Anzaldúa reveals the direct influence of her elder and memory that led her towards a sacred path and practices that influences her vision, writings, and perspective.

> For many years what kept my spiritual flame lit was the memory of the picture of *la Virgencita de Guadalupe*, a Mexican manifestation of the Virgin Mary, that Mamagrande Ramona kept on her dresser-top altar alongside *las velas*, the votive candles, and snapshots of family members, *muertos y vivos*, the dead and the living. That memory led me to *el hecho de altares* (the making of altars), *curanderismo* (healing), *nagualismo* (shamanism), and other indigenous Mexican traditions.[72]

Prior to colonization, ancient temples were a central space of ceremony. An important example of this form of colonization is the archeological site of the Templo Mayor (Great Temple), where remains exist from after the "fall of Tenochtitlan in 1521." There is evidence that the "Spaniards destroyed the buildings and used the stones to build their colonial city from which Mexico city was to grow."[73] Perhaps more poignantly, it is important to mention that ancient temples were destroyed for the purpose of building colonial churches. Bonfil Batalla (1996) states,

> The temples and idols that could be seen were destroyed; in 1531 Zumárraga reported the destruction of five hundred temples and twenty thousand idols. But frequently the new Christian temples were built on the sites formerly occupied by ancient *cues*, or temples, which had been leveled, or on top of pyramids.[74]

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[70] Anzaldúa (1982 - unpublished work): 12.
[71] Anzaldúa (1982 - unpublished work): 12.
[72] Anzaldúa (1197). "Foreword." *The Encyclopedia of Queer Myth, Symbol, and Spirit.* p. vii.
[73] "Excavation of the Temple," http:www.dellerae.com/tenoch/Excavation.html#stages, date accessed: 1/26/2012. In 1978, the Coyolxauhqui Stone was excavated at this site.
[74] Bonfil Batalla 1996: 86.

The visual shock of this tragedy is immense and discussed by several scholars.[75] The ancient stones form the wall of the churches of the Spanish. In fact, to date, there is site map at Templo Mayor which indicates that if in fact the Spanish colonial churches were demolished, it is likely that archeologists would find additional ancient structures or stones underneath the earth's surface.[76]

Tracing Coatlicue, Coyolxauhqui, Tonantzin, and Tlazolteotl

Lara (2008) suggests that "Anzaldúa was among the first writers to theorize about Tonantzin-Guadalupe from a Chicana feminist perspective."[77] She describes Anzaldúa's impact on the study of the sacred and sexuality:

> Anzaldúa's ovarial writings complicate Tonantzin-Guadalupe's cultural histories by critically linking her to a pantheon of Mesoamerican indigenous goddesses, thus becoming an inspiration to many other Chicanas seeking to re-sexualize the 'sacred' image of Tonantzin-Guadalupe.[78]

Scholars like Irene Lara (2008) and Maria Elena Martínez (2004) build their arguments from the common understanding that the Spanish colonizers, who many times were religious officials, did the work to eradicate indigenous spirituality. Lara (2008) in particular makes the point that the "*Florentine Codex*," authored by "the Spanish friar and ethnographer Bernardino de Sahagún," "skeptically describes

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[75] Taylor (2003). Diana Taylor (2003) *The Archive and The Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas.*
[76] Professor Eduardo Matos Moctezuma is a leading scholar in this area, as is David Carrasco. Carrasco, Davíd, Leonardo López Luján, and Eduardo Matos Moctezuma (2007) *Breaking Through Mexico's Past: Digging the Aztecs with Eduardo Matos Moctezuma.*
[77] Lara 2008: 106. Irene Lara (2008) "Goddess of the Américas in the Decolonial Imaginary: Beyond the Virtuous Virgen/Pagan Puta Dichotomy" in *Feminist Studies.*
[78] Lara 2008: 107.

indigenous devotion to Guadalupe on Tepeyac Hill—the site of her initial appearance and also the site of an ancient temple to Tonantzin."[79] Lara (2008) notes, "Tonantzin is among a group of indigenous goddesses who were demonized by Christianity."[80] The other familiar *diosas*, "indigenous goddesses," or "similar sacred energies" she mentions next to Tonantzin, are Cihuacoatl, Coatlicue, and Tlazoteotl. Lara argues that Anzaldúa "defines them all as symbols of the indigenous and feminine sacred,"[81] and that she does the work of remembering:

> Conscious of the ways that Mexica imperialism had also subordinated the complex feminine sacred power of goddesses such as Tonantzin and Coatlicue, Anzaldúa does not romanticize nor create a new dichotomy between Catholic *desconocimientos* versus Mexica *conocimientos.* In resistance to discourses that construct cultural and historical amnesia and distort indigenousness and femaleness in the interests of the dominant ideology, Anzaldúa remembers the multiple names of Guadalupe and other indigenous goddesses.[82]

Lara notes, "Indeed, as Anzaldúa suggests, unlearning the virtuous *virgen*/pagan *puta* dichotomy is nothing less than healing patriarchal and colonized constructions of female sexuality and spirituality."[83]

Lara's article is a significant contribution to the study of *diosas* or goddesses in las Américas. She does the work to decolonize discussions of Guadalupe and move towards showing her connection to indigenous ancestors, such as Tonantzin. It is clear that Lara's work is in conversation with Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera*

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[79] Lara 2008: 100. Tonantzin is the "Nahua" name for Guadalupe, usually referred to as *La Virgin de Guadalupe*. I write her name as "Guadalupe" to remain consistent with Lara's arguments, who shows that "Nahuatl does not have a word for 'virgin'" (103).
[80] Lara 2008: 100.
[81] Lara 2008: 109.
[82] Lara 2008: 109.
[83] Lara 2008: 110.

trace of ancestry. It is also significant to note that "Cihuacoatl ('Serpent Woman'), the Toltec earth Mother, was also called Tonantzin."[84] Later she discusses how Coatlicue is recognized as "Serpent Skirt," which is parallel to Anzaldúa's discussion of this earth goddess, who is also associated with or can be seen as another form of Tonantzin or *la madre tierra*.[85] A central part of Lara's decolonizing is to show connection or a lineage among the ancient *diosas*, instead of the usual separations, divisions, and demonizing. [86]

Also what we see from Lara's research is the way a female mother earth, *madre tierra* was central to spiritual beliefs in ancient cultures and histories. Lara poignantly states, "Given that most Nahua documents were destroyed and the knowledge we have about ancient Nahua culture is laden with Christian colonial and Nahua male bias, it is challenging to discern pre-transculturated Nahua beliefs and practices." Yet she does the work to read "primary documents according to an ancient Nahua lens," one which centers harmony, "complementarity and balance," and forms of duality.[87]

One of Lara's central arguments is "that through their re-memberings, Tonantzin-Guadalupe becomes a decolonial figure capable of healing the virtuous

[84] Lara 2008: 101.
[85] Lara 2008: 101.
[86] "[C]olonizing Christians negatively associated the Christian serpent, devil, Eve, evil, and sin with these Nahua sacred energies. Although 'masculine' Nahua deities were also demonized," Lara (2008) suggests "that by being associated with a human woman, the fallen Eve, the maligning of the goddesses transposes to the maligning of actual Nahua women, particularly healers, midwives, and 'harlots.'" (101).
[87] Lara 2008: 102-3.

virgen/pagan *puta* split perpetuated by Western patriarchal thought."[88] She argues that "the relationship between Guadalupe and Tonantzin is alive in the cultural memory and practices of many Mexicans and Chicana/os, particularly those who are still connected to their indigenous identities in spite of a colonial legacy that attempts to erase or delegitimize the indigenous link."[89] This is significant then because within a spiritual icon that is known, there is a possibility to tap into ancestral knowledge by renaming Guadalupe. Because "Tonantzin-Guadalupe can be a powerful force of healing and creativity,"[90] Lara concludes,

> Ultimately, decolonizing Tonantzin-Guadalupe does not necessarily mean rejecting Guadalupe as a colonial sign of the virtuous *virgen* in favor of Tonanztin, and associated goddesses as signs of the colonized pagan *puta*…Instead, through Tonanztin-Guadalupe, they engage her/their *conocimientos* in order to sanctify the complexity and dynamism of their spiritual and sexual subjectivities.[91]

Lara presents a piecing back together of a history and memory of ancestry through a feminist analysis. Although Lara builds on the work of Anzaldúa in *Borderlands*, she does not claim that her feminist re-reading of the *diosas* is a queer reading. For purposes of this dissertation focused on queer Latina discourse, I build on Lara's work with an eye towards building queer Latina histories.

Pointing to the importance of Lara's feminist revisionary work, Zavella's (1997) study of the "the gendered construction of Chicana/Mexicana sexuality" demonstrates how rigid narratives of Catholicism and the dictates of virginity impact

[88] Lara 2008: 103.
[89] Lara 2008: 104.
[90] Lara 2008: 106.
[91] Lara 2008: 123.

the life choices of two distinctly identified working-class mujeres (Mirella Hernández "a heterosexual Chicana" and María Pérez "a *lesbiana* Mexicana").[92] Zavella grounds her analysis of the narratives by "regional variations" to show how location is a significant factor in the expression and enactment of sexuality. Interestingly, Zavella states, "Using interviews to understanding sexuality is problematic" because sexuality is "assumed rather than made explicit."[93] This assertion offers significant insights into the larger arguments of this dissertation, and sheds light on the complexities of locating scholarship and documentation on Chicana and Latina sexualities. María Pérez, the *lesbiana* narrator who was raised in a "small town in the state of Puebla," reconfigured traditional gender roles, and embraced hybrid forms of spiritual beliefs by "combining" what Zavella names "a sardonic devotion to La Virgen de Guadalupe, Buddhism, and the Goddess."[94] It was Pérez who searched for resonances of her sexuality identity in books, and found that it was difficult to hide her desires for her woman lover in public.[95] The dangers of breaking the silence were evident when Pérez's mother "discovered" her relationship "by opening a letter" from Pérez's lover. As a result, Pérez was beat by her father.[96] Zavella's article shows the complexities of navigating Catholic notions of appropriate forms of sexuality that are ultimately ingrained in Chicana and Mexicana culture on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border, and are a result of legacies "rooted in dislocations generated by a

[92] Zavella 1997: 392-393. Patricia Zavella (1997). "Playing with Fire: The Gendered Construction of Chicana/Mexicana Sexuality" in *The Gender/Sexuality Reader.*
[93] Zavella 1997: 393.
[94] Zavella 1997: 398.
[95] Zavella 1997: 401.
[96] Zavella 1997: 401.

history of Spanish conquest, colonization of indigenous peoples, and a war of independence."[97]

Coyolxauhqui as an Ancestor of Decolonization

In her essay, "Let us be the healing of the wound: the Coyolxahqui Imperative – la sombra y el sueño," Anzaldúa wrote:

> I stare up at the moon, Coyolxauhqui, and its light in the darkness. I seek a healing image, one that re-connects me to others. I seek the positive shadow that I've also inherited.[98]

In the introduction to the third edition of Borderlands/La Frontera Clair Joysmith (2007) names Anzaldúa a "Coyolxauhqui visionary."[99] Unearthed in 1978, Coyolxahqui, is a fragmented figure, cut in pieces.[100] As the myth goes, it was her brother Huitzlipochli who slashed her because she was plotting the murder of her mother (Coalticue). Coyolxauhqui didn't approve of her mother's pregnancy. Daniel Alarcón (1997) suggests that in telling history it is important to allow myth significance, just as we allow significant to text written by historians. Alarcón's framework is helpful in approaching the popular and male-centered narrative of

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[97] Zavella 1997: 382.

[98] Anzaldúa continues, "I yearn to pass on to the next generation the spiritual activism I've inherited from my cultures…My job as an artist is to bear witness to what haunts us, to step back and attempt to see the pattern in these events (personal and societal) and how we can repair el daño (the damage) by using the imagination and its visions. I believe in the transformative power and medicine of art" (Keating, 2009: 304).

[99] Joysmith from "Introduction" to 3rd edition of *Borderlands/La Frontera* (2007).

[100] There are a few representation of Coyolxauhqui in ancient structures that have been uncovered, it is her image as a full circle, full moon that is perhaps the most known. In this image we see Coyolxauhqui with bells on her limbs as if she were a danzante (dancer). Bare-breasted, she has double-headed snakes which are tied around her center and a skull to represent death. Her head faces up, as if she too is reaching towards the cosmos. The body appears muscular and her hands and feet strong. Her facial features recognizable to Chicanas, she does not appeared shattered or afraid at all.

Coyolxauhqui. The narrative that revolves around this Aztec diosa de la luna, or Aztec goddess of the moon is curious. Efforts have been made by Chicana artists primarily to re-envision Coyolxauhqui, Anzaldúa's work has played an influential role in this venture.

In the 2007 *Mujeres Con Palabra* album, In Lak Ech, an "all-Xicana performance poetry group" released a drumming song called Coyolxauhqui. The main lyrics form a sort of prayer to la diosa:

> Coyolxauhqui, Coyolxauhqui tu eres mujer, en la luna esta tu imagine,
> tu eres fuerte, sangramos, damos vida, damos leche y amor, tu espirtu
> esta conmigo...

Signaling to a Xicana feminist reading of the sacred Coyolxauhqui, one in which Xicanas and Latinas can find a reflection of their spirituality and femininity that is not sexualized or demonized. This reading of Coyolxauhqui offers a feminist alternative to the ancestral narratives that tends to favor the male gender.

Similar to the work undertaken by the group In Lak Ech, Anzaldúa in the "fall of 1995" invited three artists friends to do an intensive creative workshop focused on re-imaging Coyolxauhqui. According to Santa Barazza (2001) who was one of the three invited artists, it was called, "Entre Americas: El Taller Nepantla."[101] Chicana artist Barraza, details how Anzaldúa told them the usual myth or story of Coyolxauhqui, and also revealed Anzaldua's creative imagining of Coyolxauhqui. She wrote:

[101] Barraza 2001: 6. Santa Barraza (2001) *Artists of the Borderlands*.

> Anzaldúa interpreted the creative process of each artist as a kind of dismemberment, analogous to the falling body parts of Coyolxauhqui and the initiation ceremony dreams of a novice shaman.[102]

The Chicana and Latina artists were provided with materials to create art by meditating with Coyolxauhqui in the artwork they were creating.[103]

Claudia Mercado of In Lak Ech does a queering of Coyolxauhqui, in her piece titled, "Lovermoon." The diosa enters the dialogue as a voice over. In this semi-autobiographical piece Mercado details her encounter with the full moon, who tells her to "slow down," and encourages Mercado to remember "you are a part of me, and you're not listening." Just through these few introductory words we understand the narrator's relationship with the moon, the way in which Coyolxauhqui guides through her light and cosmic cycles. The story continues with the desire between Mercado and "la luna llena." Mercado dramatically says, "I fall in her arms, Staring into my eyes, Full moon asks me to kiss her." She continues by describing Coyolxauhqui's appearance through her desire and encounter with her:

> Wind chimes awake the rivers of my veins, Pumping my heart of my real self/ Her eagle penacho feathers, Caress and fan my animal heat, Soothing hardened nipples/ Birthing a new heartbeat between la naturaleza and me, Piercing into the darkness like the bells on her face.

In this poetic narrative there is a deep honoring of Coyolxauhqui, while a strong intimacy grows between the two. Mercado re-imagines the Aztec moon goddess, while the *la diosa* asks her to remember her connection to the moon with the

[102] Barraza 2001: 7.
[103] It is significant to note that the 2010 Society for the Study of Gloria Anzaldúa featured a panel with these artists.

pronunciation of the word, "*Acuerdate*" ("Remember"). It is to this form of remembering through cultural production that I turn to in the next chapter.

Coyolxauhqui is a spiritual elder of decolonization. Through these few examples of Chicana and Latinas evoking Coyolxauhqui, we can see how there is a reclaiming of her within Chicana and Latina feminist culture. A fragmented feminine figure who guides through her completeness, as a full moon. Revising and reinterpreting the accepted narrative of the moon goodness, through a Chicana or Latina lens allowing further access to this ancestral knowledge. Complicating the narrative of Coyolxauhqui to move away from the stagnant story of her desire to murder her mother Coalticue, and instead focusing on her strength, femininity, and possibilities as a guide for creativity.

Conclusion: Women of Color Visionaries

Escarvado (excavating) women of color feminisms to uncover complexities are not self-evident processes. Gloria Anzaldúa in life and spirit is a great social philosopher and literary *curandera*, who consistently worked with an indigenous grounded lens. She gave us the language of "nepantla," the in-between space, of race, class, gender, sexuality, the simultaneity of clashing borders and opening connections. She brought our attention to layers of existence and the violences that occur when we stay in the fragmentation, colonization, and don't work to see or realize our whole selves, to decolonize.

It is through the fusion of Anzaldúa's multiple ways of forming knowledge, and vision of creating from the alignment of her body-mind-spirit that she contributed to the field of women of color feminisms. Intentionally moving away from the linear western patriarchal thinking that places people into hierarchal and static categories, and instead moving towards an in-between creative matriarchal or feminist-centered space, where multiplicity can exist in a responsible and productive way and allow for possibilities of access for all involved.[104] Anzaldúa produced works that were outside of the norms (of heteronormativity and whiteness), she employs methods and tools to produce her work that critique these norms, as she disrupted disciplinary boundaries.

Anzaldúa inspires us to build interconnected analytical frameworks that trace and uncover the connections between the forced removal of a people, rape of women and children, restrictions of indigenous ceremony, and lack of access to foods from the earth, and other forms of domination based on gender and racial formations, to see clear the destruction of peoples, cultures, and languages.

Frida Kahlo and Gloria Anzaldúa—A pedagogical spirit journey

Anzaldúa writings offer recognition of those who live within the intersections, layers, and markings of race, class, gender, and sexuality or queer women of color identity formations. She drew attention to spaces of trauma, legacies of colonization, domination, and interconnected violence. Similarly, Anzaldúa offered another way of conceptualizing ancestry and connections to other worlds, one that is not confined by

[104] Reti (2005) "zone of possibility." Anzaldúa's creates a space of healing, a space of possibility within the academy through her publications, teaching, and writing.

heteronormative or colonial restrictions, resonates as a necessary theoretical intervention for feminists and queer of color communities. For example, the consideration of ancestry and art as important components in the study of history is an important intervention.

Held within Anzaldúa's altares collection were various representations of Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, who does not appear in Anzaldúa's writing, and yet her legacy as a queer ancestor is significant for queer Latina and Chicanas, as well as other women of color.[105] Frida Kahlo is also a queer Latina ancestor, artist, and visionary who was influenced by her hybrid identity.[106] Her father was Jewish and her mother was Indígena from Oaxaca. In her lifetime, 1907-1954, Kahlo wore indigenous-made huipils, rebozos, and braided hair in many varieties, men's suits including the tie, and earth made stones as jewelry. Kahlo was a dynamic political and social artist who held a critical perspective of the nationalism in Mexico. Her art and activism worked against the grain of Mexican and U.S. national politics; similarly she challenged restricted binaries of gender and sexuality. Like Anzaldúa, she was constantly producing creative work that was in search of ancestry.

[105] Reti commented that there were over 1,000 pieces of Frida Kahlo memorabilia in Anzaldúa's collection. (Reti interview, 2010).
[106] According to Davis Maciel (1991), in his "Mexico in Aztlán and Aztlán in Mexico: the Dialectics of Chicano-Mexicano Art," in *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965-1985*, San Francisco based "Galeria de la Raza" sponsored "the exhibition Homenaje a Frida Kahlo in 1978" (114).

I started my course on Tracing Queer Latina/o Theory with a 1932 painting by Frida Kahlo, titled, "Self-Portrait on the Borderline between Mexico and the United States/Autorretrato en la frontera entre México y los Estados Unidos."[107] Also assigned for the first week of class was Anzaldúa's Borderlands/La Frontera. In the class session featuring this painting, we began to discuss how the image captures Frida in an in-between space, where the sun and moon on the Mexico side look ill while the sky on the U.S. is full of toxic smoke from the developing industrialization in the nation. The roots of the sacred plants on the Mexico side become man made electric cords as they connect to machinery on the U.S. side. Frida is at the center with a pink colonial style dress and a necklace that holds symbols of ancestry. In the hand pointing to the U.S. side she holds a cigarette and in the other she holds a

[107] The course was American Studies 157: Sexual Identities and Communities, subtitled, "Tracing Latina/o Queer Theory." I taught this course both fall 2009 and fall 2010.

Mexican flag, both signs of a certain form of liberation and patriarchy. Broken ancient structures that resemble Teotihuacan with indigenous remnants on one side, high rise buildings and industrial machines labeled FORD beneath an American flag on the other. Needless to say, Frida is pointing to a culture clash, playing with time, space, and possibility. Showing her critique and existence in both nations,she places herself at the center, at the border, the "in-between space" that can take many forms as Gloria Anzaldúa theorizes for us.

It was significant to begin the course with Frida Kahlo as a transnational and diasporic subject, artist, and cultural and political critic. It is relevant to trace her paintings and participation in political movements as a site of ancestral roots of Latina queerness. Not only do we know that she was a person who was sexually intimate with people of multiple genders, it is also evident from her paintings and critics that she offers commentary on state politics through a cosmic perspective, a queering of boundaries. Frida Kahlo captured social and spiritual worlds through her paintings. This is especially exemplified in a 1949 painting titled, "The Love Embrace of the Universe, the Earth (México), Myself, Diego, and Señor Xólotl," in this painting she is again straddling borders of other dimensions and relations.

Guided by Gloria Anzaldúa's Borderlands theorizing, I pedagogically worked through the class by imagining an ongoing dialogue with the students and her political context and location. Anzaldúa was writing at a time when feminists of color were theorizing and acknowledging histories of the simultaneity of an analysis that maps the structures of race, class, gender, and sexuality in the U.S. (Davis 1981,

Zavella 1994). Feminist of color and lesbian of color scholars argued for subjective writing instead of the usual objective truth, as well as an emphasis on writing from a lived present moment, experience, or memory. Anzaldúa's emphasis engaged with various sites of knowledge and cultural production that influenced this "poor Chicanita from the sticks" from Texas to theorize spirit, ancestry, and memory through the existence of multiple genders, sexualities, and locations.[108]

The next chapter, Queer Latina Cultural Production: Remembering through Oral and Visual Storytelling extends the arguments of the two previous chapters through an analysis of queer Latina artists who create art and story outside of dominant institutions. Using non-western thought, integrating a critique of the land, and resisting colonizing identity formations, I argue that the featured queer Latina cultural producers represent a community that was in part inspired by Anzaldúa and other women of color feminist legacies. Through an analysis of their paintings, sculptures, and theatre productions there is a collective building of creative ways to exist outside or resist the ideologies of dominant religions and others forms of disciplining, such as gender and sexuality. The artwork featured here is connected to ceremonies and medicine that are of the earth and based on indigenous beliefs and practices, these can be likened to what Susan Miller (2008) names the "Indigenous Paradigm."[109]

[108] It is significant that Anzaldúa writes from the geopolitical of South Texas. Texas history is unique in the story of how the U.S. – Mexico border was established in 1848 and also its proximity to Mexico and shared porous border.
[109] Miller (2008).

Chapter Three:

Queer Latina Cultural Production: Remembering through Oral and Visual Storytelling

This chapter centers the organic and inter-generational efforts of queer Latinas to construct their own narratives and histories through oral and visual representations as a form of restoring collective memory. The cultural work of queer Latinas exists within the threads of this entire dissertation; however, it is in this chapter that I explore more deeply the possibilities of "remembering" within oral and visual storytelling. I argue that through the construction of alternative narratives and histories, queer Latina cultural producers are paving a path towards decolonizing ancient knowledges and regaining cultural memory. It is important to recover knowledge that has been hidden, lost, or silenced while doing the work of decolonization.[1]

According to Taylor (2003), "Cultural memory is, among other things, a practice, an act of imagination and interconnection."[2] It requires a deep focus and belief in something more than what is immediately visible. As Taylor argues, "Sometimes memory is difficult to evoke, yet it's highly efficient; it's always operating in conjunction with other memories."[3] The featured cultural producers in

[1] Waziyatawin Angela Wilson (2005) in her text, *Remember This! Dakota Decolonization and the Eli Taylor Narratives* argues, "the recovery of Indigenous knowledges is a central component in the struggle of decolonization" (1).
[2] Taylor 2003: 82.
[3] Taylor 2003: 82.

this chapter participate in various forms of ceremony and actively work to evoke ancestral memories in shared spaces and through practices of creative ritual.

While Taylor focuses on cultural memory, Sturken (1997) makes an important distinction; she differentiates "between cultural memory, personal memory, and official historical discourse," arguing that "when personal memories of public events are shared, their meaning changes."[4] They become a form of cultural memory or collective remembering that can become a form of collective story. Like Sturken, I am more concerned and attentive to shared forms of cultural memory, and I build on her framework by illustrating the ways in which spiritual and political spaces of collaboration and collective remembering are important to the process of restoring or inciting ancestral memory and imagination.

The work of remembering makes it possible to piece together expressions, perspective, and theories through mediums of alternative (creative) methodologies. These representations can engage the complexities of difference and the interconnections of local and global relations of power. The remembering I focus on occurs through various forms of cultural production, including media-film, theater, music, poetry, painting, sculpture or a fusion of these. The purpose of remembering is to enable the telling of a story or the re-telling of history, and the creation of subaltern historical narratives that open space for transformation. In this chapter, the historical narrative centers on queer Latinas and their counterparts.

[4] Sturken 1997: 3.

The "remembering" I am conceptualizing facilitates a "re-rooting" in the present moment through a revised perspective on the importance of restoring the connections among history, culture, language, and spirituality.[5] My use of "remembering" is borrowed from Moraga's (2007) discussion in "The (W)rite to Remember: Indígena as Scribe 2004-5."[6] Moraga (2007) argues that it is important for Xicanas and Xicanos to "re-member" the histories that have been erased due to colonization in order to recover the connections among ancient cultures, stories, art, architectures, languages, spiritualities, and diverse and distinct sexualities. In her practice, Moraga (2007) encourages remembering through collective writing workshops.

During the moments of contact and conquest discussed in this dissertation, the culture of non-dominant peoples are compromised and in some cases destroyed purposefully. This makes it difficult to have knowledge about ancient cultures and practices. I argue that what continues to exist despite this violence is the sacred knowledge that lives within the people—spirit, *la palabra* or word, culture, which many times can manifest through visual imaginings or other forms and representations, like theater.[7] Sturken (1997) suggests, "Cultural memory is produced

[5] Central to this remembering are critical forms of mapping race, gender, sexuality, and class in all its complexities and structures. An analytic that is akin to what Lugones (2008) calls "the modern/colonial gender system," which she partly characterizes as a form of "intersectionality" that has been theoretically formulated by women of color feminists. Lugones (2008) illuminates, "Intersectionality reveals what is not seen when categories such as gender and race are conceptualized as separate from each other" (4).

[6] The most recent version of this work is titled, "Indígena as Scribe/2005: The (W)rite to Remember," this essay appears in Moraga (2011) *A Xicana Codex of Changing Consciousness, Writings, 2000-2010*, a text I engage in the later part of this chapter.

[7] The emphasis on images and performance echos the insightful formulation that Taylor (2003) draws in her critique of writing that was introduced by the Conquest, that is, "The writing =

through representation in contemporary culture, often through photographic images, cinema, and television. These mnemonic aids are also screens, actively blocking out other memories that are more difficult to represent."[8] Sturken's treatment of memory and forgetting are complimentary to the discussions of remembering in this chapter.

Sturken asserts that *Tangled Memories,*(1997) "is based on the premise that memory is a narrative rather than a replica of an experience that can be retrieved or relived."[9] Memories are not evidence of something; instead, the narratives tell collective stories or imaginings. She continues, "All memories are 'created' in tandem with forgetting…Forgetting is a necessary component in the construction of memory. Yet the forgetting of the past in a culture is often highly organized and strategic."[10] Sturken (1997) offers a vital piece of knowledge in this formulation that is needed for remembering, since the forgetting is not random. There are significant reasons for the forgetting, including historical and sexual traumas. As discussed in the first chapter, sexual violence was a central component of colonization. The effects are still being felt in epidemic form today through incest and other forms of violence. In many ways, Sturken's analysis, when read next to Moraga's analysis,

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memory/knowledge equation is central to Western epistemology" (24). Taylor argues, "Although the Aztecs, Mayas, and Incas practiced writing before the Conquest—either in pictogram form, hieroglyphs, or knotting systems—it never replaced the performed utterance. Writing, though highly valued, was primarily a prompt to performance, a mnemonic aid" (17).

[8] Sturken 1997: 8. "Even a photographic image is subject to interpretation about what it actually proves" (8).

[9] Sturken 1997: 7.

[10] Sturken 1997: 7.

suggests the need for intentional rememberings for the purpose of transformation or healing.[11]

In this chapter, I discuss the importance of oral storytelling as a method of transmitting knowledge. I spend time on instrumental methods and frameworks, such as oral storytelling, oral history, oral tradition, and visual culture and imaginings. Next, I primarily analyze Fregoso (2003), Moraga and Rodríguez (2007), and The Latina Feminist Group (2001) together to offer a discussion of my use of "meXicana," "Xicana," and "Latina" within this dissertation for the purpose of exploring the different forms that the political project of queer Latinas can take. The remainder of the chapter delineates a discussion focused on generations of queer Latina indígena artists and cultural producers. I illustrate how cultural producers incorporate ancestral knowledges and practices into their art as a way of decolonizing knowledge, regaining ancestral memory, and "re-membering" through the practice, creation, and exhibition of their art.

How do generations remember when records and memories have been destroyed or mutilated for the purposes of cultural extinction? I argue, as others have, that memory or remembering what is painful opens space for the healing of historical traumas.[12] It builds possibilities for seeing and uprooting what has caused harm for an extended amount of time. Maori scholar, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) identifies

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[11] I am suggesting that remembering, becoming aware of a memory, can assist in the process of healing historical or sexual traumas. This logic follows that of post-traumatic stress, when one becomes aware of what caused the trauma that knowledge facilitates the path of overcoming the memory.

[12] See for example, Judith Herman (1997), *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* and Thich Nhat Hanh (1992), *Touching Peace: Practicing the Art of Mindful Living.*

"Remembering" as one of "Twenty-Five Indigenous Projects."[13] In her discussion of "Remembering," Smith (1999) wrote, "The remembering of a people relates not so much to an idealized remembering of a golden past but more specifically to the remembering of a painful past and, importantly, people's responses to that pain."[14] She continues, "Both healing and transformation become crucial strategies in any approach which asks a community to remember what they may have decided to unconsciously or consciously forget."[15] This is helpful in thinking about queer Latina indigenous histories, and people of color histories more generally, because as argued in the previous chapters, the misrepresentations of history and the colonization of land, *madre tierra*, and indigenous peoples have caused great despair and various forms of disease, *maldad*. As Sturken (1997) suggests, historical narratives do not honor the truths of multiple populations of people. In her words, "The writing of a historical narrative necessarily involves the elimination of certain elements."[16]

To have the courage to remember in the midst of forgetting is not an easy task. To heal the heart one must touch the pain in mindfulness so healing can occur.[17] To continuously remember that indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica and many other lands have been displaced, sexually violated, and desecrated is significant historical work that resonates with contemporary forms of "racialized sexuality;" nevertheless,

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[13] Smith (1999), chapter 8, "Twenty-Five Indigenous Projects," in her important and relevant book, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples.*
[14] Smith 1999: 146.
[15] Smith 1999: 146.
[16] Sturken 1997: 8. Also see, Foucault (1978) *The History of Sexuality*, especially part five, "Right of Death and Power over Life," pp. 135-159, where Foucault explicitly speaks of racism, genocide, the "regulation of populations," and bio-power. An additional helpful essay is "17 March 1976," pp. 239-263, in Foucault (1997) *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collége de France, 1975-1976.*
[17] Thich Nhat Hahn (1992).

there must be a simultaneous healing energy or space created in order for transformation on a larger scale to occur.[18] I believe this is the risk that the artists featured in this chapter take with their work—they offer us a way to enter into what feels painful or difficult and make it visible and manageable through their ceremony of creating. Before entering into their work, I will spend some time discussing the methodological relationship between oral history, oral tradition, oral storytelling, and knowledge production.

Some methodological questions that guide this discussion are: What analytical frameworks have opened the possibilities of exploring queer Latina cultural production? How do cultural knowledge production and representations assist in tracing the histories and silences of queer Latina/o theory? How do we do this work of archiving knowledges? How do oral and visual culture assist in the process of creating or remembering alternative histories? How do we archive this knowledge for future generations?

Oral History, Oral Tradition ~ Oral Storytelling and Knowledge Production

Through this tracing of queer Latina ancestry in cultural production, I seek to explore and expand the possibility of oral storytelling as a form of historical memory and knowledge that works to restore violently erased memories through oral

[18] Soto 2010: 1. Soto (2010) argues, "We tend to take note of racialized sexuality primarily when it is explicitly pronounced, if not announced, in representations by Chicana feminist writers and cultural workers, especially those who profoundly violate sexual norms, such as Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga" (9). Soto continues by citing Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano as "the scholar most invested and prolific in developing a vocabulary with which to explore Chicana racialized sexuality" (9).

traditions and oral histories, and cultural knowledge archives. Central questions of this methodology are: how is knowledge produced, and what and whose knowledge counts as evidence?[19] Which sites become a part of social memory? Which are erased? Pushing the boundaries of an already progressive and innovative method and field of inquiry, I am inspired to explore the connections between the method of oral history and the practices of oral tradition and oral storytelling, particularly within the context of histories of colonization, with a particular focus on the roots of queerness, dual energies, two-spiritedness in relation to queer Latinas. How can this methodology enrich sociological approaches?

Several artists featured in this chapter have a deep spiritual understanding of themselves and a connection to indigenous ancestries, lands, and peoples of Mesoamerica and beyond, while they simultaneously maintain a critique of the ways that dominant histories have unfolded. Native scholars, particularly Indigenous feminist scholars like Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), Waziyatawin Angela Wilson (2005), and Jennifer Denetdale (2007) by focusing on their own people (the Maori, the Dakota, and the Diné respectively) in relation to larger structures (i.e., racism, colonization, genocide, and slavery), offer important methodological models with rigorous intellectual analyses next to spaces of transformation and healing through renewed or "decolonized" historical narratives. This work has important implications for sociological inquiry because the much-contested "insider" versus "outsider" dilemma is no longer relevant. Inside what these scholars show is the significance of

[19] This question is influenced by Foucault's (1980) "Power/Knowledge" formulations.

doing research within one's community. For example, Denetdale (2007) begins the trace of the Diné people through her great-great-great grandmother's article of clothing. The knowledge she puts forward is formed from various sources, including family stories, photographs, and political narratives.

Indigenous feminist scholars offer important insights for the tracing of queer Latina histories that aim to re-root through "re-membering" and storytelling. I seek to build a framework that offers a way of honoring the indigenous roots of Chicana and Latinas for the purposes of learning who we are, again.[20] Storytelling and oral tradition are part of indigenous histories. There is a long history of oral storytelling and *testimonio* among marginalized communities of color. Yolanda Chavez Leyva (1998) states, "As a people who have passed on our *historia* though the sharing of our *historias*, storytelling itself provides a basis for unraveling the multiple meanings of silence."[21] Similarly, the Latina Feminist Group (2001) argues that "*Testimonio* has been critical in movements for liberation in Latin America, offering an artistic form

[20] Needless to say, the history of "Mexican-American" women in the United States has been extremely complex. However, there are some things that are apparent, such as histories of racism and forced assimilation that impose ideologies of "whiteness" and "white identities" by erasing indigenous connections. The fact that many Mexican-Americans have "Caucasian" listed as their race on their birth certificates speaks to the whitening of a people in America. The term "Hispanic" is heavily critiqued for doing this work of whitening and assimilating, i.e. the magazine *Hispanic Business*. Scholars like Gloria Anzaldúa argue the word lesbian has a homogenizing effect—similar to the term Hispanic, which "whitens" black and indigenous populations; Anzaldúa prefers the terms dyke or queer because they are more representative of her working-class background (1998: 263).

[21] Leyva 1998: 430. Leyva, Yolanda Chávez (1998) "Listening to the Silences in Latina/Chicana Lesbian History" in *Living Chicana Theory.*

and methodology to create politicized understanding of identity and community…*testimonio* can be a powerful method for feminist research praxis."[22]

The Latina Feminist Group asks an important question, "How can *testimonio,* as self-construction and contestation of power, help us build the theory of our practice, and the practice of our theory?"[23] Given the composition of the group and their respective disciplines, the Latina Feminist Group is an example of the kind of methodologies of intersections that could be useful to sociology.

Oral historians are rethinking the value of the narratives offered by storytellers. According to Kennedy (2006),

> In the past fifteen years the most forward-looking oral historians have come to understand the subjectivity and orality of their sources as a strength rather than a weakness. They have explored how oral testimony – the actual storytelling – conveys unique information and how the subjective – what the past means to a particular individual – adds new dimensions to history.[24]

Prior to oral history, archival research was the primary method in historical research. Rarely found in the archives are the narratives of "queer" or "deviant" populations.[25] In many ways, it is through an intentional critique of what is missing in dominant historical narratives and archives that queer of color studies took form and launched what Pérez (2003) eventually called the "queer of color gaze." This gaze shifts the

[22] Latina Feminist Group 2001: 3. Latina Feminist Group, ed. (2001). "Introduction: Papelitos Guardados: Theorizing Latinidades through Testimonios," in *Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonies.*
[23] Latina Feminist Group 2001: 19.
[24] Kennedy 2006: 272.
[25] Pérez 2003.

sociological gaze by calling attention to what is outside the "norm" or the heteronormative.

One of the most intriguing parts about oral history is that there is no intention to generalize a story or narrative; instead, there is an understanding that each story is unique, although there may be interconnections with many other existences or memories. Memories are infused with cultural, social, and political imaginings and experiences. Oral history interviews offer an opportunity to "tell" what one remembers of a particular moment or time in history. The very experience of remembering creates meaning through a memory that is contextual (in time and space), while also specific to a topic, genealogy, or legacy. As Perks and Thomson (2006) assert, "Memory thus became the subject as well as the source…of Oral History."[26]

The method of oral history can assist in unraveling historical narratives that have been put forward as dominant historical truths. Feminists of color ask for historical truths that are reflective of more that the dominant narrative.[27] Oral history does the work of documenting important alternative histories while mapping the larger social and political contexts. Oral stories are not pulled apart or coded, as in conventional sociological inquiry; instead they are three-dimensional like a map or story on an ancient wall that when listened to conjures images and shows a path, a direction. Documenting through oral histories works in part to capture what has not

[26] Perks and Thomson 2006: 4. Robert Perks and Alister Thomson, ed. (2006) "Introduction," *The Oral History Reader*.
[27] Blackwell (2011), Gluck et. al (1998).

been documented, while oral storytelling is a term more commonly used to describe the teachings of elders, indigenous knowledges, and sacred stories.

Connecting oral history with queer of color theory pushes sociological inquiry toward an important practice of methodological intersection. There has not been much research or documentation within the field of sociology on queer people of color, as in most other fields of study. There was not much visibility or established knowledge of non-heterosexual peoples and relations, although of course they did exist. *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold* (1993) by Elizabeth Kennedy and Madeline Davis led to the more frequent use of oral history within Lesbian and Gay Studies, but as Nan Boyd (2008) has argued, "these authors take great pains to discuss their methodology in light of the challenges posed by queer theory."[28] The connection between oral history getting take up in Lesbian and Gay studies and getting taken up in sociology since scholars are searching for stories of certain subjects located in particular time and space.[29]

In a preliminary and groundbreaking piece entitled "Breaking the Silence," Yolanda Chávez Leyva (1996) posits a methodological framework that centers "Latina/Chicana Lesbian History." She begins the follow-up (1998) version with a tender story of remembering "Norma García—sixty years old with a still-trim body, man's haircut, and jeans."[30] Leyva (1998) directs Latinas and Chicanas to turn their roots to working through the silences, and provides her own "evidence" of Latina and

[28] Boyd 2008: 181.
[29] Buroway (1991). Michael Buroway, et al. (1991) *Ethnography Unbound: Power and Resistance in the Modern Metropolis.*
[30] Leyva 1998: 429.

Chicana lesbian existence by offerig pieces of telling narratives, and letting us know that she uses "pseudonyms" in her essay "for the protection of the women."[31]

An important moment of foresight exists in Leyva's (1998) essay, as she writes that "Silence has its own contours, its own texture. We cannot dismiss the silences of earlier generations as simply a reaction to fear. Rather than dismiss it, we must explore it, must attempt to understand it. We must learn to understand the ways it has limited us and the ways it has protected us."[32] Leyva's work queers the usual understandings of silence and takes seriously realities of culture, hierarchies of racialization, and histories of colonization, a project enabled by methodologies that translate queer histories and legacies of Latinas and Chicanas.

Like Leyva (1996, 1998) and Pérez (2003), Kim (2008) calls for the problematizing of the "Western notion of silence as a sign of submission to patriarchal and colonial authority," arguing that it "fails to recognize silence as [a] meaningful signification of the problems involved in re/constructing history."[33] This thinking challenges the notion that "history is more authentic when seen and spoken" and encourages the researcher and the public to "acknowledge" that "marginalized groups" may use silence "as a form of discourse and a means of resistance to the hegemonic power."[34] As Kim asserts, "[A]s critical historians, it is our responsibility not only to listen for silences as much as for words but also actively search for

[31] Leyva 1998: 433. I refer to Leyva article as preliminary, because although she does offer examples, there seems to be a more extensive project that she draws from for this concise essay.
[32] Leyva 1998: 432.
[33] Kim 2008: 1361. Soon Nam Kim (2008) "Whose voice is it anyway? Rethinking the Oral History Method in Accounting Research on Race, Ethnicity and Gender." In *Critical Perspectives on Accounting.*
[34] Kim 2008: 1361.

silences through which new layers of meaning can be revealed."[35] The critical historical methods of Kim, Leyva, and Pérez offer a non-western way of reading silence as something other than absence and deficiency.

There have been sociological interventions that are also helpful in this regard. Avery Gordon (1997) argues a useful shift in sociological knowledge around the debate of evidence. In a critique of Sociology and the process of forming knowledge in the discipline Gordon argues, "To study social life one must confront the ghostly aspects of it. This confrontation requires (or produces) a fundamental change in the way we know and make knowledge, in our mode of production."[36] The ghostly aspects of social life are moments, spaces, and realities that are not apparent due to existing structures, these discourses of inequalities are often interconnected and cause erasures or invisibility to ensure there endurance.

Gordon states, "To write stories concerning exclusions and invisibilities is to write ghost stories. To write ghost stories implies that ghost are real, that is to say, that they produce material effects."[37] This formulation of "writing ghost stories" is a critical when documenting a phenomenon such as sexuality that often exists in hidden and conflicting discourse. It underscores that what is often disappeared, not-documented, or exists outside, holds an important space in sociological knowledge[38]—particularly to map and complicate accepted histories of disciplines,

[35] Kim 2008: 1363.
[36] Gordon 1997: 7. Avery Gordon (1997) *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination.*
[37] Gordon 1997: 17.
[38] "The ghost is not simply a dead or missing person, but a social figure, and investigating it can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life" (Gordon 1997: 8).

knowledges, nations, and peoples. "It is sometimes about writing ghost stories, stories that not only repair representational mistakes, but also strive to understand the conditions under which a memory was produced in the first place, toward a countermemory, for the future."[39]

Formations of "meXicana," "Xicana," and "Latina"

The queer Latina cultural producers I explore here shift within various political projects that are constantly in awareness of the socio-political context and history. The authors I explore here theorize frameworks that queer Latina discourse engages. Rosa Linda Fregoso in *meXicana Encounters* (2003) retells the social, political, and cultural history of the meXicana formation, usually conceived through the binary Chicana/Mexicana, in film and cultural analysis. She maps the Mexico-U.S. borderlands as a contested and complex geopolitical space. Fregoso complicates and disrupts notions of borderlands, nation-states, and migration by methodologically removing the imposed (/) border that is found within the Chicana/Mexicana formulation. Fregoso (2003) states further,

> As the interface between Mexicana and Chicana, 'meXicana' draws attention to the historical, material, and discursive effects of contact zones and exchanges among various communities on the Mexico-U.S. border, living in the shadows of more than 150 years of conflict, interactions, and tensions. 'meXicana' references processes of transculturation, hybridity, and cultural exchanges – the social and

[39] Gordon 1997: 22.

> economic interdependency and power relations structuring the lives of inhabitants on the borderlands.[40]

Fregoso's "meXicana" formulation is particularly important because it disrupts the political and cultural boundaries that divide and distance people and culture, and points to the "exchanges," the moments of contact, that shape each other's realities. Too often scholarship compares and contrasts Chicanas and Mexicanas, which already assumes a disconnection. In Fregoso's work, I see a bridge, a way of connecting a constructed binary. Her work acknowledges the complexities of the political border by viewing its history as shared while it simultaneously maintains the tensions of economic and social distincts that depend on the particular geopolitical space and culture in which one resides.

Similarly, I find useful the reformulated politics of indigenous identities put forward by La RED Xicana Indígena.[41] A defining passage of their "Mission Statement" reads,

> La RED recognizes Xicano and MeXicano peoples to be a pueblo made up of many indigenous nations in diaspora who through a five hundred year project of colonization, neocolonization and de-indianization have been forced economically from their place of origin, many ending up in the United States. Politically, we recognize that we stand with little legal entitlement to our claim as indigenous people within América; however, we come together on the belief that, with neither land base nor enrollment card -- like so many urban Indians in the North, and so many displaced and undocumented

[40] Fregoso 2003: xiv. Rosa Linda Fregoso (2003) *meXicana Encounters: The Making of Social Identities of the Borderlands.*

[41] The organization, La RED Xicana Indígena, existed for over just 10 years (1997-2007), its members were based primarily in Arizona and California, however their goal was to be inclusive of other indigenous women in the Americas. "As Xicanas living in the United States we self-identify as indigenous women with native origins in the Southwest United States and/or México, but also understand our project to include women whose indigenous origins may reside throughout el Caribe, and Central and South America." (Moraga and Rodriguez 2007: 1).

> migrants coming from the South --, we have the right to "right" ourselves; that is, to attempt to put la Xicana, la mestiza, la indígena back into balance with her origins and work vigorously from that site toward the decolonization, economic independence and cultural integrity of our communities.[42]

The vision of this community organization actively works to make visible histories that have been forgotten or displaced due to colonization. The particular use of the "X" signals a simultaneous search for and acknowledgement of indigenous ancestry and continued existence. I build from both Fregoso's and La RED Xicana Indígena's conceptualizations in writing "Xicana" instead of Chicana.

Taylor (2003) sheds light on this debate by speaking of "the colonizing project" and directly addresses the intentional destructiveness of ancestral cultures and memory. Taylor argues,

> Part of the colonizing project throughout the Americas consisted in discrediting autochthonous ways of preserving and communicating historical understanding. As a result, the very existence/presence of these populations has come under question. Aztec and Mayan codices, or painted books, were destroyed as idolatrous, bad objects. But the colonizers also tried to destroy embodied memory systems, by stamping them out and discrediting them.[43]

I see Taylor's argument in direct connection with Fregoso's formulation of "meXicana" and Moraga and Rodríguez's assertions and use of "Xicana." These scholars are doing the work to illuminate the oversights and invisibilities of complex histories in the usual workings of Chicano Studies, Latin American Studies, and in

[42] Moraga and Rodríguez (2007: 1). They continue by making their community alliances and work clear: "To that end our members support projects, which encourage self-sustaining economies, such as community gardens that produce traditional medicines and provide for the nutritional needs of local communities." (1).
[43] Taylor 2003: 34.

Taylor's case Performance Studies. Fregoso works to show the historical tensions of "living in the shadows,"[44] while Moraga and Rodríguez work "to re-envision our families apart from the Eurocentric model of the privatized patriarchal family and to draw example from the tribal structure of our indigenous antecedents (i.e. the extended family including blood relations and relations of shared affinity)."[45] The work of these authors enables the construction of my own critical framework, one that makes visible historically unacknowledged traumas through an analysis of the contemporary moment in order to bring harmony to what has been disrupted through colonization. Of course, the communal trauma is not static—it shifts over time and space. However, as pointed out in the previous chapter, the politics of naming are significant, and ever shifting (in 1980, for example, the term "Hispanic" was made part of the U.S. Census).

My dissertation has thus far focused on conceptual formulations that reflect histories and politics of identity formations and ancestry that connect mostly to Mexico. In their collaborative text, The Latina Feminist Group's *Telling to Live* (2001) productively uses "Latina" or "Latinas" as a "coalitional term" that makes room for tensions within histories and allows for distinct multiplicities.[46] They strategically foreground the idea that they "are not homogenizing and leveling our

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[44] Fregoso 2003: xiv.
[45] Moraga and Rodríguez 2007: 1. Significant to this dissertation state, "We recognize women as the carriers of the knowledges of our various traditions, especially within the realm of the sacred. As such, we understand our mission requires efforts to re-instate the traditional leadership of women within our communities, especially the female elders' role as members of tribal councils and as ceremonial leaders." (1-2). Building on Taylor's (2003) arguments of "colonizers" working to "destroy" and "discredit" it follows that women and non-gender conforming people were seen as a threat to the newly implemented colonial patriarchy, and thus silenced (34).
[46] Latina Feminist Group 2001: 5.

differences into an idealized, unified national/ethnic heritage."[47] Instead, "a pan-Latina project entailed creating a new paradigm," one that moves toward a "more relational consciousness and practice *among* Latinas" that requires them to "translate ourselves for each other."[48] They continue,

> Our group histories and lived experiences are intertwined with global legacies of resistance to colonialism, imperialism, racism, antisemitism, religious fundamentalism, sexism, and heterosexism. When theorizing about feminist *latinidades*, we reveal the interrelationships among these systems of power.[49]

This framework has the analytic potential and productivity to hold multiple histories together in tension, instead of a more common approach that keeps distinct histories apart.

Corazones illuminados: Brillando contra la oscuridad

The artists and visionaries I focus on in this chapter are indígena mujeres/artists/healers who are on the path of tracing ancestry, "walking the red road," or walking a path that is grounded in an indigenous vision of re-membering, transformation, and healing. For generations, the artists I have chosen to write about have been rewriting forgotten histories. In their art, they break bounds by moving away from Christ-centered religion and moving towards spiritual practices that honor the four directions and earth. Central to this chapter is the work of a queer Indígena film collective called Womyn Image Makers (comprised of Maritza Alvarez, Aurora

[47] Latina Feminist Group 2001: 5-6.
[48] Latina Feminist Group 2001: 10-11.
[49] Latina Feminist Group 2001: 19.

Guerrero, Claudia Mercado, and Dalila Paola Mendez), a two-spirit Xicana Indígena theatre collective called cihuatl productions (comprised of Cherríe Moraga, Celia Herrera Rodríguez, and Adelina Anthony),[50] and a queer Xicana Indígena sculptor named Gina Aparicio. This generation of artists recreates story and offers medicine of remembrance through their collective and collaborative visions.

All of the above-mentioned artists work within multiple frames of identity formations and methodologies, including but not limited to queer Latinas, Xicana Indígenas, and women of color. In what follows, I will explain who they are and trace how these particular queer Latina artists have done the work to re-member indigenous ancestry and knowledge and work toward decolonizing ancient knowledges and regaining cultural memory.

In this journey,[51] they have mentored each other and younger generations, while they are guided by their ancestors. These artists are important "role models" or guides for Latinas and Xicanas in the field of ancestral image making and practices. In their art, there is a visible constant connection with indigenous practices; spirituality, prayer, and ceremony are central elements of their art and existence. They share critical perspectives of the racist and heterosexist U.S., particularly as a heteronormative dominating global capitalist world force. It follows that they share informed understandings of colonization and histories of violence and war.

[50] Although Adelina Anthony is very central to this collaboration, for purposes of this chapter I will focus on Moraga and Rodríguez.
[51] My knowledge of these artists comes from reading, studying, and viewing their art/work, as well as participant observation, interviews, and personal communication.

These seven artists all have achieved degrees in higher education and most have also pursued post-baccalaureate degrees, while two currently teach in U.S. institutions of higher learning (Stanford and UC Berkeley). Another point of similarity is that these Xicana and Latina indígena artists were raised in poor and working-class conditions in California. There is definitely a link between their own struggles growing up, and the vision each artist developed to bring transformation and healing to communities of color and indigenous communities. All of these remarkable artists have also dedicated their lives to community activism in avenues that range from mentoring youth in low-income racialized neighborhoods (like Boyle Heights in Los Angeles) to teaching in urban public schools.[52]

Multiple forms of community work in various capacities have also been central to their respective formations as community leaders and artists. In the mid-1990s, four of the featured artists participated in a "circulo de mujeres" where they shared sacred space with younger women of color, burned sage, and held talking circles about consciousness-raising topics. They share a strong connection with Native communities and a deep respect for the land.[53] They also share a practice of

[52] To show a further connection, it is significant to note that Cherríe Moraga was Aurora Guerrero's (Chicano) English Instructor at UC Berkeley. Guerrero was 18 and in her first year in college.

[53] For example, Moraga (2011) writes about Celia Herrera Rodríguez, "Growing up in the great shadow of Mt. Shasta in Sacramento in the late sixties and early seventies, Herrera found resonance for her impulses as an artist through the Northern California Native communities and the Chicano movement, which first opened the door to her understanding of the intercultural and spiritual connections among indigenous traditions" (205). An example of cultural production that speaks to the honoring of the land is Claudia Mercado of Womyn Image Makers (WIM), film *Aqui Estamos y No Nos Vamos* (Here We Are and We Are Not Leaving). This 2006 documentary film, which premiered at the Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival, brings awareness to the South Central Farmers struggle. "The film sheds light on the years of the farmers' struggle to save the largest urban farm in the U.S. from corporate greed" (Curiel 2011). The film is named "after the South Central Farmers' chant that inspired a huge green movement in the concrete jungle of Los Angeles" (Curiel 2011).

honoring the stars (moon and sun), plants, herbs, water, fire, and other medicines from the earth and universe. All regularly participate in various forms of ceremony, such as sweat lodges, *temezcales*, altar-making, and danza, as well as practices and prayers that are reminiscent of the "old ways" of connecting with *la madre tierra*, sacred mother earth.

All of these aspects directly influence the *trabajo de corazon* (work from the heart) that these artists put forward, and the sacred spaces that are created when their art is exhibited, screened, and viewed, or heard, seen, and experienced in another form. It is clear that these artists are invested in body-mind-spirit alignment for purposes of being clear channels for their art, activism, and visions. The next section of the chapter will explain how I first came into contact with these artists, and then move into discussions of their artwork. I start with Gina Aparicio's sculptures of indigenous *diosas*, followed by a discussion of Womyn Imakers Makers (WIM) and their award-winning and groundbreaking short film *Pura Lengua*, which features an urban Xicana story of queer love and heteronormative violence. Ceremony on stage is central to the discussion of *New Fire,* a theater production by Cherríe Moraga, Celia Herrera Rodríguez, and Adelina Anthony. I explore the themes of *New Fire* next to Moraga's text *Xicana Codex*, and then continue the discussion of ancient codices through Dalila Paola Mendez's artwork entitled *Diosas Enamoradas*, which queers Kukulcan, a central Mayan god.

I came to know the work of the majority of these artists through the UC Santa Cruz-based women of color film festivals.[54] As a co-organizer of the Twelfth Women of Color Film and Video Festival, entitled *Disrupting Silences, Imagining Trans-formations*, I participated as a moderator of a dialogue with Womyn Image Makers that focused on their keynote short film *Pura Lengua*.[55] Through subsequent interactions, particularly during the Thirteenth Festival and other events including Cherríe Moraga's *Indígena as Scribe* visit to UC Santa Cruz, I entered into understanding this world of ceremony, creativity, and cultural production.[56]

Sculptor Gina Aparicio was one of the featured exhibiting artists at the Thirteenth Women of Color Film and Video Festival entitled *Regenerations*, which featured the work of artists Margaret Alarcon, Pamela Chavez, Adriana Garcia, Alma Lopez, Yolanda Lopez, Dalila Paola Mendez, Yadhira Perez, and Gabriella Santos.[57] That year the film festival organizers coordinated and collaborated with the site committee of the Nineteenth Annual MALCS (Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio

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[54] The 12th and 13th in particular, both held at University of California, Santa Cruz. The women of color film festival at UCSC has a rich history of creating alternative spaces for women of color artists, primarily filmmakers and critical race and gender scholars. It is a site that highlights a critical form of visual knowledge and community, which is distinct from mainstream or "Hollywood" type film spaces. As Dalila Paola Mendez of Womyn Image Makers suggests, "What you find in the film industry, is that it is mostly male, a large percentage, very few women and then it goes onto race, or people of color, that don't have that many spots behind the camara. So its both, in front of the camara and behind the camara" where space needs to be created for women of color. (Transcript of "Voices" with host Mark Halfmoon, recorded: August 3rd, 2006.)

[55] Featured on the panel were WIM members: Maritza Alvarez, Aurora Guerrero, and Dalila Paola Mendez, as well as the lead of *Pura Lengua,* Karla Legaspy. April 2005.

[56] *Indígena as Scribe The (W)rite to Remember*, April 2007.

[57] Pamela Chavez, a graffiti and mural artist who identifies her ethnic racial background as "Latina" in the "U.S. context" and "then…Costa Rican," expressed gratitude as a young artist for being part of the featured artists for this event. Chavez said, "there are not a lot of spaces to put your artwork up as a queer Latina" (Interview with the author, 2009). Chavez who actively does the work to trace her Costa Rican ancestry in her artwork explained that due to her "strict Catholic church family" she "grew up pretty homophobic," revealing that it was within her artwork that she found her voice to self-realize. (Chavez Interview, 2009).

Social) Summer Institute.[58] It was this creative collaboration that shaped and gave life to an Art Exhibit that was part of both the conference and the festival. At this overlapping exhibition, Gina Aparicio, a mujer indígena artist born and raised in Los Angeles, exhibited three clay sculptures that evoked a deep remembering of tragedy and healing.

The first piece was a "4-foot, 9-inch woman," a sort of replica of Aparicio herself. With maize, sage, and other elements from *madre tierra* around her, she easily became an altar for sacred teachings at the Art Exhibit.[59] I witnessed this when a young woman of color from Los Angeles, who traveled with these *mujeres,* explained to a two-year-old the sacred elements that surrounded the sculpture. Her knowledge reflected a deep wisdom. Aparicio's intention for this sculpture was that it would bring together "…things that have been passed on from generation to generation, over hundreds and hundreds of years, through our mythology, through our stories, through our oral traditions, and through our spirituality and spiritual practices.[60]

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[58] The MALCS Summer Institute was titled: *Transfronteras: Generations and Geographies. Activistas en la lucha!* (August 2-5, 2006). University of California, Santa Cruz. The adjoining event was the "MALCS Closing Dinner and Reception Opening of the 13th Annual Women of Color Film and Video Festival: *Regenerations.*" MALCS Program 2006.

[59] Transcript of "Voices" with host Mark Halfmoon, recorded: August 3rd, 2006, topic: 13th Annual Women of Color Film Festival. Santa Cruz Community Television, California. Other artists featured on this interview panel were: Monica Enriquez, Aurora Guerrero, and Dalila Paola Mendez.

[60] "Voices," Halfmoon, 2006.

Aparicio's sculpture is holding both her arms and hands out to the heavens with her head in a similar incline. A heart-centered necklace lines her yellow-green top, while her belt holds a calavera at her core, sitting cross-legged and rooted. Her left hand has a swirl etched in her palm and her hair is pulled back in a braid: an urban diosa en ceremonia, prayer. Aparicio says about this sculpture that

> …a lot of times people see indigenous cultures as something that is dead, as something that no longer exists,…it is very much so alive, and it's alive in us and that we have a responsibility to keep those things alive for the future generations so its an attempt to document our history, to document the lineage that has been passed down and to leave that for future generations. So she's bringing in a lot of these metaphors, but very contemporary, she is like a goddess, but she has on jeans and shoes for instance…She is not the traditional, what you are used to seeing, maybe an unclothed goddess.[61]

Aparicio's vision and description of the piece show a sacred story that is informed by a spirit of resistance to the annihilation of indigenous cultures. This sacred piece

[61] "Voices," Halfmoon, 2006. Aparicio worked on this piece and the other addressed in the chapter at California State University, Northridge facilities.

reflected the Festival's theme, *Regenerations*, through the evocation of the Mayan teachings and practices as relevant to the present moment.[62]

The second clay sculpture exhibited by Gina Aparicio was of "a women crucified on the cross," who is "impregnated and her womb is the earth."[63] Her name is Cuica Maquixtia, "which translates into she who sings to be free, she's blind folded;"[64] she is unclothed, and she wears a long braid. Her hands and feet are literally crucified, nailed and tied, on the cross. It is an extraordinary political sculpture that Aparicio describes as addressing "issues from institutionalized religion to patriarchy."[65]

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[62] According to the 2006 MALCS program, "The theme of this year's Women of Color Film Festival, *Regenerations*, draws inspiration from the number 13 in the Mayan calendar, which symbolizes transformation, movement, and change." It is also significant to note that Dalila Paola Mendez collaborated with another visual artist, Margaret "Quica" Alarcon to make the poster for the 13th women of color film fest. Mendez describes the "influence" of the poster as "the trees…here in Santa Cruz, the beauty of nature within Santa Cruz and how for so many generations, our peoples have lived off the land." It represents the importance "for us and for our future generations…to take care of the earth." She continues, "the symbols within the trees all represent the four elements of water, air, earth, and fire and the different symbols that relate to woman, like the butterfly," she mentions in particular, the monarch butterfly that migrates to Santa Cruz every year. Mendez explains how they intentionally worked with the concept of metamorphosis of the butterflies and women. "We are children, we develop and we grow up to be these beautiful women who have so much to share with the world, so each of these symbols represents that in our transformations that we go through within life." (Transcript of "Voices" with host Mark Halfmoon, recorded: August 3rd, 2006.)

[63] "Voices," Halfmoon, 2006. This image appears on page 64 of Hidalgo de la Riva (2006) special issue, *Chicana Spectators and Mediamakers*.

[64] "Voices," Halfmoon, 2006.

[65] "Voices," Halfmoon, 2006.

With this powerful piece, Aparicio critiques the unbalancing of the four directions and the violence against Indigenous cultures, as well as the interruptions of Christian ideology and white supremacy brought through Spanish and British conquest and colonization.[66] The sculpture has a Nahuatl name, which, as I explained in the second chapter, was a dominant language, often associated with the Aztec or Mixtec, and used widely in New Spain and beyond among indigenous people until 1821, the year that Mexico became a nation.[67] Aparicio names this piece in Nahuatl because

> one of the indigenous languages from the central valley of Mexico, and so in an attempt to try to preserve those indigenous languages…so many have been lost. Not lost, but…very violently taken away…so it is an attempt to preserve that and to reintroduce that into the community…in Los Angeles.[68]

Aparicio links her analysis of colonization to the ever-receding access to knowledge about Indigenous language, culture, and practice.

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[66] As argued by Martínez (2004), particularly in her arguments of la "*limpeza de sangre*" discussed in chapter one.
[67] Forbes (1973).
[68] "Voices," Halfmoon, 2006.

Womyn Image Makers

Womyn Images Makers (WIM) came together in May 2000.[69] The collaborative worked together for over ten years, the four members were Maritza Alvarez, Aurora Guerrero, Dalila Paola Mendez, and Claudia Mercado. According Claudia Mercado (2001), "These urban Xicana, Indigena, Mestiza filmmakers and visual artists…share a passion for representing our stories: sensual morena narratives, obsidian experimental digital collages, slice of life adventures and herstorical ancestral portraits."[70] These four mujeres joined forces to tell stories through the creative means, in this case film. All from various backgrounds from Latina America, different histories of migration yet all critical of nation and state politics.

The film I will highlight here is *Pura Lengua*, a short film that features an urban Xicana story of queer love and heteronormative violence. It makes connections between forms different forms of state and colonial violence. On the participant sheet they submitted to the women of color film festival, Womyn Image Makers described their film as an "Eleven minute short that provides a micro and macro glimpse of the implications of neo-liberal and neo-colonial affects on a young Xicana and queer artist."[71]

What is significant about this film is the overt political critique of the state in various forms. The main protagonist, Reina, an urban Xicana from Los Angeles, has gotten her heart broken by her female lover and her body beaten by the police. Reina

[69] Mercado 2001: 29. Claudia Mercado (2001) "Womyn Image Makers: Las Nuevas Doñas?"
[70] Mercado 2001: 29.
[71] Participant Information Sheet, 2005. "Disrupting Borders: Seeing Silences and Imagining Trans-formations," 12th annual women of color film festival.

is arrested after a vendor at Placita Olvera[72] presumes that she had stolen a sacred turquoise necklace that her lover had recently honored her with while pronouncing the words, "will you marry me." Reina with her broken heart reflects on the presence and contradictions of the necklace on her body and in the store display. The white owner, who represents neoliberalism through the gentrification of this historic location, notifies the police of Reina's "illegality."

The racial and heteronormative lines are clearly marked when Reina responds to question of where she got her necklace: "from my girlfriend you pinche puerco." The cop replies, "so you like pussy, huh?" Confirming that her story is plausible, yet due to her resistance as a brown queer womyn she is still in violation of the law and will suffer the consequences. Reina's healing was also necessary because the girlfriend who had said to her "I will never hurt you," recently told Reina she couldn't be in a relationship with her anymore because her son needed a father. The model or norm of the heterosexual family interrupts the love between two women who according to society's standards are not equipped to raise a boy. The film ends where it began, with Reina speaking her words of truth in a circle of mostly women, some of who rattle and drum while she remembers.

[72] Placita Olvera or Olvera Street is a historical landmark in the heart of Los Angeles. It is a gathering site for Latinos, and particularly the Mexican or Chicana/o communities. Tienditas sell treasures that are difficult to find in the regular U.S. market. A few streets over from Chinatown and Union Station, this historic site also frequently hosts Aztec dancing and other forms of prayer and community building. There is currently a petition addressed to the mayor of Los Angeles to "Save Olvera Street."

New Fire and Xicana Codex

At a recent talk at Stanford University,[73] playwright and author Cherríe Moraga described the theater production of *New Fire: To Put Things Right Again* as a "three-dimensional" version of her 2011 book, *A Xicana Codex of Changing Consciousness, Writings, 2000-2010*.[74] *New Fire* is a multi-media theater production that features ceremonial song, dance, music, healing, performance, and video. *A Xicana Codex of Changing Consciousness* is, as the title indicates, a codex, a collection of sacred writings, images and stories over a period of ten years that speaks to the growth of indigenous awareness in daily life. The 2011 Duke University release of *Xicana Codex* and the January 2012 world premiere of *New Fire* at Brava Theater in San Francisco reflect each other in presentation and production.

New Fire was produced by cihuatl productions.[75] The collaboration of cihuatl productions was, in their words, "[i]nitially conceived [of] by Playwright Cherríe Moraga, Performing Artist Adelina Anthony, and Visual Artist Celia Herrera Rodríguez, who together represent over three-generations of art practice and teaching."[76] The play, *New Fire,* marks the "third major theater project" of cihuatl productions (*Hungry Woman* premiered in 2005 and *Digging up the Dirt*, which was

[73] Book Reading and Panel held at Stanford University, January 17, 2012, the panel consisted of Cherríe Moraga, Celia Herrera Rodríguez, David Carrasco, and Dr. Loco.
[74] Opening night of this world premiere was on January 13, 2012.
[75] "Cihuatl" means "female" in the Natuatl language.
[76] From "An Open Letter from Cherríe Moraga, Celia Herrera Rodríguez, and Adelina Anthony," September 12, 2011. "Cihuatl productions' primary aspiration is to actively contribute to a growing movement of 'conscienced' social activism and civic engagement through the arts." Their goal is articulated as "two-fold: 1) to build an independent arts 'academy' of critical consciencia; and 2) to produce transgressive socially relevant art (i.e. performance, creative writing, film, and visual art) that responds to some of our most vulnerable communities – Latino and Latina immigrants, students, lesbian/gay/transgender youth, single mothers, native peoples, and elders" (Moraga, et. al, 2011).

"co-produced with Breath of Fire Latina Theater in Santa Ana, California," *in YEAR).* In a collective "Open Letter" written by the artists and founders of cihuatl productions, Moraga, Anthony, and Rodríguez describe *New Fire: To Put Things Right Again* as "the sacred geography of Indigenous American mythologies" that tells "a 21st century story of rupture, migration and homecoming."[77] This is evidenced in the play through the presence of many indigenous peoples and their practices, such as Filipino, Peruvian, Xicana/os, Native American (Oglala Lakota), Black and African. It was a sacred collaboration among healing people with the purpose of representing tools of healing in a public space.

Cihuatl productions is a "cultural arts organization centered in queer Xicana-Indigenous aesthetics and social justice values,"[78] and therefore the "Indigenous American mythologies" shared in this production may have resonated more profoundly with Xicana indígenas and Xicanos than with other Indigenous communities or peoples of color. However, the aim of cihuatl productions goes beyond one community or people, and the goal "is to cultivate an approach to people-of- color art practice, study and production" that is "informed by 'home-knowledges' and non-Western worldviews."[79]

New Fire is described as where "theatre meets ceremony." The theater production of *New Fire* features Celia Herrera Rodríguez in multiple ways.[80] In some

[77] "Open Letter" dated September 12, 2011. [Accessed through facebook, 9/12/2011.]
[78] "Open Letter" 2011.
[79] "Open Letter" 2011.
[80] It is significant to note that Celia Herrera Rodríguez next to her multiple roles in *New Fire* (2012), is the illustrator of Moraga's (2011) *A Xicana Codex of Changing Consciousness,* and is the lead designer of "New Fire" production of which Cherríe Moraga is the writer and director. These two

scenes, she appears on stage as "Roadwoman," leading the ceremony as a grandmother "who brought the medicine." At times, she is simultaneously featured on video panels on either side of the theater's stage, where the audience sees representations of various moments of ceremony with indigenous people in locations such as Chicago, and South Central Los Angeles, and with people such as Zapotec migrants. Rodríguez and her prayers, her *voz*, her cooking, and her *sabiduria indígena* (indigenous knowledges) are captured through visual representation on the screen. This brings another layer of reality and social context to the play. There is a particular striking segment in which indigenous is redefined as "knowing where you come from." Particularly in the context of Chicana/os this is significant since a history of displacement and erasure of indigenous cultures plagues this consciousness.

The strength of this theater production emerges from the way Moraga and Rodríguez brought the deep knowledge of ceremony onto the theater stage. At times it was the prayer offered by Rodríguez that brought the audience clarity and peace, and in others, it was the performance itself, which included the music, song, and drums that guided the ceremony on stage.

The process of being on a healing path was revealed and made possible for everyone through the story of a 52-year-old character named Vero. When the audience meets Vero, we learn that she has taken the medicine before and is still not well. At this juncture in her life, she enters into a remembering during ceremony with

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instances of collaboration within cultural production follow the earlier work of *The Hungry Woman* (2005).

the assistance of Roadwoman, El Caminante, and the others present for a ceremony in honor of Vero's 52nd birthday. The two-spirit trickster role of Coyote, a very dynamic character played by Adelina Anthony, was especially important in bringing the healing. This Coyote character took on various roles throughout the production. She/he enacted violent patriarchal male roles to assist Vero in finding herself again, in remembering, and in healing from her traumas.

Among other stories, teachings, and dilemmas, Vero's character experiences four stories of violence that were experienced through her body and are connected to larger social contexts of sexual violence, patriarchy, and conquest, as well as the implications of living with these traumas. Vero went through very intense moments on stage. The first titled, "She did not get well, 1975" was a reenactment of a 19-year old Vero being raped by a man she barely knew who enticed her with Bacardi, the liquor. The second, titled, "Her name should have been mountain, 1966" featured a six-year old Vero who had bruises the color of mountains and was forced to copulate her step-father while her mom was working the night shift. After the narration by El Caminante of both these stories, Vero's remembers them and simultaneously eats the medicine (peyote) during ceremony. Still, she did not get well. She did not throw up the bitter that existed within her due to these sexual violences.

Another crossroads of the play, and the third moment of a remembered violence is when the "ghost" Victoria Mercado appears through a female Coyote.[81]

[81] Victoria Mercado was brutally murdered in 1982 at the age of 31 in Hayward, California. It is significant to note that Victoria Mercado was remembered in *New Fire* and in Moraga's (2011) book, *Xicana Codex.* Victoria Mercado, a Chicana born in Salinas and raised in Watsonville, dedicated much

Victoria Mercado is remembered through Vero's disapproval of herself in the past. She revisits a time in her life when she stood by and allowed people to bad-mouth her sister, Victoria, because she was queer. Vero understands her internalized homophobia, and her queerness simultaneously. As this scene goes dark, a remembering of others whose lives have been violently taken due to homophobia, racism, and other societal ills is read. This list includes the remembering of the tragic death of transgender youth, Gwen Araujo.

Finally, through a scene that features an elder woman, Lola, carrying a trash bag of bones, there is voice-over addressing the murders in Ciudad Juarez while Vero starts to name the woman on stage and other women of color "basura," trash—another violent, self-hating legacy she had adopted for herself due to being a racialized poor woman in a capitalist society. It is at this moment that we see las animas, *Tzitzimitl*, ancestors, the stars come to assist in the healing ceremony for Vero. A dramatic *limpia* or cleansing unfolds, as the audience processes layers and layers of violences. The stories, narrated visually in bright color and through song and movement, do the work of decolonizing knowledge by explicitly representing a "healing ceremony," where the audience is privileged to see and hear sacred knowledge at work.

In addition, *New Fire's* themes offer a break with Western patriarchal gender-sexuality systems and move toward regaining sacred memories where alternative and two-spirit genders and sexualities were honored. Besides the important role of Coyote

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of her life to important transformative social justice work on multiple levels. She was a key organizer on the "Free Angela Davis Campaign" (Aptheker 1999).

as a two-spirit character, within the *New Fire* theater production El Caminante, the male elder storyteller, takes gentle issue with the ceremony being run by a Roadwoman or grandmother, instead of a Roadman or grandfather. Through the duration of the play we see his consciousness shift, he begins to wonder if creator could be two-spirit. Towards the end of the play he turns and asks Vero, "do you think creator is two-spirit?" and he follows this by saying, "don't tell anyone I asked that." Showing how his curiosity and question are taboo, this scene reveals how indigenous cultures and spiritual communities are not free from male dominance.

This elder male character, who is guided by wind for the stories to tell in the ceremony was not quite comfortable with the idea that a medicine woman could lead and guide ceremony, a role that he was used to being fulfilled by the grandfathers. Yet, what we see on stage are two-spirit women and grandmothers guiding, particularly through Roadwoman and Cedar Woman. In many ways he himself was two-spirit, although this possibility was not fully entertained in this theater production.

The themes explored in *New Fire* are analytically explored further in Moraga's text. At the Stanford book talk of *A Xicana Codex of Changing Consciousness,* religious scholar David Carrasco said, "stories come alive in ceremony," in reference to Moraga's work in the theater. He also asserted that "fire is about change" and "new fire is about radical change." Similarly, he drew a parallel between Xicana Consciousness and radical consciousness. He acknowledged the

strand of Buddhism within her text, Eastern teachings that connect to or speak of "the old ways."[82]

A common understanding regarding the codices is that indigenous people, with the purpose of translating themselves to the Spanish colonizer, created them during the time of conquest. It is significant that Moraga (2011) herself embarked on writing a memoir of stories, next to Rodríguez's powerful drawings or representations of ancient spirits. Moraga (2011) describes Celia Herrera's work as "based in the language of the symbol, [it] is a directed gesture toward the recuperation of a history, a way of knowing, lost to Xicanos and Xicanas."[83]

Moraga (2011) as an artist, author, mother, playwright and fire-keeper, presents her writings humbly, and yet the offerings within are illuminated visions, images, and intellect. Moraga's knowledge and writings span the decade of 2000-2010 and offer Xicanas and Xicanos a way to remember. In Moraga's (2011) essay, "Still Loving in the (Still) War Years" she writes of her mothers Alzheimer's: "[S]he had forgotten all stories, suffering from Alzheimer's. Still she remembered me, although at times she referred to me (and my lesbian niece) as 'he' instead of 'she.'"[84]

[82] Moraga's (2011) epilogue is titled, "Xicana Mind, Beginner Mind." Here she recounts the autobiographical story of when she found the text, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind.* The saying "the old ways" refers to traditional and ceremonial indigenous ways, however its use does not indicate a discussion to the past *only*, conversely the use of "the old ways" within this context shows the pertinence of spiritual forms of being that have existed for thousands of years and do not resemble colonial legacies or adhere to western modes of existing.
[83] Moraga 2011: 201.
[84] Moraga 2011: 191.

Moraga continues, "I have other butch Latina lesbian friends (my age) who tell me the same," that their *abuelas* or mothers name them by a male pronoun.[85]

For Moraga, forgetting is a form of remembering. She suggests, her mother is remembering, when she calls her "he." Moraga understands this to mean a remembering of her "two-spirit" self and she rethinks her mother's supposed error in naming: "some part of me feels that in this great show of intuitive knowing, our 'demented' mothers and grandmothers may not be forgetting so much as remembering."[86]

The closing appendix of Moraga's (2011) *Xicana Codex* is derived from an earlier piece she authored titled, "Sola, pero bien acompañada: Celia Herrera Rodríguez" for an art exhibit that Rodríguez did at the C.N. Gorman Museum at University of California, Davis in 2006. In this essay, Moraga (2011) argues that Rodríguez's art is a "protest against amnesia."[87] Moraga cites an interview she did with Rodríguez, the artist, who offered the following:

> As Chicana/os, we are a displaced people of many nations of origin, living in diaspora in the United States. Our mestizaje—perhaps more a political idea rather than a fact of biology—was forced upon us. How do we recover from the shock of displacement, the loss of Indigenous memory? How do we rekindle the home-fire? The painting is the record along the road. It allows me to think, meditate, to assume the posture of ceremony, to pay attention in that deep way. The door opens to us, just by spending time looking at the images, the symbols. And we begin to understand. These paintings and installations are a conceptual language, a suggestion of how to find our way back to home.[88]

[85] Moraga 2011: 191.
[86] Moraga 2011: 191.
[87] Moraga 2011: 207.
[88] Moraga 2011: 201.

Although the painting that Rodríguez describes is not found in Moraga's text, it is clear that Rodríguez's words suggest that through the "reading" or mere visual exposure to the ancient images, one can begin to understand in a deeper way a "conceptual language" that people have been detached from since the time of Conquest. It is not a coincidence that such is the case with many ancient "artifacts" that are held in European museums. It is to a discussion that highlights this very tension that I now turn in a discussion of the representations of Mayan Codices in the artwork of Dalila Paola Mendez.

Codex – Codices

Taylor (2003) says about the codices, "The images, so visually dense, transmit knowledge of ritualized movement and everyday social practices."[89] Yet when there is a detachment to this ancient knowledge it is arguably lost to people who study Mayan ancestry, culture, and language, and thus forgotten by generations of Mayan descendants when they do not have access to the Codices. Such is the case with the "Dresden Codex," one of three or four existing Mayan Codices. A scientific report titled, "The Dresden Codex—the Book of Mayan Astronomy," authored by Bohumil Böhm and Vladimir Böhm (1991) is important to the arguments of this chapter. It is within this text that we find contradictions in the honoring of Mayan people and culture. Their analysis is achieved through reporting on the sacred Codex, one of a

[89] Taylor 2003: 17.

handful of sacred Mayan archives that survived the decimation of ancient codices. Böhm and Böhm (1991) reveal that the "Dresden Codex" is held in a European museum. It is held in the Saxon State Library in Dresden, Germany, and named after the location in which it resides. This arguably "stolen" archive in diaspora leads to disconnection from its roots or home. This codex is a historical document of the Yucatan area (Chichén Itzá).

The Böhm (1991) astronomers say of the knowledge held within the "Dresden Codex,"

> The results of Mayan observations and calculations of astronomical phenomena are concentrated in the Dresden Codex. It is a band of paper 3.5 meter long set up into 39 sheets marking up 78 pages 8.5 x 20.5 cm. The paper was obtained from the bark of wild-growing species of fig tree. It is supposed that it originates from Yucatan as a latter transcription of an elder original. It contains calendrical data, written in the Mayan dating system, concerning astronomical data and the sky mechanics, and tables of multiple integers that are to be used for calculation of planetary movement ephemerids and tropical years, next to the hieroglyphic texts and numerous depicturings of the Mayan gods and ritual scenes... One of the most important problems during the studies of the various Mayan culture phenomena had been the problem of correlating the Mayan to our Christian dating system.[90]

The authors reveal another violence towards the sacred Codex, the scientific way of understanding the depth of knowledge the Mayans possessed prior to their research was measured against a Christian system. Böhm and Böhm's findings highlight that they were able to obtain a "new coefficient" that allowed "for the conversion of the Mayan dates to our dating system by a complete analysis of the mutual relation between the time intervals of all the Mayan dates in the Dresden Codex and 400

[90] Böhm and Böhm 1991: 1. Bohumiland Böhm and Vladimir Böhm (1991) "The Dresden Codex—the Book of Mayan Astronomy."

inscriptions from the cathedral cites."[91] This analysis, while practical, continues a legacy of colonization; it restricts access to ancestral knowledge and re-membering. What is admirable about this research team is that they used Mayan knowledge from ancient structures to assist in interpreting the Codex.[92]

What follows in the report are pages and pages of planetary observation by the Mayan translated into "our dating system." The Mayan cosmic observations include dates for Venus and Mercury visibility, solar eclipses, full moons and new moons, next to equinoxes and solstices, and planetary conjunctions.[93] There is no doubt that these days and planetary happenings were directly linked to ceremonies practiced by the Mayan. However, that is not found within this report. Taylor (2003) further contextualizes the importance of Codices in Mesoamerica.

> Through *in tlilli in tlapalli* ("the red and black ink,") as the Nahuas called wisdom associated with writing), Mesoamericans stored their understanding of planetary movement, time, and the calendar. Codices transmitted historical accounts, important dates, regional affairs, cosmic phenomena, and other kinds of knowledge. Histories were burned and rewritten to suit the memorializing needs of those in power.[94]

Following Taylor (2003), it is clear that scholars are doing the work to map the implications of these ancient knowledges that are available through existing sources,

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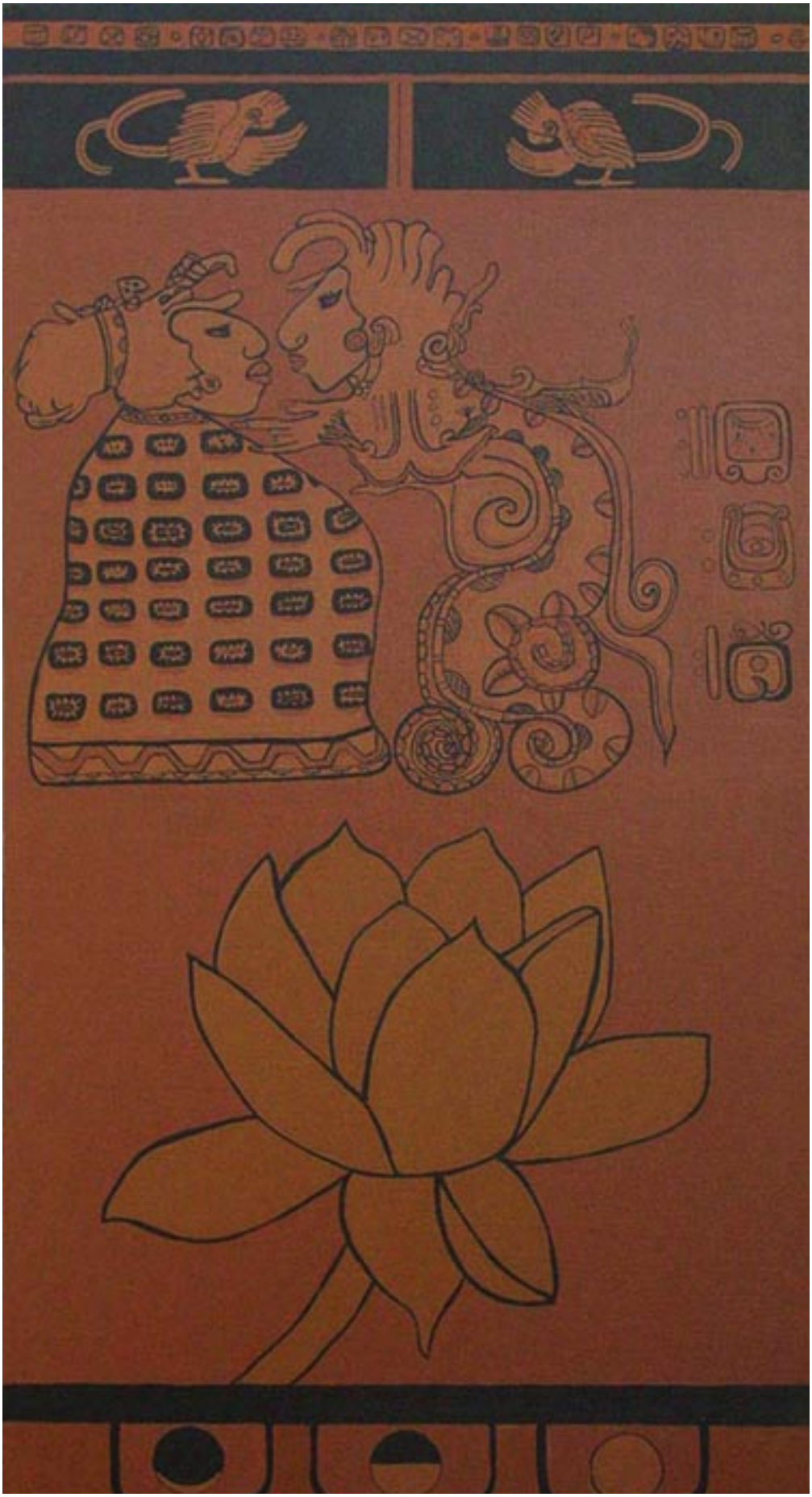
[91] Böhm and Böhm 1991: p. 2.
[92] Describing "Mayan settlement," they say, "Its forming falls to the so-called early phase of the initial period placed between 1500-800 BC. It was spread step-by-step to the regions of Guatemala, south-eastern Mexico, Belize, Salvador and north-western Honduras. The construction of beautiful and splendid cathedral cities, fine arts of sculpture and painting, use of their own hieroglyphic script, success in astronomy, existence of the literature and the development of handicraft and trade were the outer expression of this cultural-economic rise" Böhm and Böhm (1991: 1).
[93] According to (Böhm and Böhm 1991), "planetary conjunctions" are when "two planets observable from the Earth get in line and are nearly covering each other" (3).
[94] Taylor 2003: 17. "The space of written culture then, as now, seemed easier to control than embodied culture" (17).

like the Codices. I agree with Taylor's refusal to romanticize their existence or put a contemporary misplaced meaning on them, which enables a remembrance of ancestral culture, language, and practices.

Visual artist Dalila Paola Mendez was heavily influenced by the Mayan Codices to create her acrylic painting, *Diosas Enamoradas*.[95] The painting features two *diosas,*[96] one representation is a queering of Kukulcan, a central Mayan god who is usually represented in the male form. She is the *serpiente*. The other is a *mujer* that was inspired from an image Mendez viewed on an ancient structure in the Yucatan, Guatemala area. The whole painting is two colors, "black ink with red earth color."

This sacred and profound image of two ancient "mujeres amando" portrays "the spirit of love."[97] Two queztal birds facing each other, "dando la bendicion," honor this love.[98] At the top we see what Mendez describes as "different Mayan stars," while the bottom features three phases of the moon, waning (growing) crescent, quarter moon, and full moon. A lotus flower appears in the center as a sort of offering to the love of the *diosas*, and can be connected to Buddhist beliefs of illumination. On the side of the two *diosas*, three Mayan symbols are visible that travel vertically; they incorporate the Mayan number system.

[95] Acrylic painting, 2005.
[96] Ancient goddesses.
[97] Mendez Interview with the author, 2010.
[98] Mendez Interview, 2010.



Mendez noted that it was her intention to make this a codex of that ancient time, an image or symbol of "mujeres amando mujeres with the connection grounded to this earth" that could appear on a mural or on a wall.[99] She maintained that "We are all creating, doing things and some of us, I think are conscious and try to do our art to raise consciousness or share a story…connected…through spirit."[100] She explained that in the process of creating this painting, she entered "this whole other dimension. I don't know if I could explain it but like nothing else was around."[101] She arguably entered another level of re-membering. Mendez shared that part of her inspiration for this image was a Mayan-centered painting that is held in London, England. She traveled to see it, and reflected a deep sadness at the distance this sacred piece of art had from its homeland (Yucatan, Guatemala area).

Mendez, who has ancestry in Guatemala and El Salvador, shared that part of the intensity of creating this piece was the reaction her family might have. Although she came out at the age of twenty-one, she was aware that as a public artist who shares her work with her family, they might have a difficult time accepting the queer ancient image that asks the viewer to embrace "the love of spirit."

Conclusion

The works of these artists, when read collectively, show a revision and remapping of histories of gender and sexuality. They move away from

[99] Mendez Interview, 2010.
[100] Mendez Interview, 2010.
[101] Mendez Interview, 2010.

heteronormative conceptions of the family, and the roles that have been constructed along with these Western notions. I have shown how through their own narratives and visual representations they are doing the collective work of re-membering and decolonizing knowledge with the purpose of regaining cultural memory. The avenue of studying a generation of cultural producers through their art and words builds on the idea of using the artist to rethink historical knowledges. This chapter focused on research is akin to feminist ethnography.[102] Useful, however, was an integrated approach that keeps in tension participant observation, oral history interviews, and visual readings of artistic production to show a formation of cultural artists and visionaries who contribute to queer Latina discourse and remembering.

The next and final chapter, Tracing Latina Lesbiana *Historias* of Resistance, Solidarity, and Visiblity is connected to the previous chapter by showing another distinct community that has done the work to build memory. Latina lesbianas, like other communities, have used solidarity as a site to build historical knowledge around a disappeared community of social actors. Through their own recognition of missing memory and exclusion from dominant forms of social and political knowledge, Latina and Chicana lesbians did the work to create spaces of creativity to tell stories from their own critical perspectives, as well as archives and forms of print to document these stories. Anthologies became an important site to build this knowledge, particularly because they are a collective theorization of the politics of identities. The

[102] See Ruth Behar and Deborah Gordon's (1995) edited collection, *Women Writing Culture*, particularly useful for this project is the "Introduction: Out of Exile," pp. 1-29, which seeks to outline a "feminist ethnography."

following chapter argues that because of racist and heteropatriarchal structures of oppression, Latina lesbians have become visible mostly through their own efforts to gain visibility and create historical memory with the purpose of building a cross-border movement of resistance.

Chapter Four

Tracing Latina Lesbiana *Historias* of Resistance, Solidarity and Visibility

She called me diosa one day
And I believed her
I mean, she was a librarian
She wrote encyclopedia entries
Archived important papers
Surely, she was an authority on diosas[1]

This chapter analyzes a historical archive created by and about queer Latinas.[2] It centers on the intellectual and social activism of important social actors that critically engage in radical feminist, lesbian, and anti-patriarchal theory and practice. Specifically, I focus on Latina lesbiana archivists, artists, writers, and scholars, who

[1] An excerpt from tatiana de la tierra's 2007 tribute, "Yolanda the Powerful: In Memoriam-Yolanda Retter-Vargas, Presente!" Accessed at USC ONE Gay and Lesbian Archives.
[2] The above black and white photos feature Yolanda Retter in her home. Photographer Laura Aguilar shot these photos as part of her Latina Lesbian photographic series.

have creatively built forms of resistance and cultural memory in their respective works by gathering and guarding knowledge and *historias* (histories). This chapter is centered around a generation of cultural knowledge producers, they are: Laura Aguilar, Gloria Anzaldúa, Jeanne Córdova, Cherríe Moraga, Juanita Ramos, Yolanda Retter, tatiana de la tierra, and Carla Trujillo.[3] I trace queer Latina knowledges and particular strands of women of color feminist social movements in order to disrupt silences around queer *historias* and document individuals and communities who work within and across the politics of identity formations. Coalitional terms, including Chicana lesbians, Latina *lesbianas*, lesbians of color, women of color, and queer people of color, emerged in a particular social and political context of the 1980s. One or two more sentences here about the importance of these coalitional formations and what work it took to make them; explain significance and difficulties of working in the moment of 1980s and how it gets remembered as "post-activist" (heard you say this a bunch of times) and post-racial. The narratives and cultural productions of the archivists, scholar-activists, artists, and writers who worked within and across these formations show a network of solidarity that has formed around the formations Latina lesbiana, lesbians of color, and women of color.

Social movements and political struggles in the late 1960s and early 1970s provoked an upsurge in consciousness within Black, Chicano, Asian, and Native communities. As a result, political identities that focused on racial and class struggles

[3] Although they vary in age, these Latina lesbianas are arguable a groundbreaking generation for Latina lesbian or queer Latina knowledges. I interviewed six out of the eight for this project. Although I did not interview Anzaldúa or Moraga, I did speak with them, on separate occasions, about my project.

took form, at times in the form of nationalism. Forms of colonialism, genocide, and slavery, among other forms of oppression, were named as racist legacies that negatively impacted women, children, and particular communities of color. While within this rising consciousness connections were made across race and class, what was largely lacking was a consistent analysis of gender and sexuality.

Social movement discourses of the 1960s and 1970s tended to categorize participants and their activism through narrow or exclusive analysis and heteronormative frames.[4] It is in this context that the connections between queer sexuality and the radical become invisible. Pérez's (2003) arguments for "a decolonial queer gaze" are useful here, because this gaze "allows for different possibilities and interpretations of what exists in the gaps and silences but is often not seen or heard."[5] It became necessary to complicate the notion of one unified movement in order to document the narratives of the "marginal" or "other" forms of subjugated knowledges.[6] In particular, the lives and complex perspectives of lesbians of color or Latina lesbianas remained mostly hidden and/or silenced due to wide-spread homophobia and the the chastisement of queers or gender non-conforming people in struggles for racial justice.

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[4] Ferguson (2004), argues, "A national liberation movement like the Black Panther Party inserted itself into hegemonic waters as it normalized heteropatriarchal culture and revolutionary agency. Hence, despite its antagonisms to liberal ideology, it—like the civil rights and women's movements—facilitated liberalism's triumph" (115). He suggests mining "the history of women of color feminisms" as a site of emerging knowledge that disrupted "racial domination from the normative grip of liberal capitalism" (115).

[5] Pérez 2003: 129.

[6] Gutierrez (1993) in his article, "Community, Patriarchy, and Individualism: The Politics of Chicano History and the Dream of Equality," problematizes the idea of *the* Chicano movement in the U.S. (1965-1975). By drawing attention to the participation of students, Chicanas who argued for a feminist analysis, and queers who were not recognized, Gutierrez emphasizes the multiplicity within the Chicano movement was often conceptualized as homogenous (62).

The decade of the 1980s brought visible and critical interventions from women of color feminists and lesbians of color that brought together analyses of race, class, gender, and sexuality under the rubric of what Chela Sandoval later named oppositional consciousness.[7] Together with the formation of women of color feminisms, "U.S. third world feminisms," as conceptualized by Sandoval, emerged an international feminist politic of solidarity. Although the concept varied depending on geopolitical location, this politic of solidarity consisted of a complex analysis that held the U.S. accountable for historical atrocities towards people of color and indigenous people in the U.S. and beyond. It is this multi-layered and always-shifting critique of heteronormative patriarchal dominance that historically informed the solidarity of Chicana and Latina *lesbianas*, lesbians of color, and women of color feminists. Within these coalitional communities there was a vision of solidarity that moved across constructed and policed borders of gender, race, nation, and sexuality.

This chapter offers a genealogy that uses the coalitional term "Latina *lesbianas*" despite its potential limitations as an identity formation and a political space of possibility and creativity.[8] Calvo and Esquibel (2009), who reviewed "research on Latina lesbians" as "an understudied population in the social sciences,"[9] chose to use "queer Latina" and "Latina WSW" (Latina Women who have Sex with

[7] Sandoval (1991, 2000). Also see Sandoval (2002) for a further discussion of lesbians of color participants in the social movement of U.S. third world feminism.
[8] I argue that it is the naming that allows for collectivity that is significant, instead of the actual label (i.e. Latina lesbianas), which historically has shifted over time and space. To name a marginal group is crucial to avoid invisibility in society.
[9] Calvo and Esquibel 2009: 217. Luz Calvo and Catrióna Rueda Esquibel (2010) "Latina Lesbianas, BiMujeres, and Trans Identities: Charting Courses in the Social Sciences," in *Latina/o Sexualities: Probing Powers, Passions, Practices, and Policies*.

Women) due to the exclusion of bisexual and transgender Latinas that can occur with the use of "Latina lesbian."[10] Activists, writers, and scholars like Gloria Anzaldúa also argue that the word lesbian has a homogenizing effect that is similar to the term Hispanic, which "whitens" black and indigenous populations. Instead, Anzaldúa prefers the terms "dyke" or "queer" because they are more representative of her working-class background.[11] For this reason, as well as the historical timeframe I am working with, I focus on Latina *lesbianas* in this chapter in order to explore a generation that came into their sexual consciousness at a time when lesbian was a circulating term before the politicization of queer. The Latina *lesbianas* in this chapter created their own representations through a necessary disruption of normative images of Latinas or lesbians. I show how these reconfigurations of "Latina *lesbianas*" were conceptual tools and formations full of dynamism, contradiction, and different forms of silence.

This project of tracing Latina lesbian history is an active response to colonial legacies in modern forms of knowledge that silence racialized queer histories through unintentional exclusion and fragmentation within, for example, Chicano/a Studies and women's studies. Women's studies relies on frames from "the women's liberation movement," which tend not to represent women of color histories. Similarly, a gap in knowledge exists in Chicano Studies due to a widespread adherence to homophobia, whether conscious or unconscious, in the Chicano community. Trujillo, in her essay,

[10] Calvo and Esquibel 2009: 218.
[11] Anzaldúa 1998: 263. In her "To(o) Queer the Writer—*Loca, Escritora y Chicana,*" in *Living Chicana Theory.*

"Chicana lesbians: Fear and Loathing in the Chicano Community" (1991), argues that an attention to sexuality, lesbianism, and queerness consistently poses a threat to "revolutionary" or "alternative" political agendas that were male-centered or race-based and in turn skews the way this knowledge is presented.[12] Historian Antonia Castañeda (1992) observed that within research on women of color by women of color scholars,

> …most women scholars of color who research and write history of women of color look not to the women's liberation movement, but to third-world liberation movements. These movements focused on race and class oppression of African Americans, Chicanos, Native Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Asian Americans in the U.S. and identified with global struggle of third-world peoples for economic and political freedom.[13]

Castañeda and Trujillo together ask for different ways of reading historical narratives so that the marginal can be visible through a reading that is aware of racism, sexism, and homophobia.

Pérez (2003) in her critique of Chicano history suggests that the "colonial mind-set believes in a normative language, race, culture, gender, class, and sexuality."[14] Pérez's queered "decolonial framework" is useful in the tracing of Latina lesbian *historias*.[15] Although she does not engage in a queer historical project per se, her article "Queering the Borderlands," facilitates questions about oral history and archival analysis, particularly in its focus on how to rethink silences of queer racialized sexualities as a type of epistemic violence, which signals the need for

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[12] Trujillo (1991).
[13] Castañeda 1992: 505. Antonia Castañeda (1992) "Women of Color and the Rewriting of Western History: The Discourse, Politics, and Decolonization of History" in *Pacific Historical Review.*
[14] Pérez 2003: 123.
[15] Arrizon (2006).

decolonized historical narratives that are attentive to the paradoxes of silence.[16] Before I discuss the collaborations, contributions, insights, and activisms of a particular generation of Latina *lesbianas*, I continue with a brief discussion of predominately queer Latina/o scholars who contribute to queer Latina/o scholarship.

Latina/o Sexualities: Queering the Archives and Our Histories

Next to Pérez (2003) and Leyva (1998), several other queer Latina/o and Chicana lesbian scholars have proposed important alternative methodologies for "locating" queer Latina and Chicana *lesbianas* in history and theoretical discourse. The emergence of this field of study is in response to the lack of historical knowledge about Latina *lesbianas* and other queer communities of color who are not often the subjects of inquiry in queer or Latina/o studies or acknowledged as part of the genealogies of these fields.[17] Muñoz's *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (1999) is an early contribution to this field that, along with Roderick Ferguson's *Aberrations in Black* (2004), builds on women of color feminisms.[18]

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[16] Leyva (1998). As discussed in the previous chapter, Leyva's framework articulates different types of silences in the *historias* (histories) of Latina and Chicana lesbians.

[17] Muñoz (1999) writes of this obliteration, "Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa's 1981 anthology *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* is too often ignored or underplayed in genealogies of queer theory" (21-22). He argues that *Bridge "*serves as a valuable example of disidentification as a political strategy" (22).

[18] Muñoz (1999) demonstrates his continuation of the legacies of women of color feminisms and *Bridge* through his scholarship, "[I]n this book…I will consider the critical, cultural, and political legacy of *This Bridge Called My Back*" (22). One example of how he does this is his engagement with filmmaker Osa Hidalgo's 1996 video *Marginal Eyes* or *Mujería Fantasy 1*. Muñoz's analysis of Hidalgo's film shows a re-scripting of a dominant narrative, a disidentification with patriarchy, where scientific evidence is found of ancient matriarchal societies and thus leads to a women of color centered state. Ferguson (2004) builds on the Black Lesbian Feminism of Audre Lorde in his chapter,

Catriona Rueda Esquibel's *With Her Machete in Her Hand: Reading Chicana Lesbians* (2006) is a recent contribution to research on Chicana lesbian fiction. She argues, "Chicana lesbian writing has yet to be studied as a distinct field...with definable characteristics, themes, paradigms, and contradictions."[19] Her text undertakes this research by primarily focusing her analysis on "plays, short stories, and novels that feature Chicana lesbians."[20] Esquibel argues, "The work of Moraga and Anzaldúa is rarely perceived as being situated within a genealogy of Chicana lesbian writing. Instead they are decontexualized…" as *the* Chicana lesbian representative of the whole community or their lesbianism is detached from their work.[21] This echoes the critiques of this chapter. The aim here is to show how Moraga and Anzaldúa were part of a larger network of women of color and lesbians of color whose cultural creativity and forms of resistance were constantly in solidarity with other artists, scholars, cultural producers, and writers.

Esquibel through her queer "reading" of Chicana lesbian fiction, noted the establishment of the historical proof of existence for this diverse community through their own writing, an important breakthrough for a community that is often rendered marginal in historical narratives, even in queer studies.

"Something Else to Be: *Sula, The Moynihan Report*, and the Negations of Black Lesbian Feminism, pp. 110-137. Also significant to this discussion are Juana María Rodríguez (2003) and Sandra Soto (2010).

[19] Esquibel 2006: 1. Catriona Rueda Esquibel's *With Her Machete in Her Hand: Reading Chicana Lesbians.*

[20] Esquibel 2006: 1.

[21] Esquibel 2006: p. 2-3.

> The dominant theme to emerge from this study is one of histories of Chicana lesbians written though fiction. Lacking historical proof of Chicana lesbian existence, Chicana writers have created one, indeed, created many, through their fiction.[22]

This dissertation reflects this significant theme or finding. Chicana lesbians did the work to piece together their histories through story and creativity, so they would not be written out of history. I build and extend this idea to Latina lesbianas cultural production and archival work of the 1980s and 1990's. As a way to keep memories alive and build cultural memory of a generation of Latina lesbianas, who were in collaboration with many others, they did the work to build the roots of a queer women of color radical body of knowledge. It is significant to note that in the historical time frame I am addressing many lesbians of color took issue with the term queer, because it subsumed gender. Therefore, it becomes evident why these women choose to label themselves in all ways possible, to not be erased. Anzaldúa says, "My labeling of myself is so that the Chicana and lesbian and all the other persons in me don't get erased, omitted, or killed. Naming is how I make my presence known, how I assert who and what I am and want to be known as. Naming myself is a survival tactic."[23] I will now move into a discussion of the classic anthology *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women of Color*, followed by a brief discussion of other key anthologies, which are relevant to queer Latina and Latina *lesbiana* legacies.

[22] Esquibel 2006: 6.
[23] Anzaldúa 1998: 264.

Anthologies, Collaborations, and Visibility

An important source of Latina *lesbiana* or queer Latina knowledges is "creative production."[24] I discuss in this section the long line of collaborative anthologies (collections of writing) that hold a dialogue between various authors of distinct perspectives, genres, and social positions. It is difficult to draw strict boundaries around Latina lesbiana and women of color feminist spaces since they exist in multiplicity; however, tracing offers a way to find connections and relations within this dynamic site of knowledge production. I argue that women of color and Latina lesbiana thinkers make integral contributions to formulations of transnational feminisms and practices of solidarity through visual and textual representations.[25]

Yarbro-Bejarano (1994) wrote, "Women of color thinkers such as the writers in *Bridge* and [Chela] Sandoval were developing notions of multiple subjectivity in a context of political resistance in the early 1980s."[26] According to Alarcón's (1990b) viewpoint of *This Bridge Called My Back*, "the editors and contributors believed they were developing a theory of subjectivity and culture that would demonstrate the considerable difference between them and Anglo-American women, as well as

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[24] Calvo and Esquibel (2009) observe, "despite the paucity of empirical studies on this population, there is a rich body of Latina lesbian creative work circulating at film festivals, poetry readings, and comedy shows and in short stories, anthologies, theater, performance art, and a significant number of novels. This creative production has inspired an equally rich body of critical work on Latina lesbian culture and identity" (217). I engage with the Latina lesbian creative work as well as the critical work to map a particular generation of Latina lesbiana cultural producers and strand of women of color feminisms.

[25] The 1999 anthology *Between Women and Nation: Nationalism, Transnational Feminism, and the State* is important to consider in this regard, edited by Kaplan, Alarcón, and Moallem. As is the 1988 Spanish version publication of *This Bridge*, *Esta puente, mi espalda: Voces de mujeres tercermundistas en los Estados Unidos*. It is significant to note that was debate and disagree over the work "Esta" in the title since it is an incorrect use of the word that grammatically should read "Este." The Chicanas were inclined to "Esta" because it signals to a feminine subject.

[26] Yarbro-Bejarano (1994): 9.

between them and Anglo-European men and men of their own culture."[27] Through these efforts, women of color offered alternative ways to conceptualize social transformation. Much of this work was sprouted from a vision of collectivity that aimed to disrupt racism and was in connection with politics of worldwide decolonization.

To trace this intervention further and track the growth of women of color feminisms, I explore the legacy of *This Bridge Called My Back: Writing by Radical Women of Color,* a book project that has offered inspiration to generations of women of color scholars, writers, and activists. The call for submissions to *Bridge* began to circulate in April of 1979.[28] The original call read, "We are planning a Radical Third World Feminists' Anthology: A Woman to Woman Dialogue of essays by women of color on their perspectives of the Feminist Movement."[29] It was signed, "Sincerely, Cherríe Moraga Lawrence, Gloria Anzaldúa, and friends." Significant in this call is the productive tension held between Third World and women of color. This political debate was an important concern and critique for feminists of color who were actively confronting racism in various institutions in the U.S. while simultaneously seeing connections with racist oppression in "developing" or so-called "underdeveloped" countries.[30]

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[27] Alarcón (1990b): 356.
[28] According to Short (1994), "*This Bridge Called My Back* was conceived in February 1979 by Gloria Anzaldúa at a women's retreat outside of San Francisco for which she had received a $150 scholarship to attend as the only woman of color" (3).
[29] Call for Submission acquired at the G. E. Anzaldúa Papers, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Archives, University of Texas, Austin.
[30] The use of the formulation of first-world/third-world is contentious and has been critiqued extensively, however, this paradigm at its moment, and arguably still today, is a critique of power

Bridge and other women of color anthologies have been particularly instrumental in the revised politics of identity formation, difference, and solidarity. Although *Bridge* was centered on radical women of color writers, it is significant that the two editors were Chicanas and lesbians. By choosing to name it women of color, instead of making this a Chicana-centered text or a lesbian only text, Moraga and Anzaldúa did the work of conceptualizing beyond nation and sexual identity in order to build solidarity and chart interconnections among women of color feminists without losing specificity.

Another demonstration of their vision to create community is the postscript to the original call of *Bridge*, it reads:

> We are also compiling a list of Third World Women writers, artists, scholars, performers, and political activists. We hope to set up a network of women of color who may be called upon to give presentations, readings, workshops, or participate in conferences. We hope to make this list available to women's studies departments and other interested feminist organizations. If you would like to be included in this list, please send a short biographical sketch…[31]

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relations that inform global hierarchies. British economist Nigel Harris (1986) explains, "The idea of the Third World was a radical critique of the order of world power that had governed international affairs until that time [1955]. The world of empires, it was said, had produced two devastating world wars in the first half of the twentieth century, and also a string of savageries inflicted upon the subject majority of the world's peoples. Empire was part and parcel of an economic system, capitalism, which had been equally destructive in economic terms, in the swings of boom and slump, and particularly in the Great Depression between the wars. The emancipation of the world's majority, the Third World, offered the opportunity for a new political and economic order based on what Sukarno called the 'new emergent forces'. In a world so recently released from the terrible war of 1939-1945 [World War II], and plunged into a new Cold War, the hopes embodied in the Bandung Conference [of non-aligned countries] could not help but be inspired." (Harris 1986: 11-12). It is significant to note that U.S. third world feminist also embraced this formulation in solidarity with worldwide decolonizing movement, yet with important critiques (Sandoval 2000). Wallerstein's (1974) "world-system" formulation that relies on the categories: core, semi-periphery, and periphery, are easily comparable to the much-critiqued formulation—developed, developing, and underdeveloped countries.

[31] Call for Submission acquired at the G. E. Anzaldúa Papers, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Archives, University of Texas, Austin.

It was this vision of collectivity, of building a network of women of color and a larger community of knowledge, resistance, and multiplicity that is integral to the continued relevance of this text and its contributors to various fields of study and sectors of society. Chabram-Dernersesian (2007) notes that *This Bridge Called My Back* is "one of the foundational texts in Chicana/o cultural studies."[32] Castillo-Speed (1995) says in the introduction to her edited collection, *Latina: Women's Voices From the Borderlands,* "Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa are the foremost Latina literary political writers," both who are contributors to her collection.[33] Castillo-Speed continues, "They are represented in this collection by works that stretch the definition of "Latina" and "American" beyond the boundaries of the United States and even of Latin America."[34]

Long-time activist and archivist Yolanda Retter, a Latina dyke of Peruvian ancestry, responded to the call for *Bridge* with her information and biographical sketch to be a part of the women of color network. In a 2006 interview with Juanita Ramos, Yolanda Retter noted that she began her early activist work "intentionally and consciously" in 1971. Further noting the trajectory of her activism, Retter says,

> When I came out publicly, I began working with a group called Lesbian Feminists in Los Angeles. Which was a politicized lesbian group that was primarily white and later in the 80s with a group called Lesbians of Color in Los Angeles. And then after that in the 90s when the movements had sort of abated, I began working in

[32] Chabram-Dernersesian 2007: 6. Angie Chabram-Dernersesian, ed. 2007 "Introduction: Chicana/o Cultural Studies and Beyond" in *The Chicana/o Cultural Studies Forum.*
[33] Castillo-Speed 1995: 19. Castillo-Speed, ed. (1995) *Latina: Women's Voices From the Borderlands.*
[34] Castillo-Speed 1995: 19-20.

> archives and libraries on behalf of lesbians, women, and people of color.[35]

Retter's narrative is one example of how women of color feminists have historically struggled for visibility and connection with other women of color. In Retter's case, although she did not submit writing for consideration to the editors of *Bridge*, her life's work and activism demonstrates her dedication to this form of knowledge.

In a 2005 interview with Retter, she spoke about her awareness of the Chicano movement as well the reasons for her non-interest in that space of organizing and community,

> I am not Chicana, I am half-peruana. And I grew up in El Salvador, although I was born here. But I remember very distinctly when I was at Pitzer College, that would be late 60s and beginning of 70s, I wasn't going join the Chicano movement. Why? Homophobia and sexism. Who needed that? So when I finally decided to come out to the public, tell everyone that I was dyke, my first political *familia* were the white girls at the Lesbian Feminists group that met in the 1970s, [specifically] 1971 at the women's center. There were maybe 5 women of color in that group, 3 Latinas, a couple of Black women and a couple of Asian women.[36]

Retter's narrative shows how her process of "coming out" was supported by being a part of a white women's lesbian feminist group instead of a race-based movement. This is very telling in terms of the lack of lesbian of color or women of color spaces

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[35] Interview of Yolanda Retter, conducted by Juanita Ramos, October 25, 2006. Accessed at the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Archives. In this same interview, Retter credits the release of Moraga and Anzaldúa's text, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color,* as a historic moment when out Latinas started to be more visible, "and different groups emerged across the country, including…Lesbianas Unidas." Retter (1999) produced a dissertation titled, "On the Side of Angels: Lesbian Activism in Los Angeles, 1970-1990." In her dissertation Retter documents the emergence of lesbian movements with an emphasis or intentional to make visible lesbians of color and women of color.

[36] Interview of Yolanda Retter, conducted by author, August 18, 2005. At UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center. I first learned of Retter's archivist and activist work through an extensive website focused on lesbian of color and women of color history. It is no longer accessible since her untimely death.

in the 1970s where an analysis of gender, race, sexuality, and class could simultaneously exist. When I asked Retter about "out" Chicana lesbians during the 1970s, she informed me that I was going to have a very hard time finding Chicanas who identified as lesbians within the movement. This has proven to be an intense silence that will require further research. For the purposes of this chapter, I have shifted my focus to the 1980s, a moment in which anthologies, particularly *This Bridge Called My Back* and others with related themes, became a forum for the generation of models of criticism for radical women of color that address the complexities of social movements that work towards liberation.[37]

In the introduction of the first edition of *Bridge,* Anzaldúa explains the naming of the text—"we named this anthology 'radical' for we were interested in the writings of women of color who want nothing short of a revolution in the hands of women."[38] Therefore the qualifier "radical" signals a vision of transformation that was rooted in ongoing activism at multiple sites. This is reminiscent of Sandoval's (2000) arguments about "differential consciousness." Building from Althusser's theory of ideology,[39] Sandoval argues, "U.S. third world feminism" is driven by a differential consciousness and "new subjectivity"—a "political revision that denied

[37] Hurtado (1996) wrote in her text, *The Color of Privilege,* "Women of Color participated in all of these social movements [Black Civil Rights movement, the Chicano movement, and the white Women's Liberation movement] but their specific concerns were not central to any of these groups' political agendas" (92). The initial goal of this dissertation was to locate subjects who identified as queer (LGBT) and participated in various movements.
[38] Moraga and Anzaldúa 2002: liii.
[39] Louis Althusser (1970). "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)."

any one ideology as the final answer, while instead positing a tactical subjectivity with the capacity to de- and recenter, given the forms of power to be moved.[40]

Sandoval's concept of "tactical subjectivity" provides a framework of negotiation for those subjects that are oppositional to multiple dominant ideologies and cannot be located under one singular rubric of identification. U.S. feminists of color, like the "radical" contributors to *Bridge,* brought together multiple ideologies and an interconnected analysis to shape the theory and method of differential consciousness.[41] Sandoval argues that, "the social movement that was 'U.S. third world feminism' has yet to be fully understood by social theorists."[42]

A point of contention is the form in which *Bridge* is flattened out within Women's studies, ignoring the contradictions and paradoxes within women of color feminist perspectives. The intersections between racism and sexism were many, yet privilege and practices of ranking of oppressions did not allow all feminists to see them. Alarcón wrote, "Anglo feminist readers of *Bridge* tend to appropriate it, cite it as an instance of difference between women, and proceed to negate that difference by subsuming women of color into the unitary category of woman/women."[43] The pieces in this anthology, which are rarely analyzed on their own merit, deny a universal experience or position of unity. Instead, the common ground for this framework is difference. A thread of this difference is violence against women of color through everyday experiences, next to remembering forgotten histories, and healing traumas.

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[40] Sandoval 2000: 59.
[41] Sandoval 2000: 61.
[42] Sandoval 2000: 42.
[43] Alarcón 1990b: 358.

The work is for those who exist out of the norm in society: "The vision of radical Third World Feminism necessitates our willingness to work with those people who would feel at home in *El Mundo Zurdo, the left-hand world*: the colored, the queer, the poor, the female, the physically challenged."[44] *El Mundo Zurdo* was conceptualized as a world free of racism, homophobia, and other forms of hatred based on difference, a world where the interconnected relationships between all that lives are honored.

Critiques of racism, colonialism, homophobia, and articulations of resistance were central to the story line of the feminists of color writing featured in *Bridge.* There was an engagement of various erased and hidden histories within the text. Alarcón says, "*Bridge* leads us to understand that the silence and silencing of people begins with the dominating enforcement of linguistic conventions, the resistance to relational dialogues, as well as the disenablement of peoples by outlawing their forms of speech."[45] *Bridge* contributors create language. There are a total of twenty-eight original contributors to this anthology, including a pair of sisters and a collective of Black women writers.[46] Besides the editors, Moraga and Anzaldúa, it is Chrystos'

[44] Moraga and Anzaldúa 2002: 218.
[45] Alarcón 1990b: 363.
[46] Barbara Smith and Beverly Smith; Combahee River Collective. The 3rd edition of *This Bridge Called My Back* released in 2002 by Third Woman Press contains a Publisher's note by Norma Alarcón, additional writing by Celia Herrera-Rodríguez, and an extensive bibliography by Mattie Udora Richardson. As well as two new sections (Artwork and Art Folio) that feature seventeen artists of color, including Marsha M. Gómez's *Madre del Mundo,* Judith E. Baca's *Las Tres Marias*, and Ester Hernández's *Sun Mad.*

writing, that "forthrightly speaks" to "her experiences and concerns" as a "Native American lesbian," that is featured most frequently with a total of five entries.[47]

After the Forewords by the editors and Toni Cade Bambara, a Preface, Introduction, and "The Bridge Poem" by Kate Rushin, six complex and poignant sections follow. The titles of the sections in *Bridge* speak to the intense themes covered within the text: (1) Children Passing in the Streets: The Roots of Our Radicalism; (2) Entering the Lives of Others: Theory in the Flesh; (3) And When You Leave, Take Your Pictures With You: Racism in the Women's Movement, (4) Between the Lines: On Culture, Class, and Homophobia, (5) Speaking in Tongues: The Third World Woman Writer, and (6) El Mundo Zurdo: The Vision.[48]

Through the creativity and collaborations within *Bridge* came the urgings for alternative movements or spaces that could incorporate the worldview perspectives of queer women of color.[49] For Moraga, *Bridge* was a coming home. She wrote, "I didn't have to choose between being a lesbian and being Chicana; between being a feminist and having family."[50] Responding directly to the homophobia and heteronormativity imposed by the Chicano movement, this concept of being whole is radical because it challenges the fragmentation of the self that queer women of color

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[47] Moraga and Anzaldúa 2002: 332. It is also significant to note that contributor Max Wolf Valerio who "is a transman, and an American Indian (Blackfoot)/Latino poet, performer, and writer" published as Anita Valerio to the 1981 *Bridge*. This shows the way *Bridge*, although not necessarily a transgender space, is able to hold this tension of shifts in gender and sexualities.

[48] The 2002 version contains four additional sections, titled: Twenty Years Later; Appendix; Artwork; and Art Folio.

[49] Needless to say, the production of this anthology is not without its faults and limitation, as is the case with most text. Among other instances of reflection, Moraga (2002) in her foreward to the 3rd edition writes about those that are "noticeably absent in the *Bridge* of 1981" (xvii).

[50] Moraga 2002: xlix.

have historically faced, including the dangers of being "out" to one's family or community.

Another significant contribution of this anthology is the way *Bridge* illuminates the groundbreaking concept of "Theory in the flesh." Moraga and Anzaldúa (2002) explain,

> a theory in the flesh means one where the physical realities of our lives – our skin color, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings – all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity. Here, we attempt to bridge the contradictions in our experience…This is how our theory develops.[51]

This idea of "a politic born out of necessity" is part of the legacy that fused an understanding of how radical transformation is linked to everyday experiences of being of color, queer, working-class, immigrant. Anzaldúa writes, "the danger in writing is not fusing our personal experience and world view with the social reality we live in, with our inner life, our history, our economics and our vision."[52] The contributors in each essay, letter, manifesto, poem, and interview in *Bridge* do the work of linking their particular perspective with larger social critiques of racism, homophobia, and classism.

For example, the significance of *Bridge* has been spoken, analyzed, and written about by many.[53] A key article in the field of Women's studies focused on the legacies of

[51] Moraga and Anzaldúa 2002: 21.
[52] Anzaldúa 2002: 188. In "Speaking in Tongues."
[53] For recent scholarly works that critically explore the legacies of *This Bridge Called My Back,* see Duffield and Cespedes (2002), "Practicing Transgression: Radical Women of Color for the 21st Century," and Sudbury (2003), "Toward a Holistic Anti-Violence Agenda: Women of Color as Radical Bridge-Builders."

Bridge is Alexander's (2005) "Remembering *This Bridge Called My Back*, Remembering Ourselves."[54] Alexander (2005) in her remembering explains,

> For me, *Bridge* was both anchor and promise in that I could begin to frame a lesbian-feminist-woman-of-color consciousness and at the same time move my living in a way that would provide the moorings for that consciousness. Neither anchor nor promise could have been imaginable without the women in *Bridge* who gave themselves permission to write, to speak in tongues.[55]

Significantly, fields of study, such as feminist studies and Chicana/Latina studies, have witnessed an outpouring of anthologies that mirror the efforts of *Bridge*.[56]

The "Theory in the flesh," Moraga and Anzaldúa speak of is connected to lived experience, living memories, and storytelling. Subsequent anthologies such as Juanita Ramos' *Compañeras: Latina Lesbians,* Carla Trujillo's *Chicana Lesbians* and *Living Chicana Theory,* Anzaldúa's *Haciendo caras*, set the tone for theorizing from a place of deep intimate knowledge, "of the flesh." They also offer a genealogy or legacy of politics for Latina lesbianas. These anthologies are a type of collective analytical self-disclosure that speak, write, and theorize through experiences of

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[54] An earlier version of this article was published in the 2003 anthology, *Sing, Whisper, Shout, Pray! Feminist Visions for a Just World*, edited by Alexander, Albrecht, Day, and Segrest.

[55] Alexander 2005: 260.

[56] For example, Daisy Hernández and Bushra Rehman's (2002) *Colonize This! Young Women of Color on Today's Feminism,* who say in their collaborative introduction, "Despite differences of language, skin color and class, we have a long, shared history of oppression and resistance. For us, this book is activism, a way to continue the conversations among young women of color found in earlier books like *This Bridge Called My Back* and *Making Face, Making Soul*" (xxi). Hernández and Rehman (2002) continue, "As young women of color, we have both a different and similar relationship to feminism as the women in our mothers' generation. We've grown up with legalized abortion, the legacy of the Civil Rights movement and gay liberation, but we still deal with sexual harassment, racist remarks from feminists and the homophobia within our communities. The difference is that now we talk about these issues in women's studies classes, in classrooms that are multicultural but xenophobic and in a society that pretends to be racially integrated by remains racially profiled" (xxiv). They point to the continued relevance of race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, etc. as important categories of analysis and departure, despite the progress that has been made to eradicate discrimination in the U.S.

systems of inequalities. These texts were created in spaces of collaboration and through visions of solidarity and resistance.[57] Anzaldúa, like other feminists of color scholars and visionaries, like Cherríe Moraga and Audre Lorde, saw paradoxes and contradictions in the social movements around race and feminism as places to critique and build alternative forms of social transformation.

Latina and Chicana lesbians shifted history through their social movement that exists in documented form through anthologies. Anthologies are unique in that they hold space for collective expression and contradictory voices that create a forum for dialogue and engagement. These anthologies open a field for scholarship on queer Latina diasporas through collective and complex representations that were not always successful, yet either way made contributions to discourses of queer Latinas. This resonates with the efforts to put out *Este Puente, Mi Espalda,* and speaks to this visionary international solidarity politic. In 1988, a Spanish version of *This Bridge,* entitled *Esta Puente, Mi Espalda: Voces de mujeres tercermundistas en los EEUU,* was edited by Cherríe Moraga and Ana Castillo, translated by Ana Castillo and Norma Alarcón, and published by Isms Press. This edition was a gesture towards an emerging third world consciousness that reflected worldwide decolonization politics and a desire to build international solidarity to disrupt constructed political borders and violences. Critical writings from women in Cuba, Veracruz, El Salvador, and Watsonville were brought into this anthology in an effort to acknowledge larger

[57] For example, the publishing of *This Bridge*, ignited the start of a Kitchen Table Press, a women of color centered published space after the original publisher (Persephone Press) went out of business. The press collaboration among various women of color writers, including Cherríe Moraga, Barbara Smith, Audre Lorde, and Mariana Romo-Carmona.

political struggles, especially in connection to resistance, survival, and the spread of U.S.-based imperialist militarism and war in Latin America.

Initially, *testimonio* or *autohistoria* were the primary ways in which the stories of Latina and Chicana lesbians were circulated.[58] Oral history and building archives were also employed as methods to construct alternative sites of knowledge production for marginal or subaltern subjects by these Latina lesbianas. For example, Juanita Ramos started the New York-based Latina Lesbian History Project in an attempt to fill gaps of knowledge about Latina Lesbian histories. Ramos compiled and edited the anthology *Compañeras: Latina Lesbians,* which was later published by Routledge. This anthology was groundbreaking in the sense that it spanned the spectrum of Latinas, which included Gloria Anzaldúa, but was not focused on Chicanas by any means and used *autohistoria*, oral history, and poetry as primary forms of expression.

Trujillo, in her "Introduction" to *Chicana Lesbians* (1991), says,

> In 1987, Juanita Ramos published an anthology on Latina lesbians entitled *Compañeras: Latina Lesbians.* At that time, *Compañeras* gave presence to the voices of Latina lesbians who, with the exception of Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, had been largely unheard. Exhuberant at its arrival, I anxiously read it from cover to cover. At the book's end, however, I was bothered. I realized that the book wasn't lacking in the context of Latina

[58] For more on "*testimonio*" see the Latina Feminist Group (2001). Keating (2009), says about "*autohistoria,*" Anzaldúa coined this term, as well as the term *autohistoria-teoría*,' to describe women-of-color interventions into and transformations of traditional western autobiographical forms. Deeply infused with the search for personal and cultural meaning, or what Anzaldúa describes in her post-*Borderlands* writings as "putting Coyolxauhqui together," both autohistoria and autohistoria-teoría are informed by reflective self-awareness employed in the service of social-justice work. Autohistoria focuses on the personal life story but, as the autohistorian tells her own life story, she simultaneously tells the life stories of others" (319). Through this perspective of Coyolxauhqui, we see how she represents an ancestor of decolonization.

> lesbian experiences, if anything it was very thorough in the types of issues covered and the number of Latina contributors. The problem was that since Latinas comprise a very diverse group, capturing them *all* in full context was virtually impossible. As a Chicana lesbian, I wanted to see more about the intricacies and specifies of lesbianism and our culture, our family, mixed-race relationships, and more. *Compañeras* had only teased me. Not only did I want more, I needed more.[59]

In an interview with Trujillo, she discussed the important influence of both Moraga and Anzaldúa on her writing when she saw them speak at an anti-racism conference during her graduate years. She recalled that both women told her to write, even if she didn't consider herself a writer.[60]

González (1992) reviews Anzaldúa's *Making Face, Making Soul, Haciendo Caras* and Trujillo's *Chicana Lesbians: The Girls Our Mothers Warned Us About* and demonstrates how these anthologies "give radical lesbian women of color a forum" of expression, resistance, and visibility.[61] She argues that "straight critics" in Chicano and feminist intellectual spaces rarely acknowledge the work of lesbians of color and instead "impose upon these works a heterosexual genealogy."[62] González describes *Haciendo Caras* as a text where "[c]ultural criticism unifies the essays and creative selections, as do expressions of rage against colonization, and the problem of de-colonization in the academic malestream and in mainstream feminist circles."[63]

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[59] Trujillo 1991: ix.
[60] Carla Trujillo interview with author, 2011. It is significant to note that next to Trujillo's edited anthologies, her 2003 novel *What Night Brings* features a young protagonist, Marci Cruz, who experiences domestic violence in her household and longs to be a boy.
[61] González 1992: 82. Deena González (1992) "Masquerades: Viewing the New Chicana Lesbian Anthologies" in *Out/Look.*
[62] González 1992: 82.
[63] González 1992: 81. González's play on words with the term "malestream" simultaneously shows her critique of patriarchy and machismo of Chicano studies.

Of Trujillo's anthology González says, "this work challenges Eurocentric organizational schemes and, by extension, Euro-Americans and heterosexual people of color who accept those methodologies unquestioningly in 'their' canons."[64] If Anzaldúa and Trujillo's anthologies are not seen as queer or lesbian women of color texts, then the layers of analysis that complicate heteronormativity in Chicano and Women's studies are no longer viable, which in turn flattens the critique these authors are asserting within and about these fields of study.

The production of these anthologies, from González's perspective, is pivotal for the recognition of lesbian women of color in the academy. She wrote, "Without some of our work in print, we face total erasure, and risk not being present in historical and cultural memory."[65] This presence and production of the texts is at the cost of still not being fully heard, since "They now have or own our words; they think they "hear" our voices, our languages, but we are still absent."[66] González remarks that editors and writers like Anzaldúa and Trujillo, "have suffered the consequences of being out (by not being hired in academic jobs or by being appropriated constantly as *the* resident dyke, Chicana voice…"[67] González suggests that "liberal" scholars do the work to position themselves and recognize the limitations of their perspective based on where they are located. Interventions such as this one allow queer lesbian of color theorizations of colonization and de-colonization to have a significant place in the canons of Chicana/o and Women's studies.

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[64] González 1992: 81.
[65] González 1992: 83.
[66] González 1992: 83.
[67] González 1992: 83.

The Work of Tracing: Re-writing Early Latina Lesbiana Historiographies

The work of archivists, scholar-activists and artists trace a trajectory or genealogy of Latina lesbiana histories that counteracts the detrimental and heteropatriarchal idea that lesbians of color or *lesbianas de color* do not exist or contribute significantly to the growth of society (Retter 1997, Córdova 2001). Through the building of archives, the reconstituting of databases, the photographing of Latina lesbians, and the creation of anthologies, magazines, and organizations focused on Chicana and Latina *lesbiana* stories and feminist perspectives, this chapter maps a shift in the historical terrain that renders queer Latinas visible or significant to historical analysis by focusing on a generation of gatherers and guardians of knowledge. In this way, this work contributes to cultural memory. Following the radical impulse of uncovering subjugated knowledges, Latina *lesbiana* social actors centered and cited here have done the work to carve out a space for the marginalized or the unseen, in various community and public spaces, including academia and cross-border social movements. This chapter is most interested in how Latina lesbiana archivists, scholar-activists and artists do the work of tracing and archiving unseen knowledges?

Documentation and scholarship centered on queer Chicanas and Latinas has primarily come in the form of auto-ethnography that contains biographical, historical, and socio-political elements. Alice Y. Hom and Yolanda Retter have made significant in-roads in articulating and reflecting back to the academy the important

activism of lesbians of color in Los Angeles. At the Lesbian Legacies Collection at the ONE Archives there is evidence of at least one lesbian of color or lesbiana de color meeting. It seems that particularly as these networks were getting started that they were based on informal gatherings at people's homes or church spaces. Home phone numbers were given as contact information.

At the USC ONE Gay and Lesbian Archives, where Yolanda Retter worked for years, I searched mostly in the Lesbian Legacies Collection. In an interview with Yolanda conducted by Juanita Ramos from a radio show in 2006, Retter commented that the ONE, which was seen as very white and male, wanted "to be credible" so they established the Collection. With a "lesbian legacies" collection there would be a gender balance. Within this collection, only seven folders of many are focused on the category Lesbians of Color, which is sadly impressive. This is different from what is usually found in the archives, which is next to nothing. There was some repetition in the folders to ensure that even if you only viewed one folder, you had a chance to catch a connection with the other; there was one general folder and all others had a specific gathering focus, including LA, National Conference, 1983; California; Los Angeles; Network; New York; U.S.; Writers.

Retter's dissertation, *On the Side of Angels,* is a study based on her own participant observation in the lesbian feminist community in Los Angeles as well as oral histories, with people such as Jeanne Cordova. What is notable about Retter's dissertation is that she makes it a point to highlight when lesbians of color or women of color are involved in an action, event, or scene. This sentiment is reflected in her

work of building archives, which was clearly a central part of scholar-activism. It is because of her stubbornness that there is an LGBT and Mujeres Initiative at the Chicano Studies Research Center at UCLA. This effort by the late archivist and scholar-activist Yolanda Retter was significant in reformulating histories that had been marked by a norm that was not inclusive of lesbian of color, butch, or genderqueer histories. Much of her early work was dedicated to studies focused on Latina lesbians in the Los Angeles area with a focus on women of color histories. Retter, who passed away at the age of 59, contributed to the building of archives on women of color and lesbians of color by working with Walter Williams on the ONE USC International Lesbian and Gay Archives. They also co-edited a book entitled *Gay and Lesbian Rights in the United States: a Documentary History*.

My first conversation or interview for this project was with Yolanda Retter in 2005. I sat with Retter, at the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center. She talked through the possibilities of my project with me from an archivist-scholar point of view. Retter herself was doing the work of conducting oral histories with Latina Lesbians of early generations (1970-1990s), and she reinforced what I was slowly discovering about this research—that I was going to have a very difficult time locating archives and even people to conduct oral histories with.[68] After I learned of her sudden passing in 2007 I went back to the archives with the intention of listening to the oral histories she had conducted. To my surprise, grouped with her oral histories on Latina Lesbians I found a tape label "Chicana lesbians of the 1960s and

[68] Among several helpful suggestions, she offered affirmative feedback to my dilemma of expanding my focus to Latina lesbians instead of only focusing on Chicana lesbians.

1970s." I got very excited since this was exactly what I had been searching for. I put the tape into the recorder and within seconds I was shocked to hear my voice in a dialogue with Yolanda Retter from years before. This showed, once again, the scarcity of materials that document Chicana lesbian and Latina lesbiana histories.

Besides Retter's research, publications and archival work, her collaboration with Lillian Castillo-Speed, Ethnic Studies Librarian at UC Berkeley, is one of the most significant indicators of her contributions toward shifting institutional formations of knowledge. Retter worked with Castillo-Speed on a project to revise the Chicano Database. It was called the "Chicano Thesaurus Revision Project" and sponsored by a grant from the Librarian Association University of California (LAUC). There were two major components to the revisions: (1) List of LGBTIQ Terms Added to the Chicano Thesaurus (24 terms) and (2) List of Non Chicano People of Latino Heritage (65 terms).[69]

Castillo-Speed and Retter had conversations for some time about the desire to collaborate, since they were both working in the Chicano Studies research centers on their respective campuses (UCB and UCLA). Castillo-Speed[70] recalled that Retter had a lot of critiques about the Chicano Database and the major one being the limited terms to name Chicano and Latino LGBTIQ communities; prior to this revision project, "homosexual" was *the* key term. As of 2007, one can enter terms such as "lesbians of color" and "Transgender People" into the database for more accurate and

[69] tatiana de la tierra who was also a library science specialist had similar concerns to Yolanda Retter's. In her poignant 2008 article, "Latina Lesbian Subject Headings: The Power of Naming" tatiana de la tierra discusses the complications of her search for Latina lesbianas and finding "Homosexual" and "Hispanic" (95).

[70] Lillian Castillo-Speed interview with author, 2010. UC Berkeley, Ethnic Studies Library.

inclusive research searches. The other major shift is the 65 terms to search for research connected to non-Chicano people; terms such as Costarricences (for Costa Ricans), Dominicanos, Salvadoreños were added to make a space in the database for people of Latino Heritages (the terms are reflective of Latin American nation states and migrants in the U.S.).

Collaboration with Photographer Laura Aguilar

Chicana lesbian photographer and artist Laura Aguilar, photographed Yolanda Retter when she was working at Conexxus for her *Latina Lesbian* Photographic Series.[71] Laura shared with me about Yolanda's significant presence in her life in terms of her racial formation.[72] Yolanda Retter was one of the first, if not the first, to pronounce Laura Aguilar's name in Spanish in the white lesbian Los Angeles world. Retter encouraged her to take hold of her racial identity formation in the presentation of her art. Yolanda Retter influenced Aguilar to put energy into developing her art and applying for funding to support her work. Aguilar remembers that there were not a lot of Chicana photographers; often she was the only Latina or woman of color among white women in a photo exhibit. The mentorship of Yolanda Retter, among others, assisted Laura Aguilar to break barriers of race, gender, disability, sexuality, and more recently, spirituality. There is also a collection of her photography at UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center because of Yolanda Retter's former position there.

[71] Yarbro-Bejarano (1998). This image began this chapter.
[72] Laura Aguilar interview with author, 2009.

When I asked Aguilar how she decided to put her work in the UCLA archive, she responded with a nervous chuckle and revealed that it was because she was suicidal.[73] Aguilar trusted Retter as a friend and archivist, so she was able to entrust her artwork to the UCLA CSRC. Aguilar has consistently struggled with economic hardship, acceptance in society, and most recently with severe illnesses. She was born to a Mexican American family in 1959, raised in Rosemead, California and was aware from an early age of her complexities with learning and with language. Aguilar turned to a visual format to express herself. Her contributions to Latina Lesbians histories are significant on multiple levels and through various projects. She did two photographic projects, (1) *Latina Lesbian* series, and (2) the *Plush Pony* series. It is within these photos that we see a different telling of history.

The *Latina Lesbian* series documents a variety of Latinas who are part of a network of Latina lesbianas. Yolanda Retter commissioned Aguilar for this project and was the first to be photographed for this series. She started in August of 1986 with a grant from Connexxus.[74] A short narrative on each photo reveals a particular message from the Latina lesbian featured, and this is significant because they are naming themselves and working against the ways they can be feared or disregarded in society. According to Aguilar, the *Latina Lesbian* series captured women who were part of an activist, creative, or professional world. The *Plush Pony* series, on the other

[73] Laura Aguilar interview with author, 2011.
[74] Retter (1997) says about Connexxus, "From its inception in 1984 until its demise in 1990, the Connexxus board of directors was chaired by women of color, and the organization made serious efforts to create programming relevant to lesbians of color. It was most proactive in the Latina community." (336). "Connexxus sponsored photographer Laura Aguilar's Latina Lesbian series, portions of which traveled to various exhibition spaces including Los Angeles's City Hall" (336).

hand, was a documentation of a working-class bar in the L.A. area where Aguilar set up during operation hours to photograph the bar patrons. Through these images, we see various representations of sexuality and gender, including butch and femme. As an artist, Aguilar was unsatisfied that she had only captured a particular circle of lesbians who had access to institutions, education, and other privileges in the *Latina Lesbian* series. With the *Plush Pony* (1992), according to Aguilar, her intention was to capture a variety of working-class *mujeres* who are not usually represented in visual images.

In the image above entitled "Plush Pony 4," we see a black and white representation of three "butch" women. In some of the other images there are couples, where one woman looks more femme and the other more butch. Here we

see a photographic shot representing the diversity of Latina butch women, who are showing toughness through their fierce looks and body positions. Aguilar explained how she provided the background, and shared that at one point the lighting went out in the whole bar because of her electrical needs,[75] demonstrating the economic limitations of this historic bar. A central contribution of Aguilar's work are the distinct representations she captures. While the *Latina Lesbians* series did show a bit about their individual environment, the Plush Pony shows a collective space of queerness, where perhaps many of its inhabitants do not vocally share their sexual orientation widely. It is clear, however, through their visual appearances that they do not conform to heteronormative notions of gender and sexuality.

Conclusion

What I signaled in this chapter are the gatherers and guardians of knowledge who contributed greatly to the movement of making Latina lesbiana communities visible and recognizable to society by resisting the norms imposed and creating alternatives that honored their complexities, positionalities, and working-class identities. Latina lesbianas, for generations, have done the work to create visibility through a feminist critique of inequalities, including patriarchy and homophobia. This network of women worked to create spaces that opened up possibilities for a radical feminist politic, particularly positions that could take on the difficulties of analyzing violences on multiple levels, while building visual stories of resistance,

[75] Aguilar interview, 2011.

solidarity, and visibility. The intersectional analysis within women of color and lesbians of color writing and activism facilitated an analysis of larger systems of subjugation and sprung forward as an important site of tension from which to build theory and recreate a space within institutions that rarely recognized the complexities of women of color.

Through the building of archives, the reconstituting of databases, the photographing of Latina lesbians, and the creation of anthologies, magazines, and organizations focused on Chicana and Latina lesbiana stories and feminist perspectives, this chapter maps a shift in the historical terrain that renders queer Latinas visible or significant to historical analysis. Following the radical impulse of uncovering subjugated knowledges, the Latina lesbiana social actors centered and cited here have done the work to carve out a space for the marginalized or the unseen, in various spaces, including academia and cross-border social movements.

Latina lesbianas, through their visual representations, although distinct in their efforts, create an important visibility and feminist critique of inequalities, particularly interconnected global forms of capitalism and patriarchy. An important example of this is the collaborations among Latina lesbianas and other women of color. Audre Lorde's theorizations, for example, show an interconnected vision that proposed a "creative force" or spirit-centered form of change. Audre Lorde, like Juanita Ramos, spoke at the first National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights in 1979. Ramos, however, expressed that she only had three minutes on stage because she was

to share her time with her gay-male Latino counterpart.[76] I end this chapter with this piece of history to illuminate the strength and vision of the international third world movement during the late 1970s and 1980s and its merging with "lesbian and gay" struggles. Significantly, the concerns of third world LGBT communities are quite distinct from the mainstream white-centered lesbian and gay movement because racism is consistently a central concern.

Audre Lorde's theorizations and the National Third World Lesbian and Gay Conference

> Recognizing the power of the erotic within our lives can give the energy to pursue genuine change within our world…For not only do we touch our most profoundly creative source, but we do that which is female and self-affirming in the face of a racist, patriarchal, and anti-erotic society.[77]

In 1979, there was an emerging movement and formation of a National Third World Lesbian and Gay Conference.[78] Key organizers were the National Coalitions of Black Gays.[79] Central to this conference were Third World lesbians and gay men, and there was international participation from Mexico.[80] The conference was held in conjunction with the first National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights

[76] Juanita Ramos interview with author, 2011.
[77] Lorde 1984b: 59.
[78] The conference dates were October 12-15, 1979 and the location was the Harambee House in Washington D.C. The central goals of the conference were: (1) to establish a national network for Third World lesbians and gays, (2) to establish an education and communication network for and among Third World lesbian and gay organizations, and (3) to confront the issues of racism, sexism, homophobia and heterophobia among, by and against Third World lesbians and gays. (source: 1979 pamphlet from USC ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives).
[79] This organization was later renamed National Coalition for Black Lesbians and Gay Men.
[80] There was "special outreach" to: "Native Americans, Latin Americans, Asian Americans, and Afro Americans." (source: 1979 pamphlet from USC ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives).

in October 1979.[81] Audre Lorde, who was a keynote speaker at this groundbreaking conference, also gave a keynote speech at the March on Washington.[82] In her speech that shared the title of the conference, "When Will the Ignorance End?" she offered powerful words that held the present moment together with a vision of constructing a different future. She suggested that the diversity "between" and "within" Third World lesbians and gay men could be a "generative force" and warned that they must not "let diversity be used to tear us apart from each other, nor from our communities."[83] Lorde said,

> Now the future is ours, with vision and with work. And that work will not be easy, for those who fear our visions will try to keep them silent and invisible. But the ignorance will end, when each of us is prepared to put ourselves upon the line to end it, within ourselves, and within our communities. That is real love, that is real power.[84]

Lorde remarked that a national gathering of Third World lesbian and gay peoples would have only been an "impossible dream" thirty years prior due to intense forms

[81] According to a flyer for the march, "The official theme of the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights" that took place on October 14, 1979 was to "End all social, economic, judicial and legislative oppression of lesbian and gay people." The five central demands were: (1) End all Anti-Lesbian/Gay Laws, (2) Adopt a Comprehensive Lesbian/Gay Rights Bill in Congress, (3) Issue a Presidential Executive Order, (4) Non-discrimination in Lesbian Mother and Gay Father Child Custody Cases, and (5) Protect Lesbian and Gay Youth. It is important to note that this flyer for this March on Washington was produced in both English and Spanish. (source: USC ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives).

[82] Juanita Ramos, a Puerto-Rican lesbian who is the editor of *Compañeras: Latina Lesbians,* and was part of Comite Homosexual Latinoamericano (COHAL) in the late 1970s also gave a keynote speech at the first National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights.

[83] Byrd, Cole, and Guy-Sheftall 2009: 209.

[84] Byrd, Cole, and Guy-Sheftall 2009: 211. From Audre Lorde's "When Will the Ignorance End? Keynote Speech at the National Third World Gay and Lesbian Conference, October 13, 1979."

of racism and white supremacy that would not allow most people in the room to come together in a public space.[85]

In her speech, Lorde leads the audience into imagining another way of enacting power,

> The ignorance will end when each one of us begins to seek out and trust the knowledge deep inside of us, when we dare to go into that chaos which exists before understanding and come back with new tools for action and change. For it is from within that deep knowledge that our visions are fueled, and it is our vision which lays the groundwork for our actions, and for our future.[86]

There is a responsibility for each person involved to act toward a collective or greater good, and that practice requires doing the hard work of self-transformation. When Lorde evokes the future she points to the children and says, "[T]hey have a right to grow, free from diseases of racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and the terror of any difference."[87]

In her speech, Lorde gestured towards "the ghosts of those who came before us, that we carry within ourselves—the memory of those lesbian and gay men within our communities whose power and knowledge we have been robbed of."[88] Similarly, she also brought to light those who are "absent" "because of external constraints" such as "prison," "mental institutions," and "in the grip of incapacitating handicaps and illnesses," as well as those who "have lost their vision…have lost their hope" and are "trapped by their fear into silence and invisibility."[89] I find her words absolutely

[85] Byrd et al. 2009: 211.
[86] Byrd et al. 2009: 209.
[87] Byrd et al. 2009: 210.
[88] Byrd et al. 2009: 207-8.
[89] Byrd et al. 2009: 208.

compelling. She guides the audience into a remembering of those Third World people who were not able to live their truth because of social ignorance and constraints, and points to the present reality of social structures that continue a similar disservice and that disproportionately target those who are already disenfranchised. Her analysis asks a different question of lesbian and gay rights in 1979. Lorde is not requesting that Third World lesbian and gay men be incorporated into society as it stands. Instead, she is arguing for a shift in social structures that begins with each person understanding their relation to other peoples and society as it has been constructed. She suggests, "I think we are all here because we are seeking a new kind of power, a force for change beyond the old forms which did not serve us."[90]

Audre Lorde's ideas of social change are reflected in the conference resolutions. In a publication by the *Gay Insurgent* in 1980 there are significant ideas that constitute a radical agenda put forward by the Third World lesbian and gay conference participants. The document is titled, "Struggles Reach New Levels," it features a picture of marchers holding a banner that reads "First Gay Americans," and the caption under the photo reads, "Gay Native Americans march in Washington."[91] Through this documentation it is possible to see all the constituencies that attended the conference, and the National March, along with their key resolutions. The participants included the Third World Women's Caucus, Freedom Socialist Party and Radical Women, Latin American Lesbian and Gay Men's Caucus, Jewish Caucus, the

[90] Byrd et al. 2009: 210.
[91] Daniel Tsang (1980), wrote, "Heading the Third World contingent was a small group of Native Americans, holding a sign proclaiming 'The First Gay Americans'" (11). Accessed at: USC ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives.

National Coalition of Black Gays, and participants from Mexico. The various constituencies proclaim resolutions that reflect their political vision. For example, the Third World Women's Caucus declared support for the "leadership of Third World Lesbians in defense of" "race, sex, sexuality, and class struggles" and "rejecting the feminism of the NOW-type feminists movements as it does not address the needs of all Third World women."[92]

The Freedom Socialist Party and Radical Women demanded "an end to all deportations of undocumented workers" and called for "open borders with Mexico." They additionally called for the "complete dismantling" of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) police apparatus, and condemned the use of the phrase "illegal aliens," which they argued "is a racist and degrading term for undocumented workers."[93] The same constituency, the Freedom Socialist Party and Radical Women, put forward the "immediate" need for the "recognition of the sovereignty of Native American nations and their right to self-determination." They called for Congress to "grant amnesty to all Native American political prisoners, including Leonard Peltier."[94] Some of the other resolutions included the formation of a Latin American Lesbian-Gay Men Coalition, an end to forced sterilization of Native American women, and the abolition of the 1952 Immigration Act which they named an "outrageous law" that causes "many of our Third World Lesbian sisters and Gay brothers [to] live in constant fear of harassment and deportation because of this

[92] "Struggles Reach New Levels: National Third World Lesbian and Gay Conference Resolutions," *Gay Insurgent* 6, Summer 1980: 17-18. Accessed at: USC ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives.
[93] "Struggles," 1980: 17. Accessed at: USC ONE Archives.
[94] "Struggles," 1980: 18. Accessed at: USC ONE Archives.

McCarthy-era law."[95] In a report back of the 1979 March by Daniel Tsang, he notes, "Many of the Asian marchers faced deportation for so visibly coming out as lesbian or gay, under a reactionary McCarthy period law which bars gay people from abroad from entering this country."[96]

It becomes clear from Audre Lorde's speech and the resolution put forward by conference participants that this emerging movement was distinct from mainstream lesbian and gay activism, as well as movements that were only feminist or only race-based. This Third World Lesbian and Gay conference captures a unique moment of consciousness. Organizing around immigration law, prisons, and forced sterilization are many times separated out and rendered isolated issues for a particular group. However, within the space of a queer "Third World" there was a way to show the interconnectedness of these harmful institutions that reproduce histories of violence particularly against people of color of all genders, classes, and sexualities.

In many ways Lorde's (1984) theorizing of the erotic gives us tools to unthread, unearth, or decolonize our "lifeforce" and "creative energy." She suggests "the knowledge and use of which we are now reclaiming in our language, our history, our dancing, our loving, our work, our lives," is perhaps what is needed to reconceptualize our methodologies of social transformation.[97] She says, "[t]he erotic is resource within each of us that lies in a deeply female and spiritual plane, firmly

[95] "Struggles," 1980: 17. Accessed at: USC ONE Archives.
[96] Tsang, Daniel (1980). "Third World Lesbians and Gays Meet," 11. *Gay Insurgent* 6, Summer 1980. Accessed at: USC ONE Archives.
[97] Lorde 1984b: 55.

rooted in the power of our unexpressed or unrecognized feeling."[98] Knowledge that arises from the center of our existence (intuition) is often silenced within the academy and western heteropatriarchal society. She suggest, "[W]e have come to distrust that power which rises from our deepest and nonrational knowledge."[99] While Lorde asserts that this is especially true for women I would argue that this is a result of legacies of domination and so this distrust of self is the case for many people. She develops her argument by pointing out that in society there is a "false" split between the spiritual and the erotic, and the spiritual and the political.[100] It is when we fuse these together that we rise up to demand another world where suffering or self-hatred is not the norm.

[98] Lorde 1984b: 53.
[99] Lorde 1984b: 53.
[100] Lorde 1984b: 56.

Conclusion

Women of color feminisms are rarely acknowledged in their full complexity, particularly the work that brings together gender, race, sexuality, spirituality, and politics of social transformation. I have argued that as a site of knowledge production, women of color scholars remain mostly hidden within the academy and yet made a significant impact on research and theory through complex and layered formulations and expressions of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Women of color feminists' formations disrupt western and patriarchal dominant epistemologies through writing that attends to diverse knowledges of creativity, art, and ancestry.

The chapters in this dissertation show how decolonization is a methodological way of rethinking knowledge. In chapter one in particular I showed how internal colonialism was a central analytic in building the Chicano movement ideology, building off of world systems theory, which places nations into a hierarchy. The Chicano Power movement, like other race-centered nationalist movements suggested an important analysis of the colonialism within the United States inflicted on people of color however it did so at the cost of an analysis of gender, sexuality, spirituality, and land. I argued that Chicano Studies as a field of study that needs to be decolonized. In the larger dissertation I offer rethinking the land and different forms of remembering by queer ancestry by Xicanas and Latinas.

Creative, visual, and cultural production is legacy within women of color feminisms. Decolonization takes an instrumental form through artistic and cultural production such as the practice of constructing altars or sculptures. Queer Latinas

through their art and vision create and tell stories to re-write and re-imagine history. Queer Latina spaces of art and cultural production, which are filled with ceremony and prayer, are a central way that these queer Latinas (cultural producers) have told their stories and re-written dominant historiographies. Women of color writers have documented their stories by telling about pains, traumas, and healings using what Anzaldúa called *autohistorias*—organic forms of theorizing that intervene into academic spaces. Similarly, "truth-telling" of historic and political truths, as theorized by Waziyatawin (2008) is a form of expression that is central to women of color feminists who seek social transformation. Through anthologies, films, and other various other forms of creative and collaborative knowledge production subaltern stories of queer Latina sexualities are represented.

Queer archival research is significant in the study of queer Latina diasporas because it maps allows for the searching (*escarvando*) of what is not visible in publications or documented histories. The archivists, artists, and editors do the work to build knowledge found in the margins to articulate Latina lesbian histories and discourses. This is a practice of unearthing story. I have showed that a combination of qualitative methods is necessary for locating this history. There is a need to explore or combine methods, such as oral history interviews, archival work, and the practice of building an alternative historiography, as well as analysis of visual and literary culture. I have attempted to map a historiography of queer Latinas that addresses forgotten discourses, as well as the resistance to historical silencing by

queer Latinas. These social actors offer access to knowledges that offer remedies by charting alternative pathways to social transformation.

Ultimately, this dissertation, analyzes a historical archive, created by and about queer Latinas by centering on the intellectual and social activism of important social actors that critically engage in radical feminist, lesbian, and anti-patriarchal theory and practice. I traced significant knowledges and social movements that disrupt silences around queer *historias* and queer Latina discourses by analyzing important strands of people who work together, within, and across the politics of Chicana lesbians, Latina lesbianas, lesbians of color, queer Latina, and women of color. Tracing silences of non-heteronormative populations is a move to address colonial forms of epistemic violence. As Audre Lorde reminds us, "it is not difference which immobilizes us, but silence."[101] Silence is not only connected to absent voices, but to social, political, and epistemological exclusions or misrepresentations of marginal or "othered" populations. The emerging work in queer Latina/o studies to acknowledge various forms of queerness, difference, and identity formations allows for the possibility of reorganizing key fields of study that critiques colonial heteronormative parameters. Leading fields in this venture are Chicana and Latina studies, feminist studies, and queer of color critique, to which I hope this project contributes.

[101] Lorde 1997: 22. *The Cancer Journals: Special Edition.* Aunt Lute Books.

Finally, my intentional engagement primarily with women of color feminist scholars and writers Gloria Anzaldúa, and to different degrees with the work of Audre Lorde, and Cherríe Moraga was a move to reconceptualize how we understand their contributions to feminist of color theory and queer theory. This dissertation has shown the relevance and significance of art and creativity as possessing an epistemological function that is difficult to access without attention to the visual. The visionary words of Anzaldúa, Lorde, and Moraga created images of social transformation that are require further academic inquiry to see the layers of possibility.

Appendix

This a multi-method project. I conducted 20 oral history interviews, a total of 4 of these were with archival researchers and/or librarians, while the remaining 16 were oral history interviews with artists, activists, editors, and writers. I also visited and conducted research in 5 archival sites (CSULB Special Collections (LA Women's Movement Collection); UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center (Mujeres and LGBT Collection); UCSC Special Collections (Gloria Anzaldúa Altares Collection); USC ONE National Archives (Lesbian Legacies Collection); UT Austin Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection (Gloria Anzaldúa Papers). I traveled to Mexico City for research purposes four times from 2005-2011, twice for the *Marcha Lesbica* (the lesbian march). In Coyocan, Mexico I spent time working with Yan Maria, whose home holds a large archival collection titled, Historia del Movimiento Lésbico Feminista en México, 1977-2007 (History of the Lesbian Feminist Movement in Mexico, 1977-2007). It is one of only "alternative" type archives that I was able to locate, it clearly shows transnational links with movements in the U.S. starting as early as the late 1970s. Also relevant to my research where two museum visits, one held at the J. Paul Getty Museum (Aztec Pantheon Exhibit) and the other at the de Young, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (Olmec Exhibit).

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