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**TEXAS-MEXICO BORDER CULTURAL PRODUCTION:
ETHNOGRAPHIC AESTHETICS AND MODERNITY IN
FOLKLORE, LITERATURE, AND FILM**

BY

MARGIE MONTAÑEZ

B.A., English, University of New Mexico, 2002
M.A., American Studies, University of New Mexico, 2005

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy
American Studies**

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

July, 2017

DEDICATION

To Joe, Joey, and Dominique—the loves of my life

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**Texas-Mexico Border Cultural Production: Ethnographic Aesthetics
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation develops the trope of an ethnographic aesthetic to dissect the cultural production of Jovita González, Américo Paredes, and more recent works by Alicia Gaspar de Alba and Lourdes Portillo. The dissertation argues that Texas-Mexican cultural production actively produces knowledge. In other words, when understood within the framework of ethnographic aesthetics, Texas-Mexican border cultural anticipates and imagines local futures in a constant shifting colonial space. Texas-Mexico border cultural production is not passive or residual but is in fact active and emergent.

The dissertation situates Texas-Mexico border cultural production as responding to and within post-national American Studies discourse that “stresses the ways different cultures are transformed by their contact and interaction with each other” (28). This contact occurs in what John Carlos Rowe terms “contact zones,” which are “semiotic sites where exchanges may occur from both (or more) sides, even when the configurations of power are inequitable (as they usually are)” (28). The texts in this project react to and against social, racial, and economic shifts occurring in border contact zones while simultaneously inventing and imagining new social orders. This body of work then concurrently contests even as it creates.

This dissertation proposes an Ethnographic Aesthetic as a model that expands on the notion of ethnographic poetics. In addition to offering ways of reading indigenous literary forms, my model is one that illustrates different ways border cultural production actively invents and constructs cultural identities, voices, dialogues, and styles that are never static but fluid, as with border culture in general. This project is one that situates border cultural production outside of binary models of resistance and domination. The cultural texts this project explores are not stuck in a historical time-freeze but rather negotiate tradition and offer pathways through modernity.

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Introduction

Ethnographic Aesthetics and Texas-Mexico Border Cultural Production

I grew up in Chaparral, a southern New Mexico town literally on the edge of New Mexico and Texas. Geographically isolated from other New Mexico cities and towns, Chaparral lies on the southeast tip of Doña Ana County and the southwest corner of Otero County. The division between the two New Mexico counties cuts through Chaparral by a road aptly named County Line and the visible sanctioned division between New Mexico and Texas bypasses the town by a street fittingly named State Line. El Paso, Texas, is a few miles away while the nearest New Mexico city is over a 45-minute drive.¹ It was on this precipice that straddles Texas, New Mexico, and the United States- Mexican border that my interest in literature, folklore, and the borderlands was formed. It was in this space that even as a young girl I loved hearing family stories, trading uncanny folktales with cousins, and taking trips to Juárez, Mexico.

The daily crossing of this cultural and geographical space was soon mimicked in my graduate research. I was introduced to Jovita González, a Texas-Mexican folklorist and ethnographer, by way of Jose Limón's 1994 book *Dancing with the Devil: Society and Cultural Poetics in Mexican-American South Texas*. Once again, I found myself transfixed by story-tellers, folklore, and space as I read about Texas-Mexican anthropological precursors. This time, the balanced and intriguing triptych was more complicated as I attempted to situate this cultural production within the fields of Ethnography and American Studies; the former a discipline where early Chicanos/as

were represented as exoticized others unable to speak for themselves and the latter an interdisciplinary field rooted in New England region and literature.

Paradigm Shifts in American Studies and Ethnography

This dissertation begins by mapping the paradigm shifts in American Studies and Ethnography and then converges the two in what I term Ethnographic Aesthetics to dissect the cultural production of Jovita González, Américo Paredes, and more recent works by Alicia Gaspar de Alba and Lourdes Portillo. This dissertation argues that Texas-Mexican cultural production does not only serve, as Raymond A. Paredes states in “The Evolution of Chicano Literature,” as the “repository of much Chicano history and culture” (1982, 35), but most important it is a form of ethnographic aesthetics in which these texts actively produce knowledge. In other words, when understood within the framework of ethnographic aesthetics, Texas-Mexican border cultural production anticipates and imagines local futures in a constant shifting colonial space.

Chicano/a cultural production of the Texas-Mexico border does not merely pass down history, culture and identity but rather at different historical periods—marked by complex, shifting and often violent contact zones, invents what it means to be Mexican-American and imagines new possibilities. This dissertation maintains that Texas-Mexico border cultural production is not passive or residual but is in fact active and emergent. Though American Studies and Ethnography have had implications in reproducing colonial power relations, ethnographic aesthetics has emerged from the paradigm shifts in both disciplines and provides a framework where cultural production of the Texas-Mexico border actively invents, critiques, and imagines new possibilities.

As an early academic discipline American Studies was fraught with the same *isms* that plagued early ethnographic studies. American Studies' early focus on New England region and literature constructed an overarching American ideology/mythology within the academy that marginalized U.S. minority cultures. Early forms of nativism fostered by anti-immigration sentiments were expressed in different forms throughout history; from anti-Catholicism to anti-all foreign or racially different, the fear was that this changing population was altering the composition of the country for the worse. American nationalism's characterization of a unified American identity attacked ethnic, national and regional groups. Early ethnography in general, and in the Southwest specifically, is shadowed by a colonial tone that attempts to establish universal truths about its Mexican-American/Texas-Mexican inhabitants. However both disciplines, American Studies and Ethnography, have undergone necessary paradigm shifts—shifts that have put into conversation the shifting cultural, regional and race/class politics of the Texas-Mexico borderland.

Early nationalistic paradigms are problematic in attempting to (un)recover the complexities of Texas-Mexico border cultural production where the producers are both writers and subjects of Texas-Mexico borderland history. A letter quoted in Mary Helen Washington's presidential address to the American Studies Association in 1988 reveals the general anxieties about the shifting paradigms in the discipline. The letter reads: "some new names and faces on the 1985 program committee [might] constitute a threat to all that has come before" (4). Against this nationalistic ideology, post-nationalism emerges in an attempt to recognize others besides New England and its literary greats as the central loci in defining American Studies. Post-national American studies then is

essential to the studies of Texas-Mexico borderlands because it now links “North and South Americas instead of the old and new Englands” (Saldívar 2006, 15). Because American Exceptionalism focuses on contributions to U.S. cultural imperialism and its “exclusions of the many different cultures historically crucial to U.S social, political, and economic developments” John Carlos Rowe posits a “new” American Studies framework (Rowe, 23). In *Post-National American Studies* (2000) Rowe argues that new American Studies extends its agenda beyond the U.S’s geographical and cultural borders and incorporates the intersections of different cultures within the United States. Thus, in a post-national American Studies framework, a “single nationalist mythology of the United States no longer prevails,” leaving the cultural borders of the United States no longer clearly defined by arbitrary markers and signifiers (23).

It is in this “clearing” that my dissertation situates Texas-Mexico border cultural production as responding to and within post-national discourse that “stresses the ways different cultures are transformed by their contact and interaction with each other” (28). This contact occurs in what Rowe terms “contact zones,” which are “semiotic sites where exchanges may occur from both (or more) sides, even when the configurations of power are inequitable (as they usually are)” (28). Rowe is not the only one to call attention to contact zone. In *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (2008) Mary Louise Pratt call attention to “contact zones.” Pratt argues that contact zones are:

Social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination—like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today... “contact zone” is an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect. By using the term “contact,” I aim to foreground the interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial

encounters so easily ignores or suppressed by diffusionist accounts of conquest and domination (4, 7).

Texas-Mexico border cultural production reacts to and against social, racial, and economic relations occurring in these “contact zones” while simultaneously inventing and imagining new social orders. This body of work then concurrently contests as it creates—even in inequitable shifting historical periods. While configurations of power are unequal, Texas-Mexico border cultural production still participates and engages in social, racial, and economic relations and inserts a Texas-Mexican identity and experience into larger historical constructs.

In Amy Kaplan’s *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (2002) Kaplan asserts that U.S imperial expansion abroad is inexorably bound up in the production of American identity. She further contends that foreign spaces are closer than we might think and challenges the traditional understanding of imperialism as a one way imposition of power. The U.S.-Mexico borderland region not only extends this argument literally as the borderlands shifts from a foreign space to a domestic one after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 but also symbolically as it creates a domestic contact zone marked by conflict and negotiation shadowed by residual colonial violence. In the U.S.-Mexico borderland culture and identity is no longer aligned exclusively with national boundaries, creating a space that is at once both symbolically and literally foreign and domestic that resists a unified regional and national identity. Texas-Mexico border cultural production then serves as venue for which to understand the social transformation of this region, not as a one way imposition of power, though still inequitable, but as constructed and transformed through the interactions in different

contact zones. Because Texas-Mexico borderlands collapse the foreign and domestic space, the cultural production of this region reacts to and against the colonial moment of 1848 but also precedes it and thus moves beyond sanctioned boundaries of nation and region.

Literal and figurative boundaries have been questioned within Ethnography as well. Like American Studies, this field has undergone paradigm transformations. No longer the scientific colonialist history penned by white men, Ethnography, especially ethnography from the contact zones, has moved the peripheries to the center. My project, through Ethnographic Aesthetics, offers an alternative reading of the cultural production from these contact zones and explores the way Texas-Borderland texts counter hegemonic discourses and ethnographic authority. In James Clifford's *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art (1988)* Clifford argues that ethnographic authority characterizes traditional ethnography: "the current crises—or better, dispersion—of ethnographic authority makes it possible to mark off a rough period, bounded by the years of 1900 and 1960, during which a new conception of field research established itself as the norm for European and American anthropology. Intensive fieldwork, pursued by university trained specialists, emerged as a privileged, sanctioned source of data about exotic peoples..." (24). Further, this period is marked by cultural descriptions, "valid anthropological abstractions were to be based, wherever possible, on intensive cultural descriptions by qualified scholars" (25).

Some 19th century ethnographers were already investigating cultures prior to the shift to establish ethnographic authority. The traveler and the missionary are just a few examples of groups interacting with and writing about different cultures. Although the

missionary and the traveler frequently lived with these different cultures, had better research contacts, and often had the necessary linguistic skills—the professionalization of ethnography charged them with being preoccupied with issues of government and conversion. Anthropology, as a field, and Ethnography, as a discipline, set itself in contrast to these early writers whose knowledge of indigenous peoples was accused of being “not informed by the best scientific hypotheses or a sufficient neutrality” (Clifford 1988, 27). Early ethnography established itself as a scientific authority, as “purveyor[s] of truth in text” and the ethnographer “trained in the latest analytic techniques and modes of scientific explanations” (27, 30). Scientific authority was established by creating a system or model for fieldworkers to follow. In addition to “training,” fieldworkers were required to “efficiently” use native language, observe and describe visually and construct wholes for the part—“without spending years getting to know natives, their complex language habits, in intimate detail, the researcher could go after selected data that would yield a central armature or structure of the cultural whole” (Clifford 31).

The ability to understand and establish the whole from the part was the basis for the ethnographer’s scientific authority and allowed them to establish authority in a relatively short period of time. The detached observer then epitomized neutrality and impartiality; these classic ethnographic methods argued that only through keeping a distance could the researcher objectively focus on social reality. In *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (1989) Renato Rosaldo calls this notion the “myth of detachment,” arguing that a researcher can rarely become a detached observer (168). Rosaldo provides a provocative discourse on the importance of changing how researcher, especially those involved in ethnographic research, define the methodological basis of

projects intended to articulate the nature of cultures and critiques anthropologists who practice the rubric of classic anthropology in cultural studies programs.

Clifford Geertz's classic work on interpretive anthropology, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973) also counters the argument that ethnography covers universal truths that govern human interaction, and instead represents "webs of significance he [observed/observer] himself has spun...the analysis [of culture is] therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (5). James Clifford and George E. Marcus also problematize classic ethnographic writings. In their edited collection *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* ((1986) they argue that the notion of representation put forth by the ethnographer is an ambiguous notion, as it represents the ethnographer's position of power and expertise while simultaneously implying the absence of the culture being studied. Critics call for a remaking of social analysis that moves away from the reliance of neutrality and objectivity and towards a subjective positionality of both researchers and subjects.

Ethnographic Aesthetics

As mapped above, American Studies and Ethnography have gone through paradigm shifts that challenge traditional borders and authority. This dissertation draws from what George E. Marcus and Michael M.J. Fischer call ethnographic poetics. In *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences* (1999) Marcus and Fischer propose literary production as another mode of ethnographic expression that offers "culturally authentic ways to read indigenous oral narratives and literary forms" (73). This dissertation takes this premise and expands literary production to include

different modes of cultural production. I propose Ethnographic Aesthetic as a model that expands on the notion of ethnographic poetics. In addition to offering ways of reading indigenous literary forms, my model is one that illustrates different ways Texas-Mexico Borderland cultural production actively invents/constructs cultural identities, voices, dialogues, and styles that are never static but fluid, as with border culture in general.

In this way Chicano/a cultural production is not merely a repository of culture and history but offers complex cross cultural and cross border alternatives to hegemonic constructions of Texas-Mexican border identities and culture. The Texas-Mexico population suffered the worst under the new social order after the United States-Mexican War, creating a more extensive folklore of social conflict in this area (Limón 1983, 216). If this region was undergoing constant social shifts, why would the cultural production of the region be different, offering only a monolithic account of these transformations?

I offer Ethnographic Aesthetics as a way to understand the cultural production of this space other than binary models of resistance and domination. Ethnographic Aesthetics then complicates the easily demarcated boundaries of the region and offers an alternative to the ethnographic authority of the region that was already established by Anglo writers of the time. Texas-Mexico border cultural production lies in an interstitial space between academia and the community and between tradition and modernity and is a space where identities “burst open and where the colonial self and colonized other both become elements of multiple, mobile, categoric identities” (Pérez 1999, 7). This ethnographic work does not function to speak for the whole and reproduce stereotypes but brings voice to a community that has previously been silenced by ethnographic authority. Texas-Mexico cultural production already prefigures the “current postmodern

focus on voice, ethnographic authority, positionality and the politics of representation (Davalos 1998, 14).

The cultural texts this project explores are not stuck in a historical time-freeze but rather negotiate tradition and offer a pathway through modernity. This dissertation argues that blurring boundaries between tradition and modern and assimilationist and resistance confuses the rigid lines of understanding the region and resists rigid categories of understanding identity. In other words, the fluidity of Texas-Mexico cultural production does not reproduce or create history or experiences of an “other” nor does it create ambivalence or unknowing, but rather creates a space for inventing and imaging local futures.

According to Emma Pérez in *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History* (1999), Pérez claims that resistant Chicano narratives, no matter how radical, still adhere to dominant ideology of self and other by approaching history using spatio-temporal models that “enforce a type of colonialist historiography” (4). Chicano texts that are understood or read as solely resistant creates a fictional historical age as “other” that reproduces notions of difference, of “us” vs. “them.” In this sense Texas-Mexican history becomes a history of things as they *were*, as a space (spatio) to merely document the past (temporal). The trouble with this paradigm is that I question what becomes of this cultural production when it is only understood as a historical text? What happens when it is understood as a vehicle that only serves to pass down culture, to reiterate tradition, or document the past? This dissertation argues that the cultural production the Texas-Mexico Border collapses boundaries, not only geographic and cultural boundaries, but collapses the boundaries of time and space in order to reveal their importance and

relevance as more than a repository but as a space that actively creates meaning. Not making a case against tradition, the dissertation maintains that the cultural production of this region traverses the complexities of tradition and modernity and in so disrupts the notion of ethnographic authority and creates a space for (re)inventing.

Ethnographic Aesthetics is a paradigm that not only considers cultural production forms as ethnographic texts but provides a model where texts both collapse and collide boundaries—cultural and geographical, and reveal the way cultural identities are invented in times of shifting historical periods—past, present, and the imagined future. In border cultural production Ethnographic Aesthetics dismantles ethnographic authority, imagines transnational readers, collapses form and fact, and highlights the importance and role of auto-ethnographers.

Chapter Outline

Chapter one documents the way ethnography established authority by instituting ethnography as a science performed by university-trained specialists. This chapter explores the ways ethnographic aesthetics contributes to the fields of Chicana feminist theory and puts into conversation J. Frank Dobie, an established expert in Texas-Mexican Folklore and Jovita González's advisor and mentor, Jovita González, and Américo Paredes. Overall this chapter argues that earlier works by Américo Paredes resisted dominant authority epitomized by J. Frank Dobie because Paredes is viewed within a discourse that privileges binaries of essentialized difference. This Chapter then proposes Jovita González work does not resist nor attempt to reproduce ethnographic authority but in fact dismantles and collapses monological authority through language.

Chapter two argues that border cultural production functions beyond sanctioned binaries and crosses and collapses borders of class, race, and gender by navigating tradition and modernity. By imagining local futures that exist beyond regional boundaries, the texts examined in this chapter make sense of local sensibilities and local social shifts and actively inserts Texas-Mexico into larger historical constructs that do not simply replicate resistant and dominant models of resistance. This chapter investigates border cultural production in ways that do not rely on sanctioned paradigms of difference but proposes a model that highlights meaningful difference by reimagining border heroes. Ultimately chapter two argues that the authors discussed imagine local futures in shifting colonial relations in a way their characters can envision but the author cannot fully conceive.

Chapter three examines the ways the texts in this dissertation collapse form and function to allow for new readings and to account for meaning in the act of writing. This chapter investigates the ways border texts, or forms, function in different ways. This chapter begins with Sergio Reyna's critique of González's work. Reyna claims that González's work functions literarily to entertain, to merely embellish for more elaborate narrative works like the novel. Reyna then compares this to more traditional forms such as folklore and storytelling, whose *function* is to preserve tradition. I argue that this schema essentializes difference and privileges tradition. Literature, short stories, films, because of their *form*, are deemed false; that is, their sole purpose is to entertain, while folklore and storytelling, and I include here classic ethnography, are *forms* whose *function* is to represent truth and preserve traditions. By collapsing genres border texts imagine new possibilities of future identities and offer pathways that navigate tradition

and modernity, allowing for future possibilities that exist outside binaries of difference. Overall chapter four argues that one cannot separate the fact, what the story is narrating, from the form, like the folktale, novel, and the corrido. In this way, the facts are not separate from the means of communication.

The dissertation's last chapter brings the dissertation to the contemporary moment of the Juárez murders and serves as a caution using the first three chapters to make its argument. That is, the texts hinge on reproducing an authorial tone that speaks for and about others—the authors dancing dangerously close with the practices of early scientific ethnography. This chapter begins with the politics of the EL Paso Thanksgiving Parade to introduce the El Paso, Texas-Ciudad Juárez border. The chapter's trajectory then moves to a brief history of the Juarez murders, theories surrounding the murders, and maquilas before transitioning to the cultural production surrounding the murders. This Chapter considers Lourdes Portillo's *Señorita Extraviada* (1998), Marjorie Agosin's *Secrets of the Sand: The Young Women of Juarez* (2006), and Alicia Gaspar de Alba's *Desert Blood: The Juarez Murders* (2005). This chapter argues that the cultural production of the Juárez murders hinge on reproducing the predicaments of early ethnography.

Notes to Introduction

¹ Las Cruces, NM is 40 miles Northwest of Chaparral. The closest town is Anthony, NM 10 miles East across the Franklin Mountains. Chaparral is nestled between Fort Bliss in El Paso, TX to the South and White Sands Missile Range to the North.

Chapter 1

Establishing, Resisting and Dismantling Ethnographic Authorities: Science, Folklore, and Language

By the 1970's the field of ethnography had begun to question the ethnographic authority and presumed neutrality that characterized traditional writings in the field. While these changes challenge and question classic ethnography's reliance on neutrality and objectivity, the shift also highlights the ways ethnography established itself as a field rooted in science. It is this emphasis on science that this chapter begins with, as science was the basis for establishing an ethnographic authorial tone that spoke for and about cultures generally. But science also specifically spoke for and created images of Texas-Mexicans in the U. S. borderlands that at worst, were represented as violent and primitive, and at best, simple-minded people stuck in tradition. This chapter suggests that an ethnographic aesthetic dismantles the scientific authorial tone that spoke for and about Texas-Mexicans and, inserts an alternative voice, one that does not merely resist or reproduce authority, but instead dismantles ethnographic rhetorical authority in the United States-Mexico borderlands.

Chapter one is divided into six areas of discussion, beginning with a brief trajectory of the way ethnography was established as a science in order to set practitioners apart from missionaries, administrators, and other men of letters who also possessed research contacts and linguistic skills, and were also in the field writing. The shift to professional ethnography created a type of scientific authority, an authority not

only in ethnographic writings, but also, as this chapter argues, a kind of authority that filtered through in early forms of popular culture.

Section two develops the paradigm of an ethnographic aesthetic, situating it within the fields of ethnography, American Studies, and Chicana feminism in order to lay the framework for analyzing Jovita González's work while section three examines the way ethnography informed popular culture. Sections four through six explore the ways both Américo Paredes and Jovita González's texts respond to Anglo ethnographic authority before moving to a discussion on Jovita González's life and work. Overall, chapter one argues that Jovita González's folklore dismantles ethnographic authority through the use of language and the disruption of monological authority. Further, this chapter argues that an ethnographic aesthetic illuminates the ways border texts navigate a shifting colonial space beyond binaries of resistance and domination. This chapter posits that essentializing difference creates binaries with complacency and complicity at one end and heroic resistance at the other. In other words, difference has traditionally been understood as that which is in opposition to authority, resulting in reproducing binaries of resistance and oppression that, at best, elide other possibilities and at worst, positions the two binaries against each other. However, this dissertation maintains that an ethnographic aesthetic puts differences in dialogue, constructing possibilities that are overlooked when understood within traditional orders of difference.

Establishing Ethnography as a Science

Producers of early ethnographies sought to distinguish their work from other colonial writings, like those of the missionary, traveler, and administrator. The shift to differentiate ethnographic writings from other "men on the spot" and their writings on

native and indigenous peoples led to the professionalization of field—a move that launched institutional changes establishing the ethnographer as a scientific authority. By implementing specific changes that addressed everything from field work and research methods to the mastery of Native languages, the new fieldworker-theorist “replaced an older partition between the ‘man on the spot’ and the sociologist or anthropologist” (Clifford 1988, 26-27). Establishing authority became an explicit project of new ethnographic methods and the representations now “depended on institutional and methodological innovations circumventing the obstacles to rapid knowledge of other cultures” (Clifford 1988, 30). The new methods of acquiring knowledge stood in direct contrast to the “rather different economy of ethnographic knowledge” that previously defined the field. Clifford uses R. H Codrington’s *The Melanesians* (1891) to demonstrate the way knowledge was acquired before the fieldworker theorist ways of Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, and Mead established the new norm of intensive fieldwork of university trained scholars:

Before...the norm of the University-trained scholar testing and deriving theory from firsthand research, a rather different economy of ethnographic knowledge prevailed. ... For example, *The Melanesians* (1891) by R. H. Codrington is a detailed compilation of folklore and custom, drawn from his relatively long term of research as an evangelist and based on intensive collaboration with indigenous translators and informants. The book is not organized around fieldwork “experience,” nor does it advance a unified interpretive hypothesis, functional, historical, or otherwise, it is content with low-level generalizations and the amassing of an eclectic range of information. Codrington is acutely aware of the incompleteness of his knowledge, believing that real understanding of native life begins only after a decade or so of experience and study. This understanding of the difficulty of grasping the world of alien peoples—the many years of learning and unlearning needed, the problems of acquiring thorough linguistic competence—tended to dominate the work of Codrington’s generation. Such assumptions would soon be challenged by the more confident cultural relativism of the Malinowskian model (Clifford 1988, 27).

In contrast to Codrington's generation, and before the fieldworker theorist and the establishment of participant observation, there was what Clifford terms the "intermediate generation" of ethnographers that "did not typically live in a single local for a year or more, mastering the vernacular and undergoing a personal learning experience comparable to an initiation. They did not speak as cultural insiders but retained the natural scientist's documentary, observational stance" (Clifford, 1988, 28). By the 1920s however, the fieldworker-theorist had "brought to completion a powerful new scientific and literary genre, the ethnography, a synthetic cultural description based on participant observation" (Clifford 1988, 30). The dissertation then, refers to ethnography as a literary genre, a cultural text, and the practice of gathering and interpreting cultural descriptions—a conflation brought on by the establishment of professional ethnography.

Professional ethnography is marked by a period that implemented methodological innovations shortcutting the time it took to gather information and establish ethnographic authority: "during this period a particular form of authority was created—an authority both scientifically validated and based on a unique personal experience" and, by the close of the nineteenth century, "nothing guaranteed, a priori, the ethnographer's status as the best interpreter of native life—as opposed to the traveler, and especially the missionary and administrator, some of who had been in the field far longer and had better research contacts and linguistic skills" (Clifford 1988, 26). The new paradigm of methodological innovations consisted of six official stages that culminated in establishing scientific authority. Instead of years in the field, the university ethnographer now studied "classic subjects" and was "trained in the latest analytic techniques and modes of scientific explanation;" a training that set ethnographers apart from other writers:

This conferred an advantage over amateurs in the field: the professional could claim to get to the heart of a culture more quickly, grasping its essential institutions and structures. A prescribed attitude of cultural relativism distinguished the fieldworker from missionaries, administrators, and others whose view of natives was, presumably, less dispassionate, who were preoccupied with the problems of governments or conversion. In addition to scientific sophistication and relativist sympathy, a variety of normative standards for the new form of research emerged: the fieldworker was to live in the native village, use the vernacular, stay sufficient (but seldom specified) length of time, and investigate certain classic subjects, and so on (Clifford, 1988, 30).

Validated publicly and professionally, the fieldworker could now focus on matters of language, a difficulty addressed in the second step of professional ethnography.

The second stage of professional ethnography circumvented the many years it took to acquire the linguistic competence of Codrington's generation. The length of time in the field no longer equated to the degree within which the ethnographer could use native language. For example, the new style ethnographer was in the field rarely over two years and, in fact, Clifford informs us, it "frequently was much shorter" (1988, 30). For the new university trained scientific ethnographer, this shorter time in the field was sufficient to efficiently use native language: "the new-style ethnographer...could efficiently 'use' native languages without 'mastering' them" and could avoid the use of an interpreter by using the native tongue just enough to "ask questions, maintain rapport, and generally get along in the culture..." (Clifford 1988, 30). The emphasis on the efficient *use* of language rather than the *mastering* of it is a central issue for Texas-Mexican authors that will be addressed later.

The third and fourth stages of professional ethnography go hand in hand, stressing both the observation and the interpretation of cultures. The visual, or the power of observation, is addressed in the third stage, emphasizing that "culture was construed as an

ensemble of characteristic behaviors, ceremonies, and gestures susceptible to recording and explanation by a trained onlooker” thus, as a general trend, the participant-observer emerged as a research norm (Clifford 1988, 31). To the ethnographic participant-observer, a “distinct primacy was accorded to the visual” and thus, “interpretation was tied to description” (Clifford 1988, 31). Interpretational and theoretical abstractions are the basis for the fourth stage, arguing that these abstractions “promised to help academic ethnographers 'get to the heart' of a culture more rapidly than someone undertaking, for example, a thorough inventory of customs and beliefs" (Clifford 1988, 31). By limiting time spent in field or the mastery of language, “the range of necessary knowledge was conveniently limited” and instead, the ethnographer could go after “selected data that would yield a central armature or structure of the cultural whole” (Clifford 1988, 31). The participant-observer both described and interpreted culture, a move that worked, at least, schematically, to conflate the ethnographer and the anthropologist, whose different roles had previously been clear: “before the late nineteenth century...the describer-translator of custom and the builder of general theories about humanity, were distinct” (Clifford 1988, 28). This conflation is the basis for the fifth stage of scientific ethnography.

Given the short period of time the new fieldworker theorist spent in the field, the fifth stage of professional ethnography focused on particular institutions that could outline patterns and rituals. Because culture as a whole was too complex to master in short research spans, the fieldworker turned theorist did not focus on a complete inventory or even description of culture and customs, rather, the focus was to get at the whole through a sum of its parts, “parts were assumed to be microcosms or analogies of wholes” (Clifford, 1988, 31).

The ethnographic present, the sixth stage of scientific ethnography, relied on the ethnographer to produce and interpret patterns of behaviors from short-term research activity. Patterns regarding cycles of a year, behavior, or rituals could be formulated by substituting the part for the whole. The training and steps the new scientific ethnographer underwent validated not only the field, but also the ethnographer by producing an “efficient ethnography based on scientific participant observation” (Clifford 1988, 32). To introduce long term historical inquiry would have complicated the task of the new-style fieldwork.

By the 1920’s both the university trained fieldworker-theorist and the introduction of participant observation changed the ethnographic landscape—ethnography was now regarded as a scientific literary genre and the ethnographer, a scientific authority. The ethnographer was not only believed to have an advantage over other cultural writers, but also possessed a prescribed attitude of cultural relativism that worked to distinguish their writings from other writings on government or religious conversion. Early ethnographies by professional ethnographers were ultimately understood as representing the entire truths of peoples and were viewed as possessing unquestionable authority and authenticity. Participant observation, though contested and disputed, “remains the chief distinguishing feature of professional anthropology” (Clifford 1988, 34).

Ethnographic cultural relativism along with issues of government and conversion are taken up in Leah Dilworth’s *Imagining Indians in the Southwest: Persistent Visions of a Primitive Past* (1996). Ethnographic scientific writings are the subject of scrutiny and examination as Dilworth examines the role early ethnographers/anthropologists played in creating and sustaining an imagined Indian image in the Southwest that worked to situate

the region as *other* to the nation. Dilworth's study moves beyond the written ethnographic account and includes other forms of texts that advanced this romanticized constructed image, arguing that tourism, arts and crafts, poetry, postcards, and museums also functioned to disseminate a manufactured image of Indians as a primitive, romanticized vanishing culture.

Ethnographers treated Hopi sacred ceremonies as a spectacle that reified the belief that the white race was superior by maintaining the standard of civilization. In the Southwest specifically, Native American culture was believed to be primitive, representing a lesser degree of progress on an evolutionary scale and, therefore, needed to be documented before extinction. Quoting at length the findings of John Gregory Bourke—soldier and ethnographic scientist of the 1880's, Dilworth calls attention to the ways Bourke's work functioned as a type of salvage ethnography. Attempting to document something “other” and uncivilized—culture as it was before it was missionized and assimilated, ethnography held a precarious position.

On the one hand, salvage ethnography claimed to save tradition from being lost due to the natural process of assimilation while simultaneously representing what was at risk being lost as exotic, romanticized, and other. Bourke documented the Hopi Snake-Dance tradition for fear it would soon to be lost due the natural process of evolution while reifying it as a “lurid tinge of a nightmare” in the minds of U.S citizens (qtd. from *The Snake-Dance of the Moquis of Arizona, qtd. In Dilworth 26, 1996*). Cultural evolution, a theory developed by anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan, argues that all cultures represented “different stages of social development along a progressive, evolutionary scale: from savage to barbaric to civilized, with European society being the

standard of civilization” (Dilworth 24). Cultural evolution, Dilworth claims, “dovetailed nicely with the notion of assimilation; it made the process of civilization seem inevitable and natural. Forced assimilation merely accelerated a ‘natural’ process” (Dilworth 27). Ethnography, it was believed, could inform social change that worked to further the nation’s agenda of civilization.

The documented step-by-step actions of the Hopi Snake Dance and the subsequent publishing of the pictures and stories resulted in a totalization that “ensured ethnographic authority” (Dilworth 1996, 31). In the Southwest, ethnography and tourism functioned jointly to portray Indians as silent people whose authenticity was found to be in their primitiveness and “constructed a version of Indian life that reflected and spoke to American middle-class desires and anxieties” (Dilworth 1996, 79). Industrialization and over-crowding in the North, Dilworth asserts, is a reason Native Americans were represented as a pastoral vanishing population. The images spoke to the new anxieties deriving from the ever-changing cultural landscape while furthering the project of civilization.

Ethnographic authority filtered through in different artistic, literary, and touristic endeavors, manufacturing representations that fell outside the traditional ethnographic genre, but nevertheless just as harmful. The different combinations of authority made the dissemination of ideas, representations, and images of what the “other” looked like easily imbeddable in the nation’s imagination. If by the 1920s the scientific authority of the fieldworker-theorist had been established, Clifford also tell us that by the 1950s “peoples long spoken for by Western ethnographers, administrators, and missionaries began to speak and act more powerfully for themselves on a global stage. It was increasingly

difficult to keep them in their (traditional) places. Distinct ways of life once destined to merge into ‘the modern world’ reasserted their difference, in novel ways” (Clifford 1988, 6). While it is easy to recognize a response to ethnographic authority that responds by speaking and acting more powerfully, an ethnographic aesthetic examines the ways people long spoken for have vocalized and responded to authority in ways that differ from the traditional model of resistance.

Indeed, prior to the 1950s, marginalized people were already speaking out and resisting in different forms, forms that were and are often overlooked because they fall outside the traditional constructs of opposition and resistance. For example, in the 1920s, at the pinnacle of scientific ethnography, Hopis realized that the “proliferation of representations was just as threatening to their cultural practices as government, schools, land allotment, and missionaries” and forbade drawings and photos of sacred ceremonies before refusing outsiders altogether (Dilworth 1996, 22). The move to forbid documentation of the ceremonies and the eventual refusal of outsiders is a form of resistance, a way to dismantle the power and authority of those documenting that lies beyond the traditional binaries of resistance and opposition. That this resistance was not easily recognizable because it didn’t act or speak forcefully, I argue, allowed the pastoral, vanishing and primitive representation to thrive, feeding the national idea of either extermination or civilization—a representation that vastly differed than the representations of Texas- Mexican along border.

Dilworth’s project is one that attempts to “investigate and defuse the power these images and texts exert over readers, viewers, and the subjects depicted” (Dilworth 1996, 23). This project is similar in that it investigates the power of earlier ethnographic images

and texts. The difference lies in the fact that I posit an Ethnographic Aesthetic as a paradigm that reveals the way people spoken for were already diffusing and dismantling authority.

Literary, cultural, and scientific authority became something to acquire, to gain, an academic privilege that granted ethnographic authors the right to talk for and about indigenous groups. Thus, authority became a scientific project, a model that if followed would lead one to acquire expert status and the privilege to speak for and about others. However, authority is not *sui generis*, nor however, is it something handed out or afforded based on experience or identity.

Ethnographic Aesthetics and Chicana Feminist Theory

Native and marginalized peoples have long been spoken for. Emphasis on the written word over oral histories took and to a certain extent, still takes precedence. The written word privileges those with alphabetical writing as the only ones with history and the authority to write the history of others: “toward the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, the measuring stick was history and no longer writing. ‘People without history’ were located in a time ‘before’ the present.’ People with history could write the history of those people without” (Mignolo 2000, 3). The privileged historical record belies the fact that Native people and their histories existed before they were the subjects of historical and ethnographical writing.

Through science, ethnography was able to establish the field as the authority and voice that spoke for and about others, ultimately ensuring the ethnographers’ position of power and expertise: “What emerged during the first half of the twentieth century with

the success of professional fieldwork was a new fusion of general theory and empirical research, of cultural analysis with ethnographic description” (Clifford 1988, 26). The result was a colonial like practice where cultures and people were imagined in the minds of Anglo and European anthropologists as units unaffected by time and space fated for extinction under the pressures of modernity. Constructed representations thus followed a dominant central idea that different cultures embodied different degrees of evolution and data was fit into narratives of progress. While in some instances as early as the 19th century some ethnographers strayed from the dominant paradigm and indeed investigated cultures from various points of view rather than the prescribed lens that filtered ethnographic writings, this practice did not constitute the norm and the ethnographer’s authorial stance largely remained unquestioned and ultimately served as the benchmark for classic ethnography well into the twentieth century.

Classic ethnographic models and historical writings have been contested in Chicano/a studies in general and Chicana feminist discourse specifically. The dominant authorial tone has often been challenged and questioned in both the fields of Chicano Studies and, as summarized in the introduction, interpretive ethnography. Chicana feminist discourse however, challenges not only the authorial tone of classic ethnography, but also the authorial male tone that comprises much of Chicano historiography and literature. In *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas Into History*, Emma Pérez claims that the minority gendered voice has been silenced. Pérez posits that history, like ethnography, is the “story of the conquerors, those who have won. The vanquished disappear” (xv). Pérez offers an alternate reading of history, one that challenges the marginalization of Chicanas in American history. Drawing on Foucault

and other cultural theorists to examine Chicana social movements in Mexico and in the United States, emphasizing the era of the Mexican Revolution, Pérez's project goes beyond the "sanctioned historiographic debates" in order to take the "his" out of the "story," the story that "often becomes the universalist narrative in which women's experience is negated" (xiv). Further, Pérez claims that Chicanas are "spoken for, and ultimately encoded as...passive women who cannot know what is good for us, who cannot know how to express or authorize our own narratives" (xv).

Pérez asserts that traditional modes of history set up spatio-temporal categories such as the frontier or the west that contribute to the colonial imaginary "because they have traditionally only been questioned from within for revision" (5). She goes as far as to claim that Chicano/a historiographies have been "circumscribed by the traditional historical imagination. This means that even the most radical Chicano/a historiographies are influenced by the very colonial imaginary against which they rebel" (5). It is perhaps through the colonial imaginary that Leticia Garza-Falcón and José Limón critique Jovita González's work as they analyze her work within traditional modes of discourse—an issue that will be fleshed out later in this chapter. Taking the decolonial imaginary into consideration, an Ethnographic Aesthetic functions strategically by dismantling authority and traditional ideologies that allows a Texas-Mexican voice into history. The decolonial imaginary, like an ethnographic aesthetic, allows one to go "outside" in order to "come back in with different kinds of inquiries" and "confront the systems of thought that produce Chicana history" (Pérez 1999, xiii).

If history is divided into categories such as colonial and postcolonial, Pérez offers the decolonial imaginary as a rupturing space, the alternative to that which is written in

history. The decolonial imaginary is that time lag between the colonial and postcolonial, that interstitial space where differential politics and social dilemmas are negotiated (6).

Pérez is not the first to call attention to this “interstitial space where silences can be located” (132). Chéla Sandoval’s notion of differential consciousness also calls attention to this in-between space that allows for a third gender category to allude to third world feminists who have been functioning in an interstitial space within the United States.

In “Chicano/a Studies as Oppositional Ethnography,” Angie Chabram claims that the “politics of ethnographic interpretation identified in Chicano discourse, and anthropological discourse embraced race, class, gender, under-representation, and sociopolitical and economic oppression” and recuperated an “historical subject through history, politics, literature, sociology, folklore, law, and art” (1990, 240). Moreover, this dissertation argues that border cultural production can be read as ethnographic texts that not only embraces race, class, and gender, but dismantle the classic ethnographic system of thought that produced binaries of difference and biased representations.

Like Chicana feminists who negotiate identities among varying power bases, Jovita González and Américo Paredes are negotiating an identity for Texas-Mexican people, one that is not overshadowed by the colonial imaginary. Like differential consciousness, “the decolonial imaginary is a theoretical tool used for uncovering hidden voices of Chicanas that have been relegated to silences, to passivity” (Pérez 1999, xvi). An Ethnographic Aesthetic then also imagines the way Chicano and Chicana texts engage with each other and with larger paradigms of the colonial imaginary. If Chicanas have been relegated to silence and passivity, then Chicanos have been relegated to resistance, a

resistance that ultimately reproduces the very colonial systems of thought that they are writing against.

Emma Pérez's theory of the decolonial imaginary is an appropriate tool for undertaking the task of Chicana feminists "to show how in works by Chicanas, elements of gender, race, culture, and class coalesce" (Yarbo-Bejarano 1987, 140). Chicana feminist theory challenges traditional boundaries and moves the periphery to the center to change power politics in the present. Emma Pérez's decolonial imaginary enables one to probe history in order to bring to the present marginalized voices.

The decolonial imaginary fits into Chicana feminist theory as a theory that will "rewrite history using race, class, gender, and ethnicity as categories of analysis, theories that cross borders, that blur boundaries—new kinds of theories with new theorizing methods" (Anzaldúa 1990, xxiv). Like Emma Pérez's decolonial imaginary, Gloria Anzaldúa's *mestiza consciousness* is a gendered discourse that occupies an interstitial space. *Mestiza consciousness* is a "consciousness of the borderlands" and the work of this consciousness is to "break down the subject-object duality that keeps her a prisoner and to show in the flesh and through the images in her work how duality is transcended" (Anzaldúa 1987, 102). By telling their stories, and the stories of other Chicanas, Chicanas "reject the dominant cultures definition of what a Chicana is. In writing, they refuse the objectification imposed by gender roles and racial and economic exploitation" and critique the "destructive aspects of her culture's definition of gender roles" (Yarbo-Bejarano 1987, 141).

Emma Pérez's decolonial imaginary, Chéla Sandoval's notion of differential consciousness, and Gloria Anzaldúa's *mestiza consciousness* intersect different forms of

hegemonic discourse in order to bring forth not only Chicana identities but also new possibilities of a “postcolonial, postnational consciousness” (Pérez 1999, 26). While critics argue that Chicana theory is not a real theory rooted in hard science, Chicana theory is vital because it is linked to experience and works to “decolonize ourselves and to connect fragmented identities” (Anzaldúa 1990, xvi).

An ethnographic aesthetics offers another way in which to read Texas-Mexico border folklore and dissect unsuspecting historical relationships like that between Jovita González, Américo Paredes, and J. Frank Dobie. Reading Jovita González and Américo Paredes through a different lens, not one concentrated on the dominant patriarchal voice of academia, one can understand González's work as both engaging with and independent of both Dobie and Paredes. This not only legitimates González work as her own narrative, but also considers the ways Paredes's work functions outside the resistant and violent historiography of Chicano history. Homi Bhabha's “rhetoric of repetition or doubling” allows for agency in their work (1994, 54). That is, Paredes and González's work no longer only functions to mimic Dobie's racist hegemonic discourse or merely resist it. The fact that these authors are the ones “talking” makes a difference, even if it is a “sameness-in-difference” (Bhabha 1994, 54). Thus, through an ethnographic aesthetic, they neither reproduce nor resist, but rather dismantle traditional orders of difference and authority.

Let me suggest that, when read through the paradigm of an ethnographic aesthetic, Paredes and González's work not only prefigure post-structural ethnography, but dismantles the scientific authority of early ethnography. Because ethnographic work already functions in-between dominant and marginal spaces, Jovita González, as a

Chicana ethnographer, and Américo Paredes, a Chicano academic and folklorist, by default already fit into this interstitial space of tradition and modernity and community and academia. As a theoretical tool, the decolonial imaginary reconceptualizes histories, and an ethnographic aesthetic, not only moves beyond binaries but also imagines alternatives outside essentialized differences of coloniality. Jovita González and Américo Paredes, when understood outside of the traditional orders of resistance and oppression, are not the oppressed or the oppressor, victimized or victimizer, colonized or colonizer. Rather, as this chapter will later demonstrate, they “negotiat[e] within the imaginary to a decolonizing otherness where all identities are at work in one way or another” (Pérez 1999, 6).

In addition to the field of ethnography, this dissertation contributes to the fields of Chicano/a studies and Chicana feminism because it proposes an alternative to resistance or oppositional modes of critique. That is, ethnographic aesthetics offers an aesthetic, or paradigm, in which to read the imagined futures and identities Texas-Mexican border texts construct, or, to use James Clifford’s phrase, I argue that the texts offer “pathways through modernity” that move beyond binaries of opposition and resistance and tradition and modernity that often reproduce colonial and essential differences. As opposed to oppositional texts whose narrative of difference relies on resisting established power relations, ethnographic aesthetics collapses geographical, cultural, and temporal boundaries to reveal how border texts invent future social, class, and identity possibilities, not ones stuck in the past, but ones that traverse modernity into the present and, indeed the future.

Through the paradigm of an ethnographic aesthetic, Texas-Mexico border cultural production simultaneously invents local futures and possibilities even as it dismantles the rhetorical authority that silences it. It is the issue of ethnographic authority that this chapter examines. As I've previously mapped, through professionalization and standards of ethnographic methods, ethnography established authority based on the premises of science. This scientific authority was so dangerous because this pseudo-science not only claimed authority in academic fields, but generated representations backed by science that were disseminated and reinforced through different forms of popular culture.

Ethnography, Popular Culture, and the Borderlands

Cultural production in the south Texas borderlands is complex—but ethnographic aesthetics offers new methods to explore and reimagine the ways that cultural production occurs and is continuously challenged and reinterpreted through ethnographic qualities. The rhetoric of scientific ethnography manifested into early nationalistic forms of popular culture, especially in early 20th century films by controversial American filmmaker D.W. Griffith. The rhetoric of professional ethnography advanced scientific credibility to different forms of popular culture. In this way, cultural production too could be backed by the authority of science.

Shifting colonial relations, scientific ethnography, and cultural production created a tripartite structure that worked in unison to define the Southwest in general, and the Texas-Mexico borderlands specifically, to the rest of the nation. Coinciding with the aftermath of the Mexican-American War and the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848, American ethnography was gaining momentum and by the close of the

nineteenth century, the ethnographer had not only reached the status as the best interpreter of native life, but was unquestionably the “purveyor of truth in text” (Clifford, 1988, 25). In the Texas-Mexico Borderlands, the Texas-Mexican population was reduced to essences as universal truths were constructed and biased portrayals were popularized and disseminated not only through “scientific” ethnographic writings but through popular film, literature and other forms of cultural texts.

Advancing a nation building agenda, turn of the century filmmaker, D. W. Griffith, reinforced cultural and racial stereotypes—stereotypes that engage and expand notions of cultural evolution and scientific racism. In the 1915 silent film, *Birth of a Nation*, both directed and co-produced by D. W. Griffith, Griffith recounts the Civil War and subsequent Reconstruction era. His film sets the framework of a threatened Victorian¹ womanhood by newly freed Black males. In one scene, a newly freed black slave named Gus (played by a white actor in blackface) wants to marry Betsy, a White woman. With traditional social and racial orders in limbo after the Civil War, Gus tells Betsy, “[y]ou see, I’m a captain now—and I want to marry.” Betsy runs from Gus while wailing her arms screaming for help, but to no avail. Demonstrating the threat of newly freed slaves, Gus not only lusts after White women, but looks inhuman. Glancing at the camera, the viewer gets a close-up of Gus’s eyes in order to reveal they look demonic, glowing from within with no pupils. When Gus finally has Betsy cornered, she is stuck between Gus and a cliff. The narrative pauses here for a moment as Betsy contemplates her next move. In a symbolic and literal act, she decides to jump to her death, reinforcing there is no fate worse to white womanhood. The film simultaneously reinforces the racialized animalistic hyper-sexual Black male, while glorifying the rise of the KKK.

Similarly, *Martyrs of the Alamo*, a 1915 film also produced by D.W. Griffith is set during the backdrop of the Mexican-American war. Mexican soldiers were depicted as hyper-sexual—lusting over white women, alcoholics, and violent. To put it simply, both films highlighted simple racial binaries of good vs. evil, a backwards, uncivilized, and primitive culture threatening a refined, progressive civilized one. The African American characters in *Birth of a Nation* and the Mexican characters in *Martyrs of the Alamo* contrast greatly to the safe, vanishing trope of the Native Americans of the Southwest discussed previously, indeed complicating the "brown" body politic and reinforcing Manichean ideologies to make sense of shifting social orders. As a form of popular culture, the films would have been seen by many and the images and representations sketched indelibly in the minds of its viewers. An NPR article titled "100 Years Later, What's the Legacy of 'Birth of a Nation'?" States that the film's "effect on race relations were devastating, and reverberations are still felt to this day" (1).

The “current crisis—or better, dispersion-- of ethnographic authority makes it possible to mark off a rough period, bounded by the years 1900 and 1960, during which a new conception of field research established itself as the norm... university trained specialists, emerged as a privileged, sanctioned source of data about exotic peoples” (Clifford, 1988, 24). And, films like *Birth of a Nation* and *Martyrs of the Alamo* were seen as historically accurate. But even as professional ethnography was gaining momentum and biased cultural representations were being disseminated to the nation at large via different forms of cultural production, it was becoming increasingly difficult for Western ethnographers to “keep people in their traditional places because distinct ways of life,” or tradition, “reasserted their difference in new ways.” This is especially apparent

when examining the relationship between J. Frank Dobie, Américo Paredes, and Jovita González.

Texas Trio: González, Dobie, and Paredes

Jovita González was born in 1904 to a landed upper-class family in Roma, a small town in South Texas on the Mexican border. She was the daughter of Jacobo González Rodríguez from Nuevo Leon, Mexico and Severina Guerra Barrera, a descendant of a Texas landowner. González was born into an upper-class Mexican-American family of educators and artisans and from “a long line of colonizers who had come with Escandón to El Nuevo Santander” (González 1997, ix). El Nuevo Santander, a viceroyalty of New Spain, corresponding to the Mexican state of Tamaulipas and present day South Texas, was a colony founded by Jose de Escandón in 1747 and, as González herself informs us, one her ancestors, “Don José Alejandro Guerra had been surveyor to the Crown” (González 1997, ix) . El Nuevo Santander, scholar Ramón Saldívar maintains, was also a “place where the cultural traditions of the old and the new worlds collided and created new social realities” as settlers brought with them “cultural traditions, religion, folklore, and language” (Saldívar 2006, 25).

It is interesting to note that folklore, religion, and language were cultural aspects the new settlers brought with them to the new world—all cultural aspects that the professionalization of ethnography sought to document. Understanding the shortcuts that professional ethnography implemented, it is hard to conceptualize the fact that professional ethnographers attempted to document and comprehend the nuances of complex cultural traditions in short time periods spent in the field, or the limited

understanding of local language, as the field of ethnography attempted to circumvent the time it took to understand the complexities of the way local knowledge created "new social realities" caused by the collisions of the old and new worlds. It is also significant that El Nuevo Santander is where Ramón Saldívar states the old world and the new collided, an interesting collision that helps one understand the complex positionality of González's life and work. In fact, it is this collision between the old world—tradition, and the new world—modernity, that this dissertation argues an ethnographic aesthetic enables an imagined Texas-Mexican future social and cultural identity.

This literal and figurative collision of the borderlands manifests in Jovita González's texts—not only in collision form, following Américo Paredes's "*With his Pistol in his Hand*," but also coalesced in order to navigate tradition and modernity and to dismantle ethnographic authority. An ethnographic aesthetic allows one to read the navigation between tradition and modernity as a mediation that imagines and constructs local futures that exist beyond binaries of resistance and domination that dismantles rhetorical authority and also critiques gender inequalities-- both Anglo and Texas-Mexican. Moreover, the trajectory of mediating tradition and modernity is also evidenced when considering Jovita González's own life history and provides evidence of the transnational and movement beyond the local and region, an idea that will be taken up further in the next chapter.

For Jovita González, education became the catalyst for the collision between the two worlds on both sides of the United States-Mexico border when Jacobo González moved his family to San Antonio so his children could be educated in English. Even

before formal education began for González, a different kind of education was emphasized at home, though perhaps equally informing her later work:

What about the girls? They were taught at home. We were fortunate enough to have with us at intervals, Mamá Tullitas, our paternal grandmother. She brought to us fantastic tales from medieval Spain. Before our eyes passed Christian damsels wooed by Morris Knights, Crusaders fighting for the Holy Sepulchre, Perhaps more important was the Mexican version of *Cinderella* which we loved (González, 1997, x).

This was the start of an ongoing education for Jovita González that would further link her to modern Texas institutions on the one hand, and the tradition of Mexican and Texas-Mexican folklore on the other. She later obtained a Bachelor's degree and a teaching certificate in Spanish from Our Lady of the Lake in 1927 and was eventually a graduate student at the University of Texas at Austin where she received a Master's in History in 1930. It is her life as a graduate student that is of particular importance in Jovita González's literary career as it not only highlights the origins of the criticism of her work but also implicates what was and is at stake when geographical and cultural borders collide and, more importantly, shores up how those intersections have previously been understood.

Interested in Mexican American folklore and with the guidance of her mentor, J. Frank Dobie, who was a professor of History at the University of Texas, González participated in the Texas Folklore Society, even serving as president for two terms from 1930-1932, and wrote her master's theses, numerous articles, published in journals and magazines, and wrote two novels—a life trajectory that highlights both cultural and spatial fluidity, and the cultural exchanges in the Texas-Mexico borderlands. Of Dobie, González writes in her memoir: “[t]he summer of 1925 brought me a far reaching experience. I met J. Frank Dobie. Heretofore the legends and stories of the border were

interesting, so I thought, just to me. However, he made see their importance and encouraged me to write them, which I did, publishing some in the *Folk-Lore Publications* and *Southwest Review*" (González 1997, xii).

Dobie's position in the region, like González's, is complex and goes back generations. Although Dobie left south Texas to complete his college education at both Georgetown and Columbia, Dobie would eventually find his way back to Texas: "of southern heritage, Dobie's ancestors—pioneers, he called them—came to settle in Texas in the great colonization of 1830s, his parents eventually became ranchers in south Texas in the 1870s... . Indeed, three of Dobie's uncles served with the Texas Rangers" (Limón 1994, 44). It is González's relationship with Dobie that often causes critics to wrestle with the politics of González's work. J. Frank Dobie was a major figure in Mexican Folklore, was seen by his academic peers as the authority on Texas-Mexican people and their folklore, and clearly held race and class biases. Thus, according to José Limón and Leticia Garza-Falcón, one cannot simply dismiss J. Frank Dobie as an innocent advisor. These critics assert that Jovita González's work echoed prejudices and a colonial tone "consistent with that of her *padrino*, Dobie" and, that like her mentor, she not only "articulated class/race paternalism" but also "reinforced Anglo-American capitalist dominance in Texas as a whole" (Limón 1994, 69).²

An American Soldier, Red-Cross volunteer, journalist, and academic intellectual, Américo Paredes was also writing around the same time as González and Dobie. If González reproduced race and class paternalism, Américo Paredes signifies the contrary. Paredes's 1958 work on the study of Gregorio Cortez, "*With his Pistol in his Hand*": *A Border Ballad and its Hero*, is a seminal piece in Chicano Studies because it

demonstrates opposition to Anglo dominance and explicitly resists Texas Rangers, Texas Rangers with whom Dobie's uncles would have served. Paredes's text "distinguished between a hero of the people such as Gregorio Cortes and the creation of a heroic figure by external forces to serve hegemonic purposes" (Stoeltje 2012, 45). Further, it is argued that Paredes's writings offer a "counterstatement, documenting and valorizing a culture and tradition of resistance, of standing up for one's rights in defiance of the forces of domination" (Bauman 1993, xiv-xv). When understood in binary paradigms of resistant and oppression, Paredes and González engage dominant rhetoric by either resisting or reproducing class, race, and economic relations. Nonetheless, a tradition of resistance, however resistant, still reproduces binary powers.

Class and race politics along the border are and were complicated and resist simple binary categories of analysis. In other words, when understood within the traditional constructs of difference, there are only two options to authority and dominance—either resist, the traditionally accepted way of responding to unequal power relations, or reproduce them, as the critics argue Jovita González's work does. Leticia Garza-Falcón tries to make sense of this dichotomy in *Gente Decente: A Borderlands Response to the Rhetoric of Dominance* (1998) but ultimately creates an argument that reiterates the very binary it is attempting to explain. Garza-Falcón maintains that González's response to dominance "remains both 'among' and remained from 'her' people...the Texas Mexicans are her people in the sense that she defends their history against common place stereotypes; and then too they are not. She writes about them from a distanced and sometimes paternalistic view-point" (Garza-Falcón 1988, 77). This logic too functions within the constructs of essentialized difference. That is, Gonzalez's work

cannot escape the colonial shadows within in which it is produced, highlighting Emma Perez's arguments that even resistant Chicano historiographies are embedded in coloniality. The constructs of essentialized difference creates binary structures of resistance and either complacency or complicity. When understood in this way, opposition that is explicitly demonstrated, "*con su pistola en la mano*," for example, is easily recognizable and an alliance with the people that fight for injustice is imaginable. However, complacency and complicity lie on the other end of the spectrum, ultimately reproducing the very conditions that produced unequal power relations.

Jovita González's complex border positionality troubles scholars who have traditionally understood border cultural production within constructs of binaries of difference. González's positionality situates her, a Texas-Mexican female, operating within the Texas-Folklore Society, comprised of mostly Anglo men, the University of Texas at Austin, and as a student of J. Frank Dobie. However, it is this exact positionality that Limón highlights for his argument, claiming that González's work represents that of a repressed individual as she had to "contend with social domination in her capacity as an intellectual and in the specific sites and circuits where dominating power is articulated" (Limón 1993, 453-54). The space between resistance and oppression that seems to be characteristic of González's work is also addressed by Gloria Velasquez Treviño who attributes González's condescending narrative tone, as well as the absences of female characters, to what she calls "cultural ambivalence" (1985, 10).

Reproducing colonial tones, cultural ambivalence, and reinforcing Anglo paternalism is a critique also extended to fellow *Tejana* writer, Adelina de Zavala. Author of "*History and Legends from the Alamo and Other Missions in and around San Antonio*,

de Zavala's work was recovered by the Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage project in 1996 but was originally published by de Zavala herself in 1917 and like González, participated in the Texas Folklore Society, serving as vice-president from 1926-27 and was known for her vast knowledge of Texas folklore. Ironically, but not surprisingly, de Zavala too underwent the same scrutiny as Jovita González. Adina de Zavala's life and work, Richard Flores argues in his "Introduction" to *Histories and Legends*, is "further complicated by the realization that several of those with whom she corresponded maintained some very rigid and elitist, if not racist attitudes towards Mexicans," and who "according to Mexican Folklore of the day, [were] responsible for the social and economic demise of Mexicans in Texas" (Flores 1996, Xviii). Could we assume then that de Zavala also conversed with González's "Tio Pancho," a nick-name González used for J. Frank Dobie? Flores tells us that de Zavala corresponded with Texas historian and friend Carlos Castañeda and Eugene Barker. González's master's thesis, "Social Life in Webb, Starr, and Zapata Counties" is a social history of South Texas encouraged by both J. Frank Dobie and Carlos Castañeda and written under Dr. Eugene Barker. Dr. Barker finally approved González's work after stating it was "an interesting but somewhat odd piece of work" (qtd. in Garza-Falcón 1998, 75).

These two contemporary Texas-Mexican female authors, de Zavala and González, navigated and participated in the cultural and political world of the Texas-Mexico Borderlands. When border positionality is understood within an ethnographic aesthetic, a theoretical construct that merges a Post-National American Studies and poststructural ethnography, not only are cultural borders no longer clearly defined, but one can account for the complex ways cultural production of the region, through ethnographic qualities,

invents, constructs, and imagines identities that are emergent, constructed, and re-imagined in contact zones of shifting national contexts. It is here that “different cultures are transformed by their contact and interaction with each other” (John Carlos Rowe 2000, 28). The similarities of the critique of González and de Zavala’s relationship with Anglo men and Anglo-American capitalist institutions demonstrates the way essentialized difference shadows the region—a shadow that stifles the way the transformation in the contact zones are understood.

If de Zavala and González’s work reproduces a colonial tone of the region, then Américo Paredes is not only understood as resisting inequalities, but as transcending the region by way of Greater Mexico. Ramón Saldívar States: “[e]xtending the idea of greater Mexico as an imaginary space consisting of transnational communities of shared fates, Paredes allows us to make sense of the new geographies of citizenship in an era of emerging globalization with its intensified flow of ideas, goods, images, services...” (2006, 59). By situating Greater Mexico in the transnational imaginary, Saldívar positions Paredes in a more complex positionality. A positionality that has traditionally excluded female Tejana writers. Similar to the decolonial imaginary put forth by Emma Pérez as an interstitial space between the colonial and postcolonial where alternative histories are written and negotiated, Saldívar’s transnational imaginary is not only ideological but also functions as a chronotope, a “spatial and temporal indicator of a real contact zone that is historical and geographical, cultural and political, theoretical and discursive” (53).

The larger paradigms put forth by Emma Pérez, Ramon Saldívar, and Walter D. Mignolo reimagine in new ways a gendered subaltern history that has previously been excluded. Rather than merely a repository of culture, border cultural production produces

border knowledge in the contact zones, or, in “sites where identities and cultures intersect” (Rosaldo 1989, 149). An ethnographic aesthetic too, allows for new knowledge and understanding of border cultural texts. Walter Mignolo proposes border thinking which is “modeled on the Chicano/a experience” that demands recognition of the colonial difference from subaltern perspectives, perspectives that do not concern itself solely with “extracting new riches but the condition of possibility for constructing new loci of enunciation as well as for reflecting that academic ‘knowledge and understanding’ should be complemented with ‘learning from’ those who are living in and thinking from colonial and postcolonial legacies” (2005, 5). This project reexamines Jovita González’s work in a way that moves or looks beyond charging her with producing internal cultural colonialism and instead attempts to understand new constructions of information from those “living in and thinking from colonial and postcolonial legacies.”

Emma Pérez’s decolonial imaginary and Mignolo’s border knowledge can be viewed in dialogue—they both challenge traditional colonial history by offering a theoretical rupture, or time lapse, between the colonial and postcolonial. Within colonial progressive history, Pérez says Chicanos do not exist prior to 1848 because they cannot look beyond sanctioned historiography and thus our existence is dependent on a colonial moment. Pérez posits that Chicanas and third world feminism operate not in the colonial, but in the decolonial since they have been “hidden” from traditional male centered historiographies. Through the decolonial Chicanas are able to escape this coloniality, making them (Chicanas) producers of what Mignolo terms “local knowledge” that accounts for the epistemology of coloniality because their experience enables them to

recognize conditions of coloniality by both the dominant society and by Chicano culture itself.

An ethnographic aesthetic teases out the complex ways border identity is emergent, invented, and constructed not by not relying on sanctioned Chicano historiographies of resistance and oppression to the dominance of power, but rather examining alternative ways of understanding border texts outside classic binaries of colonial progressive history that resists essentializing difference. An ethnographic aesthetic understands Mexican-American history as not dependent on a colonial moment and views time and space as not successive, but simultaneous. Texas-Mexico border cultural production accounts for coloniality not in the established ways of resisting, but by dismantling authority and imagining new futures in a shifting colonial space that navigate and mediate tradition and modernity.

The Predicaments Language

While Jovita González has not been understood in the field of ethnography other than to say that she followed Dobie's ethnographic style, I propose an ethnographic aesthetics as a model to reevaluate her work. González's work engages with and responds to the complexities of the United States-Mexico border. While classic anthropology can be charged with the "fitting of data to preconceived notions of stereotypes" (Paredes 1977, 2), González's work does not function to simply reproduce or mimic ethnic and racial stereotypes nor, however, does it resist them; instead, her work dismantles the rhetorical authority that produced these representations in the first place. Her work first recognizes and accounts for the conditions of coloniality and then dismantles them, producing new

forms of critique—critiques that move beyond resisting and opposing and instead informs, constructs, and invents new possibilities.

If language serves as a dominant ideology that “accomplishes the tasks of confirming particular viewpoints by repeating similar constructions” (Garza-Falcón 1998, 37), then language functions in Jovita González’s work to counter and dismantle hegemonic depictions of border culture that have been passed down through the use of dominant rhetoric. In dealing with the complexities of language, especially along the United States-Mexico border, Américo Paredes explains that language is precarious and cautions that one cannot assume words for facts when dealing with minority groups.

Paredes states:

Closer to the heart of the problem is the matter of language, a truly thorough knowledge of the language, both standard and dialectical. A common criticism advanced by Chicanos is that anthropologists do not really know the Chicano’s language.... Unwarranted generalizations may be reached on the basis of misinterpretation of words, especially if a dialect expression is taken in its standard dictionary meaning or a metaphorical expression is taken literally (1977, 3).

The generalization, misinterpretation of words, and misreading of metaphorical expressions, can be seen as a direct result of the professionalization and scientific model of ethnography. Under this mode the new style ethnographer was in the field rarely more than two years—just long enough, they claimed, for the ethnographer to “efficiently” use native language.

The misuse and misunderstanding of language is the catalyst for the events leading up to the shoot-out and subsequent chase of Gregorio Cortez in Américo Paredes’s *“With his Pistol in his Hand”*: *A Border Ballad and its Hero*. This work functions to openly resist Anglo-American domination and authority in the borderlands

by way of a hyper-masculine Texas-Mexican figure. However, although this legend embodies the quintessential border hero resisting authority, it is confusion over language that causes the confrontation between Gregorio and the Sheriff to begin. Paredes fleshes out this conflict at length:

A day or so before June 12, Morris had received word from Sheriff Avant of Atascosa County, asking him to look for a horse thief from Atascosa who had been trailed to Karnes. Sheriff Avant did not know the man's name. "That he was a medium-sized Mexican with a big red broad-brimmed Mexican hat" was all the information that was passed on to Morris. At this point the search for the thief takes on a very familiar aspect. The officers of the law go out looking for a Mexican, any Mexican...

As interpreter, Morris has one of his deputies, Boone Choate, who was supposed to be an expert on the Mexican language. ..Through Boone Choate, Morris questioned several Kenedy Mexicans and finally got to a man named Andrés Villarreal, who had recently acquired a mare, not by purchase, but by trade. Villarreal told the officers that he had traded a horse for the mare to a man named Gregorio Cortez...

...Morris and Choate went up to the house to talk to the Cortezes about the mare...According to Boone Choate, he (Choate) asked for Gregorio Cortez...Choate then asked Gregorio if he has traded a horse to Villarreal, and Gregorio said, "No." He was telling the truth; he had traded a mare. Why Choate, a ranchman presumably, confused a horse with a mare is not clear. A plausible guess, in view of other evidence about Choate's shaky command of Spanish, is that he did not know or could not think of the word for mare (*yegua*) and used caballo (*horse*) instead.

When Gregorio said "No," Sheriff Morris got off his surrey, climbed through the fence, and approached the Cortezes, telling Choate to inform Romaldo and Gregorio that he was going to arrest them...

In the next few seconds Morris shot Romaldo Cortez, shot at Gregorio and missed, and was in turn shot by Gregorio (58-62).

What follows is the subsequence escape by Cortez of the Texas Rangers, finally turning himself in of his own accord. This legend's ending has many variants, even if "all eye witness accounts agreed as to this sequence of events" (62). In *The Mustangs*, for example J. Frank Dobie states Cortez "became a horse thief and was killed out near El Paso" (qtd. in Paredes 1958, 113). Paredes's version in effect recovers the legend from

Anglo writers of the region and reaffirms the celebration of resistance to Anglo-American institutions in the Texas-Mexico borderland.

How would the tale of Gregorio Cortez have turned out differently if, for example, the translator had understood both the dictionary and metaphorical meaning the words *caballo* and *yegua*? Nearly 20 years after the publication of *With His Pistol in His Hand*, Paredes once again addresses the issue on the nuances of language in his 1977 article on literal and cultural meanings of words. If translation was able clear up Cortez in the implication of stealing the horse, that is, if the translator understood both the literal but also cultural implications of words, would the role of the translator be negated, frowned upon, be charged with reproducing a colonial tone? These questions both shore up the unfair critique of González that view her as both assimilationist and repressive, but also provide the framework for an ethnographic aesthetics that frames her work as functioning outside the binaries of difference that work to not reproduce or even resist authority in the borderland, but in fact dismantle it through the use of language.

By the 1920's and 1930's Jovita González's work was already accounting for the language barrier between her Texas-Mexican community and that of the dominant society. Before her graduate studies, meeting J. Frank Dobie, and even before her father moved the family to San Antonio to be educated in English, González recalls her early exposure to the predicaments of language: “[p]revious to our moving to San Antonio, I had attended, for one year, a one-teacher school in English... . Even though the English I learned was elemental, it helped me a great deal” (1997, xi). While learning English at school helped González “a great deal,” she also appreciated the cultural aspects of language, the qualities that cannot be learned in an unspecified length of time in a

prescribed environment. In addition to the elemental knowledge of English learned at school, González states that “the fact that all our neighbors were English-Speaking” was “another thing that helped” (xii). Although González learned English and was fluent in Spanish, she was most importantly fluent in the border culture of South Texas and the Anglo academic culture of the University of Texas at Austin and the Texas Folklore Society. Because González occupied a position betwixt and between all of these spaces, both literally and symbolically, her work foreshadows the language conflict that was not only occurring as she was participating in this realm, but also perhaps in ethnographic work that would follow. We know that González, like her mentor, was an active participant in the Texas Folklore society. Could she have been in the audience, for example, when Dobie was asked to explain the etymology of the word *mojado*? In discussing Dobie, “a loveable old fraud... as far as Mexican materials were concerned,” Paredes recounts:

My favorite story to hate about Dobie was the one in which apparently he had been asked to explain the etymology of the word *mojado*, wetback, meaning a Mexican who has crossed the US border illegally. Now, how do you translate *mojado*? You wouldn't call someone a “wet,” or a “wet one,” because those words meant something else in those days. Those were the days of prohibition, and to call someone wet or dry meant something entirely different, having to do with the consumption of alcohol, not with illegal border crossing. So that's why *mojado* came to be translated as *wetback*. But Dobie's version was more colorful: ...this is what he was quoted as saying in feature articles: “What happened was that Mexicans would swim across the river, and as soon as they swam across, they would lie down in the sun. And when they awoke, all their clothes were dry except their backs. So anytime you saw a Mexican with a *wet back*, you knew he had just swum across the river” (qtd. in Saldívar 2006, 118-119).

Dobie's language in this passage sets in motion two stereotypes that continue today, especially in today's political climate. First, it reaffirms the idea of the “stupid Mexican,” who is according, at least to Dobie, too stupid to take off his clothes before jumping in

the river or too dumb to put them on a raft to float over, which, according to Paredes, “is what they did, of course.” Second, it reaffirms the “lazy Mexican” stereotype who takes naps at the job sight and is so lazy he falls asleep right under the sun, and is the first thing he does when he reaches the U.S. (qtd. in Saldívar 2006, 119). Further, Dobie’s response highlights the misunderstanding that occurs when cultural and dialectical expressions are translated and understood literally.

The language predicament in Jovita González’s stories not only negotiates and mediates a position between her Texas-Mexican community and that of the dominant society, but dismantles the ethnographic authority with regards to language. In this way language and culture are not transparent entities figured out through field work, but rather metaphorical and cultural meanings of words are fleshed out in her tales. González’s tale titled “Tío Patricio” dismantles an ethnographic authority that presumes mastery of native local language. González closes this tale by recalling the stories of birds Tío Patricio would tell:

More vivid in detail and coloring are Tío Patricio’s stories of birds. Every one in Texas is familiar with the road-runner, the Nemesis of rattlesnakes. This bird is commonly known as the *paisano*. The term is wrongly applied, for in its literal sense it means countryman, and is a corruption of the *faisán*, pheasant, to which family the road-runner is wrongly supposed to belong. It really belongs to the cuckoo family. Whether *paisano*, *faisán* or road-runner, the legend connected with it is the same (2000, 27).

In this passage González delivers a rhetorical hook and counter, so to speak. First, she lures in the Texas folklore society audience, who may live in Texas and know the tale, and who may even be Spanish speakers, by including them in the presumed statement that “everyone” in Texas is familiar with the tale of the road-runner. González then

counters by stating not only that they all wrongly apply the word, but also that their use of the word, is in fact, a “corruption.” In this simple statement González distinguishes the differences between *paisano* and *faisán*, explicating their meaning to those in the audience, who, like Paredes claims, often misinterpret words and while might know the literal meaning of the word do not really understand the cultural implications of them. González could also hypothetically be questioning the authority of the university trained ethnographers even as she corrects them. González dismantles ethnographic authority by first recognizing the authority exists, “[e]very one in Texas is familiar...” and then counters by correcting the meanings of the word in question.

While the cultural implications of any wrong connotations of the word are not addressed in this tale, one needs only look at the tale of Gregorio Cortez to see how misunderstandings of words—something as seemingly simple as *caballo* vs. *yegua* or *paisano* vs. *faisán* could lead to violence and death in the tumultuous Texas-Mexico borderlands. Correcting any wrong connotations of the *paisano* to the Texas Folklore Society, González dismantles authority by acting as a linguistic and cultural translator, an anthropological Malinche, so to speak, straddling a third space between the Texas-Mexican people and the mostly Anglo audience of the Texas Folklore Society.

Like Limón maintains, I agree that González shaped the tales according to her audience—an audience of mostly Anglo men from the Texas-Folklore Society. However, this is where my argument departs. I argue that González shaped the tales not because she is repressed by the “social domination in her capacity as an intellectual and in the specific sites and circuits where dominating power is articulated,” but in spite of it (Limon 1993, 453-54). If time and space are not viewed in the traditional colonial way of being

successive, González's work anticipates the language misunderstanding over *caballo* and *yegua* in Paredes's "*With his Pistol in his Hand*" and the circumstances that prompt Dobie to trace the origins of the word *wetback*.

While an ethnographic aesthetic suggests González's work anticipates the issues regarding language, it also collapses time and space; in other words, if time is not viewed as successive, but simultaneous, let me suggest that González could also be functioning in Karen Mary Davalos's theory of post-modern Chicano Studies. As a Chicana scholar offering an alternative ethnographic voice, González's tales work to not only address and redress an Anglo audience, but also function for a future Chicano/a audience who are no longer presumed to Spanish speakers who, though not fluent in language, are fluid in their culture. This argument is essential for today's audience. González's audience is vastly different, especially when one considers how her audience has changed now that her work is part of the *Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage* and that just under 70 years have passed between her folklore being published by the Folk-Lore Society and the subsequent publishing by the Recovery Project.³ Further, imagining varied audiences also dismantles a monological authority as her work no longer addresses a single general reader, "the multiplication of possible readings reflects the fact that ethnographic consciousness can no longer be seen as the monopoly of certain Western cultures and social classes" (Clifford, 1988, 52). González's work then does not demonstrate repression or ambivalence, but a strategic dismantling that counters universal truths and offers many alternatives. In this way privileged authorities are not allowed to speak without contradictions.

Dismantling Monological Authority

Strategic dismantling extends beyond the literal and cultural linguistic aspect of words. Besides dismantling the aspect of scientific ethnography that established the basis for mastering native language in relatively short periods of time, González's work also dismantles the monological authority associated with early ethnographies in the region. The following quote, although referring to botany and ecology, captures the essence of scientific ethnography that attempted to find the quickest and most effective way to circumvent the time it took to acquire knowledge of other cultures and establish authority. Sharon Kingsland states: "[t]he criteria of profitability in science may vary, but generally scientific 'profit' may be gauged by how quickly an approach generated data and gives one greater control over the object of inquiry, in this case the living organism" (483). There is no question that the scientific project of ethnography mapped earlier in this chapter was a way to "quickly" generate data and give the ethnographer "greater control over the object of inquiry." While ethnographers, as authors of texts, hold presumed authority over their "objects of inquiry," an ethnographic aesthetic dismantles the notion that author equals authority.

Collapsing the field of ethnography with different cultural works, like folklore and literature, for example, an ethnographic aesthetic also draws from literary and cultural theory to help make its argument. In *Flawed Texts and Verbal Icons: Literary Authority in American Fiction* (1984), Hershel Parker states "authority in literature comes from the author, but that authority can be blurred or wholly lost and, paradoxically, it can persist even when the author thinks it has been removed" (16). The polyvocality of

González's work disrupts the notion of author as authority, that is, one can no longer assume a "text is authoritative merely because the author authorized its publication" (Parker, 1).

González's work counters the monophonic voice and monological authority that characterizes classic ethnography by collapsing the narrative "I" and authorial "I" and disrupting the "data" generated by ethnographers. Here I draw from González's "Tío Patricio" once more to make my argument. Not only about tales of birds, this piece predominantly surrounds the events leading up to Tío Patricio getting tricked into revealing his deepest insecurities. Tío Patricio, a *pastor*, is a character that defies being easily categorized. In describing Tío Patricio, the narrator states:

He was a giant dressed in a discarded soldier's uniform; however, his shoes and hat did not match his military array, for the former wore rawhide *guaraches* and the latter a high, pointed, broad-brimmed Mexican felt *sombrero*. His black patriarchal beard contrasted with his cheeks, rosy and firm like a girl's. In fact, his complexion was the envy of all the marriageable girls of the country side. Not seldom a *señorita* braver than the rest ventured to ask, "What do you wash your face with, Tío?" (22).

A shepherd with his rosy cheeks, patriarchal beard, soldier's uniform, and *guaraches*, Tío Patricio is a contradiction of sorts. His allure lies in the fact that he doesn't function as a stereotype or model that can be used over and over; he is not a character that would make a profit by "generating a lot of data;" rather, Tío Patricio's "profitability" is not that he generates a "type" but in the fact that he counters and defies a stereotype.

Tío Patricio is not the hyper-sexual Mexican threatening White womanhood, like the Mexican soldiers in *Martyrs of the Alamo*, nor is he the quintessential resistant Mexican hero like Gregorio Cortez. From the start Tío Patricio resists getting pigeonholed, a point emphasized by the fact that his description literally opens the story. An anti-hero of sorts, Tío Patricio resists typecasts of essentialized difference from both

the Anglo-American and Chicano community. One character sums it up best, calling him “a queer steer” (23).

Tío Patricio’s peculiarity is invoked and then immediately revoked as the shifting narrator abruptly transitions, “[b]ut that is another story,” and resumes with the tale about how Tío Patricio was duped by a *vaquero* named Coyote. The narrative shift to this plot follows, but not before making another statement shoring up Tío Patricio’s oddity:

You remember there was something peculiar about Tío Patricio. He always wore a hat in summer, in winter, in fair weather and foul. Even at night he slept with it over his face so as to cover his head, he was rather sensitive about it too; no sooner would one the ranch hands mention the word *head* or *hair* than the *pastor* silently disappeared. Of course every one wondered at this eccentricity but no one dared ask him to explain it. The most uncouth *vaquero* knows that no gentleman ever asks another anything concerning his personal appearance (23).

Two things are happening in this passage. First, the narrator implicates an ambiguous audience. “You remember the story...” can invoke either an audience at one of the Texas Folklore Society meetings or other Tejanos. Because this passage follows with the assertion that “you” remember Tío Patricio in summer, winter, etc., the “you” can also invoke the community González collected her folklore from and ultimately informed her field notes. Either way, the statement dismantles rhetorical authority by invoking her “informants” as collaborators and shifting the “I” of the narrator. By emphasizing the reader, or audience, González shifts her authority as author to the imagined activity of the reader, “the ability of a text to make sense in a coherent way depends less on the willed intentions of an originating author than on the creative activity of a reader” (Clifford 1988, 52). González positions folklore as a mediating space to address both potential audiences. If there is a tendency for the “ethnographer’s counterpart to appear as a representative of his or her culture—a type, ...through which general processes are

revealed” (Clifford, 1988, 44) then the tale of Tío Patricio obscures as much as it reveals. Tío Patricio reveals a counter-character, complicating and dismantling the tendency to “type” cultures into easy categories or the assumption that the author is narrator.

Coyote, Tío Patricio’s nemesis, however, is also not a representative of his culture at large. Coyote is introduced as a new *vaquero* hired to help the master ship cattle. If Tío Patricio is introduced as a bit odd and queer, then Coyote is introduced as devious, “there was one in the outfit whom no one liked; he had snake-like beady black eyes that were as sly and as crafty as a coyote’s. Probably this started the men calling him “Coyote” (23). Coyote is established as a character to watch out for, comparing him to both a snake and a coyote—as both sly and crafty. It is no surprise then that Coyote begins to question Tío Patricio’s queerness:

"What’s wrong with him?" Asked Coyote. "He is a queer steer, isn't he? And, tell me, why does he always wear that steeple-like structure on his head? Do you dare me to ask him why he never takes it off? I bet my *reata* against yours I'll do it. Who'll take my bid?"(23).

On the surface Coyote fits a Texas-Mexican stereotype. He is a betting man, macho, and dares others to test his masculinity, “I bet my *reata* against yours I’ll do it. Who’ll take my bid?” He is also a border type that cannot be trusted, even by his own peers: “[a] mean look came into Coyote’s eyes and I knew he meant to carry out his threat at first opportunity” (23). However, this is just the surface of Coyote's complexities.

Since the narrator’s “I” is unknown, the statement “I knew he meant to carry out his threat” invokes Coyote’s peers while obscuring González’s authorial “I.” In this way Coyote fits the narrative of a border bandit, both for Anglo Texans and for Texas-Mexicans. He is hyper-masculine, can’t be trusted, liked by no one, but then too, he does

not fit this mold. Unlike the masculine border hero who resists the Texas Rangers and all who come his way by violence and resisting, Coyote is also a counter border type that resists essentializing difference. He outwits and out fools not by using violence, but by trickery. Even this “uncouth vaquero” is smart and witty and devises a plan to get Tío Patricio to take off his hat by tricking everyone, not only Tío Patricio:

Two weeks before Christmas Coyote suggested we have *Las Posadas*. As every one knows, these are the most solemn and beautiful services of the Christmas season. It is a service which we who are still Christians and speaks God’s own language hold every year in honor of the birth of the Christ Child.

“Since there is no church and no regular choir,” continued Coyote, “I am going to ask the master to lend us a statue of the Virgin and we can have the services outside. You men will be arranged in groups so you can sing better; and other group representing Joseph and Mary go about asking for shelter and are refused everywhere. The person or group nearest the Virgin will take them in and with that the celebration will close” (24).

Through religion, Coyote prepares his plan to fool everyone, and it works for a moment, ““Can any one as repulsive looking as this man be capable of such beautiful ideas? Thought I” (24). No sooner than the plans for the posada get underway than is Coyote’s plan revealed:

Christmas Eve finally came. About eight we went to the portal, the place of the celebration... . And thus we went the rounds of all groups. All this time I had been wondering who was to give lodging to the Pilgrims. Then my eyes fell on Tío Patricio. The man sat rigid, pale as the mood outside. On his face was the look of a haunted beast. And then it all dawned on me. He was to sing the verse of acceptance. And he had to kneel bareheaded before the Virgin’s altar... . The time came for Tío Patricio to sing he got up and, walking with the steps of a somnambulist, approached the altar.

He knelt and took off his hat.

He was bald

A dry hoarse sob shook his mighty frame.

We left him there with his humiliation alone with the mother of God (26).

A counter hero of sorts, Coyote turn his tricks on his fellow ranch hand—even the uncouth vaquero is smart, witty, does not need a gun, a *reata*, or a bet for that matter. The

narrator comes to realize the he or she too was tricked: “I knew Coyote was a despicable skunk, but I had not dreamed he would dare do a thing like this...I glanced towards Coyote; the grin of triumph on his ugly face made his namesake look handsome” (26). Tío Patricio and Coyote both reveal counter Texas-Mexican characters as people who do not fit easily into preconceived notions.

Jovita González, like her work, is “confronted with a dilemma, caught between two perspectives which appeal strongly to different aspects of her experience” (Yarbo-Bejarano 1987, 140). González’s work navigates these different aspects by operating within new ethnographic methods, ones that brings voice to a community that has previously been silenced by ethnographers. At the same time counter characters are revealed in her stories, her texts also underscore the ethnographic components that make up her work. In this way González does not collapse one rhetorical authority—the classic ethnographer’s authorial authority, just to insert another authority—the Texas-Mexican authorial tone, a rhetorical move that would only reproduces binaries of unequal power relations. Rather, González structures voices outside of reproducing hierarchical binaries. González’s work, unlike scientific ethnography, does not lead to a deterministic truth but offers many and partial truths, truths that are neither neutral, scientific, nor authoritative, but are partial, selective, and contestable.

Notes to Chapter 1

¹ For an expanded concept of Victorian womanhood see *Racial Thinking in the United States: uncompleted Independence* eds, Paul Spikard and G. Reginald Daniel. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004.

² The politics surrounding González's work is often compared to Zora Neale Hurston's folklore and her relationship with Franz Boas who also guided her folklore collections. Like González who collected folklore from her people in South Texas, Hurston collected folklore in the 1930s from her own community in Florida.

³ "Tio Patricio" for example was originally published in "Tales and Songs of the Texas-Mexicans," *Man, Bird, and Beast*, ed. J. Frank Dobie (Austin: Folk-Lore Society, 1932) and by the recovery project in *The Woman who Los her Soul and other Stories* in 2000 by Arte Público Press

Chapter 2

Navigating Tradition and Modernity: (Re)Imagining Class, Gender and Heroes in the Borderlands

In his introduction to *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*, James Clifford uses a poem by William Carlos Williams from *Spring and All* to demonstrate the predicament of culture. The predicament of culture, Clifford informs us, is a state of off-centeredness. It is the state of being off-center among traditions while confronting the condition of rootlessness and mobility. The predicament of culture is ethnographic modernity in that it finds itself among traditions and too it is not, as it grapples with the flux of a shifting modernity. The stake in this predicament is authenticity, a presumed authenticity that is lost to modernity. Clifford's book grapples with this notion, claiming his book is not about a world populated with "endangered authenticities" but rather a project that offers paths through modernity (1988, 5). The predicament of culture might be reconciled by the ethnographic modernist who, unlike the scientific ethnographer, does not look for selected data to fit in for the whole but searches for the universal in the local, a "veering between local attachments and general possibilities" (1988, 4).

By the 1920's "a truly global space of cultural connections and dissolutions has become imaginable: local authenticities meet and merge in transient urban and suburban settings—settings that will include the immigrant neighborhoods of New Jersey, multicultural sprawls like Buenos Aires, the townships of Johannesburg" (Clifford 1988, 4). This time of cultural connections and dissolutions are also meeting and merging in

south Texas as Jovita González and Américo Paredes were writing between academic and literary traditions and between "local attachments and general possibilities." The spaces of cultural connections and dissolutions found my arguments on Ethnographic Aesthetics. This Chapter argues that the movement between and betwixt domestic and public space, and gender and cultural borders is a component of Ethnographic Aesthetics that can be understood as a reimagining of the fixity of tradition and the movement of modernity. Ethnography along the Texas-Mexico border allows the contest, erasure and invention of who gets to claim movement across imagined and real places. Ethnographic Aesthetics establishes movement as a central strategy of ethnographic knowledge.

By navigating tradition and modernity through movement of real and imagined spaces, an Ethnographic Aesthetic navigates past, present, and future possibilities that exist beyond the local and the region and beyond constraints of tradition and modernity. Resisting and dismantling the scientific ethnographic tone that spoke for and about Texas-Mexicans leaves a clearing to imagine future possibilities and reimagine social, class, and gender orders in the Texas-Mexico borderlands. The works by Jovita González and Américo Paredes both engage with, and depart from, the scientific ethnographic rhetoric that established a dominant voice in the Texas-Mexico borderlands. Further, border texts (re)invent what it means to be a Mexican-American or Texas-Mexican beyond binaries of essentialized difference.

The chapter is divided into four sections, beginning with an exploration of how González challenges the paradigms of expectations, yet simultaneously illustrates the limits and challenges in her own biographic experiences. Section two explores the way social, class, and gender politics are reimagined by way of religion and tradition and

investigates the way gender orders are questioned and reinscribed through collapsing past, present, and future. Section three is a reanalysis of border heroes, heroes that counter the classic violent and resistant border hero in exchange for reimagining a hero that is a philosopher, poet, and intellectual. The last section turns to Américo Paredes's "The Hammon and the Beans," examining how mapping spatial, temporal, and architectural categories complicates rigid social orders.

Jovita González as Ethnographic Modernist

This section proposes Jovita González as the ethnographic modernist Clifford writes about. Her biographical experiences navigate tradition and modernity, working in an out of the limitations and restrictions of tradition while contemplating the general possibilities of shifting colonial orders. As a Mexican-American female, ethnographer, and an academic, González moved beyond binaries and boundaries. As an ethnographic modernist, she navigates the predicament of culture—ethnographic modernity. That is, she remembers and remains tied to traditions while operating within the modern fields of folklore, ethnography, and academia. González's early life is highlighted by literal and symbolic movement between Spain, Mexico, and the United States—she was born in Texas, her father was a native of Nuevo León, Mexico, while her maternal ancestors were from a line of colonizers from Spain. And, perhaps even more significant, González teetered between the traditional demands of gender in both her public and private life.

Circumscribed by traditional gender and cultural pressures, González navigated the public academic world of South Texas. Education however, also proved to be the catalyst by which she challenged gender boundaries in her private life. Education was important, González informs us, not only for the boys, but was also stressed for the girls

in her family. Traditional gender norms are being reimagined through education in González's memoir even as she underscores the planning and effort that went into the boys' schooling:

Homes were built, families grew, and the ranchers wishing a Mexican education for their boys looked for a teacher. The man was my father, married to one of their own and with the culture and training of Mexico.

With Las Víboras as his headquarters my father made plans for the school that was to bring Mexican education to the border boys. Books were ordered from Mexico and the curriculum from that country was followed (x).

This passage indicates a shifting of cultural and gender roles as a new life was beginning to take shape: "homes were built," "families grew," and schooling was brought to the children of the border, or so at least, to the "border boys." The traditional education of Mexico—curriculum, books, and all, are being transplanted to the shifting cultural, spatial, and masculine Texas-Mexico border. As an ethnographic modernist, González recognizes these shifting times as a place where cultural traditions are not lost to modernity, but reimagined in shifting colonial orders.

If education from Mexico is now part of the Texas-Mexico border, it is also the movement of schooling to the modern borderlands that suspends and questions traditional gender norms. González literally disrupts her own narrative after discussing the boys' education by inserting a rhetorical question, "[w]hat about the girls?" This question not only inserts a literal pause in the narrative marking a shift in thought, but also marks but a shift in the way gender norms are able to be reimagined in the borderlands. The question assumes the reader forgot about the girls at best, as the discussion of the schools explicitly emphasizes that education was for the boys; or worse, the question assumes the reader finds the absence of girls' education normative. As if to remind the reader of this

inequality, González anticipates these assumptions and asks the question herself, “[w]hat about the girls?” before answering it, “[t]hey were taught at home.” Either way, this statement functions in both traditional gender norms, only boys get educated, and, in modern shifting orders where girls are also taught, able to ask questions, and education is a possibility, even if unequal.

The space and movement in education and the flux between tradition and modernity is even more complex when examining González’s relationship with J. Frank Dobie. He was her friend, mentor, and teacher, but they clearly held different perceptions. Within the paradigm of the predicament of culture, Dobie could be understood as trying to keep González and her people in their “traditional” places. Commenting on González’s work, Dobie remarks:

I look for two things in folklore. I look for flavor and I look for revelation of the folk who nourished the lore... If a thing is interesting, that is all the excuse it needs for being... Some day, it is quite likely Miss Jovita González will plunge in and trace her charming stories...back to the Middle Ages, but I hope she will not do this until she has extracted all the dewy freshness that the Mexican folk put into their tales” (qtd. in Limón 1997, xx).

Afraid González will direct her work back to the Middle Ages before she “extracts” all the “dewy freshness” from the Mexican folk highlights the fear of losing authenticity and tradition in the face of modernity. But if Dobie desires to preserve Mexican folk tradition, it is ironic he introduces González’s to modern Texas institutions, like the Texas Folklore Society, a “‘privilege’ then allowed to few Mexicans” (Limón, intro, 1996, xx).

González’s introduction to the folklore society by Dobie could best be understood as a literal performance of salvage ethnography, a way of showing her off as a relic of tradition in the face of threatening shifting social and cultural orders; after all, “Dobie was fascinated by what he saw as a vanishing way of life” (Cotera 2008, 110).

Maria Cotera maintains that Gonzalez's effort to collect stories "reflected the anxieties of her Anglo colleagues in the Texas Folklore Society to recover and record the last remnants of a culture that was rapidly disintegrating in the face of modernization" (Cotera 2008, 104). As an ethnographic modernist, however, Jovita González navigates the predicament of culture. Neither a relic rapidly disintegrating in the face of modernization nor an endangered authenticity, González maps a pathway through modernity that balances cultural traditions while contemplating the general possibilities of participating in the Texas Folklore Society, collecting folklore, and earning her master's degree. Folklore served two contradictory but important functions. First, collecting folklore pacified her Anglo colleagues, as Cotera maintains, but second, it also created a space for González to insert a Texas-Mexican voice in a region that was dominated by Anglo men.

Resisting Dobie's view of Mexican folk, González stopped attending his classes at the University of Texas at Austin. In a note omitted in González's biographical writing, she calls attention to this fact: "it was an agreement that we made, that I would not go into one of his classes because I would be mad at many things. He would take the Anglo-Saxon side, naturally. I would take the Spanish and Mexican side" (qtd in Limón 1997, xxi). Besides the folklore she collected, González also presented the "Mexican side" in her Master's, a social commentary of South Texas. By navigating the academic and cultural world of South Texas, González navigated the traditional constraints of gender and class by producing ethnographic work that was not stuck in tradition, but navigated tradition with the complex shifting orders of the borderland. In this way, authenticity is not endangered or lost, but reimagined in the present and future; as one of her mentors

and friend, Dr. Carlos E. Castañeda stated, her work “would be used in years to come as source material” (qtd. in González 1997, xiii).

If González could navigate the traditional constraints of gender, cultural, and social orders and imagine new ones in her thesis work, her adult private life would prove more cumbersome. In 1935 she married Edmundo E. Mireles from San Antonio and I argue that the gender and cultural tradition of marriage ultimately silenced González, if only for a moment. In the 1970s González and her husband granted an interview to Marta Cotera, "a leading Mexican-American feminist, archivist, and historian" (Limón 1996, xviii). Limón offers a succinct narrative of these events surrounding this interview:

Cotera was seeking to recover their papers, but particularly Gonzalez's, on behalf of the Mexican-American Library Project at the University of Texas at Austin. Mireles would not permit a formal tape recording, so we only have Cotera's recollection of what transpired. As Cotera reports it, the discussion got around to the book that Gonzalez had worked on with her 1934 grant, which Cotera knew about because it was reported in progress in the author's biogeographical sketches for the several articles Gonzalez had published in the *Southwest Review* and the *Publications of the Texas Folklore Society*. With Mireles doing most of the talking, the couple confirmed that such a book had indeed been written, but Mireles said it no longer existed; it had been destroyed. .. Mireles went on to make two other points about the presumably destroyed manuscript: first, the racial-political climate in the 1940s would have made the novel's publication controversial for them as public school teachers in Corpus Christi, and, second, as a strategy for dealing with this local problem as well as appealing to publishers, his wife had asked Eimer (Raleigh) to lend her surname to the project and to type the manuscript (xviii-xix).

The manuscript addressed in the above passage is the historical romance *Caballero*, a novel that is considered in the following section of this chapter and deals with social issues of marriage and family leading up to the Mexican American War. The politics surrounding the co-authorship will also be discussed later. For now, I include these details only to guide the narratives of events surrounding the interview:

Let us recall Mireles's control of the conversation and his concern for what he feared would be the repercussions of publishing *Caballero* with a single Spanish-surnamed author in the still volatile South Texas racial climate of the 1930 and 40s. According to Cotera, Mireles also said that, even if it existed, he would not have wanted the manuscript published *then* in the 1970s, as he feared for its reception in the Chicano literary nationalist ambience of the period. For these reasons, Mireles announced to Cotera that the manuscript had been destroyed. According to Cotera, at that precise moment Mireles announced *Caballero's* destruction, Jovita González, unobserved by her husband, made a brief wagging gesture with her hand to Cotera, clearly *negating* her husband's statement. She then reinforced her negation with her eyes intently gazing upon Cotera. (Limón 1996, xxii).

While the novel in question reimagines new social and gender orders in south Texas, it proved more difficult for González to fully realize these new possibilities in her adult life. Confined by domesticity—having to signal behind her husband's back the existence of *Caballero*, Gonzalez's literary writing didn't continue after her marriage. Like much of her work, *Caballero* was eventually published posthumously in 1996.

The domestic sphere of marriage also stifled González's plans to pursue a Ph.D. Limón once again fills in what González neglects to reveal: “[w]hat she does not tell us in her autobiography is that in 1938-39, while they were contemplating the move to Corpus Christi, she explored the possibilities of further graduate study toward a Pd.D. at Stanford, California-Berkeley or the University of New Mexico, but following what were likely complicated marital negotiations, she decided to go with him to Corpus Christi (1996, xxiv). Focusing on marriage, teaching, and co-authoring Spanish-language textbooks with her husband, González concealed her literary and academic desires in public, “[i]t appears that in this later part of her life she told no one in Corpus Christi about her manuscripts or her life as a creative writer (Limón 1996, xxi). However, even within the private sphere of domesticity she navigated tradition with future possibilities, perhaps imagining what was ahead. While continuing her “culturally required duties as a

‘housewife,’ she continued to work on her manuscripts whenever she could, agonizing over their state and her failure to find a publisher for them” (Limón 1997, xxiv).

González ignored much of the information about the *Caballero* manuscript or her opportunities in pursuing a doctorate in her short memoir. I use ignore because it registers a type of intentionality on González’s part. Like the intentional wagging of her finger during the interview, González closes her memoir reflecting on her marriage and teaching. The last words of her biographical writings are literally “we have been happy” (1997, early life, xiii). Would they have been happy if, for example, she continued to pursue her creative work or her advanced degree? One cannot surmise. However, González does offer a kind of mirrored account to her own trajectory when she conveys the details surrounding her father’s opportunity to further his studies.

Like Jovita, her father has the opportunity to study beyond the region by way of a scholarship, “[w]hen, as a young man, my father finished the equivalent of our high schools, he was awarded the General Bernardo Reyes Scholarship to study in Belgium” (1997, ix). The demands of domestic life and gender traditions also stifle his opportunity, “his mother’s illness prevented his going” (1997, ix). The narrative surrounding education are anchored in traditional family and gender roles. While it is easy to see the limits of tradition in González’s life after marriage, her father’s story she shares does not essentialize the tradition of gender norms.

If the confines of tradition stifle her education, these same constraints also affected the men in González’s life. In this way, the hardening of gender roles has the potential to harm and offer opportunities to both genders. Daughter and father both dedicated their life to education. If we recall her earlier memories, he developed the

border school for boys and she became a life-long educator in Corpus Christi, TX. Navigating tradition and modernity in domestic and public sphere of ethnography, González's corpus of literary work imagines future possibilities. With the wagging of a finger, she let her interviewer know *Caballero* existed; with this simple act navigating the fixity of tradition with the general possibilities of the future becomes conceivable, "it is easy to imagine, however, that Jovita would have wanted her novel published, posthumously if necessary, as it represented the fruit of so many years of her labor and her major literary statement. It expressed too much to be relegated to oblivion" (Limón 1996, xxii). González's life experiences link her biographical "I" that might be tied to tradition, to the interpretive eye of her literary work—where identity is imagined, emergent and constructed.

Imagining New Social Orders: Gender, Race, and Class

Writing against a dominative history of Texas-Mexicans, González's work wrestles her people away from common place stereotypes that normalizes Mexicans as cruel, violent, and inferior. Writing around the same time as González, Walter Prescott Webb writes:

Without disparagement, it may be said that there is a cruel streak in the Mexican nature, or so the history of Texas would lead one to believe. This cruelty may be a heritage from the Spanish of the Inquisition; it may, and doubtless should, be attributed partly to the Indian blood. . . The Mexican warrior...on the whole, is inferior to the Comanche and wholly unequal to the Texan" (qtd. in Garza-Falcón 1998, 1).

Like ethnography that established its authority through the rhetoric of science, Webb's assessment was also widely perpetuated. His "brand of history" Garza-Falcón asserts, "serves as an excellent example of how scholarship considered academically sound during a particular epoch can be revealed as a justification for racism and serve to anesthetize a national consciousness" (1998, 1). While Webb wrote those words in 1935

in *The Texas Rangers*, he can be situated within a continuum of writers and travelers from the nineteenth century who were originators to this position. In her writings on Texas, Mary Austin Holley wrote in 1836:

They [Mexicans] are very ignorant and degraded, and generally speaking, timid and irresolute; and a more brutal and, at the same time, more cowardly set of men does not exist than the Mexican Soldiery. They are held in great contempt by the American settlers, who assert that five Indians will chase twenty Mexicans, but five Anglo-Americans will chase twenty Indians... The Mexicans are commonly very indolent, of loose morals, and if not infidels of which there are many, involved in the grossest superstition. This view exhibits why it is by no means wonderful that this people have been dupes and slaves of so many masters, or that the plans of intelligent and patriotic men, for the political regeneration of Mexico, have therefore failed. The moral education of these people must be improved... There are exceptions, but we believe the general character of the Mexicans in Texas and her vicinity has been pretty accurately drawn. Fortunately, however, there are but few of her race within confines.

The great majority of the population of Texas and the most valuable portion of it consist of emigrants from the United States. The active and enterprising New Englander—the bold and hardy western hunter—the high-spirited southern planter—meet here on common ground... (128-129).

Holley's writing only hint at the beginning flux of settlers that would eventually make their way to Texas. In fact, toward the end of the century, a "second and much larger wave of Anglo-Americans, principally from the Mid-West, came to South Texas looking for cheap land and exploitable labor. They inundated the area, bringing with them their dominating political, educational and cultural institutions, as well as a greatly intensified racism (Limón 1997, xvii).

Ironically, González references this racism and displacement of her people from Texas in her memoir before the family moves to San Antonio. Bidding farewell to their great grand-mother, it is González's great grand-mother who instills a sense of belonging in her grandchildren in the ever-changing region. González recounts:

I have a clear picture of her lying in a four-poster bed her clear-cut ivory features contrasting with her dark sharp eyes.

“Come, get closer to me, children, so I can see you better,” she said. “Your mother tells me you are moving to live in San Antonio. Did you know that land at one time belonged to us? But now the people living there don’t like us. They say we don’t belong there and must move away. Perhaps they will tell you to go to Mexico where you belong. Don’t listen to them.

Texas is ours. Texas is our home. Always remember these words: Texas is ours, Texas is our home.”

I have always remembered the words and I have always felt at home in Texas (González 1997, xi).

Providing a history lesson of sorts, González’s great grandmother provides a flashback that calls attention to the attitudes in Holley’s writing. Holley offers a justification for colonizing Texas, writing in a letter in 1831:

Neither the Mexican government nor the Mexican people, knew any thing of this interesting country, and, whatever value it now possesses in their estimation, or in the opinion of the world, is to be attributed, entirely, to the foreign emigrants. They redeemed it from the wilderness... This consideration, certainly gives to those emigrants, a natural and just claim upon the liberality of their governments, and authorizes them to expect a system of colonization (1973, 114-115).

González’s grandmother’s bedridden statement that Texas once belonged to “us” challenges the narrative that naturalizes the colonization of Texas on the one hand and voids Texas-Mexicans in the shaping of Texas history on the other, who, according to Holley, don’t know “any thing of this interesting country.” González’s grandmother’s closing remarks also foreshadow the struggles that lie ahead— “perhaps they will tell you to go to Mexico where you belong,” while solidifying their position in the present, “Texas is ours, Texas is our home. Remember these words...” González’s literary work invokes the past, “I have always remembered the words and I have always felt at home in Texas,” even while writing against a dominative history that relegates Texas-Mexicans to second-class citizens

González gives voice to her community, both upper and lower class and reimagines social orders outside the authoritative Anglo-American history and beyond those in classic Chicano historiography. Instead of maintaining traditional orders of difference or even rendering them a loss, Gonzalez’s work doesn’t mourn, or mimic, but invents new orders outside the binaries of essentialized difference. In a story titled “Don José María,” the account opens by describing a unique border culture similar to her own, a culture not like Gregorio Cortez’s resistance narrative or like the narratives of Texas’s dominant history. Instead, the story counters both historiographies by offering an alternative observation:

Don José María was one of the richest landowners of the lower Rio Grande Valley. He had more cattle, more horses, more mules, and more goats and sheep than any other *ranchero*. In this pretentious stone house, square and flat-roofed, he lived like a feudal lord, ever in readiness to receive his friends and foes.... Monotonous and uninteresting from the outside, his home was the center of border culture—not the culture of Mexico, not the culture of the United States, but a culture peculiar to the community (2000, 30).

This passage documents new class and social orders even as it complicates the rigid boundaries of class and nation. Unlike the “folk” Dobie was scared would die off in the face of modernization, “Don José María” documents how border culture is actively invented by blending elements of tradition and modernity. Like the border boys who were building life along the border with schooling from Mexico and merging traditional Mexico curriculum with new life along the border, the above passage illustrates how Texas-Mexican culture is not residual but emergent. That is, to the inexperienced eye, José María’s ranch is “monotonous and uninteresting from the outside,” but actually functions someplace in-between both Holley’s and González’s grandmother’s worlds. The border ranch is “not the culture of Mexico,” nor however, is it “the culture of the

United States.” Rather, it is space that is “peculiar to the community” where “gatherings always ended with evening prayers,” homemade altars were “the joy and pride of feminine art,” and groceries were ordered “by catalogue from Sears Roebuck” (2000, 31-32).

González’s tales of the border are not all filled with feudal lords and rich rancheros. “Don José María” also documents the customs and traditions of the lower class. In preparing for the coming of the missionary priest, González writes “the servant quarters were astir with excitement.... Servant women were kept busy grinding corn on the *metate* for tortillas, while others washed the linen to be used for the altar” (31). On the surface, this renders a picturesque description of border life that romanticizes the difference between the land-owning Texas-Mexicans and the servants. Though romantic and picturesque, this image counters arguments that only landed Texas-Mexicans countered the hegemonic narrative of the region. Further, in literature, servants often serve the task of representing the people (Bruce Robbin 1986) and in this case, the narrating of the servant activities coupled with the description of Don José María’s family provide a more balanced picture of an emerging border culture “peculiar to the community.”

Literature and folklore reveal a process of “remembering and forgetting” that produce “narratives, plots, and allegories that threaten to reconfigure in often disturbing ways versions (myths, in fact) that serve state and institutional orders” (Marcus 1998, 92-94). An Ethnographic Aesthetic allows one to recognize narratives that “threaten” or “reconfigure” national mythologies at the same time the narratives imagine new ones. As previously argued, González was aware of her social, racial, and class positions in

dominating Texas institutions, but I have also established that Gonzalez was aware of gender politics. To agree with José Limón's assertion that González's work only at times demonstrates a "slight tone of resistance," and that at best it only "slips," as if an accident, due to her repressed state is limiting (1994, 71). Taking into account González's complex positionality, her "slips," if we use Limón's term, are not accidental but calculated and intentional. González's work thus offers a critique of the limitations imposed by a patriarchal society, both Mexican-American and Anglo.

Multivocality of the Texas-Mexican experience includes a subtle gendered voice and critique. In "The Mocking Bird," for example, González symbolically critiques gendered relationships through animal metaphors. Claiming that all of nature obeys him, the mocking bird, and not God, his wife is quick to reprimand: "hush, you are foolish and conceited like all men...they wait and listen for the voice of God, and when he calls, even you sing" (2000, 2). The mocking bird, full of arrogance, attempts to sing only to find that his wife's advice should have been obeyed as he no longer has a voice, it appears that God has taken it away. Contrary to González's biographic experiences where traditional gender demands silence both González and her father, here we see a symbolic silencing due to arrogance.

González deals with gender metaphorically through her animal tales, but also collapses past, present, and future to grapple with these constraints and limitations. González work imagines a new future and envisions a creative past when she invokes Sor Juana Inez and Ann Bradstreet in "Shades of the Tenth Muses," after all, "future is something to be creatively imagined, not simply endured" (Clifford 1988, 6). In "Engendering a 'Dialectics of our America': Jovita González's Feminist Testimonio,"

María Eugenia Cotera offers an alternate feminist reading of Jovita González's tale. Cotera does not disregard the previous debates over Jovita González, but first acknowledges this contested field in order to offer her suggested reading of González. While Jovita González has been represented as a "painfully acculturated intellectual" and her work situated within dominant mainstream Texas folklore studies, Cotera claims that it is this space read in conjunction with her work that testifies to the complex circumstances of early Chicana Feminists (2000, 237-8).

In her article Cotera offers a close and contextual reading of González's "Shades of the Tenth Muses." This tale first appears in Sergio Reyna's anthology of González's stories *The Woman who Lost her Soul* (2000) under the section "Tales of Mexican Ancestors." Reyna credits Cotera for making the publication of this manuscript possible, as she had been working on this literary project. Cotera juxtaposes autobiographical information with the fiction of this short story to show the many demands (family, politics, and academics) placed on women like González and Sor Juana Inez whose lives paralleled each other as they sought to negotiate an identity that does not subscribe to traditional gender or cultural roles. Cotera pays particular attention to the imaginary dialogue that takes place in "Shades of the Tenth Muses" between Sor Juana Inez and Anne Bradstreet. This dialogue narrativizes the contradictions brought on by social space and time and offers the "perfect narrative to elaborate Jovita's gendered vision" (Cotera 2000, 241). These two central figures characterize different feminine traditions. Anne Bradstreet, very domesticated and concerned with domestic life, shares this with Sor Juana in their fantasy conversation:

I am the mother of eight children. I had eight birds hatch in one nest. Four bucks there were, and hens the rest. I nursed them up with pain and care, nor cost, nor

labour did I spare. Till at last they all had wing. And then I have my husband, if ever two were one, then surely we. If ever man were loved by wife then he; if ever wife was happy in a man, compare with me ye women if you can (113).

Bradstreet's domesticity is contrasted to Sor Juana's more liberal views. When asked by Bradstreet if she ever wanted to get married, Sor Juana replies—"No, I can not say I ever did. Many suitors wooed and made love to me, but no one would I have. I always thought superior to any man" and continues on to say:

They are weak, silly creatures who can not take the blame for the sins they commit. Foolish, foolish men who blame women for the evil things they do, when they themselves are to blame for the sin women commit! Tell me who is more to blame, although both I think are sinners, the one who hungry sins for pay, or the one who pays to sin (113)?

The two women go on to tell each other about the work each has published and then the muses disappear only after Sor Juana winks at the narrator, possibly González herself: "Anne faded away. Sor Juan stood up, yawned, looked at me with what I thought was a wink, and following her companion she also disappeared in the dimness of space (115). The wink to the narrator, like González's wagging of her finger and intense stare signaling the existence of a manuscript her husband claimed was destroyed, could also signal something else, a nudge of a future that has yet to be invented.

Cotera maintains that it is Sor Juana who González idealized. On the surface, this seems conceivable, just look at the similarities in Sor Juana's voice and the narrator's voice in "The Mocking Bird." In both stories men are described as "weak," "foolish," and "silly creatures." While Sor Juana might be idealized, Cotera finally asserts that it is in fact Anne Bradstreet's realm within which Jovita finds herself and feels she must contend with. These two muses represent different aspects of González that must negotiate an identity between her south Texas community and the Anglo academic sphere of the

University of Texas. Rather than reading González in an either/or state, or having to choose which character González mostly aligns herself with, I argue that González occupies a complex position that allows her to straddle binaries. Jovita is not solely resistant, feminist, or accommodationist, but operates somewhere in-between each mode of discourse. An ethnographic aesthetic also means that Jovita does need to choose between Anne Bradstreet and Sor Juana Inez. Rather, she navigates both aspects in her life, navigating modernity and tradition. The premise that one muse represents what Jovita most idealized and one represents what she must contend with in her actual life limits what could be understood by examining the meaningful difference in these two muses. If the muses are considered outside the paradigm of essentializing difference, then what each muse represents is not pitted against each other, but in dialogue.

If the ghosts of Anne Bradstreet and Sor Juana Inez stand as metaphor for different aspect of Jovita's life, the physical body in literature often serves as metaphor for the national body. Both María Amparo Ruiz de Burton's *The Squatter and the Don*, originally published in 1885 and Jovita González's *Caballero* (1996), are historical romance novels set against the backdrop of shifting social, racial, and economic divisions in the U.S-Mexico borderlands after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. It is perhaps not surprising that Gonzalez "shushed" Cotera in her interviews with her husband when the *Caballero* manuscript was mentioned. In Ruiz de Burton and Gonzalez's novels, marriages between the Mexicana elite and the Anglo-American southerner function not as interracial marriages, but intercultural ones literally and symbolically tying the South to the Southwest, who were both displaced after the Civil-War. This symbolic link through marriage complicates the way the United States-Mexico

Borderlands is not aligned exclusively with national boundaries as the borderland regions shifts from a foreign space to a domestic one following the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. The marriages both literally and symbolically resist a unified regional or national identity while positioning Mexican-Americans as active agents in developing the nation. Neil Foley expands this notion of overlapping regions in *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (1997). Foley contends that South Texas created an interesting space where the history of slavery and post-emancipation overlapped the “trans-Rio Grande North” where “the South, the West, and Mexico have come to form a unique borderlands culture” (2).

Amy Kaplan also makes the connection that slavery, Reconstruction, and Jim Crow segregation cannot be understood separately from the events of 1848 and 1898 in Mexico: “The conquest of Indian and Mexican lands in the antebellum period cannot be understood separately from the expansion of slavery and the struggle for freedom” (2002, 18). Comparing or juxtaposing the South and the Southwest within an Ethnographic Aesthetics reveals how the “global is collapsed and made an integral part of parallel, related local situations rather than something monolithic or external to them” and we see connections between these two spaces that have “appeared to be (or conceptually have been kept) ‘worlds apart’” (Marcus 1998, 90).

González’s *Caballero* and María Amparo Ruiz de Burton’s *The Squatter and the Don* are both romance novels written by a Mexican-American female and class overtakes race as a consideration as each author attempts to distinguish their upper-class status from the peons and mestizos. Together, “the works of these two authors, who were unaware of each other’s existence, create a literary historical representation of the limited options

available to the landowning Mexicanos shortly after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848” (Garza-Falcón 1998, 9). Although *Caballero* deals with ethnic tensions after 1848, Gonzalez does not deal with relations along the border in a dualistic manner as has been done by past Anglo-American and even Chicano writers. González’s complex positionality places her both literally and symbolically in a middle space between “her people” and Anglo academics. An Ethnographic Aesthetic teases out the complexity of Jovita’s folklore to expose all the frameworks from which González is operating.

González’s work does not exclusively criticize "American social injustice and celebrate Mexican opposition" but instead offers another view in which to analyze south Texas border life; a vision that seeks for an adjustment of conduct on both ends of this cultural divide. *Caballero* takes place after the Treaty of Hidalgo ceded Texas to the United States. Conflict immediately begins when Don Santiago, the patriarch of the family, refuses to accept this new social order and rejects any compromise to his family tradition and values. Ironically this resistance to new social orders and an unwavering commitment to tradition gives way for a gendered voice that emerges from González’s multivocality and articulates yet another layer to the overlapping positionalities of the border.

In Gonzalez’s narratives, women assert a voice of reason in contrast to not only the Texas Rangers, but also Mexican patriarchy. María de Los Angeles, Don Santiago’s daughter in *Caballero*, cries out after hearing her father say that all *Americanos* must be killed:

No, no! when you swear by the Cross, Alvaro, it must be for a holy cause, and we do not know whether we have the right to kill just because another

may be infidel. We must love our enemies, our Lord said, we must not hate. It would be murder to kill anyone even on our land unless he attacks us. Surely there is some good in the Americans or the Lord would not have made them (15).

Ironically, it is religion that serves as a catalyst for these gendered voices to emerge. While Maria invokes the lord's name, so too does the tale of "The Mocking Bird" discussed earlier. In González's animal tale, religion also serves as a mediating factor. While the male bird can disobey, they ultimately "wait for the voice of God, and when He calls, even you sing" (2000, 2). Like Don Santiago who did not listen to the women in his family, the mocking bird does not obey his wife and when he goes to sing, God has taken his voice away. The mocking bird is both literally and figuratively silenced but so too is Don Santiago. Santiago's unwavering stance ultimately leads to his death. Here again, González attempts to shape what it means to be Mexican American in a complex shifting region where the fissures between tradition and modernity get one killed, at worst, or at best, momentarily silenced. Religion then, serves not only as a catalyst for a gendered voice, but for Gonzalez, it also seems to be the perfect balance between tradition and modernity in a region shadowed by different colonial structures. In "Don Jose Maria" religion serves not only as a means for a gendered voice, but also as a pillar of class status, Gonzalez informs her readers that "like all Mexicans of their class, both Don Jose and Dona Margarita were devout Catholics, and the coming of the missionary priest was the occasion to display border magnificence and hospitality." In this way, class is not tied to whiteness, but to religion.

Border Heroes

While González's work dismantles the scientific authoritative tone of early ethnographies, the multivocality of her work also reimagines the region through cultural symbolic and literal contact zones. González's work too counters a Mexican-American heroic history of resistance that essentializes what opposition to dominating powers looks like. To elucidate this point this section offers a case study of Américo Paredes's "*With his Pistol in his Hand*" and González's "The Bullet-Swallower" and "The Philosopher of the Brush Country" before moving to a discussion of Paredes's "The Hammon and the Beans."

In contrast to González's stories, Paredes's "*With his Pistol in his Hand*" is a seminal Chicano text exemplified by a working class and resistant history. Chicano history and their heroes were thus tied to a specific class. The legend of Gregorio Cortez links him to both a working class and, a narrative of local resistance to authority. Before outrunning and outsmarting the Texas Rangers, Cortez is characterized by his ability to work the land. His relationship to the land functions to establish Cortez as an icon even before the confrontation with the Texas Rangers:

“[y]ou should have seen the crops raised by Gregorio Cortez. And when harvesting came, he was in there with the rest. Was it shucking corn? All you could see was the shucks fly and the pile grow, until you didn't know there was a man behind the pile. But he was even better at cotton-picking time. He would bend down and never raise his head till he came out the other end, and he would be halfway through another row before the next man was through with his. And don't think the row he went through wasn't clean. No flags, no streamers, nothing left behind, nothing but clean, empty burrs where he had passed. (35).

Tied to the land, this narrative serves as the symbolic act of male nationalism for Chicanos. In Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1991), Anderson states that signs and symbols have the ability to

create solidarity in communities. He calls them imagined communities because “members of even the smallest of nations will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear from them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (15-16). In *Caballero*, for example, Don Santiago anticipates the threat of an emergent nation, of a communion, of sorts, declaring:

For life was good, here in Texas in the spring of 1846. All these rumors that Texas no longer belonged to Mexico was the talk of fools easily frightened who gave significance to the rout of the braggart Santa Ana. Because these blue-eyed strangers trespassing here had made a flag with one star—what did that mean? (Only that they were blindly ignorant, like a child cutting out patches of cloth and pretending they were gowns.) The fools! Making a flag and thinking this made a nation! (4).

Don Santiago contests the new flag even as he tries to convince himself that it is unthreatening. The Texas flag thus has the potential to unite a forming nation. Don Santiago anticipates both what this act represents and what is at stake for his people.

But if the Texas flag represents an imagined emergent Texas, then Gregorio Cortez represents a regional and cultural symbol of community for Mexican-Americans. In describing how the legend of Gregorio Cortez functions for the Texas-Mexican, Paredes describes Cortez as simply “a man, a border man” (34) and goes on to say:

Thus the laborer made of Cortez a laborer, the farmer a farmer, the vaquero a vaquero, the suspected smuggler a smuggling suspect—each applying his own situation, his own disagreeable contacts with the Anglo-American, as the reason for Cortez’s defending of his right. The short man saw Cortez as short, the dark man as dark; and the tall man saw him as tall. The man that the *corrido* shows at bay saying, “So many mounted rangers, all against one Mexican” became in the legend a synthesis of the Border Mexican, who saw himself collectively in Cortez (Paredes 1958, 113).

I argue that for the Chicano community, this ballad serves the function of an imagined community. A community that is tied to the land and to defending their rights against the “disagreeable” Anglo-American in both function and form, quite literally:

What did he [Gregorio Cortez] look like? Well, that is hard to tell. Some say he was short and some say he was tall; some say he was Indian brown and some say he was as blond like a newborn cockroach. But I'd say he was not too dark and not too fair, not too thin and not too fat, not too short and not too tall; and he looked just a little bit like me. But does it matter so much what he looked like? (Paredes 1958, 34).

To answer Paredes's rhetorical question, no, it does not matter so much what Cortez looks like save for being tied to gender, a "border man." What Paredes does not tell us is the different ways these border men deal with injustices beyond open resistance. The masculine, resistant, and sometimes violent responses stood in direct contrast to education, academia, and scholarship.

The vulnerability of the resistant border man, or Border Mexican, to use Paredes's term, is touched upon nearly 60 years later in Juanita A. Luna Lawhn's poem titled "Man Without A Pen." In this 2016 poem, Cortez is immortalized across generations as Juanita A. Luna Lawhn pays tribute to her father. I include the poem's entirety:

It is said there wasn't a horse you couldn't tame.
 Many horses tried.
 One broke your ribs in two
 But before you got off his back
 He knew your commands.
 You rocked my cradle
 To soothe your pain

When the man said it was a 25 acre filed
 Your eyes measured the length and width
 Your feet counted the steps it took to walk the land
 Your eyes and feet knew right from wrong.

During the *pisca*
 No if's or but's
 A hundred pounds of cotton were a hundred pounds of cotton
 A scale your only weapon.

When the sky became a premature night
 Trees swayed to the sound of the northern wind
 Limbs kissed the ground

You feared the demons that led the wind.
 You asked for a knife.
 “To cut the clouds in two,” you said.
 Like a priest holds a chalice
 Before the wine turns to blood
 Your calloused hands raised the knife
 Carved the sign of the cross on the black sky
 The gods of wind split the clouds in two
 Wild winds moved east and west.

Then one night
 I sat by your side
 Time no longer a friend
 Memory a friend gone astray
 Silence your companion.
 I searched for the words that would bring you back to me.
 I spoke the name, Gregorio Cortez.
 Unexpectedly, you said, “Gregorio Cortez was a man no *rinche* could
 Catch...”
 I held history in my hand
 A book
 You held a memory.

As I stood by your death bed, you spoke,
 “It has been difficult...
 Not knowing how to read or write.”

I remember a man who could break a horse,
 Tear the clouds in two,
 Fight for what was right,
 I remember a man who could not read or write.
 I remember a man who gave me a book or two.

I don't remember a man who cried because he couldn't read or write.
 Now, I know...

Besides the recognizable alliteration, “Man Without a Pen” and “With a Pistol in His Hand,” the poem’s title recalls the legend of Gregorio Cortez even as it signals a subtle shift in focus—from pistol to pen. The poem makes the connection to Cortez even more apparent as up to this point it seems the poem is about him. “Man Without A Pen” opens with an act famously associated with Cortez’s legend, “[i]t is said there wasn’t a horse

you couldn't tame" before moving to the iconic way Cortez worked the land. The almost literal reference to Gregorio Cortez conjures the symbolic notion of the imagined community he represents. This point is emphasized with the closing of the first stanza, "You rocked my cradle / To soothe your pain." The rocking of the cradle invokes a symbolic Chicano father, Gregorio Cortez, even as he is conflated with the narrator's literal one.

The conflation of a national symbolic father with the narrator's literal father deflates in the fifth stanza, "Then one night / I sat by your side / Time no longer a friend." The presence of the literal "I" of the poem marks the narrative shift from figurative to literal. When the narrator's father literally can't remember, "Memory a friend gone astray / Silence your companion," the narrator calls upon a collective memory to reconnect with her father, "I searched for the words that would bring you back to me. / I spoke the name, Gregorio Cortez." This memory sparks her father's recollection, "Unexpectedly, you said, 'Gregorio Cortez was a man no *rinche* could/ Catch...'" The narrator reconnects with her father by speaking the name of the quintessential Chicano hero. However, the story of Gregorio is known by the narrator by way of literacy, a book, "I held history in my hand / A book" while her father connects to the story by way of oral tradition, "You held a memory." In this one stanza tradition and modernity are equal counterparts and enables a connection of generations in the present.

"Man Without A Pen" pays homage to the importance of the legend of Gregorio Cortez and refocuses the narrative from one that highlights resistance to one that dares to imagine possibilities outside those of essentialized difference. The collective, imagined memory serves just as important as the singular one. However, the poem closes by

shifting from the collective memory of the pistol to the singular act of the pen—of writing. The poem gets at this in the closing stanza. Just after remembering Cortez, the narrator’s father says at his deathbed, ““It has been difficult... / Not knowing how to read or write.”” At once the collective memory that unites a masculine Chicano community also makes known a void. A void not only in the community, but a void in Chicano historiography that is brought about by essentializing difference. In contrast to all the memories, both collective and singular, the poem’s closing lines reveal a new memory, “I don’t remember a man who cried because he couldn’t read or write. / Now, I know...” The title of the poem leaves open the possibilities of what could have been, how it all would have changed if for example, the man was not without a pen, but with.

Like Lawhn’s poem that dares to contemplate alternate paths, alternate possibilities, Jovita González’s folklore unravels the potentials outside the narratives of difference. Her work does not deal with relations along the border in a dualistic manner as has been done by past Chicano writers, both Anglo-American and Chicano, who establish an us-against-them schema, more specifically the Mexican-American vs. the Texas Rangers. Certainly, Texas-Mexican folklore in the United States may in “large measure be understood as a defensive relation to and criticism of that social domination.” (Limón 1983, 220). This defensive relation is easily recognizable through constructs of resistance like the ballad of Gregorio Cortez which established the pinnacle regional and cultural hero. A hero that is almost always male. Jovita would have been no stranger to the South Texas world of Gregorio Cortez. Still, she offers another voice and representation of life along the border. Nevertheless, her folklore does not exclusively criticize “American social injustice and celebrate Mexican opposition,” but instead offers

another view in which to analyze south Texas border life; a vision that seeks for an adjustment of conduct on both ends of this cultural divide (220).

While González's work is not characterized by social conflict per se her folklore documents the shifting class and gender relations in south Texas that, like border culture in general, is never static but always fluid. Gonzalez's compilations of folklore are not merely sporadic tales. Rather, they are positioned according to the history of land loss from 1836 when Texas gained independence from Mexico, to 1846 when the republic was annexed to the United States, and finally to 1848 after the U.S war with Mexico (Garza-Falcon, 1998, 100). In this sense, Gonzalez literally and figuratively layers her representations of social reality in a rapidly changing region.

Literary production, as another mode of ethnographic expression, not only concerns itself with literary productions, but also with the complex task of representing cultural exchanges and experiences. In this sense Gonzalez's work moves from a double voiced narrative that is "among" and "removed" from her people to one that both contests the single notion of American history and adds multivocality to the Mexican-American experience. González's cultural, gender, and class critiques shore up the complex predicaments of representing social reality in a rapidly changing space.

The fluctuating and tumultuous world of post 1848 South Texas brings us to González's tale, "The Bullet Swallower." In "The Bullet Swallower," González tells the account of a young man named Antonio who courageously defies the Texas Rangers and is christened with a new name, "Antonio Traga Balas:"

'People call me *Traga Balas*, Bullet-Swallower—Antonio Traga-Balas, to be more exact, Ay, were I as young as I was when the incident that gave me this name happened!

We were bringing several carloads of smuggled goods to be delivered at once and in safety to the owner. Oh, no, the freight was not ours but we would have fought for it with our life's blood. We had dodged the Mexican officials, and now we had to deal with the Texas Rangers. They must have been tipped, because they knew the exact hour we were to cross the river. We swam in safety. The pack mules, loaded with packages, wrapped in tanned hides, we led by the bridle. We hid the mules in a clump of *tules* and were just beginning to dress when the Rangers fell upon us. Of course we did not have a stitch of clothes on; did you think we swam fully dressed? Had we but had our guns in readiness, there might have been a different story to tell...

I ran to where the pack mules were to get my gun. Like a fool that I was, I kept yelling at the top of my voice, "You so, so and so gringo cowards, why don't you attack men like men? Why do you wait until they are undressed and unarmed?" I must have said some very insulting things, for one of them shot at me right in the mouth. The bullet knocked all of my front teeth out, grazed my tongue and went right through the back of my neck. Didn't kill me though. It takes more than bullets to kill Antonio Traga-Balas' (2000, 48-49).

Antonio lives to tell his tale and like González, he too is stuck between two cultures, albeit quite literally. Antonio first dodges the Mexican officials and then must fight off the Texas Rangers.

Antonio might just be the border man that Gregorio Cortez represents. He is courageous, defiant, and provokes the Texas Rangers. That Chicano historiography privileges a Mexican-American history tied explicitly to resisting Anglo-America is exemplified in this tale. In fact, both Jose Limón and Sergio Reyna hail "The Bullet Swallower" as one of the only resistant stories in González's literary corpus. Sergio Reyna states:

The political resistance of the Mexican American to oppression is one of the last themes that González developed toward the end of her writing career... Limón suggest that in "The Bullet Swallower" Jovita González reveals 'more of her narratively unrepressed critical political unconsciousness' (*Dancing* 71-71)... Her criticism of the North American invasion of Texas and of the subsequent imposition of rules and laws on the Hispanic community is manifested in such attitudes of obvious resistance on the part of the Mexican American community.

These attitudes of resistance were evidenced by the Mexicans through the defiance of the laws imposed by the new government, specifically those regarding smuggling and gambling. This attitude of explicit resistance, in an attempt to wage a fierce although disadvantaged fight against the Texas Rangers is illustrated in..."The Bullet Swallower" (Reyna 2000, xxv-xxvi).

This understanding of González's work epitomizes the way difference is essentialized.

The construction of the way opposition and resistance is manifested privileges a male local and regional character who is hailed as a hero. Antonio Traga-Ballas falls in a long line of this tradition. However, a reimagining of this tale from an ethnographic aesthetic finds an alternate meaning of this tale through examining the power of difference. A meaningful difference.

I posit that "The Bullet Swallower" can also be viewed not as solely resistant, but as a call for both cultures to change. Antonio's narrative "I" literally gets silenced when he gets shot in his mouth and is left for dead, not to mention, he is silenced even longer as he has to remain in hiding for a year. It is Gonzalez's authorial eye that uses satirical rhetoric to silence Antonio, the quintessential, resistant Texas-Mexican bandit, a "rogue-hero," as Reyna calls him. While the Texas Rangers are villains, using excessive force, Antonio is not portrayed as saint either, after all, he acknowledges provoking the incident, "I must have said some very insulting things, for one of them shot me in the mouth." Gonzalez is critical of both ends of this cultural divide, as she calls for not only a social, but moral reorder troubling the dualistic cultural border relations that are often viewed as either resistant on the one hand, or assimilationist on the other. In fact, this paradigm epitomized the treatment of Gonzales work, as Limón and Reyna chart her work from repressed to realized.

While Antonio may at first glance be hailed as a Gonzalez's fulfilled, unrepressed, heroic, resistant Texas-Mexican, Gonzalez's authorial eye criticizes Antonio. She states he was a "landowner by inheritance, a trail driver by necessity, and a smuggler and gambler by choice, he had given up the traditions of his family to be and do that which pleased him most" (47). It is in this space between tradition and modernity that Antonio finds himself. Unable to adjust to the shifting social order, Antonio is silenced by his anachronistic ways, as Gonzalez tells us "through some freakish mistake, he had been born three centuries too late." And while Antonio "might have been a fearless Spanish *Conquistador*" it is because he was born in a wrong place and time that he must be silenced. It is González's authorial eye that speaks in order to not only critique American institutions, like the Texas Rangers, but also critique a popular aesthetic that relegates Texas-Mexicans as units unaffected by time and space and unable to adapt in a space shadowed by shifting historical coloniality. That is to say, González is calling for a moral, social and even gender reorder of the border that moves beyond binaries of tradition and modernity.

Jovita González's "The Philosopher of the Brush Country" however, functions as a counter to the quintessential border man, like Antonio Traga-Ballas. By offering an alternative way to deal with clashing border cultural and institutional relations, González's main character in this story departs from the constructs of essentialized difference. The story surrounds Tío Pancho. Not a simple man, Tío Pancho is an oxymoron; that is to say, in a border country that epitomizes masculine resistance and bravado, Tío Pancho is a border man who is at once a philosopher, poet, and "outlaw." Not an outlaw in the same way as Antonio Traga-Ballas or any other classic border man,

he is an outlaw because simply because he follows his own ideologies. If Antonio was christened with the surname “Bullet-Swallower,” Tío Pancho is christened with the surname “Malo,” which connotes everything from bad, to sick, to even villain. The narrator clears up the meaning of Tío Pancho’s name:

Tío Pancho was a distant relative of my grandfather, In fact, both bore the same given name and surname.

“We are the same Francisco,” he would say, “except that you a Don, while I in my poverty resemble the blessed Jesus, “Poverty is loved by God,” is the saying” he would continue, “and even though a sinner, *We* both love the same thing.” By *We* he referred to God and himself. But, in spite of his supposed similarity to the Almighty, he was called *Tío Pancho Malo*. After the fashion of the simple folk among whom he lived, the surname originated not from the fact that he was bad, but from the fact that he was different. No, he was not bad. He merely had his own ideas, which he followed in his own peculiar way. And nonconformity with the general tendencies and general customs is sufficient to make anyone an outlaw amid any group of simple folk.

Tío Pancho was a philosopher, and like all philosophers, he was at outs with the world (2000, 56).

Like a border hero, Tío Pancho is from the simple folk and if we take Paredes’s word for it, Tío Pancho might just see parts of himself in the quintessential “Border Man,” who represented all border men whether smuggler, rancher, farmer, tall, short, brown, or even blond. At once Tío Pancho fits the paradigm of the border hero just for being male and living along the border. However, Tío Pancho departs from the narrative of difference in the ways he responds to injustices. In fact, I contend that he is a counter hero, an “outlaw” by the very fact that he departs from the classic male border narrative.

If Antonio Traga-Ballas is an outlaw literally going into hiding for shooting and escaping the Texas Rangers, Tío Pancho is labeled one because he differs from other border men. This marks Tío Pancho as an outcast—both among his people and not, “...nonconformity with the general tendencies and general customs is sufficient to make anyone an outlaw amid any group of simple folk.” Tío Pancho's nonconformity breaks

with tradition. Straying from tradition and the acceptable ways of expressing difference, one is either labeled as *malo*, strange, or queer, as in the case of Tío Pancho, or assimilationist and accommodationist, as in the case with Jovita herself. In this way Chicano historiography reproduces coloniality of binaries so even Antonio Traga-Ballas and Gregorio Cortez, no matter how resistant, still fit established binaries of difference.

Like González that captures the attention of the Texas Folklore Society by use of language, Tío Pancho grabs the attention of the Texas Rangers and custom officials through his use of poetic expressions. Tío Pancho might even be an ethnographer of sorts, as he expresses himself not with a pistol in his hand, but “in a most flowery language” (57). As the narrator recounts, “[o]ne day when he wanted an ax he commanded one of his sons to bring him ‘that bright shiny object which man in his cruelty uses for the decapitation of defenseless tress’ (57). Further, one day returning from his hometown of Mier, Mexico, to his new home in Texas, he is stopped by customs and questioned about what he is bringing back, his reply is sufficient to let him pass:

"Sir, they are manufacturers of wheat, with incrustations of *piloncillo* (brown sugar) which in your country are called coffee cakes, but in mine, plain sweet bread." On being told that he could go, his reply was equally verbose; "Thanks good sir, you are an ocean of kindness wherein navigates the bard of gratitude."

In fact, for all the Chicano literary cannon praise "The Bullet-Swallower" received, I would argue that González sees more of herself in Tío Pancho than Antonio Traga-Ballas. Let me suggest that Tío Pancho is Jovita's doppelgänger of sorts, representing more of her "unrepressed" state than Traga-Ballas. In fact, "The Philosopher of Brush Country" was originally published as a series of stories titled "Among my people" and was later retitled. Chicano historiography situates González's literary apex with "The Bullet Swallower" because Chicano scholars privilege a resistant history that ties Mexica-

Americans to ideologies that coincide and corroborate border heroes rather than border philosophers. This ideology places both González and Tío Pancho against the norm, and as the narrator of the "Philosopher of Brush Country states, "like all philosophers, he," and I argue, they, "[were] at outs with the world," both the Anglo American and Mexican worlds they inhabited (56).

Imagining movement through modernity however, opens other possibilities. Even though Tío Pancho is literally and symbolically "at outs with the world," he is not complicit in his situation in the ever shifting and at times volatile borderlands. For even the philosopher confronts the Texas Rangers. And though he may not have a pistol, Tío Pancho's words are just as grave. Yolanda Chávez Leyva asserts that "[in] Texas a *mexicano* put his life in danger any time he expressed his opinion" (Chávez Leyva 2016, 130). Tío Pancho is a perfect example of the Mexican-American community opposing Anglo America by methods outside the constructs of violently resisting.

In order to help his sons evade war, Tío Pancho and his boys decide to go back to their town of Mier. However, "within an hour of safety," they are confronted by the Texas Rangers. Tío Pancho does not run but confronts the Rangers:

"Most esteemable gentleman, you inquire of me my destination and why I am traveling in this direction. Your ears shall be regaled by my narrative. Most worthy gentlemen," he continued with a bow, "I am taking these, my sons, to the birthplace of their ancestors, Mier, the heroic city that defeated at one time a band of Americans. No offense intended, señores; I am taking them there because I don't want them to fight for your government. My sons are not cowards; they can, and will fight, but only when they have received an offense. How can they fight against people who have never wronged them and who they have never seen? We are sorry for the King that was killed and if you think it fitting and proper we can even write a letter of condolence to his widow, but as to fighting, that is another matter. I prefer my sons should not get involved in a fight that is not theirs" (59).

It is worth noting a couple of points in this passage. First, Benedict Anderson's notion of imagined communities is invoked just like in *Caballero*. There is no image of communion in the new nation Tío Pancho and his boys find themselves living in and fleeing from. Tío Pancho and his sons do not feel “an image of their communion” with “their fellow members” in with the United States with whom they have never met (Anderson 15-16). In fact, they resist fighting in the war because of their inability to connect, emphasized literally by Tío Pancho's question to the Rangers: “How can they fight against people who have never wronged them and who they have never seen?” There is no collective feeling of betrayal, insult, or wrong-doing. In this simple act of dialogue, I contend that Tío Pancho is just as important and critical to the region as a counter type to the classic border hero.

Second, this passage critiques American institutions that delegate Mexicans to second class citizens but still expects them to fight in their war. In this way “The Philosopher of Brush Country” no longer functions as a folkloric snapshot, but becomes more subversive. While the Texas Rangers know how to deal with situations that elicit knee-jerk reactions to use their weapons, they are baffled on how to deal with Tío Pancho's oddity and frankness. The Rangers response to Tío Pancho is that he must not know how who they are, “ ‘[d]o you know who you are talking to?’ asked one of the rangers...” The question also indicts Tío Pancho for acting out of order.

Eventually, the reader finds out that Tío Pancho's two sons went to war never to return while the youngest stayed back but eventually died of small pox.

Without his sons Tío Pancho was left alone to go about “expounding his theories and his queer philosophy.” Further, he never touched “one cent of the insurance due him. ‘This money is the price of innocent blood spilled in a useless war. If I accepted it I would feel like the butcher of my boys,’ he contended” (60). “The Philosopher of Brush Country” moves beyond the Region and the Texas Rangers, to a national critique of policies.

Reimagining Paredes through Space and Architecture

Clifford tells us that often in new social orders marginalized people inherit structures. In other words, they can “either resist or yield to the new but cannot produce it” (1988, 5). An Ethnographic Aesthetic offers a (re)reading of borderlands history because instead of a linear narrative history, ethnography offers an alternative to simply yielding and resisting and instead invents, imagines, and constructs local futures.

Moving from the symbolic body politic, like marriage, discussed earlier, visual culture, like architecture, also counters, sustains, and imagines new hegemonic narratives of the U.S.-Mexico border region. Within critical regionalism, architecture also functions as sign of nationalism, creating “imagined communities” (Anderson 15-16). In Kenneth Frampton’s essay, “Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance,” Frampton claims that architecture can be seen as the “victory of universal civilization over locally inflected culture” and, in order for it to be sustained as a critical practice, it must “distance itself equally from the Enlightenment myth of progress, and from a reactionary, unrealistic impulse to return to the architectonic forms of the preindustrial past” (17, 20). This is what Frederic Jameson calls “post-utopian disillusionment” in his piece titled “The Constraints of Postmodernism” and interjects that

critical regionalism can be viewed as a synecdochic function, where the part can stand symbolically for the whole (194). In other words, the building, landscape, or built environment comes to stand for the “local spatial culture generally” and therefore maintains racial ideologies that must be examined against both modernism and postmodernism (194).

Mary Pat Brady employs the theory of landscape and architecture to examine space, the transformation of space, and its relevance in Chicana literature in *Extinct Lands, Temporal Geographies: Chicana Literature and the Urgency of Space* (2002). Besides the built environment, Brady reconfigures space as both performative and participatory. Space is a process she tells us, because one is always involved in how these spaces are “understood, envisioned, defined, and experienced” (7). In *Histories and Legends of the Alamo and Other Missions in and around San Antonio*, Adina De Zavala, introduced in chapter one, recovers the Alamo as a literal place as she traces its history from a mission, military fort, and finally, a tourist site. But she also recovers the Alamo symbolically as a way to ethnocize her biracial identity within a regional identity that is at once Mexican and Anglo. The Alamo, like De Zavala herself, occupies a contested social space represented by the Alamo itself. The Alamo therefore, stands as a racialized narrative of the Texas-Mexico border that De Zavala does not convey explicitly.

While the Alamo is an architectural piece part of a much larger regional and cultural history, one can also read a critical use of space in a smaller context. In Américo Paredes’s short story, “The Hammon and the Beans,” for example, the first-person narrator uses local space and time to demarcate different social and racial spheres. The story takes place on Jonesville-on-the-Grande, a region on the Texas-Mexican border

with intense conflict. The narrator literally opens the story with “[o]nce we lived in one of my grandfather’s houses near Fort Jones” (3). This introduction invokes a space and time of the past, as in “once upon a time,” but it also signifies the narrator’s class positioning. The narrator and his family are from a class of land-ownership, for they lived in the narrator’s grandfather’s “big frame house painted a dirty yellow.” They lived in a quiet neighborhood, “too far from the center of town for automobiles and too near for musical, night-roaming drunks.” The literal position of the house one block from the parade grounds too far for automobiles and too near for drunks hinges between tradition and modernity.

The present moment in the story however, marks a shift in landscape, “[t]oday” the family wakes up at six in the morning to the flag “raised on the parade grounds,” a “cackling of the bugles,” a “thundered out salute,” and the “cannon’s roar, as if to battle.” This setting, in contrast the narrator’s big house in a quiet neighborhood, marks a shift from the romantic to the modernity of militarization. The cannon’s roar and the raised flag give the reader an understanding that Fort Jones, specifically, and Jonesville-on-the-Grande, generally, are two parts of the same racial landscape policing and militarizing the border; for every morning Jonesville-on-the-Grande “woke to the cannon’s roar, as if to battle, and the day began.” Fort Jones literally fissures the community. Not only separated from the town by a high wire fence, Fort Jones also divides the community along class and race lines. These divisions have become part of the cultural and spatial landscape. The narrator’s response to his surroundings is blasé: “and so we live, we and the post, side by side with the wire fence in between” (3). Unmoved by the cannon’s roar

and the wire fence, the racialized landscape has become part of the mundane which the narrator is now a part of.

The clock in this narrative also reinforces the separation and division of the community from the fort, and from each other. Its function is not only quotidian. Time reminds local residents of the military's presence even as it emphasizes class standings within the community: "when the post laundry said it was one o'clock" everyone went back to work, "except for those who could afford to be old-fashioned and took the siesta" (3). Tradition is tied to upper-class Mexican-Americans, for only those who could afford it, had the privilege to be "old-fashioned" and take the siesta. In the ever changing landscape of South Texas, only those Mexican Americans whom the changes of modernity did not affect were signaled back to work at 1:00.

The divisions sewn into the community are naturalized and unquestioned, "the post was the town's clock, you might have said, or like some insistent elder person who was always there to tell you it was time" (4). Just like one would not question an elder, the spatial and temporal categories of this border town are not only rigid, but go unquestioned. And so, residents and the soldiers co-existed by maintaining traditional boundaries, "the wandering soldiers whom the bugle called home at night did not wander in our neighborhood, and none of us ever went into Fort Jones" (5). However, although rigid, space is penetrable, and thereby movement between race, class, and social lines becomes imaginable.

The impenetrable symbolic and literal contact zones of Jonesville-on-the-Grande are penetrated by Chonita. Unlike the narrator's big house in a quiet neighborhood, Chonita's family is working class. The narrator informs us that her "mother did our

washing, in gratefulness—as my mother put it—for the use of a vacant lot of my grandfather’s which was a couple of blocks down the street.” This young girl whose family lived in the narrator’s vacant lot and did their laundry was the only one to break through the post. In fact, she can only do so after first going to the poorest part of the town:

Every evening when the flag came down she would leave off playing and go down towards what was known as the ‘lower’ gate of the post, the one that opened not on main street but against the poorest part of town. She went into the grounds and to the mess halls and pressed her nose against the screen and watched the soldiers eat. They sat at long tables calling to each other from their food stuffed mouths.

“Hey bud, pass the coffee!”

“Give me the ham!”

“Yeah, give me the beans!”(4).

Once in the grounds, Chonita literally occupies a middle space between the town and the fort.

Chonita’s positionality thus allows for movement. She must first cross into the poor side of town in order to make her way into the post—traversing class and racial borders in the process. Chonita also occupies a middle position in her daily life. Her father was a laborer, “ever since the end of the border troubles there had been a developmental boom in the Valley, and Chonita’s father was getting his share of the good times” (5-6). Her literal middle position makes her the only character in the story who crosses not only geographical boundaries, but also class and race boundaries as well.

Chonita also symbolically occupies a position between tradition and modernity. Her class position lies someplace between the narrator’s family who takes the siesta and lives in a big frame house and the “lower” part of town that makes entering the military fort possible. It is a space between the tradition embodied by the upper-class Mexican-Americans that take the “old-fashioned” siesta and the modernity of the military fort that Chonita occupies. It is precisely Chonita’s class of people whose movement is dictated by

the town's clock. If we remember, when the clock strikes 1:00 everyone, except those who took the siesta, were signaled back to work. But, just like the town's clock signals when it is time to get back to work, it also signals Chonita's movement into untraditional spaces. Ironically, she knows just the time to cross the grounds. For it is every evening when the flag comes down that prompts Chonita to move from her traditional space of playing with other children in her part of town to the "poor" neighborhood, and finally, into Fort Jones. Chonita's unfixed positionality permits her the movement between tradition and modernity.

Once inside, Chonita watches the soldiers eat and is scolded by the cooks, but not before giving Chonita left over food to take home and, not before she has had time to observe the interaction among the soldiers. Proud of the English learned from crossing into a modern and domestic, yet foreign space, Chonita is encouraged by the other kids of the neighborhood to show her newly found talent:

Chonita was a poet too. I had just moved into the neighborhood when a boy came up to me and said, "Come on! Let's go hear Chonita make a speech."

She was already on top of the alley fence when we got there, a scrawny little girl of about nine, her bare dirty feet clinging to the fence almost like hands. A dozen other kids were there below her, waiting. Some were boys I knew at school; five or six were her younger brothers and sisters.

"Speech! Speech!" they all cried. "Let Chonita make a speech! Talk in English, Chonita!"

They were grinning and nudging each other except for her brothers and sisters, who looked up at her with proud serious faces. She gazed out beyond us all with a grand, distant air and then she spoke.

"Give me the hammon and the beans!" she yelled. Give me the hammon and the beans!"

She leaped off the fence and everybody cheered and told her how good it was and how she could talk English better than the teachers at the grammar school (6).

The narrator, stuck in his family's class tradition, cannot imagine the way that Chonita's speech act is challenging both tradition and modernity. In fact, he only comprehends this

as being a cruel joke, “I thought it was a pretty poor joke. Every evening almost, they would make her get up on the fence and yell, “Give me the hammon and the beans!” and everybody would cheer and make her think she was talking English. As for me, I would wait there until she got it over with so we could play at something else” (6). In this way, Chonita imagines something that lies beyond the narrator’s imagination. He cannot see outside notions of difference and the possibilities of someone like Chonita. Eventually, the reader learns that the narrator is saddened to learn that Chonita dies from an illness, an illness probably common to the border town—“pneumonia, flu, malnutrition, worms, the evil eye” (7).

Chonita’s mimicry functions in what Homi Bhabha calls the rhetoric of repetition or doubling, in which “talking” makes a difference, even if it is a “sameness-in-difference” (1994, 54). Chonita’s speech act, even if just repeating the soldier’s conversation at dinner, reveals a challenge to coloniality as it situates her in a literal and symbolic space between resistance and complicity. Later in life, the narrator would often imagine Chonita had she lived to the decade of the thirties, claiming “those years would have been made just for her.” She would be protesting in the “picket lines demanding not bread, not cake, but the hammon and the beans” (7). If González’s Bullet-Swallower was born in the wrong place and time for his antics, Chonita can only hypothetically function in the future.

Chonita, like the philosopher of brush country, is a poet and a counter hero. She departs significantly from the resistant border hero paradigm—first because of gender, and second, because she uses speech instead of violence to challenge dominant authority. In doing so, Chonita represents a glimpse of what the future could look like. A future that Américo Paredes could not yet visualize, except in hindsight. In later years, Paredes sated

that Emma Tenayuca was the inspiration for Chonita, saying “the work of Emma Tenayuca, political and labor activist in San Antonio, especially moved me. I managed later to work her into one of my stories, using her as my inspiration of the figure of Chonita” (qtd. in Saldívar 2006, 91).¹

If Tenayuca was Paredes’s inspiration, it is ironic that Chonita dies in childhood and does not get to reach her political potential. Unlike Tenayuca, Chonita does not live to see the 1930s. The only local and regional visionary in the story not only dies, but dies a rather insignificant death. When asked what she died of, the doctor gives a list of possibilities including malnutrition and the evil eye before stating, “what the hell difference does it make?” A poet in life, Chonita goes unrecognized even in her passing. In her short life Chonita symbolizes the way the margins are not passively inheriting new social structures. As a counter border hero, she resists the social, class, and gender structures of both the Mexican American communities and the dominating Anglo-American ones represented by the militarization of the border.

Chonita represents what it means and looks like when the marginalized attempt to produce new orders. Chonita thus envisions something the author fully cannot, even if she was modeled after one of Paredes’s heroes, Emma Tenayuca.² Because the classic border hero paradigm is caught up in essentializing difference, its narrative becomes predictable in its difference. One knows how the story unfolds and how it will eventually end. With philosophers, poets, and counter heroes, the ending is unknowable but offers a clearing for imagined emergent identities and possibilities. While Américo Paredes could not fill in the blanks of Chonita’s future possibilities, the active reader can imagine it. These possibilities include a female voice that articulates radical critiques of male politics that disrupts and

dislodges gendered systems of hierarchies that make women silent. Chonita cannot alleviate the historical past of border troubles but can offer pathways through the future, through modernity.

Notes to Chapter 2

¹ Emma Tenayuca was “almost an exact contemporary of Américo Paredes, Emma Tenayuca was born in San Antonio, Texas. A child of working-class parents in that harshly segregated South Texas city, Tenayuca learned revolutionary politics listening to radical voices protesting the extreme version of the Jim Crow laws that governed Texas society in the first half of the twentieth century. In 1937, as a young woman of 21 years, Tenayuca joined the Communist Party and by 1939, already a veteran of numerous strikes and workers’ actions in San Antonio, she had been elected State Chair of the Communist Party of Texas” (Saldívar 2006, 91).

² In a note to chapter 5, Saldívar says of Emma Tenayuca and Paredes, “Paredes in several places has stated that Emma was one of his heroes as he was reaching maturity in south Texas” (2006, 461). This note of reaching maturity is important, it supports my argument that Paredes cannot imagine Chonita’s future at the time he was writing and perhaps could not imagine at that time what the challenge to traditional male border heroes looked like, thus Chonita dies in childhood in the story.

Chapter 3: Interlude

The “Literariness” of Ethnography: Collapsing Form and Function in Auto-Ethnography, Novel, and the Corrido

Classic models of ethnography are epitomized by the university-trained ethnographer. The trained, detached observer epitomized neutrality and impartiality and classic ethnographic methods argued that only through keeping a distance could the researcher objectively focus on social reality. Renato Rosaldo calls this notion the “myth of detachment,” arguing that a researcher can rarely become a detached observer and that they should instead investigate from varying points of view (1989, 168). In *the Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), Clifford Geertz claims that the aim of anthropology is “the enlargement of the universe of human discourse... and is an aim to which a semiotic concept of culture is particularly well adapted. Culture is a context; something within which social events, behaviors and processes can be intelligibly—thickly-described” (14).

Ethnography is no longer the colonial-like practice it used to be, where cultures and people are imagined in the minds only of Anglo and European anthropologists as units unaffected by time and space. Ethnography is no longer only understood or written from the anthropological or university trained point of view but rather aims to understand from the Native perspective. Adding to these paradigm changes in the field, this chapter will illuminate the ways ethnography struggles as a genre and how border cultural production collapses form and function in order to insert a marginalized voice into the Texas-Mexico border region and nation.

In James Clifford's "Introduction: Partial Truths" in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (1986) Clifford unpacks the complexities of ethnography as a genre. Clifford notes that:

To a growing number, however, the "literariness" of anthropology—and especially of ethnography—appears as much more than a matter of good writing or distinct style. Literary processes—metaphor, figuration, narrative—affect the ways cultural phenomenon are registered, from the first jotted "observations", to the completed book, to the ways these configurations "make sense" in determined acts of reading" (4).

This chapter argues that there is meaning in the literariness of ethnographies. In other word, metaphor, narrative, and figuration come to mean more than styles used to only entertain. This chapter also considers what it means when the borders and limitations of literary conventions are crossed, intersected, and interconnected. I argue that by calling attention to these spaces suggests new ways of understanding Texas-Mexico border texts by reimagining how they function within and against both their literary processes and genre conventions. The notion of conceiving of the ethnographer as a literary writer and the literary writer as ethnographer who works within and against literary conventions is a component of ethnographic aesthetics explored in this chapter. I quote at length the conundrum of the literariness of ethnographies:

It has long been asserted that scientific anthropology is also an "art," that ethnographies have literary qualities. We often hear that an author writes with style, that certain descriptions are vivid or convincing (should not every accurate description be convincing?). A work is deemed evocative or artfully composed in addition to being factual; expressive, rhetorical functions are conceived as decorative or merely as ways to present an object analysis or description more effectively. Thus the facts of the matter may be kept separate, at least in principle, from their means of communication. But the literary or rhetorical dimensions of ethnography can no longer be so easily compartmentalized... (Clifford 1986, 4).

Examining not only what authors say but the way in which they say it is proposed in an ethnographic aesthetic in order to understand the ways texts function beyond the prescribed meaning of the genre they are written in.

I call your attention once more to the critique of Jovita González's work examined in depth in chapter one that claims her work to be assimilationist and paternalistic. I argue that critics also categorize her work as such because they fail to consider not only her complex positionality and the number of discursive frameworks she works from, but they also fail to recognize the way Texas-Mexico border texts function within and against classic literary forms: "thus the facts of the matter may be kept separate, at least in principle, from their means of communication" (4). By compartmentalizing the means of communication, or the literary form, with the fact, or with what the texts say, limits the way texts function. I argue scholar's pigeonhole Jovita González's work into neat categories of genre and only consider her work within those structures. In other words, critics focus only on González's form of writing, arguing that she mimicked Dobie's racist and paternalistic style. However, if form and function collapse, her work does more the mimic Dobie's hegemonic discourse. This also reinforces Homi Bhabha's "rhetoric of repetition or doubling" that allows for agency in González's work that is both same and different (1994, 54). Essentialized difference not only shadows the way Texas-Mexico border inhabitants are perceived to respond to unequal power relations, but also creates rigid boundaries in how one categorizes acts of writing.

Sergio Reyna's introduction to Jovita González's *The Woman Who Lost Her Soul and Other Stories* 2000 considers González's acts of writing within traditional paradigms

and genres. Reyna discusses two schools of thought for recovering folk narratives. First, there is preservation of the oral tradition in its original form. In this instance, the story is considered a “sacred relic” and in order to maintain the integrity of the work, a “loyal reproduction does not change any of the oral text represented in oral tradition” (xiii). Then there is the school of thought Reyna claims Jovita González embraced. In this tradition, the “folk narrative should serve as the basis for literary production, even for more elaborate narrative works, such as the novels to be written by educated authors” (xiv). This tradition is what Marcus and Fischer call “ethnographic poetics” in *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (74). Literary production, as another mode of ethnographic expression, is not the sole purpose of ethnographic poetics, it more importantly functions to establish “culturally authentic ways to read indigenous oral narratives and literary forms” (73). Jovita González’s work then, when read within an ethnographic aesthetic, departs from the ethnographic poetics because it inserts the author’s act of writing into the paradigm. Not only do Texas-Mexico border texts offer multiple voices, dialogues and styles that are never static but always fluid, as with border culture in general, but also narrative and history collapse, both in the act of reading and in the act of writing. The rigid boundaries of genre are evidenced in in the way Sergio Reyna perceives Gonzales’s work. Reyna categorizes González’s work within the category of the novel, thus fiction and this *form* at best, is “decorative” and thus what her work communicates, *fact*, is limited by the genre. This paradigm of understanding González’s work limits the way her work is understood.

It is apparent in González’s *Caballero*, that there is evidence for the literariness in her work. The novel documents the social, racial, economic, and even gender shifts along

the border leading up to the Mexican-American War. These “facts” however, are delivered in “form” of the novel. When circumscribed by the genre, the novel would function only to entertain, to embellish, as Reyna suggests. However, by collapsing the form and the fact it becomes clear that this “form” functions in more ways. Although *Caballero* is literally labeled a historical novel, its facts reveal its politics are not solely for entertaining. In an interview with Gonzalez and Edmundo E. Mireles, González’s husband, Marta Cotera notes the complexities of the novel that shored up in the interview, “with Mireles doing most of the talking, the couple confirmed that such a book had indeed been written, but Mireles said it no longer existed; it had been destroyed. .. Mireles went on to make two other points about the presumably destroyed manuscript: first, the racial-political climate in the 1940s would have made the novel’s publication controversial for them as public school teachers in Corpus Christi, and, second, as a strategy for dealing with this local problem as well as appealing to publishers, his wife had asked Eimer (Raleigh) to lend her surname to the project and to type the manuscript (Limón 1996, xviii-xix). The fact that Raleigh was listed as a co-author illustrates that González was aware that her work functioned and would be perceived not only as “fiction” or “false” even when classified as a novel. The politics surrounding *Caballero* demonstrates the way texts forms function in ways beyond their literary genres. And, that González kept the manuscript hidden and sought out an Anglo co-author exemplifies that Gonzalez was aware of the way her work functioned beyond literary borders, even though this text was only published posthumously.

Jovita González’s work takes on many forms and her literary corpus collapses form and fact in different ways. That is, she writes Folklore published by Texas Folklore

Society, writes shorts stories and novels and, her master's thesis is considered a form of social commentary. Although Jovita's work functions beyond binaries by collapsing genre forms—critics, like Reyna, fail to see her how her work functions beyond the form. If one looks beyond the forms of the texts—or considers how the form is separate from what the genre dictates, then one can read meaning in the texts beyond mere entertainment. The novel is traditionally a work of fiction whose form is pure embellishment for the sole purpose of functioning to gain popularity, to entertain, and to sell. If the form is considered in such a rigid way then the form can only function in one way—it is seen only to gain popularity, assimilate, mimic popular styles, an argument emphasized by Reyna.

An ethnographic aesthetic proposes collapsing form and function. Similar to collapsing the authorial “I” and interpretive eye introduced in previous chapters, collapsing form and function adds another layer in which to consider border cultural production. Traditional genres conceived of as false and embellished are written for economic gains but can function in other ways. Traditional forms are important when one considers how they function in different modes. For example, the novel as form, functions not only to entertain, but actively invent, make social commentary, and dismantle authorities by crossing traditional constructs of difference.

Reimagining traditional construct of difference with meaningful differences underlines different identities and offers pathways through modernity. As Louis Gerard Mendoza explains in *Historia: The Literary Making of Chicana and Chicano History* (2001), “people of Mexican descent in the U.S. don't simply have history on the one hand and literature on the other; we also have history expressed in literary form” (2001, 61).

And that literary form may in fact be the blurred genres of fiction, folklore, ethnography, and auto-ethnography of the border.

If literature can be considered ethnography and ethnography literature, both can be considered culture collecting. James Clifford also suggests that ethnography can be viewed as a form of culture collecting, though he stresses that this is not the *only* way to see it. Clifford argues that perceiving ethnography as culture collecting “highlights the ways that diverse experiences and facts are selected, gathered, detached from their original temporal occasions, and given enduring value in a new arrangement” (1988, 231). As argued in the previous chapters, border cultural production is not stuck in a historical time freeze but collapses time and thus functions within and against temporal boundaries and envisions futures that exist outside limited notions of essentialized difference. For example, even though Sergio Reyna privileges a view of folklore in the most traditional sense of translating oral stories over more elaborate works like the novel, González’s work collapses form and function. This makes her work valuable not only in different temporal occasions but also has value in different arrangements, be it the novel, folklore, short stories, or social commentary.

Collapsing form and function counters a rigid understanding of border cultural texts. When more elaborate works like the novel are taken out of temporal occasions, a space that Sergio Reyna privileges as producing “a loyal reproduction” (2001, xiii), the texts offer value in the new arrangements. The new arrangements also have the possibility to reach a multiple diverse readership—perhaps even a readership of the future. For example, González’s master’s thesis, “Social Life in Webb, Starr, and Zapata Counties” is a social history of South Texas written under the guidance of J. Frank Dobie,

Carlos Castañeda, and Dr. Eugene Barker. Though hesitant to approve González's thesis due to its lack of historical references, Dr. Barker finally agreed, stating that it was “ ‘an interesting but somewhat odd piece of work’”(qtd. in Garza-Falcón 1998, 75). This reaction by Dr. Barker can be explained by the way González collapses form and fact, this collapse creates, according to Dr. Barker, a “somewhat odd piece of work.” After all, her thesis is described as a social history but lacks historical references. If González's earlier writings blurred genres, it is evident they also can hypothetically function for future readers. Carlos Castañeda commented that “this thesis will be used in years to come as source material” (qtd. in Garza-Falcón 1998, 75). “Social Life in Webb, Starr, and Zapata Counties” not only collapses genres of history and social commentary, but also collapses forms of folklore, ethnography, and auto-ethnography.

Auto-Ethnography

In talking about the way the “game” of ethnography is changing, Clifford, in his introduction to *Writing Culture the Poetics and Politics of Ethnography (1986)*, discusses some of the restrictions placed on the outside researcher. The outside researcher led to the concept of the auto-ethnographer. The auto ethnographer is an important part and figure of this dissertation and of border literature as a figure who dismantles ethnographic authority as well as dismantles traditional ways genres are understood—collapsing form and fact.

Collapsing boundaries, the auto-ethnographer embodies a position that is at once the writer and informant, so to speak. But the auto-ethnographer also reveals a collapse of form and function where (auto) (ethnography) is both the literary “I” as well as the interpretive “eye.” Clifford informs us of this new figure: “a new figure has entered the

scene, the ‘indigenous ethnographer.’ Insiders studying their own cultures offer new angles of vision and depths of understanding. Their accounts are empowered and restricted in unique ways” (1986, 9). What this dissertation does is understands and deconstructs the way these border texts, as forms of ethnographies that collapse form and function, do not only offer new angles and depths of understanding but also the ways in which they invent/imagine a new local future and produce knowledge.

Autobiographies, autobiographical fictions, and ethnic autobiographies are taken up in M. J. Fischer’s “Ethnicity and the Post-Modern Arts of Memory.” Of these blended and emerging genres, Fischer notes:

What the newer works bring home forcefully is, *first*, the paradoxical sense that ethnicity is something reinvented or reinterpreted in each generation by each individual and that it is often something quite puzzling to the individual, something over which he or she lacks control. Ethnicity is not something that is simply passed on from generation to generation, taught, and learned; it is something dynamic, often unsuccessfully repressed or avoided. It can be potent even when not consciously taught; it is something that institutionalized teaching easily makes chauvinist, sterile, and superficial, something that emerges in full—often liberating—flower only through struggle (1986, 195)

What Fischer says about ethnicity not being simply passed down is a notion that Texas-Mexico border cultural production hones in. Through blending literary genres, authors, in the act of writing, re-invent literary structures as well as inventing what it means to be Mexican-American is a shifting colonial space: “the search or struggle for a sense of ethnic identity is a (re-)invention and discovery of a vision, both ethical and future-oriented” (196).

Inventing what it means to be Mexican-American is multifaceted and resists simple categories. Ethnicity is not “simply a matter of group process (support systems), nor a matter of transition (assimilation), nor a matter of straight forward transmission

from generation to generation (socialization)” (Fischer 1986, 197). Overall, this project is one that questions the notion of a natural progression of culture that is merely passed down from generation to generation. It contends literature not only serves as a kind of recovery or repository for culture but that literature, the form, and act of writing, communication, negotiates identities in shifting colonial spaces.

Fact and form work together, a bifocality, that through collapsing form and function simultaneously and actively invents, creates, and negotiates identities and, imagines local futures: “ethnic memory is thus, or ought to be, future, not past, oriented” (201). Rather than culture being collected, inherited, simply passed down, or even recovered, it must be imagined, invented, and created.

The auto-ethnographer also accounts for unfair and biased representations. Fatima Tobing Rony develops her own form of cultural critique in *The Third Eye: Race Cinema and the Ethnographic Spectacle* (1996). In this text Rony both demonstrates and critiques the pervasive ways indigenous peoples are objectified in film, or what she labels “ethnographic cinema.” “Ethnographic cinema,” she tells us, “describes the broad and variegated field of cinema which situates indigenous peoples in a displaced temporal realm” and represents indigenous people as native as landscape, native as sidekick, real live native, and native as vanishing (8). She argues that these representations deny the full range of humanity of indigenous peoples/people of color and purports that these images were further used to ideologically justify colonialism and claims that they continue to have significance in academia and visual and pop culture. A daughter of Sumatran parents, Rony is aware of her position as object in ethnographic films and opens her book with “How I Became a Savage: Seeing Anthropology.” It is this subject position that

frames Rony's project as she asks "What does one become when one sees that one is not fully recognized as Self by the wider society, but can not fully identify as Other?" (6).

Rony develops the concept of the third eye to recognize the complexities of this process. Extending the notion of Du Bois' double consciousness, the third eye not only recognizes the racially charged glance "but can induce one to see the very process which creates the internal splitting, to witness the conditions that give rise to [that] double consciousness" (4). Rony maintains that the third eye is a way of not only recognizing the construction of power relations but also having the potential to disrupt them.

The auto-ethnographer is an active agent in Texas-Mexico borderland history that imagines futures as well as accounts for the conditions that deny them a full range of humanity. The critical "third eye" can be seen in their work as their writings both tell their stories on the one hand and disrupt power dominant power relations on the other. *Chicana Traditions: Continuity and Change* (2002) edited by Norma E. Cantú and Olga Nájera-Ramírez is an anthology that focuses specifically on Chicana expressive culture through auto-ethnography. Every piece in this anthology is not only about Chicana culture but is written by Chicanas who operate a certain amount of self-reflexivity. Auto-ethnographers gain agency in telling their own experience and often borrow ideas and methods from one genre to another to create hybrid texts that function as ethnography, historical fiction, and (auto)biographies. These practices synthesize "both a postmodern ethnography, in which the realist conventions and objective observer position of standard ethnography have been called into question, and a postmodern autobiography, in which the notion of the coherent, individual self has been similarly called into question" (Reed-Danahay 1997, 3). Auto-ethnography can, as Deborah E. Reed Danahay points out in *Auto/Ethnography: Rewriting*

the Self and the Social (1997), function as the ethnography of one's own group or function as "autobiographical writing that has ethnographic interest" (2). In "Chicano/a Studies as Oppositional Ethnography" (1990), Angie Chabram claims that the "politics of ethnographic interpretation identified in Chicano discourse, and anthropological discourse embraced race, class, gender, under-representation, and economic oppression" and recuperated an "historical subject through history, politics, literature, sociology, folklore, law, and art" (240).

Moving beyond or collapsing an (auto)biographical narrative, life histories of the U.S.-Mexico border often create alternative/conflicting histories but can also reconcile them as they "reveal juxtapositions of social contexts through a succession of narrated individual experiences that may be obscured in the structural study of processes" (Marcus 1998, 94). Carlos G. Vélez-Ibáñez traces his family history and Mexican Cultures of the Southwest through a process combining ethnography and biography he calls "ethnobiography" in *Border Visions: Mexican Cultures of the Southwest United States* (1996).

Combining ethnography and biography brings forth notions of positionality. Positionality plays an important function where ethnographers explicitly account for their complex position as belonging to the culture in which they are writing about. This positionality is an important aspect not considered in classic anthropology. Karen Mary Dávalos states in "Chicana/o Studies and Anthropology" that "anthropologists ignore how social interactions are conditioned by their very presence...and did not account for their position as individuals of a specific race or class" (1998, 24). It is evident in González's remarks regarding field work discussed later that she was already well aware of the

predicaments of this complex positionality in her role as an ethnographer studying her own people.

González's position could be understood as an autoethnographer. A position that already situates her as harbinger to post-structural ethnography where social scientists must "grapple with the realization that its objects of analysis are also analyzing subjects who critically interrogate ethnographers" (Rosaldo 1989, 21). It seems that in the 1920's and 1930's, González was already aware that tables could be turned—that she would also be viewed critically, as she secured securing letters of introduction from the clergy of border counties, legitimizing her practice of traveling without a chaperone and conducting fieldwork. Because of gender constraints, perhaps a young single woman would not have been welcomed in the homes of her informants, especially since most of her stories were gathered from men. González states in her memoir:

The summer of 1929 was spent traveling in Webb, Zapata, and Starr counties. To facilitate matters I had asked the Catholic Arch-bishop Droessarts and Bishop Capers, Episcopal bishop of the same city, for letters of introduction to the clergy of the border counties. Whenever anyone asked who "the strange young lady with long hair and a book full of notes was," the answer would be, "She is don Francisco Guerra's granddaughter from Las Viboras Ranch." That was the open sesame (xiii).

Jovita González was conscious of her complex positionality as an inside researcher. Part of the culture she is studying, Jovita is cognizant of the gender norms in her communities.

The letters of introduction from the church help González navigate traditional gender norms within which she functions. By securing a letter from the Catholic Arch-bishop, she uses religion to navigate tradition and modernity. Through the church's mediation, González situates herself as a cultural insider. By introduced first as Don Francisco Guerra's granddaughter, she is tied to her culture and thus an insider. In this

way she is linked to tradition even as she participates in a shifting modernity traveling to different border counties with a “book full of notes.” The letters are anticipatory of the questions asked of a woman functioning outside of the domesticity, providing an answer in anticipation of the question of who was “the strange young lady with long hair and a book full of notes.” Mediating tradition and modernity gain Jovita access to people and places she may not have had access to otherwise.

In the vein of Norma Cantú’s *Canicula*, González’s work should be considered autoethnographic in that, “the many stories and legends that she preserved through her literary work were influenced by her childhood experiences and became an important part of her personal history” (Reyna 2000, xi). In this unique position as autoethnographer in the Texas-Mexican borderlands, González is not only part of the subject being researched but also brings forth personal encounters and emotions as she is intimately connected to the community of which she writes. González’s position as an autoethnographer already situates her as harbinger to post-structural ethnography where social scientists must “grapple with the realization that its objects of analysis are also analyzing objects who critically interrogate ethnographers” (Rosaldo 1989, 21).

González is not only a part of the subject being researched but also brings in personal encounters and emotions. Unlike classic ethnography that argued for a disconnected position from the community, Rosaldo argues that the researcher benefits if they are “connected to a community, not isolated and detached” (1989, 194). Indeed, González was intimately connected to her community, claiming that she has “always felt at home in Texas” (xi). Her literal middle class position situates her symbolically in an interstitial space where “middle” is not only in the sense of “occupying a middle position

in the economy between blue-collar and service workers on the one hand and the large group of Anglo capitalists on the other, but also in the sense of serving as middlemen between the Chicano population and the dominant institutions of society” (Treviño 1985, 65).

González’s work is not only critical of dominant ideologies she dismantles, as fleshed out in chapter one, she is also critical of her own Texas-Mexican border community. In chapter XII of González’s novel, *Dew on the Thorn*, she tells the story of Don Alberto who was educated in Mexico during the time when the French trend of thought predominated. After marrying the daughter of a Texas landowner, he was persuaded to stay in Texas and conduct a school for boys. It is in the process of education that González documents class privilege:

In accordance with the common belief “that learning spoils them for work,” the children of the *peones* did not attend school....The *rancheros*, believing themselves masters of everything, looked down from their self-appointed eminence upon the *peones* as mere instruments to work for them. It had never occurred to these *hidalgos* that the *peones* were human beings with a mental capacity to learn and spiritual possibilities to appreciate the beautiful things....Now for the first time...the children of the *peones* joined the children of their masters in singing the national hymn (145).

This social sphere that was once only for the children of the *rancheros*, is now a social space where classes are mixed. In the context of education, all have a capacity to learn and are in this sense equals. As Louis Mendoza puts it, González’s work “eschews modernist visions of cultural unity and instead anticipates a postmodern practice of depicting the cultural negotiations that occur whenever multiple subjects occupy the same space” (Mendoza 2001, 33). While there is subtle class critique in the above passage, “the *rancheros*, believing themselves masters of everything, looked down from their self-appointed eminence upon the *peones* as mere instruments to work for them,” Gonzalez

does not assume ethnographic authority and suppress the informant's own voice, which works to "legitimate the anthropologists scientific authority" (Davalos 1998, 25). In ethnographic research one, even when blurring genres, "cannot simply invoke traditional moralisms or political ideologies of evaluation," rather new forms of cultural critique must emerge in the "spaces of negotiation among increasing numbers of detailed spheres of expertise and interests" (Marcus and Fischer 1999, xvi-xvii).

Novel as Fictional Autobiography

Américo Paredes's work constitutes a "corpus of work offering an unrepressed critique of past and present Anglo domination," according to José Limón. However, I argue that Paredes's work not only critiques Anglo domination but attempts to dismantle binaries when the form and facts of his work collapse. For example, *George Washington Gómez*, by Américo Paredes, was written in the 1930's and 1940's, though not published until 1990. The novel follows the coming of age of a young boy named George Washington Gómez, also known as Guálinto Gómez. This book follows Guálinto's coming of age in relation to his Texas-Mexican community and the process of modernization with U.S.-Mexican conflict as the historical backdrop. *George Washington Gómez* can easily be read as a sort of quasi-autobiography of Paredes's early life through the fictional character of Guálinto. Like many borderland subjectivities, Guálinto undergoes a process of complicated cultural identity formation shaped by many factors.

Through an ethnographic aesthetic, the factors of a complicated border identity are not so easily demarcated into binaries of difference. In fact, even though Paredes is hailed as delivering an unrepressed critique of Anglo domination through his seminal piece of the ballad of Gregorio Cortez, *George Washington Gomez* elucidates the way tradition and

modernity are navigated in order to imagine a border identity. At school Guálinto was an “American” in the classroom and “while at home or on the playground he was Mexican.” This mediation and navigation of an “American” identity and a “Mexican” identity is literally embodied by the character’s name, George Washington Gomez, his formal name, and Guálinto, his nickname. In fact, the narrator tells us that “throughout his early childhood these two selves grew within him without much conflict, each an exponent of a different tongue and a different way of living” (147). The novel teaches that identities are constructed and constantly negotiated. As he matures however, things get more complicated for Guálinto, I quote at length these complexities:

Consciously he [Guálinto] considered himself a Mexican. He was ashamed of the name his dead father had given him, George Washington Gómez. He was grateful to his uncle Feliciano for having registered him in school as “Guálinto” and having said that it was an Indian name. He spoke Spanish, literally as his mother tongue; it was the only language his mother would allow him to use when he spoke to her. The Mexican flag made him feel sentimental, and a rousing Mexican song would make him feel like yelling. The Mexican national hymn brought tears to his eyes, and when he said “we” he meant the Mexican people. “La Capital” did not mean Washington, D.C, for him but Mexico City. Of such matter were made the basic cells in the honeycomb that made up his personality.

But there was also George Washington Gómez, the American. He was secretly proud of the name his more conscious twin, Guálinto, was ashamed to avow publicly. George Washington Gómez secretly desired to be a full-fledged, complete American without the shameful encumbrance of his Mexican race. He was the product of his Anglo teachers and the books he read in school, which were all in English. He felt a pleasant warmth when he heard “The Star Spangled Banner.” It was he it was who fought the British with George Washington and Francis Marion the Swamp Fox, discovered pirate treasure with Long John Silver, and got lost in a cave with Tom Sawyer and Becky Thatcher. Books had made him so. He read everything he could lay his hands on. But he also heard from the lips of his elders songs and stories that were the history of his people, The Mexican people. And he also fought the Spaniards with Hidalgo, the French with Juárez and Zaragosa, and the Gringos with Blas María le la Garza Falcón and Juan Nepomuceno Cortina in his childish fantasies (147-48).

This shows the complexity of identity formation in the Texas-Mexico border region and the difficulties and sometimes contradictions in this process. Guálinto had to reconcile such iconic figures like Tom Sawyer and Juan Nepomuceno Cortina, a social bandit who violently resisted against Anglo injustices and declared the right of Mexican-Americans to defend themselves. Because Paredes's more "resistant" work was published before this lost manuscript, he has come to be known for his working class folk-base of Chicano resistance to Anglo-America as discussed in the previous chapters. Nevertheless, one sees in these two passages the negotiation between these two worlds. Not only by Guálinto, but if one reads this text as an autobiography of sorts, or even as an ethnographic text, juxtaposing these two genres, as collapsing form and function encourages, then we can read, symbolically at least, that Paredes was also negotiating these very same identities at the very same time.

In addition, Paredes was writing *George Washington Gómez* around the same time González was writing and publishing her folklore. Thus, these two individuals are not repressed or unrepressed but are negotiating their racial, ethnic, and class positions in the ever shifting social and economic context of the Texas-Mexican borderlands and resisting static notions of ethnic identities. Let me suggest that, it is Limón's acknowledgment of Jovita González's gendered position in Chicano/a history and literature that is "repressed," as he allows her importance to only "slip" briefly before regressing "heroically" to *male* dominated history of the border. While "following the life or biography" is not necessarily a subaltern space, Marcus does suggest that social contexts embedded in these life stories "might be most clearly revealed in subaltern life histories" (94).

Emma Tenayuca and Re-imagining the Corrido

Scholars, like Américo Paredes, posit the corrido in the decade from 1836 to the late 1930s. However, the corrido traces its roots in the Americas to the early sixteenth century with the coming of the Spanish romance, or ballad (Herrera Sobek 1998, 227). It is nevertheless much later than the sixteenth century that the corrido serves as a means for Mexicans and Mexican-Americans to express their sentiments toward not only the acquisition of Mexico but conflict arising along the Texas-Mexico border, especially with the Texas Rangers. The corrido functioned as an informal means of communication on diverse subject matters. The subject often included “disdain for Americanization and contempt for those who rejected *lo Mexicano* by adopting the fashions, language, and habits of the Anglos” (Del Castillo 1997, 79).

As a genre, Chicano historiography privileges the corrido as form and what it communicates is often tied to oppositional resistance to dominating power. Corridos often took on unique themes related to life along the border, specifically, ethnic friction, epitomized by Américo Paredes’s *“With his Pistol in his Hand”: A Border Ballad and its Hero* (1958). As discussed in depth in the previous two chapters, this corrido resisted Anglo injustices through reversing paradigms, where the “gringos’ cowardice is juxtaposed with Chicano bravery” (Arteaga 1986, 88). If the traditional form of the corrido changes its fact, or message, then the corrido can function not as a repository of resistant opposition but can imagine other possibilities outside narratives of binaries.

A poem by Beva Sanchez-Padilla titled “The Ballad of Emma Tenayuca” appears in *Entre Guadalupe Y Malinche: Tejanas in Literature and Art* and shows how Tejanas are reimagining borders and classic genres, including the corrido. *Entre Guadalupe Y Malinche* is vibrant collection of modern and contemporary personal essays, poetry, short

stories, and visual art by women from the Texas-Mexico Borderland who identify as Tejana. Guadalupe and Malinche, perhaps the two most significant cross-cultural icons in Chicana art, literature, and criticism, not only make up the book's title, but also comprise, Inés Hernández-Ávila informs us, a literal intersection in Laredo, TX—collapsing a literal and symbolic crossroads, much like this collection itself.

Sanchez-Padilla's poem, like the collection it comes from draws from many forms. The poem collapses form and function as it reimagines the orality of the corrido to the written word of poetry. Further, this piece navigates tradition and modernity by titling the poem a "ballad" and not "corrido." Using the written word of poetry to offer a ballad instead of a corrido proper hints the form that follows will not function in the traditional way. The function of the pieces offers a counter to the traditional corrido form even as it pays homage to it. In this sense the poem does not highlight Chicano bravery and violent resistant models to inequality and domination. Rather, "The Ballad of Emma Tenayuca" navigates social resistance by means that differ from violence and highlights a female border figure by inverting the classic paradigm of the corrido.

If the "Ballad of Emma Tenayuca" sounds familiar, Emma Teyuca was the person whom Paredes modeled Chonita after in the "Hammon and the Beans" discussed in chapter two. This relatively uncirculated poem was only published in 2016. I include it in this chapter because it engages Paredes's work and uses the corrido to insert the written ballad that functions to inserts a female voice into Chicano history:

I'm going to sing you a ballad about a Mexican Woman
 With the character of a tree
 Strong roots and flexible branches
 Emma Zepeda Tenayca...
 This is your song

I'm going to sing you a song
 About a brilliant woman
 Arrested at 17
 For her brave acts of protest

In these first two stanza's Emma's strength, "her strong root" tie her to tradition but her "flexible branches" allow her to navigate modernity. Unlike Chonita, whom dies early in life in Pareds's story, here Emma's bravery is not evidence by a gun, but by "acts of protest." Perhaps Emma's future could have been Chonita's had she lived. The poem continues:

Young Emma Tenayuca
 Listened to the preachers and teachers
 Reading the *Excelsior* aloud
 Ideas of Obregón, Madero, Cárdenas
 The Magones and Mutualistas

Learned the songs of the Wobblies
 And the need of the people
 To speak out and organize
 Picket, strike and protest

Listening to preacher and teachers, Tenayuca eventually leads the Great Pecan Sheller's Strike. Of Tenayuca, Ramón Saldívar says the story involves "the Plan of San Diego, it's revolutionary creed, and the racial hatred and tension that has persisted to the present in South Texas in the aftermath of the bitter fighting, the "border troubles," of 1915-1917. (Saldívar, 1994, xvi). The immediate past is "represented by the Plan of Sand Diego Rebellion of 1915-1917. With its links to the Mexican Revolution, international anarchism, socialism, and the heroic resistance struggle of the Flores Magón brothers, the rebellion represents the phase of 'direct action,' now part of the legendary past" (Saldívar 1994, xvi). That past is brought to light in Beva's poem.

Saldívar argues that Paredes’ “The Hammon and the Beans” “recreates the mood of life on the border in the first two decades of the twentieth century, a historical moment when the heroic resistance of men like the *corrido* hero, Gregorio Cortez, and even the Plan of San Diego revolutionaries, Luis de la Rosa and Ancieto Pizaña, is already fading into the hazy, and unhistoricized, past” (xviii). But I argue that this hero isn’t fading, that the hero is being reimagined and has been reimagined by previous writers, like Gonzalez who because of essentialized difference have been ignored. Both the reimagined hero and the reimagined form, Emma and the ballad, for example, are reimagined in Beva Sanchez-Padialla’s poem. These acts of writing do not just yield to new social orders, but invent, creating new local futures. I propose some of these reimagining and emerging heroes are heroes their writer’s cannot fully conceive of yet. As a reimagined border figure, the traditional form of the ballad sores Tenayuca into the future:

Emma the woman with energy
 Organizing the unemployed
 Acting on her noble beliefs
 Ahead of her time they said

They caller her
 A 90 pound giant
 A true American
 Embracing her Indian heritage

When they would see her coming
 They would say
 Here comes the young woman
 Who moves men and women

This is a song
 About an intellectual Mexican woman
 Who knew that human rights
 Are for all people

This poem blurs the biography of Emma Tenyuca with the genre of both the corrido and poetry, the written word and orality. Emma Tenayuca is a counter border hero, an intellectual, a woman, and one who fights for all. The works included in the collection thus navigate the interstitial spaces of life along the border, both the complex and the quotidian, in order to highlight the fluidity of culture. The texts collectively imagine, create, and rewrite the Texas-Mexican landscape but contest any single notion of a unified experience, be it cultural, gender, or geographical.

It is through oppositional forms of ethnography, including auto-ethnography, post-structural ethnography, Texas-Mexico borderland cultural production that I argue Texas-Mexico border subjectivities blended and blurred genres to create historical texts that not only served to document social, racial, and economic shifts along the Texas-Mexico border but to imagine alternate possibilities. These social, racial, and economic shifts extend to present-day predicaments of this region; like issues of transnationalism, globalization, NAFTA, and the Juarez murders, issues that will be taken up in next chapter, chapter four.

Both Jovita González and Américo Paredes's work blurs boundaries between form and function and, as will be discussed in chapter four, the cultural production on the Juárez murders operates in much the same way. As the U.S.-Mexico border has long been a contested space, an ethnographic aesthetic accounts for the complex shifting colonial relations of the area as it "arises in response to the empirical changes in the world and therefore to transformed locations of cultural production" (Marcus 1988, 80).

Chapter 4

Ethnography, Cultural Production, and the Juárez Murders

The predicament of culture brings the dissertation to the contemporary moment of the Texas-Mexico border generally, and to the El Paso-Juárez border specifically. Chapter four argues that the ethnographic writing and Chicana cultural production surrounding the Juárez murders vacillates between raising awareness and consciousness on the one hand, and reproducing the predicaments of early ethnography on the other. That is, this cultural production hinges on reproducing an authorial tone that speaks for about others—dancing dangerously close with the practices of early scientific ethnography. In this way, the importance of navigating tradition with the off-centeredness of a shifting modernity is just as pertinent in the contemporaneous moment.

The current economic, social, and global conditions of Juárez are interconnected, some argue, with the violence against women. The cultural production of the murders of women in Juárez can be read within the constructs of ethnography and the predicament of culture. That is, these cultural texts can be read as ethnographies that complicate and raise awareness of the issues of femicide and also function within and against the predicament of culture. If the predicament of culture rests on the notion that cultures and traditions are lost in the face of modernity, then the cultural production of the Juárez murders functions as representing not only what is at stake when modernity is understood as threatening authenticity and traditions on the one hand, but also represents possibilities for navigating complicated bi-national and bi-cultural borders on the other. The predicament of culture,

is a thread that is continued in this chapter to examine the cultural production of the Juárez murders.

Chapter four is divided into four main areas of discussion. Beginning with a discussion of the Las Palmas del Sol Sun Bowl Parade held in El Paso, Texas, every year since the 1930s, I situate the parade as a lens to explore the many layers of the cultural, geographical, and bi-national facets of the El Paso-Juárez border. I argue that the parade centers on a surface utopic display of the twin-cities that momentarily elides the issues of the Juarez murders, violence against women, drug wars, and militarization of the border, even while the politics and arrangement of the parade's procession invokes these contemporaneous issues and puts them in conversation with more traditional forms of cultural texts. If the parade offers a "front-stage" view of cultural politics of the twin cities, the following section examines what is implicitly absent from the prescribed procession, demonstrating how the parade also navigates tradition and modernity to imagine emerging social and cultural orders of the borderlands.

Section two examines the complexities of the El-Paso-Juárez border and considers the ethnography of the women of Ciudad Juárez. Specifically, I examine the ethnography surrounding the women maquila workers to understand how these women imagine and navigate future possibilities through shifting gender and cultural roles of domesticity, both in private and public spaces. This section draws from the work in Leslie Salzinger's ethnographic study titled "Re-Forming the 'Traditional Mexican Woman': Making Subjects in a Border Factory" before shifting to an analysis of the cultural production surrounding the Juarez murders and the way the Mexican national narrative of La Malinche is mirrored in the current predicament. Section three and four examines

Marjorie Agosin's *Secrets of the Sand: The Young Women of Juarez*, Alicia Gaspar de Alba's *Desert Blood: The Juarez Murders*, and concludes with Lourdes Portillo's *Señorita Extraviada*, arguing that local futures, paths through modernity, and authority are complicated by the rhetoric that speaks for the women of Juárez even while silencing them.

Overall, this chapter argues that the maquiladora industrialization can be understood as representing the loss of tradition in the face of modernity. Rather than staging the maquilas in opposition to tradition, I posit the maquilas as spaces where women are active agents who navigate tradition and modernity and the First World and the Third.

Las Palmas Del Sol Sun Bowl Parade: New Mexico, El Paso, and Juárez

The impetus for this project began as a personal one. I grew up in Southern New Mexico on the El Paso-New Mexico-Juárez border. My interest in literature, folklore, and the borderlands was prescribed by own experiences in this tryptic space. Like so many in the area, I grew up attending the El Paso Thanksgiving parade, the name used by locals, almost every year. Not until attending the parade again years later, this time as a graduate student, young scholar, and against the backdrop of a heightened militarization of the border, did I reconsider how the parade functions as more than a ritualized celebration on Thanksgiving Day. The parade also functions as a way to navigate tradition and modernity that enables an imagined future outside binaries of essentialized difference. In addition to a community festivity, the visual narrative of the parade highlights the city's complex layered history by traversing traditional cultural aspects that make up El Paso's unique character with current border politics of the militarization of the border.

The El Paso Thanksgiving Parade, officially named “Las Palmas Del Sol Sun Bowl Parade,” is an El Paso, Texas tradition dating back to 1936. While it began as a precursor to the Sun Bowl football game, it has taken on its own significance in the community. The parade marches down Montana Avenue from Copia Street to Ochoa Street for a total of about four miles. This annual event attracts some 250,000 spectators each year, with recent attendance reaching at least 300,000. Participants and spectators alike, come from both sides of the U.S./Mexico and New Mexico/Texas border. The spectators and the parade represent and celebrate the region’s rich, complex, and layered history.

The Las Palmas del Sol Sun Bowl Parade will serve as the primary text for this section. I argue that the parade can be used as a bi-cultural and bi-national framework that navigates tradition and modernity to then position and understand the backdrop of the Juárez murders, maquilas, and the cultural production surrounding the murders, which will be discussed in the latter sections. When read as a visual text, the parade not only celebrates, but also narrates the complex historical, social and cultural relations of the El Paso-Juárez borderland region. While the parade epitomizes the “front stage” of borderland politics through its procession, including a slot dedicated to immigration and the Border Patrol all the way to demonstrations of La Charreada from Mexico, the “back stage” of the parade reveals a nationalist paradigm of border culture, politics, and identities. This borderland parade both demonstrates and reaffirms El Paso’s bi-national and bi-cultural identity even while it obscures nativists constructs that ignore border violence, militarization of the border, and the killing of young women from Juárez, Mexico.

The Texas-Mexico borderlands is an area that has long been shadowed by colonial violence. Spanish expeditions into the southwest began in the 16th century and Juan de Oñate founded El Paso de Rio Del Norte in 1598. Just south of present day New Mexico, El Paso proved to be an important stop on the Camino Real that served both the Santa Fe Trail and the interior of Mexico. Consequently, the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 forced Spanish settlers south of the Rio Grande and for the next few centuries Spanish settlements along the border flourished and missions were founded at Ysleta, Socorro and San Elizario.

The Rio Grande became an important landmark in 1836 when Texas declared its independence from Mexico. Shortly thereafter, the Mexican-American War of 1846 confirmed the Rio Grande as the international boundary through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and El Paso officially became part of the United States. As fleshed out in previous chapters, this marked a tumultuous time for Mexican Americans north and south of the Rio Grande as class, race, and nation was being redefined. Ft. Bliss, located in El Paso, Texas, was the first military post along the American side of the river. And, much like Américo Paredes's fictional border town of Jonesville on the Grande and Fort Jones from *The Hammon and the Beans*, Fort Bliss was established in 1849 and in 1881 the railroad arrived rapidly expanding business and shaping today's modern city. But unlike Jonesville on the Grande, El Paso is the largest city on the border neighboring Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, forming a bi-national metropolitan area.

El Paso's bi-nationalism and bi-culturalism can be seen on any given day. A glance at the license plates on the cars parked at Cielo Vista Mall in east El Paso reveals as many white and blue Texas plates as the familiar bright orange ones from Chihuahua,

Mexico. From the freeway, I-10 west or east, one can easily see the marked landscape change from industrial, grid-like paved streets to the dirt roads lined by small uneven shanties south of the Rio Grande. Signs inviting one to eat, shop, or sleep are in both English and Spanish. It is apparent that the city's target consumers are bi-national, as one is encouraged to change Mexican pesos for U.S. dollars for a minimal fee. This visual narrative is reinforced by billboards and signs that line the interstate. Road-sign arrows directing which turn, exit, or route takes you to Ciudad Juárez can be read as an invitation or a warning, or both.

The *Visit El Paso* website mirrors this ambiguity when it encourages one to “explore El Paso like a local.” Almost in an anticipatory manner, the main page cites how safe El Paso is for visitors. Prefacing by letting tourists know that El Paso has the “#1 lowest crime rate in U.S. cities with over 5000,000 people, 4th year in row,” it then lists Juárez, Mexico as one of the “things to do” while in the city. After highlighting Juárez's Mercado, Misión Guadalupe y Catedral, and Plaza de Mexicanidad, visitor prospects are then delivered a warning. The “Mexico Travel Warning” section warns potential visitors of the U.S. Department of State's warning about the risk of traveling to Mexico, cautioning there have been “threats to safety and security posed by organized criminal groups in the country” and informs that “U.S. citizens have been the victims of violent crimes...” and, a simple click on the link allows the viewer to read the full warning. The website captures the contradictories and complexities of this regional, cultural and geographical space.

El Paso's cultural identity moves beyond the visual and beyond the immediacy of the border. Starting in 2005 on my many trips home from Albuquerque, I noticed

Billboards flooding I-25 heading to El Paso from Albuquerque, New Mexico, urging one to visit El Paso and taste Mexico. The city of El Paso's website also encourages "visitors" to "get a taste of our history that spans 400 years." The conversations casually overheard at a public outing effortlessly flow in and out of English and Spanish, two national languages that El Paso tourism embraces. This border landscape is not unique to the El Paso- Mexican border, certainly it "exists all over the North American Southwest.... It's a place being inexorably redefined—in terms of language, custom, economics, television, music, food, politics, advertising, employment, and even the pace of life—by the ever-growing numbers of Hispanics in the midst. It is becoming Mex-America." (Garreau 2001, 123).

The Las Palmas Del Sol Sun Bowl Parade serves as an annual signifier for these very same cultural relations. Because of the quotidian exchanges of the cross-cultural negotiations via tourism, shopping, traveling, etc., their very visibility hence makes them invisible. Thus, the Sun Bowl Parade reaffirms explicitly this border city's identity. It is an identity not solely rooted in the United States, Texas, or even in Mexico, but in fact it is an identity rooted in the borderlands both literally and figuratively—an identity rooted in Mex-America. Gloria Anzaldúa says it best when she says: "to live in the Borderlands means you are neither hispana india negra espanola/ ni gabacha, eres mestiza, mulata, half-breed" and "...to survive the Borderlands/ you must live sin fronteras/ be a crossroads" (Anzaldúa 2001, 139). Even as the cultural production examined in this chapter is located on the physical border, "many scholars have begun to deemphasize the physical reality of the border space, deterritorializing the border in favor of a reading which highlights its metaphorical possibilities as a nonspecific site of ethnic, racial, and

gendered interactions” (Volk and Schlotterbeck 2010, 123). While an ethnographic aesthetic indeed collapses borders and reimagines movement beyond one way impositions of power, the physicality of the border remains an important marker of Texas-Mexico border cultural production.

The Las Palmas Del Sol Sun Bowl Parade can be viewed as a literal border stage, with both the actors and the spectators representing cultural groups on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. As a text, the parade’s procession narrates the complex positionality of the borderlands Anzaldúa speaks of as well as making visible the tangible reality of the physical border space. As a collective, the parade symbolizes a national American identity even as it inserts and celebrates a Mexican and Mexican-American heritage.

The Parade opens with a strong military and national presence that is as loud as it is formal. Just like the bugle signals the residents of Américo Paredes’s Jonesville on the Grande—everyone at the parade stands while the 62nd Army Band plays the American National Anthem. The El Paso County’s Sheriff Posse, celebrating its 70th anniversary escorting the sun court, follows. Of over 90 units, the military, the sheriff’s posse, and the border patrol are among the first fifteen to enter the procession. This militarized opening is not surprising, especially when understood within the current political context. Further, the opening festivities emphasize the daily realities of those living in this space:

The concrete reality of the Texas-Mexico border reminds us of...limitations by providing a strikingly dramatic display of state power that reinforces territorial integrity and promotes nationalism. The U.S.-Mexico border is today one of the more militarized zones on earth, populated, on the U.S. side, by eleven thousand Border Patrol agents, on top of thousands of officials from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the U.S. military, state troopers, and local police, not mention a growing population of civilian vigilantes (the “Minutemen” and others). On the Mexican side, the border teems with their counterparts, from federal soldiers and state judicial police (*judiciales*), ... The massive military

presence on the border reflects a U.S. concern with immigration and drugs (Volk Schlotterbeck 2010, 123).

If the parade functions in the contemporary moment by calling attention to state power, it also invokes the long and violent history of the borderlands. The Sheriff's posse, in their wild-west attire, mark their presence as they gallop in formation on their horses, reminiscence of the Texas Rangers confronting Gregorio Cortez, shooting at Antonio Traga Ballas, or questioning Tío Pancho and his sons. In fact, Texas Ranger John R. Hughes was the grand marshal in the very first inaugural parade in 1936. The paramilitary unit famous for hunting down Mexicans and Mexican-Americans functions to promote nationalism by literally opening the parade.

While the concepts of nation building and nationalism are rooted in "fear and hatred for the other," Benedict Anderson offers a more complex understanding of this paradigm. An understanding that moves beyond binaries by claiming that even in the "case of colonized peoples, who have every reason to feel hatred for their imperialist rulers, it is astonishing how insignificant the element of hatred is in these expressions of national feeling" (Anderson 1991, 142). The Las Palmas Del Sol Sun Bowl Parade is a bicultural and bi-national performance that functions as a product of the complexities and contradictions of nationalism in the borderlands. This reading of nationalism can help understand how the current border patrol units operate in the parade.

The U.S. Border Patrol units includes not only men on horseback, but on bikes, ATV's, and Hummers. One could easily interpret their display as an indication and warning that they are capable of policing the rough borderland landscape even while they gain cheers from those in attendance. Furthermore, their position in the parade signifies

that they not only police the border as modern day Texas Rangers, but simultaneously police patriotism as they immediately follow not only the Sheriff's Posse, but also the Ft. Bliss military units.

After the military opening, the parade's procession turns to more Mexican cultural art forms. Dispersed through the many high school bands and floats sponsored by civic and commercial enterprises are units that aesthetically evoke traditional Mexican nationalism. La Charreada, or the Mexican style rodeo, is a huge crowd pleaser. Rather than speed, la charreada emphasizes style and skill of the rider and is steeped in tradition. Their outfits, as well as their horses, are adorned in flashy metals. The Mexican Charreada fast became one of the most interesting and dangerous festivals in Mexico. This Mexican art, form steeped in tradition, navigates tradition and modernity in the parade as it complicates notions of nation, binaries, and even gender norms.

The Charras, for example, are an all-female charreada team known as the escaramuzas. Their presence inserts a gendered narrative into a male-centered Mexican art form and, complicates notions of boundaries and borders. The female riders carry United States, Mexico, Texas, and New Mexico flags, in addition to one honoring La Virgen de Guadalupe. The Mariachis, Matachines, and the Ballet folklórico also have units in the parade with groups from both El Paso, Texas and Juárez, Mexico. These units emphasize Mexican folk culture as they preserve and teach traditional dance, culture and music, which can be seen by the children in the units.

The nation-ness invoked in these performances are doubly imagined as they foster allegiance not only to an American nation but to a Mexican nation as well. While there are power and political struggles within each community on both sides of the border, the

borderland community invokes a bi-national identity rooted in these struggles, “regardless of actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (Anderson 1991, 7). Symbols of Mexican nationalism juxtaposed with a national American identity are enforced and reinforced in the parade. The parade, like the discourse of the border, “acts in its familiar role as the arbiter of national, class, and ethnic difference” (Fox 1999, 85) on the hand, and complicated notions of difference on the other. If only temporarily, the parade subverts and obscures even as it underscores the power relations that create fissures in the communities. Bi-national relations are not reproduced in the familiar hegemonic discourse that posits an us-against them schema but rather creates a collective bi-national imagined community.

What happens when a culture is up for display as it is in the Las Palmas des Sol Sun Bowl Parade? The spectator’s gaze is turned onto itself as it represents both self and other, spectator and participant. In this border city, identity is not formed by rigid dichotomies, but rather forms in the crossroads. The Las Palmas Del Sol Sun Bowl parade is neither stereotypically American nor authentically Mexican as elements are brought in from each culture, representing through syncretism, the “eclectic mixing and matching of ritual elements of diverse traditions” (Grimes 1990, 4). The community is distinguished not by their “falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined” (Anderson 1991, 6). In this borderland performance, the community is imagined symbolically through this parade where participants and spectators are not passive border subjects where an identity is thrust upon them but are rather active agents in creating a border bi-cultural, bi-national identity.

Even as a militarized presence literally opens the parade, the politics surrounding the heightened militarization of the border are absent. The front stage bi-nationalist and bi-cultural procession of the parade anesthetizes the backstage cultural, political, and economic interactions in the region that includes the mass killing of young women and girls in Juárez, Mexico.

The Juarez Murders, Maquilas, and Ethnography

The United States-Mexico border has long been a contested space plagued by violence. Today, the U.S.-Mexico border continues to serve as a site and sight of contention involving violence and immigration. The United-States-Mexico border, especially in today's political climate, has not only come to stand in for the *other* but also the need to police the *other* before they penetrate the border. As Claire F. Fox notes, this border space is readily recognizable in popular culture by both a river and a fence, "in the contemporary era, generally speaking, the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo and the fence are the two primary icons used to establish the location of a narrative in the border region" (Fox 1996, 46).

Recently however, a new border narrative is emerging. Instead of, or better yet, in addition to, the physical geographic markers demarcating the border, the El Paso-Juárez border is now synonymous with the narrative of femicide¹ and violence involving Mexican female bodies that have been mutilated and dumped in the desert. Alicia Gaspar de Alba notes:

There was a time when no one knew about the Juárez femicides, as these crimes have come to be called to signify the misogyny of the perpetrators. There was a time when little coverage could be found in newspapers or on television shows or on the Internet about what was happening in Juárez to poor, young, Mexican women. Nowadays, we know too much, and yet we continue to know nothing. In the process of learning; writing stories, poetry, and music; making art; organizing

conferences; and collecting anthologies, there are only two things that have changed. The number of victims continues to grow. And now the Juárez femicides have become a legend, the “black legend” of the border (2010, 2).

The rhetoric of El Paso tourism highlight its unique bi-cultural/bi-national identity and its dubious distinction of one of the safest U.S. cities. However, it fails to mention the murders of young women that has plagued its twin city even as tourism in the city features visits to Juárez as something to experience. If El Paso tourism elides the narrative of murdered women, the Mexican government calls attention to it through the economics of tourism. First, the Mexican government blames the women for their murders and then addresses the murders effect on tourism:

The Mexican government’s new line, after years of inept investigations and covert maneuvers to derail progress on any of these cases, is that the femicides are nothing but an invention of some crazy feminists and the attention-grabbing mothers of a few dead prostitutes, a way of making Juárez look like a modern-day incarnation of the Spanish Inquisition out to hunt down, torture, and sacrifice young women, an image that city official and merchants say is spoiling tourism to the city” (Gaspar de Alba 2010, 2).

Ironically absent from El Paso’s tourism narrative, the Mexican government calls attention to the murders before dismissing them. The murders, blamed on “the invention of crazy feminists,” are said to be “spoiling” Juárez’s economy.

The murder of women in Juárez is not a recent phenomenon. 1993 marks the year of gender based violence in Juárez that involves abduction, sexual torture, rape, murder, mutilation and disappearance. It is hard to pinpoint the exact number of victims. The General Prosecutors office of the state of Chihuahua reported the murder of 268 women between January 1993 and January 2002, the Chihuahua Institute for Women reported 321 murders in the same time frame and Amnesty International reported 370 murders as of August 2003 (Ensalaco 2006, 419). More alarming still is the number of women

missing. The Inter-American Commission of Human Rights states the number of “disappeared” has also reached 300. This means that there are as many women missing as there are dead, “with implications that the true death toll could be near or above 600” (419). As the number of actual victims vary, so do the causes for these atrocities. The economic, social, political and cultural factors include the rapid population growth in a frontier city, a transient population of economic immigrants and the breakdown of community ties, low salaries and poor working conditions in the maquilas and weak or corrupt government, police, and judicial institutions (420). These atrocities have mobilized a number of organizations as well as cultural productions including art, music, film and works of fiction in order to raise cultural awareness on the violence against women.

In what follows, I will examine the role maquilas play in the murders of Juárez women. However, I suggest that the maquilas are also a way for the women of Juárez to navigate tradition and modernity. I will then juxtapose this with Chicana cultural production on the historical figure of La Malinche and the cultural production of the Juarez murders. Unlike the re-interpretation of La Malinche in Chicana cultural production that (re)imagine La Malinche as an active agent, the (re)presentation of the dismembered female bodies in the Juarez murders hinge on reproducing a Mexican patriarchal view that assigns blame to the female and further silences these women's narrative. This cultural production risks unintentionally creating a narrative of victimry while reinscribing essentialized notions of difference.

The maquilas are important in attempting to understand the Juarez murders. They also provide a framework in which to put into dialogue border cultural production

representing different time periods. The maquilas, for example, can be situated in a period of post-modernism. Post modernism, as a period marker, Paul Rabinow argues, allows one to “isolate and correlate features of cultural production in the 1960s with other social and economic transformations” (Rabinow, 1986, 247). In this way, this chapter puts into dialogue the narrative of La Malinche, economic shifts from the maquilas, and the cultural production of the Juarez murders.

In “Representation are Social Facts: Modernity and Post-Modernity in Anthropology,” Paul Rabinow confirms that cultural production and its correlations with socioeconomic changes is both limiting and beneficial and, serves as a period marker. I argue that following the correlations of socioeconomic changes in border cultural production is one way to understand how the maquilas have functioned since 1965 when they began operating. The late capitalism of the 1960s were a “momentous transformational period in the systemic restructuring that takes place on a global scale” (Rabinow 1986, 247). This transformation can be seen in cultural production correlating social and economic transformations via the maquilas and the subsequent Juarez murders. As mapped in the previous chapters, through an ethnographic aesthetic, cultural production like the corrido, folklore, and the novel collapse and transcend time and space in order to link social and economic transformations in different time periods and to imagine local futures.

While there are connections between Jovita González, J. Frank Dobie, and Américo Paredes, this section connects the cultural production surrounding the Juarez murders, with border ethnography on the Juárez women who work at the maquilas, with cultural production on the historical figure of La Malinche. The maquilas, as a period

marker of post modernism, enables the “possibility of discussing changes in representational forms within a context of Western developments that lead forward to the present situation of those writing the descriptions not in a backward-looking mode establishing textual connections with writers in very different contexts, which frequently elide differences” (Rabinow 1986, 247-248). By making differences meaningful, connections can be made with the different writers this dissertation examines, and it is true also for the contemporary moment of the Juárez murders. Shifting colonial relations reveal the emergence of new orders of difference, orders that threaten to disrupt patriarchal, gender, and social norms. These disruptions can be seen in the narratives surrounding the Juarez murders—linking them to “crazy feminists” that disrupt local economies of tourism and, with the shifting orders brought about by the maquilas emerging work force.

Although maquiladoras have operated in Mexico since 1965, it is the transnational context of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that helped create “1.2 million jobs in Mexico since being implemented on January 1, 1994. Over one quarter of these jobs are in Ciudad Juarez” (Livingston 2004, 60). In addition, NAFTA has accentuated the militarized presence along the border:

The massive military presence on the border reflects a U.S. concern with immigration and drugs, but is also directly linked to the integration of the U.S. and Mexican economies, particularly after the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994. This connection goes back even further in the case of Ciudad Juárez, which has operated as the primary center of export-based assembly plants (*maquiladoras* or *maquilas*) since 1965. It is this combination of state and private force alongside the machinery of late-capitalism, globalized production which suggests that the border on which the femicides are occurring exists both as a space where a new consciousness has generated challenges to traditional identities and a very real territory of power and violence (Volk and Schlotterbeck 2010, 123-124).

The challenges that the maquilas pose to traditional identities underscores entrenched binaries of gender norms of essentialized difference. These border factories rely on existing Mexican gender traditions in fulfilling their work force, seeking “scores of willing young women, hailing from rural families in which structures and rituals of patriarchal power and feminine acquiescence were deeply entrenched” (Salzinger 2003, 48). The maquilas function in an ironic space between modernity and tradition. By seeking young women from families where patriarchal and paternalistic binaries of gender are “deeply” entrenched, maquilas attempt to bring modernity to Juárez. And by the early 1980s, “women accounted for nearly 80 percent of Juárez’s *maquiladora* workers” (Volk and Schlotterbeck 2010, 127).

This strategy of attracting women workers functioned two-fold and was “predicated on a highly gendered economic formula that cast women both as producers charged with bringing modernity to Mexico through their labor on the global assembly line and as consumers in the modern markets that would (inevitably) accompany development” (127). This economic formula used gender as a cheap way to modernize Mexico both at the region and national levels. As Pablo Vila points out, “on the Mexican side of the border, gender is framed in regional and national terms. Thus many Southern Mexicans and Fronterizas/os believed that there are particular gender behaviors and attitudes that characterize Fronterizas/os as distinct from Southern Mexicans on the one hand and Americans on the other” (2003, 74). Feminine “attitudes” and “characteristics” are not only qualities targeted in maquila workers, but are also “critical to maintaining a low-wage regime, the essential ingredient of the assembly plants’ competitiveness in world markets...” (Volk and Schlotterbeck 2010, 127). Instead of navigating tradition

and modernity, the gendered maquila paradigm exploits tradition for the sake of modernity.

The exploitative model of the maquilas however, does not account for the ways women maquila workers exert agency in their positions as arbiters of tradition and modernity. In her eighteen-month ethnographic study in Mexico's maquila industry, Leslie Salzinger gives a firsthand account of what this complicated gendered structure looks like both in the public sphere of an auto parts plant run by a major North American car producer, and in the private sphere of domesticity. When Particimex² opened, the community viewed the plant as a “ ‘deflowering’ factory” and thus made explicit attempts to “not come in direct conflict with the authorities in women workers’ external lives” (Salzinger 2003, 65). Even as the maquilas rely on gender tradition in order to keep up with modernity, the hiring practices that ask husbands for permission for their wives to work functions in a quasi-anticipatory manner of the repercussion to come.

Often referred to as an “uncontrollable disease that sweeps over a man at the most minor of indication his wife’s or girlfriend’s unwavering attention,” jealousy rears its head in the domestic space as well as in the workplace (Salzinger 2003, 63). The maquilas represent a cause for suspicion on the part of husbands and boyfriends who often spy on the women to make sure they are actually at work. Ironically, the cause of this heightened surveillance, maquilas also offer the women autonomy from the constructs of heteronormative relationships in their personal lives:

The threat of jealous rages is part of what keeps young women careful, but they are also subject to more direct rules and pressures. Whether living with their fathers or husbands, “asking permission” is an ongoing ritual, although depending on who is being asked, varies with practical implications. When women living with their birth families want to go out fathers must be asked, but they generally agree. New husbands are another matter. A young wife on my line explains that

she spent a half hour wandering the town market with a friend on the way home the day before. When she finally arrived at 4:30, her husband was steaming. “He gives the orders at home,” she explains simply. Another young woman tells me, “I don't want to get married now. My sister just got married, and now she can't go to the dances. Horrible. I have a boyfriend, but he can't tell me no. I don't belong to him” (Salzinger 2003, 63).

What is interesting to note in the above passage is that the young woman said that her husband gave the orders *at home*, thereby implying that while he still attempts to have control of the private domestic sphere, he does not have control in the public domain that would include her position as a worker at the maquila. Further, it also implies that her husband no longer has control over tradition, thus tradition and modernity is navigated in both the public and private spheres by the women maquila workers.

Domesticity must also be navigated in the domestic space. That domesticity must be navigated in the domestic may seem like an oxymoron of sorts. However, one can see similarities and instances of navigating domesticity in the domestic space in different time periods. In Chapter two, for example, Jovita González winks at Marta Cotera during an interview in González's living room as a subversive way to signal to Cotera that *Caballero's* manuscript still exists. Though not responding out of fear of jealousy, González hides the existence of the manuscript from her husband who is concerned about the social implications of the novel. In González's “Shades of the Tenth Muse,” Ann Bradstreet and Sor Juana Inez also navigate constructs of domesticity in the domestic space of the home.³ Like these two seventeenth century women in “Shades of the Tenth Muse,” the women that work in the maquilas in the current economic and social conditions of the border also navigate tradition and modernity. In the current political, economic, and social climate of the maquilas, navigating tradition and modernity is challenging. Indeed it also poses a risk as some women ultimately pay for this move with

their life—“the murder of these young women result from a displacement of economic frustration onto the bodies of the women who work in the maquiladoras. The construction of “working women as “cheap labor” and disposable within the system makes it possible, and perhaps acceptable, to kill them with impunity” (Livingston 2003, 60). The shifting economic, social, and gendered orders that has caused a cultural backlash against women is at least one theory behind the femicide taking place in Ciudad Juárez.

The predicament of culture—the anxiety that the purity of cultures, traditions, and people will be lost in the face of modernity, rings true in the case of the maquilas and how they affect traditional orders of difference. Although the maquila industry targets workers based on docile feminine structures, the industry still disrupts a traditional male-centered work pattern. This shift especially affected migrant male workers looking for employment along the border. This model of economic frustration displaced onto women’s bodies is further complicated by the changing gendered workforce:

Contrary to assumed beliefs that returning migrant men would find work on the newly industrialized *frontera*, *maquiladora* managers turned to young Mexican women as their primary labor force. Indeed, *maquila*-based growth was predicated on highly gendered economic formula that cast women both as producers charged with bringing modernity to Mexico through their labor on the global assembly line and as consumers in the modern markets that would (inevitably) accompany development. But the replacement of male with female workers challenged existing patriarchal structures and generated a deep well of male resentment and female vulnerability (Volk and Schlotterbeck 2010, 127).

James Clifford makes a solid point when he contends that “it is easier to register the loss traditional orders of difference than to perceive the emergence of new ones” (1988, 15).

This predicament of culture might be one way to understand how the “maquiladora industrialization ultimately created a gendered and racialized political economy” that

“shaped the city’s geography in ways that facilitated, absorbed and, perhaps, promoted femicide” (Volk and Schlotterbeck 2010, 127). Instead of imagining new futures in a shifting colonial space, the rhetoric that surrounds the loss of traditional order of difference that stems from the modernization of the border renders traditions as endangered instead of imagining the emergence of new ones.

Unlike the gendered and patriarchal discourse of the maquilas that does not or cannot imagine new social orders, the women who work the maquilas can, and do. They imagine futures that do not replicate binaries or futures that value tradition over modernity, or vice versa. Instead, they navigate tradition and modernity to offer pathways through modernity. Even while the factories play into the gender politics that exist in Mexico by searching for female cheap labor and going as far as to ask for permission, “if her husband isn't in agreement with her working, I won't hire her” (Salzinger 2003, 65), the border maquilas still offer the women of Juarez a social and economic space independent of the larger society, a space that moderates tradition and modernity.

The maquilas allow women to operate in the public sphere and become wage earners while imagining future possibilities. The future possibilities exist outside the rigid constructs of patriarchal systems as evidenced by the increase of single mothers, “certainly the fact that 20 percent of the women in the maquila are single mothers is one indication of the high level of noncompliance with at least some of the community's formal strictures” (Salzinger 2003, 65). The maquila industrialization is indeed problematic and the scholarship that calls attention to the effect their hiring practices have on gender is important. Rather than focusing on the alternatives maquilas offer the young women of Juarez, attention is often focused on the breaking of customary

Mexican patriarchal traditions.

The common discourse surrounding the maquila industrialization can be framed within the predicament of culture that fears the loss of tradition in the face of modernity. Emphasis on the loss of traditional orders of difference elides the other issues women workers face, like working conditions and wages. Even so, if the women who work the maquilas are understood as active agents rather than passive subjects, the maquilas can be understood through another framework, one that offers economic and social independence separate from the male sphere of domination. This independence does not merely reproduce hierarchies and binaries of power, but an independence that imagines future possibilities outside constructs of essentialized difference. The reiteration of maquila discourse that fails to see alternative gender norms or future possibilities outside established patriarchal constructs runs the risk of reading these women's narratives as one of victimry, where the female maquila worker is first blamed for her own murder by the Mexican patriarchal society and second by the discursive framework of the maquila as a place that has dire effects on traditional Mexican gender customs.

James Clifford claims that in the face of modernity, purity, or traditions, are “always subverted by the need to stage authenticity in *opposition* to external, often dominating alternatives. Thus, the “Third World” plays itself against the “First World” and vice versa” (1988, 12). While I suggest the women maquila workers navigate traditions and modernity, and that the maquilas offer an alternative space for women, the maquilas also hold a precarious position in the predicament of culture. They represent both the “First World” as American owned plants, and the “Third World” as they are run and operated by Mexican women and men. They also stage authenticity by asking

husbands and father's permission for their wives and daughters to work and play off docile feminine characteristics even while maquilas want the women to display leadership qualities at work. I argue that the women, when seen as active agents, navigate constructs of domesticity and tradition with the autonomy the maquilas offer. In this way tradition and modernity is mediated instead of "staged."

If the backlash and violence against women is understood within the predicaments of endangered authenticities, then the "staged" authenticity still causes disruptions with the perceived loss of traditional orders of difference of traditional gender and social norms and cultural patriotic structures. What is overlooked is that the women workers are attempting paths through modernity, both literally and figuratively as they reimagine futures that exist between tradition and modernity. It seems however, that these specific paths attempted by the maquiladora workers such as working, having social autonomy, and financial freedom, are literally being impeded by violence—a violence that is literally and figuratively silencing the women. The new paths of resisting patriarchal control means women can choose what they need or want. In turn, when the "wife or would-be-wife, the mother or would-be-mother questions out loud and in print the complex 'servitude/devotion/love,'" she will quickly be seen as false to her "obligation and duty, hence a traitor" and "equated with Malintzin," however, "when our subject is manifested through devotion we are saints and escape direct insult" (Alarcón 187).

Reading La Malinche in the Juarez Murders

The maquilas are argued to disrupt gender norms ingrained in Mexican society. The anxieties stemming from the disruptions are then displaced onto the female body. Similar patriarchal constructs can also be seen in the historical context of Spanish exploration.

There is arguably no other figure in Mexican history that best represents these misogynistic views than La Malinche. La Malinche, also known as Malintzin Tenepal, was an Aztec woman who was sold by her parents to Hernan Cortes in 1519 and eventually served as his “lover, translator, and tactical advisor” (Alarcón 1983, 182-90). She is frequently portrayed as the “Mexican Eve” and has on many accounts become the “cultural scapegoat” for the Spanish conquest and birth to the mestizo/a people. Mexicans and Chicanos often refer to La Malinche as “La Chingada [the fucked one],” and “whore, prostitute, the woman who sold out her people to the Spaniards are epithets Chicanos spit out with contempt” (Swyt 1998, 2).

Because the male paradigm of La Malinche (re)inscribes a narrative that blames La Malinche for the fall of the Aztec nation, she is not forgiven for her betrayal. As Emma Perez points out, Chicanos often inflict “misogyny in the image of La Malinche upon Chicanas/Mexicanas,” in turn, each Chicana is characterized and treated as “*la india/whore*” (Perez 1993, 61-63). The patriarchal paradigm of La Malinche that ascribes blame to the female can also be read in the murders of the young women of Juárez. Like La Malinche, the young women of Juárez can also be viewed as straddling two cultures and is to blame for the disruption of engrained cultural norms. On the one hand, the women of Juárez are operating in the transnational economic world provided by the U.S. Global economy while still part of traditional gender customs of Mexico.

Chicana scholarship reimagines la Malinche in a way that does not blame Malinche for the betrayal of her people, but rather situates her in a more complex positionality. By imagining la Malinche outside constructs of essentialized difference dictated by traditional dichotomies, Chicana’s “sympathize with her position and admire

her ability to survive enslavement in two oppressive cultures” and view her as “willing sexual partner” (Kaminsky 1994, 7). By drawing attention to Malinche’s ability to survive two oppressive cultures and her role as a “willing sexual partner,” Malinche is reimagined as an active agent.

A poem titled “La Malinche” by Carmen Tafolla stresses Malinche’s complex positionality and her role in the colonial conquest. The poem uses la Malinche’s autobiographical “I” to unravel the many layers of her positionality and envisions a future beyond constructs of difference. Emphasis on the autobiographical “I” opens the poem with the Spanish equivalent *Yo*:

Yo soy la Malinche.

My people called me Malintzín Tenepal
the Spaniards called me Doña Marina

I came to be known as Malinche
and Malinche came to mean traitor.

As the speaker of the poem, Malinche opens by claiming her identity—“Yo soy la Malinche,” before moving to more complex issues surrounding it. While her people call her Malintzín Tenepal and the Spaniards christen her Doña Marina, Malinche rejects both of those identities and chooses her own in the poem’s opening, a name she tells us has come to mean traitor.

That “La Malinche” is both the title of the poem and the poem’s narrator functions to deconstruct the traditional gendered patriarchal narrative. This narrative is one that ascribes a gendered passivity to Malinche as she is referred to not only as traitor but as screwed:

They called me—*chingada*
Chingada.

(Ha—¡Chingada! ¡Screwed!)

Of noble ancestry, for whatever that means,
I was sold into slavery by MY ROYAL FAMILY—so
That my brother could get my inheritance.

In the lines that follow Malinche reclaims an identity that is used like an object to be sold
to a narrative of agency:

...And then the omens began—a god, a new civilization,
the downfall of our empire.
And *you* came.
My dear Hernán Cortés, to share your “civilization”
—to play god, ...and I began to *dream*...
I *saw*
and I *acted*.

I saw our world
And I saw yours
And I saw—
another.

And *yes*—I helped you—against Emperor Moctezuma
Xocoyotzin himself.
I became interpreter, Advisor, and lover.
They could not imagine me dealing on a level
with you—so they said I was raped, used,
chingada
¡Chingada!

But I saw our world
and your world
and another.

The poem’s autobiographical tone moves from a passive subject that is labeled and ascribed an identity to an active agent that is an interpreter, advisor, lover, and dreamer. It is between tradition and modernity, “I saw our world/ and I saw yours,” that Malinche visions another world, “And I saw another.” Tafolla’s version of La Malinche does not simply reproduce structured binaries by replacing a patriarchal system with a matriarchal notion.

Malinche envisions a future beyond gender constraints where one can be sold into slavery so that the appropriate gender can gain an inheritance, to a world where gender is an equal playing field. Because her people cannot move beyond gender constructs, they cannot conceive that Malinche would be anything but a slave to Cortes. In a time and place where gender is equated with property to be sold, Malinche disrupts the traditional narrative by doing, “I saw/ And I acted,” and rewriting her own narrative:

But Chingada I was not.
 Not tricked, not screwed, not traitor.
 For I was not traitor to myself—
 I saw a dream
 and I *reached* it.
Another world.....
 la raza.
 La raaaaa-zaaaaa . . .

As an active agent Malinche reclaims an identity rooted in hatred and oppositional binaries. If the poem opens by stating that La Malinche’s name has come to mean traitor and screwed, it literally ends by recovering an identity, one that was not tricked, screwed, or a traitor, but that a visionary of a new race, *la raza*.

Just as the poem implies that Malinche’s world could not deal with the fact that she was operating as an equal with Cortes and cannot fathom that she would acquire her inheritance instead of her brother, gender constraints continue to haunt the women of Juárez. Discourse surrounding maquilas are unable to move beyond gender as a passive category molded by the industrialized maquila industry. In the age of globalized industrialization, much like the age of colonial exploration, Cortes has simply been replaced by American corporations and La Malinche has moved from the battle field to the assembly lines.

Deconstructing patriarchal categories of gender is essential to begin to understand

the Mexican official's rhetoric that blames the women of Juárez for their own murder. For example, in 1999 the former Chihuahua state prosecutor said "women with a nightlife who go out late at night and who come into contact with drinkers are at risk. It's hard to go out on the street when it's raining and not get wet" (qtd. In Ensalaco 2006, 425). This reasoning mirrors the engrained views that characterizes women who do not adhere to paternalistic standards as *la india whore*. I return briefly to the discourse of Juárez tourism that focuses on female sexuality and promiscuity for the decline of tourism in the city: "the Mexican government's new line, after years of inept investigations and covert maneuvers to derail progress on any of these cases, is that the femicides are nothing but an invention of some crazy feminists and the attention-grabbing mothers of a few dead prostitutes" (Gaspar de Alba 2010, 2). It is interesting to note that women are not only blamed for their own murders, but are also blamed for men's weaknesses. In Leslie Salzinger's ethnographic study the husband of a new maquila worker shot himself in front of his wife. The cause was once again blamed on the female:

He was jealous they said, and she tried to leave. Discussion over whether she was to be blamed or pitied went on for days. "She's very pretty," said one of my coworkers in apparently self-evident explanation. The young widow was never able to show her face in the plant again (63).

Like La Malinche, for the women of Juárez betrayal is seen "first of all in her sexuality, which makes it nearly impossible at any given moment to go beyond the vagina as the supreme site of evil" (Alarcón 1983, 183).

In Carmen Tafolla's poem, "La Malinche," gender and sexuality is reimagined as not as a form of repression and something to be controlled by a paternalistic society, but sexuality is rethought of as a "means of liberation" (Moraga 1983, 109). In this way, sex and culture are reimagined together. Unlike the poem by Carmen Tafolla that positions La

Malinche as an active agent rather than a passive subject, the cultural production on the women of Juarez is more complicated and vacillates between complacency, complicity, and resistance. *Secrets in the Sand: The Young Women of Juarez* by Marjorie Agosin is a book of poetry that attempts to give the women of Juárez a narrative, a voice in which to speak. However, instead of moving beyond basic categories of gender for understanding, Agosin's poetry echoes a dominant discourse that assigns blame based on gender.

In a poem titled "Borders," Agosin delivers a subtle critique of the patriarchal and paternalistic Mexican government. The subtlety of the critique combined with a quotidian narrative of life lingers in the reader's mind for a moment:

In that border town
 With smells of death and sewers
 Putrefied with the voices of Mexicans
 Swarming amid the stupor of a bestial heat,
 Justice forgets about the dead women of Juarez.
 The police yawn
 Some say they walked around wearing dresses
 Much too short
 Provoking the murderers who
 After all, were good men.

If this stanza stood alone as a single poem Agosin's use of irony would have successfully carried out a critique of the Mexican police who yawn while women are being murdered by *good men*. When viewed within this context the stanza shores up the haunting rhetoric that surrounds the victims—a rhetoric that consistently argues that the murderers are "good men" who would not have committed murder if not provoked by the titillating female who wears "dresses/much too short." This rhetoric gets recirculated and is almost taken for fact. The actual reports surrounding the victims speaks little to the misogynistic constructed narrative put forth by officials. To the contrary, "although the victims were uniformly accused of dressing in provocative miniskirts, in actuality, 74 percent of the

first 137 bodies that were found intact and still clothed were wearing long pants” (Gaspar de Alba 2010, “Poor Brown Female,” 67). Agosin’s poem calls attention to this flawed logic but does little to dismantle it.

While justice forgets about the women of Juarez, the unidentified female of the poem dreams about crossing borders and entering other landscapes, “to cross, to travel and to invent another landscape.” While in “La Malinche” Malinche also dreams, acts, and invents, the older women in “Borders” warn the unnamed woman who dreams about other landscapes what may happen if borders are crossed:

Her mother would tell her:
Be careful at the border
Women should not leave home
Words would not be sufficient to save oneself
Poor women don't know how to save themselves
Through words.

The young lady decides to follow her dreams. One can surmise that she dared cross borders, not only geographical ones but also metaphorical ones that lie someplace between tradition and modernity—someplace between “home” and where one does not “know how to save themselves.” Unable to move beyond real and imagined places, the unnamed woman is confined by tradition. One learns that she was never able to “invent another landscape,” and as dreaded, her mother learns that her daughter becomes victim number 278. The mother’s warnings turn out to be a fulfilled prophesy as we learn the fate of the unnamed young lady. While Malinche names herself in the poem by Tafolla, opening with “Yo soy La Malinche,” the young woman in “Borders” is reduced to a number, number 278. Like the traditional male view of the domestic space, the older generational females also believe that a woman's place is relegated to the domestic sphere, “[w]omen should not leave home.”

Almost as in an anticipatory manner of what happens when women leave the home, blame is always already placed on the female. First, she disrupts the private domain by leaving home and then she contaminates the public space by wearing skirts that are “much too short.” While Agosin demonstrates the depth of which Mexican culture is steeped in traditional gender roles, she also fails to provide any further critique. Furthermore, the poem also does not name the victim. In the beginning of the poem the young lady is merely a “she” and later reduced to a number, number 278. Instead of honoring the victim with a name, the poem’s ambiguity leaves open the possibility that that any female can symbolically become victim 278. This rhetorical move is haunting and indeed enables the reader to grapple with the alarming number of victims that continues to grow. Nevertheless, the poem fails to (re)construct a narrative of survivance as the victim is once again, at least partly, to blame for not heeding the advice of her elders. At best, this poem serves as a warning for other women who wish “to cross, to travel,” and “invent.”

The rhetoric that places blame on the female begins to get internalized in a poem titled “Only Memory.” In this poem also by Marjorie Agosin, the victims place blame on themselves:

Perhaps we should not
 Have Left
 Our Country
 Our town or our street.
 Perhaps we should have
 spent more time with our friends
 And looked for orchards
 The peace of the lemon groves.
 If only we had stayed
 At the corner coffee shop,
 Or in the barrio looking at a soccer match
 Together with the neighbors.

Perhaps nostalgia was something
 that happened to others.
 Perhaps we never should have
 Left home
 Or made love in
 Borrowed languages
 Perhaps...

This poem recycles previous paradigms. However, this time the women blame themselves. For if they had only stayed in their community, their barrio, the local coffee shop, they would have the privilege of nostalgia. The poem ends with infinite possibilities that will never materialize. The murdered women of Juarez cannot escape the complacency placed upon them by a culture that is so deeply rooted in misogynistic gender constructs. Even in death “the young girl of Ciudad Juarez/Returns home dressed as a/ Dead bride.”

Dismembering the Female Body

In “Introduction Femicidio: The ‘Black Legend’ of the Border,” Alicia Gaspar de Alba notes the “plethora of cultural products” regarding the killings of women in Ciudad Juárez (3). Lourdes Portillo's 2001 Documentary *Señorita Extraviada* and Alicia Gaspar de Alba's 2005 novel, *Desert Blood: The Juarez Murders* are part of this plethora of cultural production. These two texts function within an ethnographic aesthetic in that they collapse form and function, blending different elements of film, documentary, fiction, and ethnography. *Señorita Extraviada* and *Desert Blood*, like the poetry and ethnographic study discussed earlier in this chapter, offer a complex analysis of responsibility regarding the murders of the women in Juárez and attempt to offer a voice where the voices have literally been silenced.

In Lourdes Portillo's 2001 documentary *Señorita Extraviada*, Portillo exposes

the number of “conspiracy theories” put forth by both popular culture and Mexican officials. The theories vary as much as the cultural production surrounding it:

Theories range from an American serial killer crossing the border to commit his crimes, knowing that, even if he gets caught, there is no death penalty in Mexico; or perhaps it is a Satanic cult, because some of the bodies were found with ritual markings on the flesh; or maybe it is snuff films; or the underground market for human organs; or the corrupt police force in Juárez; or that Egyptian chemist who was arrested in October 1995 for assaulting a prostitute and who later thought to be masterminding the crimes from his jail cell. Other theories accuse the detrimental effects of Americanization on Mexican family life which causes the males to turn into good-for-nothing drunks and wife beaters, or worse, *cholos*, and the females to leave their families and migrate north to work at the *maquiladoras* (Gaspar de Alba 2010, “Poor Brown Female,” 66).

Portillo’s narrative technique in *Señorita Extraviada* discourages the viewer from making any absolute conclusions regarding the causes of the Juárez femicides. Rather than resist or highlight any one theory, Portillo dismantles misogynistic and paternalistic paradigms through interviews and camera angles.

The film creates a complex web of overlapping testimonies. Most indelible in the documentary is Portillo's emphasis on women's shoes, which the film is noticeably structured around. These camera shots include close-ups of women’s shoes in a shoe store as well as the shoes worn by women Portillo is interviewing. These images are juxtaposed with media news images of women's shoes in the desert and those still on the dead female body. This compartmentalization symbolically dismembers the female body— the female bodies of those who have disappeared, signified only by their empty shoes; the dead victims still wearing shoes; and women still alive who speak of the fear of everyday life in their interviews. The complexities characterized in Portillo’s film can be understood within the discourse of nostalgia films which are characterized as “retrospective styling” or “*la mode retro*” which seeks to “evoke a feeling tone through

the use of precise artifacts and stylistic devices that blur temporal boundaries” (Rabinow 1986, 249). Unlike traditional historical films which “seek to recreate the fiction of another age as other,” (249) Portillo’s film blurs temporal categories of life and death and blurs, or dismembers, the logic espoused by Mexican officials.

Portillo’s film blurs temporal categories as well and physical borders. Borders are literally and symbolically crossed through camera and angle shots that encompass both El Paso, Texas, and Juárez, Mexico. The camera’s concentration on female body parts however, creates split subjectivities where the women’s narratives are trumped by their physical bodies. Hence, a female border subject will never be able to move beyond the politicized body.

Like the discourse that focuses on the victim’s sexuality, *Señorita Extraviada* too is unable to move beyond the female body as the site/sight of objectification. Ironically, although Portillo offers a web of complex issues and theories surrounding the murders, the film underscores one main point with the compartmentalized bodies. The literal and symbolic dismemberment ultimately reinforces the fact that these women have been reduced to signifiers, as Gaspar de Alba notes, “the main signifier of their lives is a corpse half-buried in a sand dune” (2010, “Introduction: Femicidio,” 4).

Alicia Gaspar de Alba’s 2005 novel, *Desert Blood*, is another cultural text that revolves around the Juárez murders. *Desert Blood* is a mystery novel that investigates the Juárez murders—specifically the murder of a young lady named Cecilia who lives in Juárez. Like *Señorita Extraviada*, *Desert Blood* criticizes Mexican authorities who wash their hands of responsibility while at the same time resisting any narrative closure that finds one entity guilty. Ivon, the main character in the novel, is a lesbian University

professor who is in the process of adopting a baby from Cecilia, the young woman from Juárez. Unfortunately, before Ivon can even meet the young lady, Ivon finds out that Cecilia has not only been murdered but also badly mutilated.

Attending Cecilia's autopsy, Ivon uses facts revealed during this medical procedure to help track the murderers. The novel draws eerily from events documented in investigative reports. As Jessica Livingston notes in "Murder in Juárez: The women of Juarez are not only raped and tortured but "mutilated, with nipples and breasts cut off, buttocks lacerated like cattle, or penetrated with objects" (Livingston 2004, 59). Cecilia's murder in the novel is similar as the reader experiences through the omniscient narrator the way Cecilia is beaten, drugged, stabbed and left in the desert. Gaspar de Alba however, literally dismembers the body by taking the reader into the autopsy room as Ivon is allowed to enter the morgue and witness the procedure. It is not enough that the novel opens with an omniscient narrator during Cecilia's brutal murder; not only are we in Cecilia's mind as she hears and feels the blades slicing into her body, the reader is also quite literally able to see into her body during the autopsy scene. The examiner dictates what he is doing as Ivon watches:

"this is the cutting line. You want to remove the hair at the top of the head here, just pull it off the scalp like this. It comes right off."
She tossed a thick clump of hair into the metal barrel that served as a trash can.
"And then make your incision from ear to ear and pull the scalp down. Be careful when you cut the skull. The brain might be liquefied already" (51).

The scene continues for another page and a half as Cecilia's organs are cut out, weighed, and gallstones are removed from her body. Both Ivon and her cousin are even offered to participate in the procedure: "Put on a glove. You can touch one if you want" (52).

Dismembering the body in this manner sensationalizes the actual atrocities that the novel is writing about. Further, the dismemberment and disembodied subjects are silenced as cultural texts speak for these women in a manner that literally and symbolically severs their totality. The gendered discourse that surrounds the maquilas and the dismembering of the female body in these texts reproduces the gender and power binaries they are writing against. The attraction to the physical body produces a narrative that never moves beyond the female body as a site/sight of male violence. Rather than reinscribing a narrative of survivance that ascribes some agency to the victims, the women are encoded as silent subjects who are unable to tell their own narrative. And more disturbingly, besides Leslie Salzinger's ethnographic study discussed earlier, the narrative of the Juárez women is a narrative that only begins after death.

Some of the U.S. rhetoric on the Juárez murders risks producing a monological authoritative tone that privileges a point of view situated on the U.S. side of the U.S.-Mexico border. Indeed, even my own research has been centered on the Texas side of the Texas-Mexico border. This positionality privileges not only an English-Speaking audience on the north side of the Rio Grande River, but also privileges information located on the United States side of the border. In 1999 when Alicia Gaspar de Alba was conducting research on the murders, her assistant was made aware by an El Paso librarian that the *El Paso Times* did not cover the murders. Considering the way El Paso tourism also does not "cover" the murders, it makes sense the *El Paso Times* would also avoid the subject.

It is interesting to note that while El Paso's major newspaper did not report on the murders, Mexican papers "constituted a three-inch-thick archive of information" (Alicia

Gaspar de Alba 2010, “Introduction: Femicidio,” 6). This begs Alicia Gaspar de Alba to ask:

Where were the academics, I wondered? Where were the Mexican, Chicana/o, and Latino/a academics? Particularly those working on labor issues, immigration police, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), or the abuse and exploitation of women workers on the border: Why were they, especially my U.S. Colleagues, not bringing their time, energy, and resources to this issue? Why was there so little scholarship on the crimes? Was it fear or apathy that defined the silence? (6).

These series of rhetorical questions shore up earlier discourses of scientific ethnography that sought to distinguish the university-trained ethnographer from other writers. That sentiment is echoed here as Gaspar de Alba asks “where are the academics” twice in the above passage. Not accounting for the cultural production produced on the south side of the border, this passage begs the reader to ask if academics are the only ones that can address sufficiently the multi-layered problems of Juárez women. In fact, she says that she wrote *Desert Blood: The Juarez Murders* in order to fill a void in that silence:

In an effort to break that silence on the U.S. side of the border, I decide to write a mystery novel about the crimes—based on research and on what I knew from having grown up in that precise, paradoxical place on the map—to inform the broadest possible English-Speaking public about the femicides” (6).

By calling out academic silence Gaspar de Alba sets the stage for her work to not only break the “academic” silence and reach the “broadest possible English-Speaking public,” but also situate her work as different from other cultural production by non-academics.

Though Gaspar de Alba claims there is “silence” in the academic community, *corridos* have addressed the issue of the maquilas and the murders for some time:

Murders and *maquilas* have been recurrent themes in *corridos* and *norteño* music since the late 1990s, as well as becoming a part of the U.S. and Latino/a folk and Mexican *rockera* music. The cultural valence of this message is important not just because the singers draw large audiences, but because those songs are composed by critics of the *maquiladoras*’ globalization project and staunch defenders of the rights of women and workers. The work popular *conjunto* band Los Tigres del

Norte is characteristic of this, as it narrates explicit themes of resistance and reordering in its response to the femicides (Volk and Schlotterbeck 2010, 141).

Perhaps the predicament of the Juárez murders is more complex than filling in silences.

There is a plethora of cultural production on the Juarez murders and distinguishing cultural production by academics and cultural production by non-academics proves to be not only futile but also risks reproducing hierarchies of knowledge and power.

It is difficult to write critically on atrocities. There is an underlying tension when accounting for the socioeconomic, social, and gender factors surrounding the Juárez murders; especially when one considers that the “only facts about the victims that we're sure of [are] they were all poor, slim, they were dark and they had shoulder length hair” (Portillo, *Señorita Extraviada*, 2001). It is troubling to reconcile that the women of Juárez are of particular interest because they are in fact, dead: “[y]ou know about them because they *are* dead, because they are part of the sensational, unresolved heinous crime wave that has taken the public by storm and has suddenly put this border on the radar of every human rights organization in the known universe” (Gaspar de Alba 2010, “Introduction: Femicidio,” 4).

Clifford tells us the “future is something to be creatively imagined, not simply endured” (6). If the cultural production discussed in earlier chapters of the dissertation imagined local futures in shifting colonial orders, where does the cultural production on the Juarez murders function with regard to imaging a new future and movement beyond tradition and modernity? Can new futures be actively imagined in the contemporaneous moment? Are Chicana writers imagining a new future or recreating colonial conditions, colonial shadows? The work that Chicana writers are engaging calls attention to the atrocities of the femicides but fails to imagine futures that exist beyond the current

predicament, nevertheless, they call attention to the unfair gendered and biased conditions of the global border.

The U.S. cultural production surrounding the Juárez murders is complex and risks producing earlier predicaments of ethnography that spoke for and about others. Indeed, the discourse surrounding the U.S.-Mexico border teeters on producing binaries, especially in today's political climate. Reproducing a simplistic plot that Mexico is backwards, unable to modernize in the current moment because they are stuck in tradition and thus lash out at women is simplistic and reproduces notions of hierarchy and inserts a U.S. monological authority. However, cultural production by Chicana authors comes close to reproducing notions of essentialized difference even as it raises awareness and calls attention to these atrocities.

Notes to Chapter 4

¹ Fregoso and Bejarano term femicide as not only “the murder of women and girls because they are female” (Russell 2001a, 15). But expand the definition to include “the murders of women and girls founded on a gender power structure. Second, feminicide is gender-based violence that is both public and private, implication both the state (directly or indirectly) and individual perpetrators (private or state actors); it thus encompasses systematic, widespread, and everyday interpersonal violence. Third, feminicide is systemic violence rooted in social, political, economic, and cultural inequalities.” *Terrorizing Women: Femicide in the Americas* 2010 Duke University Press.

² Particimex is the pseudonym for the auto part plant in Salzinger’s study.

³ In Melina Vizcaino-Aleman’s article “Rethinking Jovita Gonzalez’s Work: Bio-ethnography and Her South Texas Regionalism” 2012, Vizcaino Aleman suggests that this story takes place in the narrator’s “garage room,” structuring a female space “even though garages are traditionally masculine.

Conclusion

An ethnographic aesthetic dismantles ethnographic authority, allowing a space that exists beyond the binaries of resistance and domination. The way Greater Mexico responded to scientific ethnographic rhetoric is varied but Chicano/a historiography often privileges the heroic resistance. Resistance to authority has traditionally been understood in binary terms because Chicano Studies specifically, and academia generally, has essentialized difference. In other words, difference has only traditionally been understood as that which is in opposition to authority. However, the dissertation maintains that an ethnographic aesthetic responds to ethnographic authority and dominance by dismantling authority. Jovita González was seen as an elitist and charged with copying Dobie's ethnographic style, and her work, it was argued, "could be said to embody the perspective of the Mexicana elite" but could also "portray social relations and transformations as they affected working people" (Garza-Falcón, 1998, ix). Jovita González is not the only Mexicana author accused of being elitist. She is often compared to other upper-Mexican class female writers like María Cristina Mena, Fermina Guerra, and Ruiz de Burton.¹ An ethnographic aesthetic is a good paradigm to use for examining Texas-Mexico border cultural production because "while ethnographic writing cannot entirely escape the reductionist use of dichotomies and essences, it can at least struggle self-consciously to avoid portraying abstract, ahistorical 'others'" (Clifford 1988, 23).

Both Jovita González and Américo Paredes invent local futures through their work. Through an Ethnographic Aesthetic, their work counters the notion that:

whenever marginal peoples come into a historical or ethnographic space that has been defined by the Western imagination....their distinct histories quickly vanish. Swept up in a destiny dominated by the capitalist West and by various

technologically advanced socialism, these suddenly 'backward' peoples no longer invent local futures (Clifford 1988, 5).

This notion sets the stage for the predicament of culture, the idea that "backward" cultures are caught up in authenticity, unable to modernize and invent local futures. The ethnographic modernist however, navigates tradition and modernity. González and Paredes, when understood within traditional and sanctioned binaries that produce notions of difference, "struggle with [their] desire for intellectual pursuits, which tend to silence a voice that would otherwise speak more loudly for [their] people" (Garza-Falcón 1998,10). Indeed, certain border voices are silenced when understood within essentialized difference, a difference that recognizes only that which is "speaking more loudly" in Chicano historiography. But when understood within an Ethnographic Aesthetics, silent voices are not silent but dare to imagine new social orders regarding race, class, and even gender. And, "speaking more loudly" is a tradition that often silences voices that speak differently. In this way, the fixity of tradition has the potential to silence.

The dissertation examines counter border heroes that depart from the classic paradigm do not loudly resist in the classic form, but are heroes who thwart hegemonic structures by not necessarily speaking, but thinking more loudly. An Ethnographic Aesthetic reimagines movement outside the confines of tradition that positions people in a historical time freeze and imagines movement only within traditional oppositional modes. Through the literal act of ethnography, collecting stories, and through movement between social and gender orders, Texas-Mexican history transcends not only the fixity of tradition, but also the local and the region.

When examined outside essentialized difference, meaningful difference between Paredes and González becomes apparent. Meaningful differences that lie beyond complicity and complacency and opposition and resistance—dismantling the colonial notions of difference. By mediating tradition and modernity, the characters in Jovita González's and Américo Paredes's work move beyond the local and regional constraints of tradition and become active participants in nation building. No longer regional participants stuck in tradition, their literal and figurative movement between spaces as well as architecture enables an imagined future of possibilities, identities, and connections in a shifting colonial space.

Collapsing form and function shifts, blurs, and reconfigures form, genre, and function that allows for a more complex reading of Texas-Mexico border cultural production. Cultural texts, depending on how they are traditionally perceived can sometimes both collide and coalesce but locating and examining the instances where their fact and form collide or coalesce shape meaning at the global and the local. What appears to be cultural production of the border that is site-specific actually reveals much more about the nation and its political, economic relationship within its own borders (U.S. Southwest) as well as its power struggles with other nations (Mexico).

Texas-Mexico border cultural production illustrates the shifting social, class, and racial relations along the border. These shifts are not “followed” by sanctioned historiographies, but are documented by the people that are both producers and subjects of this history. Mapped through critical ethnography of the border, Texas-Mexico border cultural production entails “critical reflexivity, the complexity of voice, and subject position” and has “transformed the terms in which ethnographic research is now

undertaken,” (Marcus, 3). No longer dependent on a specific site, post-structural ethnography and American Studies, can follow the thread of cultural processes as they transcend both cultural and national borders.

The dissertation examines the complexity of the national border between Juárez, Mexico and El Paso, Texas as it considers the cultural production of the Juárez murders. The cultural production of the murders while raising awareness on these atrocities, also risk reproducing authorities similar to the tenets of early scientific ethnographies. One can argue that this literature raises consciousness, but what else does it offer and at what cost does it raise awareness? The literature in ways replicates the abuse of Mexican women and girls. The literature silences them, disembodies them and ultimately speaks for them without offering any significant commentary. Mexico is essentially stuck in tradition unable to modernize though the women who are trying to get a pathway through modernity are ultimately killed and silenced.

The ironic aspect with the Juarez murders is that in the texts discussed the first three chapters the characters who resist the new social orders and resist modernity are the ones rhetorically silenced. For example, Jovita’s characters--Antonio Traga Ballas from the *Bullet Swallower* and Alvaro from *Caballero*, are literally silenced as one gets shot in the mouth and the other dies because they are stuck in binaries of tradition. Like the women of Juarez, Chionita from Paredes’s “The Hammon and the Beans” dies in young age, a visionary who I argue is ahead of her time and whom Paredes cannot fully idealize. Though Chonita can imagine a future outside constraints of class, gender, and economic borders, it is difficult to imaging local futures for the women of Juárez. In this case the women are literally silenced as they are killed and then they are silenced again by the

Chicana authors who dismember the female body and risk reproducing the rhetoric of authority.

This dissertation differs from other work on border cultural production in that it is not attempting to strengthen a paradigm that established notions of essentialized difference but shifts the discourse by which this body of work is understood. In this way this project considers Texas-Mexico border authors and their cultural texts in a way that illuminates meaningful differences and contribute a meaningful invention of Texas-Mexican identity making. An identity that is not static, but fluid, shifting, and varying. Overall, I argue that the Ethnographic Aesthetic I establish in this dissertation can make connections between and betwixt borders and highlights the counter ways local knowledge is produced and invented. Cultural production of the region is not merely something documented and observed, but is invented and created. As global borders are simultaneously more contested, porous and fortified, these ideas allow us to navigate the precipice that inform the local, the global, and home.

Notes to Conclusion

¹ See *Gente Decente: A Borderlands Response to the Rhetoric of Dominance* by Leticia M. Garza-Falcón University of Texas Press, 1998.

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