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Changing and Transitioning Name Narratives: The DE.E.P. Standpoints of Identities

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CHANGING AND TRANSITIONING NAME NARRATIVES: THE DE.E.P. STANDPOINTS OF IDENTITIES

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DEDICATION

The dedication of my work and studies has always been motivated by my family, but this thesis is especially dedicated to my nieces – Jalani Calyn Alvarez and Caliah Jade Alvarez. In 2010, when Jalani was born I knew I wanted to be a role model to her, in the same way my Aunt/Adoptive Mother – Geraldine Gillen – has been to me. Then in 2013, when Jade was born, I hoped to have a strong relationship with her, in a similar fashion as I did with Jalani. Throughout the years, I realize just how much my nieces slightly embody me. Jalani through her twin-like thoughts and strength of feminism and Jade through her actions and attitude of being the youngest and assuming that she is a favorite. My nieces continue to teach me that I am a better person because of them.

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ABSTRACT

The Changing and Transitioning Name Narrative project is a replicated study from the Name Narrative Project (2014) by Montoya, Vasquez, and Martínez. The changing and/or transitioning of names relates to a Decolonial Embodiment Process (DE.E.P.) that speaks to an internal process of how individuals break away from colonial powers. Furthermore, the study highlights nine (eight volunteers and the author's) Name Narratives to investigate their realities that express an individual experience and shared standpoints. Importantly, the changing and/or transitioning of names is not an act to disrespect parents or name givers, but a profound self-love indication that is represented through materialize physical means (names) to embody their own self-identity and self-empowerment. Lastly, I hope that this project encourages creativity, vulnerability, and realness to decolonial scholarship that validates and honors the Otherness and in-betweenness of people from several intersectionalities and dualities.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

My niece, Jalani Calyn Alvarez, is the first to carry out our family legacy and within the first decade of her life can explain how her parents chose every part of her name and her sister's. In 2009, before Jalani was born, I witnessed how my brother, Cris, and his then girlfriend, Anjell, formulated Jalani's name. First, they waited to discover their baby's biological gender before disclosing their options of ideal names. In fact, Pilcher (2017) argued that parents often wait for doctors to disclose the baby's biological gender to think of baby names for a child. After Cris found out that he and Anjell were having a girl, he explained how he always admired the name Kelani. Anjell, later, expressed her hope for a name that started with the letter 'J,' stemming from her own legal name Ivin Jell. In combination, they created Jalani. For Jalani's middle name—Calyn, my brother chose a similar approach to how his own name was formulated. My brother's middle name is Andeline, a combination of both of our parents' names. Our biological father's middle name was Andrew, and our mothers first name is Emeline. With "Ande" from Andrew and "line" from Emeline, Andeline was created. For Jalani, her middle name comes from Anjell's parents' names. Anjell's step father Calvin, of whom my brother also has a close relationship with, contains "Cal." Anjell's mother's name is Jocelin, containing "lin." Together, Calvin and Jocelin became Calyn for Jalani's middle name. Nonetheless, Jalani inherited her father's surname.

However, when we (as a family) speak to the changing of surnames, especially considering I have two nieces with the last name of Alvarez, and the "tradition" is for women to change their surnames to match their partners (Laskowski, 2010; Pilcher, 2017; Peters, 2018). Jalani's response never surprises me, but also leaves others wide eyed with their mouth dangling. At a family-friend dinner, during my last summer visit to California

in 2020, my nieces, my adoptive family, and close family friends (The Bonners) decided to meet at our favorite local Mexican-American restaurant, El Tapatio. As we finished our meals and stayed to chat, the topic of surnames came up. My Auntie Bonner elaborated on the difficulties of not wanting to change surnames, speaking to the economic compensations and the hostilities that she received throughout her life for not changing her surname to "match" her husbands and disconnecting her family (Laskowsi, 2010; Peters, 2018). My adoptive mother then chimed into the conversation, and spoke to the "traditional" Filipino expectation of names. In the Filipino culture, the "tradition" of names is that the middle name of all the children is the mother's maiden name, and the father's surname continues to be carried out by the children as well. Through the legend of Filipino names, generations of Filipinos are able to trace their family lineage both maternally and paternally, because each child will hold both familial names (Posadas, 1945).

Nonetheless, unknowingly, my adoptive mother turned to Jalani, and explained to her that when Jalani decides to marry she would also need to follow the tradition. Jalani, with a confused and disgusted face, challenged my adoptive mother saying, "Why?!" My adoptive mother, repeated, "because it's tradition," and without hesitation or skipping a beat, Jalani exclaimed, "I'm not a slave, I don't need to change my name if I don't want to!" Everyone at the table, immediately turned to face Jalani with wide eyes and dangling mouths, completely shocked of her response. Me, knowing that she would respond in that way, since I was the one who taught her the strength and power of her name, made direct eye contact with her, smiled, and proudly clapped, saying loudly, "that's my niece!" Jalani then walked over to me, with her head held high, and fist pumped me. In the matter of the first ten years of Jalani's life, she challenges, empowers, and proudly expresses a feminism that took me nearly 18 years (if not longer) to reach. Jalani reminds me of the importance

of feminism, empowerment, and hope for future women of color. Thus, throughout my study, I focus on the process of decolonizing names through a Mestiza Consciousness and Feminist/Pluralism Standpoint in hopes that future generations of young women, like Jalani, are not afraid and supported for using their voices. As mentioned by Rowe and Tuck (2017), decolonial studies, "push[es] back against the assumptions about the linearity of history and the future" (p. 4). The tradition of settler colonial history and perspective invades minds, thoughts, and being, which furthers the importance of decoloniality to validate truths from individuals beyond the status quo. Therefore, decoloniality is the working process of relearning, reimagining, and renewing our minds, bodies, and beings.

Nevertheless, throughout my thesis, I argue that individuals who have changed or transitioned their names represent a personal self-decolonial movement, which I refer to as a decolonial embodiment process (DE.E.P.). Settler colonialism invaded the roots of indigeneity through thought and bodies, which inevitably included names. For instance, in relation to Filipino culture, the physical knowledge (textbooks, legal documentation, films, etc.) of our history was literally burned by the colonial powers that forcibly controlled the Philippines to ensure that Filipinos could not trace their ancestries (Mulder, 2013; Dela Cruz, 2015). My Lola (grandma in Tagalog) speaks to her earliest memories of how the Japanese would teach in the Philippines by speaking Japanese. My Lola's father saw the uselessness in learning in Japanese, especially considering that most Filipinos did not speak Japanese, and pulled her out of school. For the next four years, when my Lola was 9 years old and after being "liberated" by the Americanos (as Lola would say), she returned to school. However, interestingly, she mentioned a new form of curriculum, one that taught about Filipino history and U.S. American history. The "liberation" that my Lola remembers is not liberation, but an account of how colonialism effects the education and

thought of the indigenous. The Japanese attempted to control the Philippines by embedding their language in Filipino youth, and when the U.S. Americans defeated the Japanese and claimed the Philippines, U.S. colonialism reiterated the importance of impacting education and thought.

Additionally, colonialism passes through bodies by literally impregnating native women in hopes to control peoples' livelihoods. Through the Mestiz@ identity, Anzaldúa (1990) explained that, "Because I, a *mestiza*,| continually walk out of one culture| and into another,| because I am in all cultures at the same time,| *alma entre dos mundos, tres, cuatro*" (p. 377). The mestiz@, as Anzaldúa (1990) reiterated, "is a product of the transfer of the cultural and spiritual values of one group to another" (p. 377). Essentially, the Mestiz@ is a physical reminder of colonialism, which simultaneously belongs and is excluded from either or both of their indigenous and settler groups. Mindfully, the term mestiz@ also refers to all colonized bodies from Spanish inquisition that travels beyond land and borders. While Anzaldúa strictly speaks to the Mestiza consciousness from indigenous Latinx/a/o decent, mestizaje is not limited to Latinx/a/o communities. Therefore, as de Jesús (2005) critically analyzed the importance of Pinay consciousness, while stemmed from Mestiza consciousness, is a similar consciousness due to the shared experiences of colonization. However, with the validation of new histories and truths, individuals begin to relearn or unlearn their colonial traits. Therefore, I choose to study how a person decided to change or transition their name to relate the DE.E.P. to disassociate with their colonial past. Commonly, individuals tend to change or transition their names when they experience a change in their identity, and I argue that the same individuals also encounter new knowledge that relates to their self-empowerment and self-reflection to undo or unlearn their colonial knowledge or traits (Aksholakova, 2014;

Emmelhainz, 2013; Knight, 2018; Obasi, Mocarski, Holt, Hope, & Woodruff, 2019; Xu, 2020).

In my thesis, I demonstrate how the change and transition of names relate to the intercultural communication realm of coloniality and decoloniality theories. Initially, throughout my literature review, I first establish the importance of names connected to people's identities and the material power structures that influence the construction of names. For instance, names are the first indicators of individuals, beyond their physical appearance (Emmelhainz, 2013; Knight, 2018; Montoya, Vasquez, & Martínez, 2014). When we think of people, authors, writers, scholars, we reference their names and how we know people because we heard of their name or saw their name in something we read or saw. We give names to people, place, objects, and things, because names inevitably are important. After, I explain how names are colonized through the material power structures (gender, cultural, ethnicity, religion, race, etc.). The three categories of name changes and transitions that I focus on are marriage, immigration, and non-binary/trans-folks. In recent studies, Pennesi (2019) explained how immigrants feel pressure and discrimination through their names, Peters (2018) spoke to new and common trends for women to transition their surnames to their partners', and Obasi, Mocarski, Holt, Hope, and Woodruff (2019) highlight some findings regarding transgender/gender nonconforming individuals who change their names to commemorate how they identify. Inevitably, while marriage, immigration, and non-binary/trans-folks regularly encounter name changes and transitions, their experiences of in-betweenness and Otherness through their names has not been furthered through a decolonial framework.

Furthermore, methodologically, I interview eight individuals to describe their changing and/or transitioning Name Narrative to investigate how a DE.E.P. can be

achieved. While the original Name Narrative project is created by Montoya, Vasquez, and Martínez (2014), I replicate their process to invite a decolonial perspective and add a layer of changing and/or transitioning names. Names have stories, similar to people, and throughout my thesis I dive into those stories to learn and hear about individualized experiences to question whether a single experience is felt through a community. In reviewing that data, three major themes arise: self-empowerment, self-identity, and self-reflection. The three themes are pre-determined based on my own Name Narrative that is divulge through an autoethnographic approach. The relationship that stems from our Name Narratives emphasize the purpose behind a Feminist/Pluralist Standpoint, which highlights a shared oppression and experience. Additionally, in attempt to practice my own DE.E.P. I reiterate the use of decolonial theories and methods to slowly break away from traditional modes of researching and studying. I, specifically, attempt to provide a space and platform for others, because my hope is to validate, honor, and elevate histories that disrupt the hegemonic structure. As Castillo-Garsow (2012) demands:

> I think that before you can make any changes in composition studies, philosophy, or whatever it is, you have to have a certain awareness of the territory; you have to be familiar with it and you have to be able to maneuver in it before you can say, "Here's an alternative model for this particular field, for its norms, for its rules and regulations, for its laws" (p. 9)

Inevitably, while I present a colonial practice in writing a thesis in a traditional sense, I also challenge the notion of tradition by providing a written and/or virtual space for Otherness to be recognize, hear, and understood in a way that they/we can speak for them/ourselves and their/our experiences.

Lastly, throughout the analysis, I constantly shift between shared and individualized experiences to reiterate that individual livelihoods and shared oppressions create community, but does not call for generalizations. Meaning, that common patterns are found amongst the participants, but in no way shape or form do these participants (and the analysis) speak for the larger community. The sample throughout this project is a small number of examples and thoughts to a larger study and broader phenomenon. Likewise, while I categorized volunteers into specific demographics (immigration and martial statuses and non-binary/trans identification) to easily identify separate and shared realities, their intersectionalities crosshatch one another's to illustrate a community feel. Specifically, the analysis uses a thematic strategy to focus on three topics: birth-given names and material power structures, empowered names and strong identities, and the constant growth from self-reflection. When volunteers describe their birth-given names they spoke to already existing material power structures of sociopolitical, gendered, race, generational/current immigrant background, location, and familial influences in their names. However, they also expose the harmful nature that came from their birth-given names. Later, when individuals reveal their changing and/or transitioning name process, they express the empowerment they feel from being able to name themselves. While not all participants participant in changing and/or transitioning their names, the commonality of empowering their names as they learn more about themselves became a strong indication of self-identity and self-empowerment. Therefore, self-empowerment came from a self-identification, which associates with the act of name changes/transitions. Lastly, when volunteers reflect on their changed and/or transitioned names, they all viewed their names differently. Some felt that their names continue to be problematic, while others saw privilege in their actions, but generally self-reflection depended on each person's individualized situation.

In conclusion, the act of changing and/or transitioning names is an example of a DE.E.P. where individuals restore their power and privilege to name themselves and who they believe they are in the world. However, importantly, changing and/or transitioning names is not an act of disregarding, disrespecting, or negating peoples' parents or name givers. Instead, name changes and/or transitions happen, because individuals want to honor and love themselves for who they see themselves as. In fact, I argue that the act of name changing/transitioning is one of the biggest acts of self-love that anyone can partake. I urge future research and scholars to pursue a DE.E.P. to break from traditional notions and allow creativity to flow through their minds, thoughts, actions, and beings. When I thought of a DE.E.P., I urged for relearning and re-establishing of what I felt a creative scholarship would and could be and become. Unfortunately, colonialism leads people, communities, institutions, and even societies to believe in one specific way, to act, to think, and to be. Although, as Ndhloovu (2016) boldly states that:

> decolonial thought is not just concerned about the need for new ideas. Rather, it goes a step further to call for a completely new way of thinking – about languages, about cultural identities, about regimes of knowledge and knowledge production, and just about everything else we do (p. 36).

When people are born, we allow our minds to wonder but as we get older we learn the cruelties of society. However, decoloniality and the DE.E.P. finds our inner child in hopes to redefine and relearn the world so that we can be reborn, and renaming ourselves is one of the first steps to return to our creativity.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Throughout this literature review, I divide the information in four sections: general background, decolonial embodiment process, connection to intercultural communication, and standpoint theory. In the general background, I provide research about how names relate to the material power structures which influence how names are formulated and created at birth. Additionally, I explain how names are impacted to endure change, establishing a colonial system, which effects individuals' identities. In the second section, I define the Decolonial Embodiment Process (DE.E.P.) to investigate whether name changes could reflect an action or response to fight against colonial influences in name changes. Furthermore, I justify how DE.E.P. identities are portrayed through thought and action in relationship to names and how people might feel about their changed and/or transitioned name. In the third section, I build the connection between identity, intercultural communication, and names to demonstrate how changed and/or transitioned names relate to an in-betweenness that should be further researched in the field of intercultural communication. Lastly, in the fourth section, I utilize standpoint theory to express the importance of listening and hearing others' stories. While I disclose my own positionality and reflection on my name, standpoint theory allows us (both me and the participants) to share an experience and space to express how our changed and/or transitioned name impacted who we are as individuals.

General Background – Explaining the Material Powers at Play

Names are one of the first identifiers of a person, beyond their physical appearance, emphasizing the crucialness of names in order to recognize someone (Emmelhainz, 2013; Knight, 2018; Montoya, Vasquez, & Martínez, 2014). In fact, names generate hints to gender, culture, familial connection, class, religion, trends, linguistics, etc.

(Aksholakova, 2014; Boyko, 2017; Knight, 2018; Sabet, & Zhang, 2020). Historically, Plato, Socrates, Cratylus, and Hermogenes debated about the naturality or conventionality of names. They deciphered whether names inherently naturally belonged to a person, or whether names conventionally were simplistic labels. Some even believed that, "names, being the product of a rational process — language — are based on nature but also modified by convention and usage" (Emmelhainz, 2013, as cited in Bernay, 1997, p. 212). Whether names are natural or conventional, the history behind names digs deep and intertwines with identity without a doubt. For instance, Emmelhainz (2013) mentioned how after the *Emancipation Proclamation* in the United States in the 1860s, many slaves freed themselves from their previous masters by disconnecting and changing their names to ensure separation, symbolizing freedom and liberation. The use of changing names as depicted by Emmelhainz (2013) is literal representation of disconnecting and separating a body from a previous identity, in hopes to create a new reputation. Arguably, I attempt to justify a similar pattern by focusing specifically on women and how our identities become influenced by our choices to keep, change, or create new names when our identities are challenged by the material powers.

Continuously, as people immigrate to other countries, their names, yet again, are questioned and transformed through documentation, causing an emotional reaction. In Xu's (2020) self-narrative, she spoke to her experience while studying abroad and changing to an Anglo-influenced name, but felt that her English name began to fade, encouraging her to re-adopt her Chinese name. Comparably, Boyko (2017) mimicked how names are adopted by one person as they travel to another country, diving into another culture. In fact, similarly to how Chinese individuals often accept an Anglophone name, Russians who commute to the Asian continent or Asian influenced countries shape their names to fit

Asian cultural norms of the designated nation (Boyko, 2017). In the case of immigration and physical body movements, the change of names become a form of colonization of which is symbolized through names. Inevitably, the symbolic colonization causes internal and emotional harm to travelers and immigrants. For instance, Najmuddin—an Indonesian man who was detained in Canada for "suspicious" documentation, because his name did not reflect the Canadian tradition of first, middle, and last names—was subjugated to such practices of colonization and internal emotional harm (Pennesi, 2019). In each of the cases presented through Xu (2020), Boyko (2017), and Pennesi's (2019) articles, they exemplify the colonization through identity and assimilation based on the changing and transition of their names. Since names are significant identifiers for individuals, the colonization and material powers that constrain them are important to understand in order to find and search for solutions to decolonize names, in hopes to empower the same people who are oppressed by those constrictions. For instance, in Najmuddin's experience, he was detained by Canadian officials because his passport only listed his first name, a cultural norm in his home country. Since Canadian officials did not recognize Najmuddin's cultural name structures, they assumed that his documentation was false, because Najmuddin's name did not have the Canadian tradition of first, middle, and last names. Najmuddin was later released under the conditions that Najmuddin's passport followed Canadian norms, where officials altered his name to be presented on his passport repetitively for his first and last name (Pennesi, 2019). Therefore, in order for Najmuddin to be recognized as a person in Canada, his documentation needed to ascribe to the material powers of Canadian's understanding of first, middle, and last names. Moreover, the Canadian material powers of name structures colonized an individual's indigenous and cultural name to simply be seen by Canadian Officials. In essence, Najmuddin needed to appease the Canadian authorities

through his documentation, in order to be accepted and recognized. Similar to Xu (2020) and Boyko's (2017) analysis, colonial material powers demand name changes to indigenous, cultural, and birth given names in order to abide by the material powers constructed in certain places and spaces. Thus, through immigration, names are colonized through the material powers pertaining to certain societal expectations, and my hope is to investigate whether the same material powers can be used to decolonize the names and identity of those forcibly oppressed through their names.

In addition, name changing is relevant for married women (in heterosexual relationships) and individuals identified as non-binary or trans. Generally, in heterosexual, traditional, gendered relationships, the bride is encouraged to inherit their husband's surname. In fact, Pilcher (2017) furthered the trend by explaining that (in the context of the United States) younger aged, White women with lower levels of education who tend to conform to traditional gender roles are more likely to take on their husband's surname. One the other hand, non-White identifying women with higher levels of education and liberal gender roles in heterosexual relationships are less likely to adapt their husband's surnames (Pilcher, 2017). While the trend for married women to transition their name is important, the hostility and hatred towards married women who do not adopt their husband's surnames is more significant. Unfortunately, the refusal to transition to their husband's surnames is met with opposition causing the same or similar internal, emotional damage that immigrants and travelers encounter. Therefore, I argue that women who choose to empower their birth surnames embody and advocate for a decolonial self. However, Peters (2018) critically emphasized that "participants [of whom were all women] demonstrated an internalized double standard in that the obligation to preserve family unity falls on women and not men" (p. 182). In addition to facing the resentment for not

changing their surnames, women also bear the burden to keep the family together, living with the pressures and responsibility to start and maintain family lineages. Nevertheless, I hope to speak to women about their experiences with name changes, because the weight of the name transitions is focused on women's choices rather than men's.

Although, complementary to the fluidity of sexuality, inclusive name practices accompany the change in gender identity. Obasi, Mocarski, Holt, Hope, and Woodruff (2019) explained the, "'name-body-identity' nexus such that our identity is resultant of our name applied to a specific face and body" (p. 201, as cited in Pilcher, 2016). Typically referring to the thought of when we know someone, we can envision their face, what they look like, and even how they sound and what they might say. For transgender and non-binary individuals, their choice to change their names stem from a change in their identity, as in any other situation. Obasi, Mocarski, Holt, Hope, and Woodruff (2019) found three common themes of material power structures which non-binary and transgender individuals might operate from:

> First, names are chosen to honor their family, which, "sought to affirm both their gender identity and their ties to their family" (p. 207) Secondly, non-binary and trans folks, "[keep] a name linked to their original name is a way for respondents [transgender non-conforming individuals in the study] to both acknowledge their past self and honor those who named them originally" (p. 208) Thirdly, names transitioned for "practical reasons," such as having the same initials, number of syllables, or similar sounds (p. 208).

Uniquely to non-binary and transgender personas, they may choose to transition their whole (first, middle, and last) name facing their own pressures, expectations, and material

power structures. Hence, the importance in understanding how transgender and non-binary folks relate their new names and identities to take advantage of decolonial methods and practices.

All in all, the changing and transitioning of names relates to the change in identity to build a new self-embodiment. My goal is to determine through my own Pinay-Mestiza Consciousness and others' standpoints to see how their name changes might relate to the embodiment of decoloniality. Throughout the involuntary spread of Eurocentric history, people were minoritized, marginalized, and oppressed through their beings and bodies—and names were not excluded. Thus, I examine the transition of names to see how individuals choose to empower, fight against, and decolonize themselves from colonial material power structures.

Rethinking Names – Decolonial Embodiment Process (DE.E.P.)

In order to understand what I mean by decolonizing names, I first must establish how people are colonized and in what ways colonization is evident through our lives, bodies, and inevitably our identities and names. Tuck and Yang (2012) identify three types of colonialism:

(1) External colonialism (also called exogenous or exploitation colonization) denotes the expropriation of fragments of Indigenous worlds, animals, plants, and human beings, extracting them in order to transport them to – and build the wealth, the privilege, or feed the appetites of – the colonizers, who get marked as the first world (p. 4).

(2) Internal colonialism, the biopolitical and geopolitical management of people, land, flora and fauna within the "domestic" borders of the imperial nation (p. 4).

(3) Settler colonialism operates through internal/external colonial modes simultaneously because there is no spatial separation between metropole and colony (p. 5).

Essentially, colonialism invaded the roots of indigeneity to ensure the survival of colonialism's existence. By "roots" I refer to the blood, beings, and thoughts of a person. For instance, in the United States, elementary students learn the "catchy" phrase, "In 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed the ocean blue," in reference to learning about Columbus Day. Historically, the narrative of Columbus Day highlighted how Christopher Columbus "discovered" the United States, intentionally omitting the livelihood and history of Natives already in the United States. Therefore, the "catchy" phrase of which was taught in elementary schools throughout the United States, controlled and continued a particular settler colonial narrative which invaded the root of indigenous thought. Nonetheless, the violation of blood and beings is evident in any person of Mestiz@ identity. As Anazaldúa (1990) highlights that mestiz@s are people of mixed race, usually of indigenous and Spanish lineage. The clear indication of mixed indigenous race exemplifies how Native blood and beings are invaded. Settler colonizers mixed with Natives to ensure that their genetics, blood, and beings were carried out by literal physical bodies. Additionally, bodies became a physical representation of settler colonization, which was disguised to devalue indigeneity. In other words, settler colonialism invaded the root of indigeneity through the blood, beings, and thoughts of people to ensure the survival of its existence. Similarly, through the brutality, genocide, and sterilization, colonial powers took and continue to plague natives and indigenous traditions, customs, language, people, and so much more. In fact, Glenn (2015) analyzed that, "settler colonialism should be seen not as an event but as an ongoing structure" (p. 57). While settler colonialism does not necessarily only refer to

European, White, or U.S. American influenced colonization, the unique U.S. settler colonialism situated their goals to invade families and communities (Tuck, & Yang, 2012; Glenn, 2015). The infiltration of families and communities in a U.S. context allowed settler colonialism to literally be rebirth in a way that not only flowed through bodies, blood, and genetics, but through action, language, thought, and eventually society. Additionally, Rowe and Tuck (2017) illustrated that settler colonialism spoke to, "the theft of people from their homelands (in Africa) to become property of settlers to labor on stolen land" (p. 4). The intricacy of U.S. settler colonialism is undeniably evident—from claiming territories and land that has no human possibility of ownerships to enslavement of foreigners and demonizing Otherness to feel superior—and has transformed life in an inorganic, unnatural, and ugly reality. The harsh colonial phenomenon is echoed by Tuck and Yang (2012) explaining that, "Indigenous peoples must be erased, must be made into ghosts" (p. 6) to ensure that colonial powers and colonialism is relevant and alive. Nonetheless, settler colonialism crushes, controls, and procreates coloniality to further expand its grasp.

However, the hopefulness and resistance from decolonial theory and scholars combat and fight against the endangering and erasure of indigenous and native customs, recognitions, knowledge, practices, and peoples. In opposition to U.S. settler colonialism, decolonization offers and appreciates life and people before or if colonial powers never interfered. While the revolutionary Bob Marley (1980) sang poetically, "emancipate yourselves from mental slavery| None but ourselves can free our minds" in his redemption song, Mignolo and Walsh (2018) deepened our understandings of decoloniality, in hopes that with knowledge comes a rebirth of indigenous power and native strength. Importantly so, they noted that, "Decoloniality is not an academic discipline, which doesn't mean that it cannot be enacted in the academy" (p. 106). The earliest knowledge of decolonization

stems from revolutionary movements in the Americas (North, Central, and South), eventually making its notion to the Caribbean. However, with the spread of resilience, many indigenous and natives began to fight back in Asia, Africa, and Russia (Mignolo, & Walsh, 2018). In fact, Mignolo and Walsh (2018) explained that:

> decoloniality has changed the terrain from aiming at forming sovereign nation-states
> (decolonization) out of the ruins of the colonies to aiming at decolonial horizons of liberation (decoloniality) beyond state designs, and corporate and financial desires (p. 125).

The start of revolutions commenced a new perspective to history, philosophy, and thought. Historically, a recognizable theme in revolutions is an overthrow of government, as exampled in the French, American, and Russian revolutions. In essence, the government, ideally, symbolizes what the nation and its people believe in—their patriotism and societal values. An overthrow in the government symbolically represents how the people no longer agree with its national patriotism or societal values. The relationship to revolution and decoloniality is the shift. Decoloniality shifts the narratives of thought, history, and philosophy in hopes to respect and honor the revolutionaries (and in my case those who I suspect may resemble a decolonial embodiment process). In addition, decolonization provided an outlook that severed ties between the master and mastered and arguably strengthened independence. However, Sium, Desai, and Ritskes (2012) remind decolonial scholars that, "the decolonizing project seeks to reimagine and rearticulate power, change, and knowledge through a multiplicity of epistimologies, ontologies, and axiologies" (p. III). The hope for decolonial work is to reconstruct the power struggle between oppressor and oppressed to validate, honor, and acknowledge the injustices to allow an equitable

livelihood amongst the victims and oppressors. Additionally, "Decolonization is an emotional process" that situates people to question their bodies, beings, and positionalities (Sium, Desai, & Ritskes, 2012, p. V). Furthermore, Shome and Hegde (2002) stated that decolonization, "enables us to rethink communication through new visions and revisions, through new histories and geographies" (p. 249). Therefore, in order to understand and establish decoloniality, I suggest that we begin to unlearn or relearn things we all thought we knew and understood.

As a matter of fact, while I rely on Sium, Desai, and Ritskes' (2012) and Shome and Hegde's (2002) definitions of decolonization, I also argue that decoloniality is more than theory, especially as it pertains to our names and identities. Sium, Desai, and Ritskes (2012) claimed that decolonization refers to a theory and action where, "[the] knowledge we choose to produce has everything to do with *who* we are and *how* we choose to act in the world" (p. VIII). Therefore, the first step is to recognize how an individual is exposed to decoloniality. Unfortunately, the hegemonic institutions and material powers predominantly perpetuate a colonial narrative that is arguably itching to shift. Consequently, I encourage society and its people to think and question *who* taught and told them about their "history." In addition, while the *who* is an important factor, another consideration to keep in mind is time. Time is a relevant aspect to consider, because both colonialism and decolonization take time to instill. Centuries of colonial powers continue to inflict and harm the progression of decoloniality, making the acceptance and understanding of decoloniality difficult to grasp. Through my explanation and definition of decolonial embodiment process, I attempt to investigate the internal battle of how the collision of colonial material powers and knowledge of decoloniality create a self-unsettling. Nevertheless, time is a factor to the decolonial embodiment process, because time changes

people, their knowledge, understandings, perspectives, and effectively their names and identities. Equally, people need to, "first understand and experience the brutality of twined colonial expansion and capitalist exploitation, which included dispossession of the land protesters hoped to re-occupy" (Sium, Desai, & Ritskes, 2012, p. IX).

Secondly, once we interrogate *when* and *who* are the colonial powers that destroy and abuse our minds, bodies, and souls, decoloniality, "attempts to undo (and redo) the historical structure of knowledge production that are rooted in various histories and geographies of modernity" (Shome, & Hegde, 2002, p. 250). However, the process of "undoing" or "redoing" history begins in two manners, after realization and acceptance. First, through the actual rewriting of history, of which I elaborate its possibilities and hope to practice throughout my project. Although, most importantly and internally, through our minds. To redo and undo colonialism, we start with ourselves by recognizing a different truth. In essence, "If theory in communication is to reflect the exigencies of the global moment then we need to rethink the ways in which our intellectual quest relates to the cultural and social formations around us" (Shome, & Hedge, 2002, p. 260). Throughout the process of decoloniality, recognition and acceptance of the theory is not enough. We must also put knowledge to use by understanding how colonialism hurts us and decolonialism can free and heal us. In fact, Sium, Desai, and Ritskes (2012) emphasized that, "Decolonization does not simply suggest that we refrain from becoming spectators to the knowledge we produce; it demands it" (p. VIII). In essence, decoloniality becomes an internal process by expanding our minds. Ironically, the Disney Original movie Frozen (2013) character Pabbie said it best, "the heart is not so easily changed, but the head can be persuaded." Decoloniality persuades the mind, in hopes that the heart grows for a decolonial humanity.

Lastly, in the process of my definition of decoloniality, after I determined *who*, *when*, and *how*, I answer *what*—what do we do with decolonial knowledge, thoughts, and actions? My answer is simple—we fight, raise arms, and spread decoloniality to those who doubt us. While decolonial scholars may not be free from all colonial structures or powers, we do our best to ensure that we do what we can (through our work, knowledge, actions, and voices) to embody decoloniality. For instance, Bardhan and Zhang (2017) speak specifically to race and immigration to explain the complexities of fighting against colonialism. They concluded that the "ideologies of race" were not a universal code, because European/White settler colonial material powers were not worldwide. In fact, for immigrants and people moving across national and cultural borders, they experience an un-uniform "ideologies of race" contradicting their actions of colonial and decolonial practices, knowledge, and understandings (Bardhan, & Zhang, 2017). Therefore, while I argue that *what* the decolonial embodiment process encourages situations, circumstances, and society influences *what* decoloniality is restricted to do. Nevertheless, because of the restraints, decolonialism must continue to depict resilience, resistance, and its own form of power.

In summary, the decolonial embodiment process (DE.E.P.) as I define it is in response to the following questions:

(1) *Who* is/are the colonial power(s) which we interrogate and challenge?

(2) *When* we recognize colonial power, *when* do we accept decoloniality?

(3) *How* do we become to embody and free ourselves from colonial powers?

(4) *What* can we do in hopes to empower ourselves and others through decolonial thoughts and actions?

DE.E.P. is first identifying colonial structures, powers, and knowledge. Then, recognizing the function of colonial influences and acknowledging and accepting decoloniality. Furthermore, as we accept decolonial knowledge through our minds, we act upon decoloniality as best we can. When we know better, we hope and begin to do better, and as we embody decoloniality, we become as infectious as the first wave of decoloniality—we become revolutionary. However, how does DE.E.P. (as I define it) relate to names and identity? The short answer is—I argue that decoloniality is connected to embodiment, to people, a person, which therefore means that decoloniality has no separation between names and identities.

Connecting Bridges – Intercultural Communication, Identity, and Names

However, to further elaborate the connection between identity, names, and decoloniality. I first establish the relationship between intercultural communication and identity to define a functional rationale of how identity is referred to through the study. In Bardhan and Orbe's (2012) book on *Identity Research in Intercultural Communication*, their introduction historicized the focus of identity and its relationship to studies of identities back to the 1980s. Scholars and theories—such as Ting-Toomey's Identity Negotiation, Collier's Cultural Identity, Cupach and Imahori's Identity Management, Hecht's Communication Theory of Identity, and Y. Y. Kim's Intercultural Personhood—all encompass and highlight how identities relate to the study of intercultural communication. Additionally, a critical intercultural perspective on identity according to Halualani and Nakayama (2010) illustrate:

> a critical perspective in intercultural communication requires that we "understand how relationship emerge in historical contexts, within institutional and political forces and social norms that often invisible to

> some groups" and how intercultural communication relations are "constrained and enabled by institutions, ideologies, and histories" (p. 2, as cited by Collier, 2002, p. 2).

To summarize, identity is connected to intercultural communication, because when we think of who we are—purpose, belonging, experiences, beings, knowledges, etc.—we include how we interact with the world around us and vice versa. Therefore, when people identify who they are, we often think about our macro/micro relationships to intercultural communication.

Nonetheless, there are many intercultural communication scholars who define identity, and with the help of their research, I explore identity through names in a similar fashion. For instance, Chávez's (2012) explains that, "identity is not static; instead, it is negotiated with other people, cultures, spaces, and values" (p. 39). In essence, Chávez highlighted the fact that identity is fluid and changing as people do. The assumption that identity is one thing, or has one definition creates challenges to define identity. My purpose in explaining or defining identity is not to offer a static definition, but rather an understanding of how identity relates to the body and a person's knowledge. In fact, while Pensoneau-Conway (2012) offered a simplistic and straightforward definition of identity as, "a way to understand our personhood; it's the meaning we make of our sense of self" (p. 50), she continued to elaborate Schrag's (1986) communicative praxis related to identity in three steps. First, the temporality, which is providing self-identity through past and future/expected understandings of themselves. Second, multiplicity, which reiterates that identity is never fixed, but instead contextual. Lastly, through intersubjective embodiment, which speaks to how, "we come to know one another through those embodied relationships, and the embodied practices in which we engage that are situated in a social

context" (p. 50, Pensoneau-Conway, 2012). Essentially, identity is an embodiment that changes as people learn more about themselves, the world, and who they are in relationship to the world. Therefore, I argue that as decoloniality becomes more pertinent in the field of communication, that the decolonial embodiment process (DE.E.P.) can illuminate another layer of identity, which contributes to how we understand ourselves.

Nevertheless, since identity in itself is complex, fluid, contextual, and transforming, I focus on names specifically as a physical representation of how names intertwine with identity. According to Aksholakova (2014), Boyko (2017), Pennesi (2019), and Sabet & Zhang (2020) names are inseparable from identities, and because of the intricacy of names, they relate to the historical, social, and political levels that a critical intercultural lens encompasses. In fact, beyond our physical appearances, names are how we identify people, places, and things (Emmelhainz, 2013; Knight, 2018; Montoya, Vasquez, & Martínez, 2014). Therefore, names are only one of many layers to our identities, of which hold high significance because our names are inseparable from our bodies, beings, or self-knowledges. Additionally, I argue that names relate to colonial practices and influences through the material power structures that impact how birth names are given and created. Whether parents are naming their newborn, an immigrant is traveling to another country, or a student is introducing themselves on the first day of class, our names is what we use to describe who we are within the first five seconds of identifying ourselves.

Hence, my goal is to understand how changing and/or transitioning names might relate to a physical response or reaction to decolonize oneself. According to Bardhan and Orbe (2019) the intercultural communication field is looking for scholars to focus on identity research, "from postcolonial, performative and feminist perspective that are well equipped to address the 'in-between' spaces and dynamic processes of identity" (p. 6). The

decolonial embodiment process (DE.E.P.) investigates how the change/transition of names could be a physical representation of how people begin to decolonize themselves. In fact, Nhhlovu (2016) claimed that:

> decolonial thought is not just concerned about the need for new ideas. Rather, it [decoloniality] goes a step further to call for a completely new way of thinking – about languages, about cultural identities, about regimes of knowledge and knowledge production, and just about everything else we do (p. 36).

Essentially, my study confronts the colonial practices and material power structures in creating names in hopes to provide a new perspective on how we understand name changes/transitions. As Tuck and Yang (2012) remind us that, "settler colonialism and its decolonization implicates and unsettles everyone," (p. 7) and to offer a different insight on name changes/transitions reiterates the importance of decoloniality. Additionally, Rodriguez (2017) explained how decoloniality relates to communication through, "sharing, perceiving, understanding, and experiencing [of which] is bound up with all of our being" (p. 183). We cannot separate ourselves from our names, and what our names represent in relationship to who we are is in part one-fold to our identities. Therefore, the personal narratives and vulnerability that name changes/transitions resemble are important to comprehend to allow a new sense of self-reflection and self-empowerment. When we learn something new about ourselves, we slowly break down the barriers and borders that disconnect us from one another. Thus, through name changes/transitions, I argue that individuals resist and attempt to break away from the colonial material power structures to reflect and empower themselves through the decolonial embodiment process (DE.E.P.).

Positionality, Politics, and Process – Feminist/Pluralist Standpoint Theory

In addition to Decolonial Theory, I argue the importance of Feminist Standpoint Theory to empower and ensure that voices of those who hold name changes and transitions are heard through their own perspectives and words. Sabzalian's (2018) definition explained that standpoint is:

> a critique of patriarchal ideology...[which] sought to explain how the distinctive social and material experiences and political struggles of women yielded insights that denaturalized androcentric and sexist beliefs concealed within dominant institutions and disciplines (p. 362, as cited by Hartsock, 2004).

As previously noted by Peters (2018), women carry the responsibility of maintaining the family link through the adoption of surnames, and in return hold an important standpoint. Women decide whether or not their identity is transitioned through their name change by their new roles as wives and mothers, therefore, our insights through the standpoint speak to the sexist beliefs that names influence identity. In addition, McClish and Bacon (2002) expand standpoint by stating that, "research should be grounded in women's experience and should act as a significant indicator of the 'reality' of women's lives" (p. 28). In order to ensure that decoloniality is in practice and to honor standpoint, the voice of others who transitioned their names and found their own power in their name is significant to hear. Their experiences entail unique realities that often go unheard, which are constrained and controlled through the material power structures that inhibit their identities to fit a hegemonic influence. Shenoy (2009) reiterated that, "a standpoint develops in opposition to the dominant worldview, making it inherently political. Such a standpoint then is only achieved through 'a critical reflection on power relations and their consequences'" (p. 6, as cited by Wood, 2005, p. 62). I cannot speak, nor write for others' experiences, because my

name and transition are different than others. The feminist standpoint provides other women with a platform to tell their stories, as I witness—and maybe share—their perspectives.

Although, as mentioned by Obasi, Mocarski, Holt, Hope, and Woodruff (2019), their themes of transgender and non-binary folks in relation to name changes is unparalleled to others, as they may change their full (first, middle, and last) names during their transition. Therefore, while I operate on feminist standpoint, I include non-binary, transgender, or nonconforming individuals in my use of feminist standpoint. In fact, Longino (1993) argued that, "to produce a polyphonic text that can represent the multiple layers of experience complex social interactions, involving race, gender, class, nationality, and religion" are needed in standpoint to offer and honor marginalized and minoritized peoples and identities. Essentially, I utilized feminist standpoint to operate from a "shared oppression" rather than singling out marginalized women (Sabzalian, 2018). A "shared oppression," while stemming from standpoint, arguably strengthens decoloniality due to focus of those who are colonized and left to be forgotten. Moreover, I interchangeably use "shared oppression" and "standpoint pluralism" to introduce, "work that articulates women's [and other marginalized or minoritized] standpoints other than that of the white middle-class heterosexual feminist that has haunted too much feminist work" (Longino, 1993, p. 206).

Thus, feminist/pluralism standpoint provides me (the researcher) an outlet to step back and give others the opportunity to speak their truths, which I feel is important in acting on decolonial embodiment process. Importantly so, Sabzalian (2018) highlighted and reiterated that feminist/pluralism:

> standpoints are not equivalent with the colloquial term "perspective," which refers to an individual's unmedicated view (as cited by Harding, 1991); rather standpoint is a "technical" term to refer to "an achieved (versus ascribed) collective identity or consciousness, one for which oppressed groups must struggle" (p. 363, as cited by Harding, 2004, p. 13).

Therefore, my role is not to speak for others' perspectives. Instead, my role is to be a bridge between experiences. Significantly, Mignolo and Walsh (2018) claim decoloniality as a non-academic practice, but they do not discredit decoloniality enacted within the academic discipline. In fact, I argue that decoloniality continues through the actions and choices of decolonizers within colonial institutions to dismantle the engraved colonial forces within institutionalized structures.

Research Questions:

(1) What intercultural colonial material power structures exist that influence birth-given names?

(2) Do individuals who change their names continue to operate on similar material power structures to formulate their changed/transitioned names?

(3) With a close intertwining of names and identities, are changed/transitioned names used to decolonize personal identities?

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY & METHOD

Providing a Platform – Interviews and Narratives

Through standpoints, individuals voice their realities through a *shared* experience, hence how an auto/ethnographic approach provides meaning and life to the Changing and Transitioning Name Narratives. Given the mixed auto/ethnographic approach to this project, I develop the DE.E.P. method to account for the in-betweenness that people who have changed/transitioned their names—including me—understand about the relationship between self-empowerment, self-identity, and self-reflection. Inevitably, while I connect and relate to the Feminist/Pluralist Standpoint, I utilize standpoints in a way that values other peoples' positionalities, rather than my own. Therefore, I approach my study through qualitative methodologies and methods. As Martin and Nakayama (2018) briefly explained, "qualitative methods derived from anthropology and linguistics such as [the practices of] field studies, observations, and participant observations" (p. 57). In short, qualitative methods involve the researcher to a certain extent. In essence, I focus on a participant observant role, because I "contribute actively to the communication processes being observed and studied" (Martin, & Nakayama, 2018, p. 57). In the process of understanding others' stories, I recognize how learning from others also enhances my own story and study. In addition, Davis, Powell, and Lachlan (2013) elaborated on qualitative methods in relationship to the researcher, revealing that, "the data collection instrument is the researcher—you" (p. 322).

While I acknowledge that I cannot separate myself from my participants and volunteers, I also want to ensure that I give them space to build their own stories to highlight their realities. Furthermore, "the goal in writing qualitative research is often to be accessible, to change or impact the reader, to get a response from the reader, or to open a

conversation with the reader" (Davis, Powell, & Lachlan, 2013, p. 322). My hope, with the help of my participants and volunteers, is that we together start a dialogue of how names impact identities, which reiterates a qualitative approach. Nonetheless, Tracey (2013) points out that qualitative methods is an "umbrella concept that covers interviews" (p. 28). Her elaborate *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact* (2013) intricately describes the process of interviews as a qualitative method. However, to further comprehend the importance of interviews to my study, I trace the genealogy to oral tradition to then justify interviews in relationship to Feminist/Pluralist Standpoints. Importantly, I interchange the terms 'narrative' and 'interview' to refer to oral traditions to break up the monotony of referring to interviews.

In tracing interviews, I rely on Vansina's (1985) *Oral Tradition as History* to comprehend the academic roots of the method. They explained how oral tradition and history are different based on the collection of information. For instance, oral tradition is the transition of information from one person to another, while oral history tends to ask for witnesses who experienced a historical event. On the contrary, however, Cruikshank (1994) claimed that oral history is, "a research *method* where a sound recording is made of an interview about first-hand experience occurring during the lifetime of an eyewitness" (p. 404). In any case, oral tradition and history is a communicative process where information is transferred to understand someone else. In fact, Davis, Powell, and Lachlan (2013) explained that:

> interviews are opportunities for participants to describe their worlds, in concert and negotiation with researchers...[to] co-construc[t] a narrative with a participant—to understand [their] history and version of the story and ways

> that [they] make sense of [their] actions in the context of their cultural narratives (p. 354).

Therefore, the connection between oral tradition, narrative, and interviews is hearing, listening, and understanding another person's positionalities based on their experiences, perspectives, and memories. In addition, Vansina (1985) categorized oral tradition in four ways: (1) memorized speech, (2) accounts, (3) epic, and (4) tales, proverbs, and sayings. In my study, I focus on the memories of the volunteers because memories serve as strong narratives that have emotional connections to their realities. Cruikshank (1994) associated indigenous practices to oral tradition by reiterating that, "narratives are better understood by absorbing the successive personal messages revealed to listeners in repeated tellings than by trying to analyse and publicly explain their meanings" (p. 403). Essentially, feelings and meanings enhance memorized speech to emphasize the importance of a person's reality. Although, my point is to highlight a collective reality—while not exactly the same—that is *shared* amongst a common act of changing or transitioning names.

In essence, each story that is told attempts to honor a decolonial approach through self-narratives that come together because of a common experience. Additionally, Sorensen (2012) explains the beauty of storytelling by learning from indigenous communities around the United States who imbed oral traditions (specifically storytelling, but I argue interviews and narratives as well) in their higher education curriculums at American Indian universities. Her interviewee, Bishop explains that, "the act of storytelling is much more effective than simply reading about something from a book—and that there is something special about the sound of someone's voice relaying timeless information." (Stories build intellectual capital section, para. 7). Similar to Cruikshank (1994), feelings and someone's presence changes the dynamics of interviews, which is an important aspect for the method

that I practice, and how I practice research in training towards a decolonial approach. Rather than speak for others, I need to allow others to speak for themselves. Furthermore, in developing the DE.E.P., I refer back to my third point—*How* do we become to embody, then free ourselves from colonial powers? For me, as a researcher, I attempt to apply theories and practice methods of decoloniality to reiterate *how* I slowly free myself from a colonial structure, in hopes that others might try as well. As Castillo-Garsow (2012) boldly stated that in carrying out Anzaldua's legacy:

> I think that before you can make any changes in composition studies, philosophy, or whatever it is, you have to have a certain awareness of the territory; you have to be familiar with it and you have to be able to maneuver in it before you can say, "Here's an alternative model for this particular field, for its norms, for its rules and regulations, for its laws" (p. 9)

Consequently, while I use my academic standing (of which is a colonial structure) to conduct decolonial theories, methods, and overall research, I do so by keeping in mind that my hope is to reestablish change, therefore reiterating my qualitative approach.

Lastly, I emphasize how interviews, narratives, and memories provide a platform for individuals' standpoints. In Pennesi's (2019) article revolving around name changes, they explain how the force of transitioning names can be an oppressive act, but context matters and everyone's situation of their changed or transitioned name is different. Hence, the importance of allowing others to tell their stories, in their own words, through their own narratives. Through colonization, scholarship has been dominated by hegemonic structures, and the "silence and erasure of Aboriginal women's [and I argue anyone considered as Othered with the U.S. American context] voices have long been employed as a strategy of disempowerment by the settler colonial state and its imperial affiliations"

(Corr, 2018, p. 488). To then hope that standpoints and interviews provide a platform to form allyship and empowerment would be a step towards a DE.E.P. Considerably, interviews offer a space for individuals to operate from their standpoints, because, "the 'I' who remembers is simultaneously active and passive (thinking subject/subject of thought)" who live in a duality that only they can describe and in an in-betweenness that only they can conceptualize (Taylor, 2003, p. 191). Thus, DE.E.P. interviews utilize Feminist/Pluralist Standpoints to demonstrate how their stories and memories are told from their own experiences and words, and continues to offer a decolonial, qualitative approach to value, honor, and respect Otherness, in-betweenness, and dualities in hopes to highlight self-empowerment, self-reflection, and/or self-identification.

In Between and Never Fully Apart, but Hear Me Out – Pinay-Mestiza Consciousness and Autoethnography

> *To bridge means loosening our borders, not closing off to others. Bridging is the work of opening the gate to the stranger, within and without. To step across the threshold is to be stripped of the illusion of safety because it moves us into unfamiliar territory and does not grant safe passage. To bridge is to attempt community, and for that we must risk being open to personal, political, and spiritual intimacy, to risk being wounded (p. 3)*
>
> – Gloria Anzaldúa, 2002, This Bridge We Call Home

In addition to serving as a bridge for my participants, I attempt to speak to my own truths, as well, by engaging in a Pinay-Mestiza consciousness. As a Filipina, first-generation graduate student and immigrant child who is a multilingual woman of color, I find comfort in knowing that the Pinay-Mestiza consciousness validates who I grew up being and who I

am becoming as a scholar. While Anzaldúa (1987) explains that the mestiza consciousness and those who activate their mestiza consciousness:

> She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mode—nothing is thrust out, the good the bad the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned. Not only does she sustain contradictions, she turns the ambivalence into something else (p. 79).

de Jesús (2005) highlights Pinay consciousness as:

> [A way to] describe Filipina American struggles against racism, sexism, imperialism, and homophobia and struggles for decolonization, consciousness, and liberation...[Furthermore, Pinay consciousness deals with the] imperial trauma—the Philippines' dual colonizations by Spanish and the United States—and the articulation of Pinay resistance to imperialism's lingering effects: colonial mentality, deracination, and self-alienation (p. 5).

Inevitably, the Pinay-Mestiza consciousness allows me to bring my personal identities together to offer a multitude perspective to my research providing a critical and unique insight. Consequently, I also feel that to neglect my Pinay-Mestiza consciousness would mean to leave a part of myself out of my research. Ortega (2005) spoke to how an, "inner struggle has led to a realization that one is not one or the other but a mixture" (p. 81). In essence, people cannot be one thing and ignore another part of themselves, instead we need to utilize our pluralist positionalities to validate our uniqueness to our academic scholarship. In fact, Castillo-Garsow (2012), explained that the legacy of Anzaldúa—using theories of the flesh and the (Pinay) Mestiza consciousness—reiterates, "learn[ing] to read 'academes' and maneuver in the white world in order to empower herself" (p. 4) by, "keep[ing] traditional academic approaches in mind without being limited by them" (p.6).

Therefore, I argue that using a Pinay-Mestiza consciousness intuitively, "negotiate[es] how much of white culture, theory, and academic tradition to employ and how much to resist, she [Anzaldúa and her emphasis on the mestiza consciousness] opens up a path where formerly marginalized scholars can both be themselves and be relevant" (Castillo-Garsow, 2012, p. 6). As a marginalized persona in the beginning stages of my academic career, I attempt to empower, strengthen, and share the feminist/pluralist standpoint with my participants to speak to a shared Pinay/Mestiza consciousness and feelings of Otherness or in-betweenness.

Besides, in order to understand the decolonial embodiment process—as I attempt to intertwine DE.E.P. through my story and research—I focus on the relationship shared with the Pinay-Mestiza consciousness. Sium, Desai, and Ritskes (2012) posed the question, "Is it possible to decolonize institutions of colonial power (such as the academy, government, etc.), but further is it possible to decolonize *through* them?" (p. IV). In efforts to respond to their question, I think the use of feminist/pluralist standpoints and Pinay-Mestiza consciousness are ways in which *through* the understanding and comprehension of peoples' experiences and perspectives, researchers bridge the gap between a colonial practice to shed light and honor decolonial theories, practices, and methods. In using feminist/pluralist standpoints and Pinay-Mestiza consciousness, I focus on the validation of marginalized and/or underrepresented perspectives and experiences. My hope for my research is to investigate the colonial practices and material power structures of names by using decolonial knowledge to understand the transitional or changing process of names and their relationship to identities. By honing in on decoloniality and the transition/change in names, I try to redefine and extend how we think of personal identities through a significant indication of our identities (names). Thus, my practice of my Pinay-Mestiza

consciousness and shared platform for feminist/pluralist standpoints is an experiment to justify how the decolonial embodiment process functions *through* who we are to attack the macro power structures that colonize our thoughts, bloods, and beings.

Furthermore, while interviews offer space and allyship to others, autoethnography extends the same courtesy to me by providing space for my own Name Narrative. According to Arriola (2014), "*It's All Political*," and it is important to, "know that the system is political" (p. 324). In addition, Davis, Powell, and Lachlan (2013) depicted that critical scholarship (previously talked about in the DE.E.P. theory section), "explores the idea of culture as a viable framework for understanding how one's values and beliefs are woven together and guide their [the researcher's] experience of the world" (p. 35). Beforehand, I revealed how the researcher becomes the data collection instrument through qualitative methods, because both the critical and qualitative approaches cannot separate researcher and researched. Therefore, I utilize an auto/ethnographic method to explain a mestiza consciousness perspective to the Name Narrative project. To shortly define autoethnography, it is, "a type of ethnography in which the culture you're studying is a culture of which you're an integral part" (Davis, Powell, & Lachlan, 2013, p. 325). Basically, since I also utilize my Feminist Standpoint through a shared oppression based on gender, race, and immigration, I am part researcher and researched. Additionally, according to Ellis and Bochner (2000), there are five different type of autoethnography: (1) reflexive, (2) native, (3) complete-member-researcher, (4) literary, and (5) personal narrative. In terms of how I incorporate autoethnography based on my mestiza consciousness, I express a personal narrative on how my name, while not changed or transitioned, builds on the ideas of self-empowerment and self-identity done through a constant self-reflection. Therefore, throughout my rationale of using autoethnography, I

trace the genealogy to Anzaldúa's theories of the flesh and how I share a relationship to the method.

> *The odds were heavily against her. She hid her feelings; she hid her truths; she concealed her fire; but she kept stoking the inner flame. She remained faceless and voiceless, but a light shone through her veil of silence…The spirit of the fire spurs her to fight for her own skin and a piece of ground to stand on, a homeground where she can plumb the rich ancestral roots into her own ample mestiza heart. (p. 23).*
>
> - Gloria Anzaldúa, 1987, Borderlands

Throughout Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* (1987), she boldly analyzed the Othered, in-betweenness, and oppression of women of color based on gender, race, immigration, heteronormativity, etc. Her writing exemplified how embodiment, experience, and knowledge are one in the same and cannot be separated for women of color. In fact, in some cases, based on the intersectionalities that women of color identify with, their beings in itself can contradict ourselves. Additionally, theories of the flesh and Pinay-Mestiza consciousness intertwined based on its nature of understanding how Otherness and in-betweenness is a mindset for women who live, thrive, and survive in mestizaje. However, while theories of the flesh and Pinay-Mestiza consciousness derive from a theoretical foundation, I argue that autoethnography is the methodological form of theories of the flesh and Pinay-Mestiza consciousness. According to Davis, Powell, and Lachlan (2013), the critical approach stemmed from a feminist perspective, which began to critique the patriarchal, white-cis-heteronormative, male dominant dichotomy. In advocating for autoethnography, Wall (2006) stated that, "[m]any feminist writers now advocated for research that starts with one's own experience" (p. 3). While the qualitative methodologies

often combine researcher and researched, Boylorn (2008) added that, "[a]utoethnographic research combines the impulses of self-consciousness with cultural awareness reflecting the larger world against personal lived experiences—oftentimes blurring the lines between them" (p. 413). Therefore, I operate theoretically and methodologically from a position of duality as researcher and researched.

Nonetheless, autoethnography is not used to simply hear me out. Instead, autoethnography reiterates the importance of self-reflexivity. As Madison (2011) pointed out in the labor of reflexivity, "[self-reflexivity] contemplates his or her [or their] actions and meaning in the field (reflective) but also she or he [or they] turns inward to contemplate *how* she or he [or they] is contemplating actions and meaning" (p. 129). In addition, they argue that the labor in self-reflexivity is, "a mental and/or physical task, that is, an assigned of designated effort, toward a material end or toward economies of invention, purpose, and survival" (Madison, 2011, p. 131). Inevitably, while I describe my experiences of how my name affected me mentally, which then translated to physical action, the telling of my story continues through my autoethnography because of the importance of constant self-reflexivity. Additionally, I argue that autoethnography is meant to constantly think about how we (as individuals) reflect on our own lives, actions, and decisions. Berry and Patti (2015) characterized, "[c]ritical autoethnographers challenge us to take personally issues of social injustice and to (re)image possibilities for living more inclusive and equitable lives" (p. 265). Remembering that *It's All Political* justifies how important sharing stories (through interviews and autoethnography) is particularly for Othered, intersectional, in-betweenness people to have voice. In fact, Eguchi (2015) argued that:

> ...autoethnography is a powerful and radical method to disrupt normative systems of knowledge productions to investigate historically marginalized experiences. Autoethnography serves a political and intellectual move to call out the taken-for-granted idea and to diversify voice in the academy (p. 29).

Therefore, autoethnography provides space and allyship for me while I intellectually, mentally, and emotionally process my academic learning and comprehend my lived circumstances. As Anzaldúa and Keating (2002) mentioned:

> ...it's about doing away with demarcations like "ours" and "theirs." It's about honoring people's otherness in ways that allow us to be changed by embracing that otherness rather than punishing others for having a different view, belief system, skin color, or spiritual practice (p. 4).

Lastly, I methodologically practice autoethnography in hopes to work towards a DE.E.P. Eguchi and Collier (2018) explained that, "[autoethnography] is a research praxis that manifests the ways two different embodiments of critical consciousness might together call attention to, if not disrupt, the dominant structures and operations of the academy" (p. 51). Since autoethnography provides a platform for marginalized individuals, the method itself functions from a decolonial framework to obstruct settler colonialism. In fact, Toyosaki (2018) declares that, "[p]ostcolonial autoethnography is necessarily about the rational nature of our self-construction suspended in the network of political discourses of oppression and colonialism" (p. 35). Meaning, that since research and scholarship has been colonized and geared to sustain hegemony, autoethnography can be an outlet for scholars to voice their constant Otherness, in-betweenness, and marginalization. Thus, standpoints, consciousnesses, interviews, narratives, and autoethnography are meant to theoretically and

methodologically exemplify a DE.E.P. to investigate whether changing/transitioning of names can relate to a self-decolonization through empowerment, reflection, and identity.

Recreating the Name Narrative Project

Before fixating on changed and transitioned names, the original Name Narrative (2014) project was found by Margaret E. Montoya, Irene Morris Vasquez, and Diana V. Martínez at the University of New Mexico. Since the publication of the Name Narrative project, each author continues to work with the university in separate departments: law school, Chicana/o/x Studies, and College of Arts & Sciences. While, the first author, Montoya explained that the Name Narrative project was influenced by her *Narrative Braids* project, the other authors have also implemented the Name Narrative project to their diversity training and classroom assignments. Along my search for scholarship about names and identities, I came across the Name Narrative project and after reading through the article and its attached documentation (examples of Name Narratives, instructions, and worksheets), I thought about duplicating the project myself. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, I needed to adjust the overall format to incorporate New Mexico's state guidelines. Therefore, while I blended the Name Narrative and Cultural Profile worksheet for my study, I also adjusted the worksheet to focus on the change or transition of names. Specifically, I asked participants to complete the Name Narrative and Cultural Profile worksheet twice to first focus on their birth-given names, and then again, for a second time to speak to their changed/transitioned name. Additionally, the Name Narrative and Cultural Profile worksheet is used to stimulate ideas for the Changing and Transitioning Name Narrative Essay. Although, besides the Changing and Transitioning Name Narrative Essay, volunteers can also choose to do a virtual Zoom interview session rather than an essay. Both the Changing and Transitioning Name Narrative instructions (which contains

the Cultural Profile worksheet) and virtual Zoom interview questions are offered in Appendix A and B at the end of the study.

In terms of finding individuals who might be interested in telling their stories, I relied on a network and snowball sampling method. First, I used my own personal network (family, friends, and colleagues) to think of individuals who I knew experienced a name change. I verbally mentioned my study to them to see if they might be willing to participate, which was later followed up with a formal consent process, approved by the University of New Mexico's Institutional Review Board (UNM's IRB). Afterwards, I asked my family, friends, and colleagues if they knew other individuals who might be interested in my study, where I then reached out to them through their preferred contact method. Once acquainted, I followed up with a formal consent process as detailed and approved by UNM's IRB. My UNM IRB's approval information is also documented in Appendix C to verify the project.

After the formal consent process was completed, I gathered a total of eight individuals to speak about their Changing and Transitioning Name Narratives. Within my participants, there are three folks who identify as non-binary (specifically trans), two women who immigrated to the United States and changed their names, two women who highlight the pressures of transitioning their names because of marriage, and one woman who spoke to the benefits of transitioning her name post-marriage. Since I knew all the volunteers personally, I geared my interview questions to their individual experiences, but also relied on the approved interview questions from UNM IRB (Appendices A & B). The personalized questions allowed a deeper conversation with the volunteers, where I learned more than I thought. Lastly, I transcribed a total of 3 hours, 55 minutes, and 9 seconds of audio recorded interviews, which totaled to 82 pages of transcriptions. The complete

transcriptions can be found in Appendices D – K. Importantly, the full transcriptions are attached, because while I provide some of their stories, I do not provide all, and all of their stories deserve to be seen and heard. After conducting and transcribing all the Changing and Transitioning Name Narratives, I approached the data from a grounded theory perspective. Grounded theory essentially constructs the data from the "ground up," meaning that I reviewed the information to create a foundation. Tracy (2013) reiterated that in grounded theory, "the researcher begins instead by collecting data, engaging in open line-by-line analysis, creating larger themes from these data, and linking them together in a larger story" (p. 30).

After reviewing the data from scratch, there are two analysis approaches that I plan to operate from: thematic and iterative. According to Tracy (2013) and Charmaz (2006), grounded theory tends to focus on emerging data, but I find iterative analysis relevant to connecting theory, methods, data, and analysis. In fact, Tracy (2013) described that, "iterative analysis alternates between emic, or emergent, readings of the data and an etic use of existing models, explanations, and theories" (p. 184). In essence, the data refers to active and current theories, literature, and research to build on its findings. Additionally, since I define self-decolonization through self-empowerment, self-reflection, and self-identification/identity, I utilize thematic analysis to categorize the collected data in the three specific themes of self-decolonization. In essence, I refer to the sensitizing concept (using research questions or study objectives) to create potential themes for the data (Davis, Powell, & Lachlan, 2013).

Lastly, to organize the data, I engage in a manual and computer-aided approach to ensure that the analysis and findings are situated in themes or connected to theories, literature, or methods described throughout the study. The manual approach connects to

the iterative analysis, and the computer-aided approach helps with identifying themes. In terms of the manual approach, the transcriptions are physically printed to be placed in connection to existing material power structures, DE.E.P., or standpoints. In terms of the computer-aided approach, transcripts will be presented in a Microsoft word document, where I collected specific snippets of each interview to organize the information into the three specified themes of self-decolonization: empowerment, identification/identity, and reflection. Thus, through grounded theory, iterative and thematic analysis with a manual and computer-aided method, I connect the literature, theories, and methods all together for a cohesive project.

CHAPTER 4: ARCHIVE DESCRIPTION & DATA COLLECTION

As previously mentioned, there are eight individuals who share their Changing and Transitioning Name Narratives. Of the eight individuals, three of them identified as trans or nonbinary who reiterate how their physical change prompted their name changes. Throughout their stories, they explain the legal process of their names, which also highlight their emotional journeys throughout their process. In addition, two individuals speak to their name changes as they immigrated to the United States. Their stories spoke to assimilation and integration of their American names, but also offered deep reflection in how they began to see themselves in relationship to how they grew in the United States. Furthermore, one woman expresses the importance of keeping her birth-given surname even after marriage because of her accomplishments made with her birth-given name versus a changed or transitioned name. While she also discloses the transition of spelling her name differently, she continues to utilize her name in a geopolitical sense. On the other hand, another woman indulges in the cultural richness of her name where she dangles between her names (birth-given and post martial) to connect to her family and children. Alternatively, another woman conveys the importance of changing her birth-given name after marriage as the opportunity provides her with the chance to truly connect her name to her identity.

In each interview, both audio and visual recordings provided a different feel, because of a virtual format. The virtual format, while not ideal, became a new normal due to COVID-19 restrictions. However, since many interviews took place in January and February of 2021 (nearly a year living in COVID restrictions), online/virtual formats became relatively familiar to people. Throughout the interviews, I spent at least an hour with each volunteer, but the whole conversations were not recorded. In fact, the longest

recorded interview session was 42 minutes and 28 seconds, and the shortest recorded interview session was 22 minutes and 23 seconds. Moreover, the longest interview transcription is 12 pages and the shortest was 8 pages. Surprisingly, the longest recorded interview did not match the longest transcribed interview, which also translated for the shortest recorded and transcribed interviews. Importantly, the connection between time and content is not dependent on one another, which is represented through the descriptions of recordings and transcriptions. In terms of content of the interviews, beforehand, questions were provided to the volunteers so that they understood what would be asked of them. While the Changing and Transitioning Name Narrative Virtual Interview Questions (found on Appendix B) were used, additional questions in response to individuals' stories were included. Therefore, the semi-structured interviews portray a reasonably in-depth narrative of each participant to fully elaborate their realities. Each volunteer told an elegant, valuable, and honest narrative, where their rich stories linked to themes of self-empowerment, self-identity, and self-reflection.

Lastly, throughout this chapter the archival data collection is divided amongst four themes: (1) understanding birth-given names, (2) self-empowerment, (3) self-identity, and (4) self-reflection. In each theme, I reviewed quotes that depicted each interviewee's perspective of how they embody the theme. Generally, each individual understood their birth-given names differently and based on given context from the person who named them. However, the following themes (empowerment, identity, and reflection) focus on each person's changed or transitioned name or how they own their birth-given name. Importantly, the quotes illuminated in each theme is later discussed in the analysis and findings with its context, but full transcriptions are provided in the appendices to ensure that each person's story is heard and seen. Purposefully, the themes offer a shared

experience to reiterate feminist/pluralist standpoints. Although, each narrative contributes to a DE.E.P. where the material power structures that colonize names are investigated on a micro-level based on one person's interpretation. Thus, since changing or transitioning names occur for several reasons, the themes presented encompass a narrow scope to concentrate the shared standpoints to a personal DE.E.P. through names and name changes.

Theme 1 – Understanding Birth-Given Names

ANAÍS:

"So, um, my mom and dad, they were still together at that point. So, my, my mom is from Juarez in Mexico, and my dad is from like, backwoods Appalachia in Pennsylvania. And he was in the army, so he went down and met my mom that way. Um, and so he chose the middle name, Gail, because that's his mom's name."

"I haven't really talked to my dad too much about it, but when my mom says it, it kind of sounds like they wanted to pick a name that would work in both Spanish and English. But yeah, my mom and dad are the ones that chose um, my first name, my birth name."

"So, um, when my mom talks about it and tells the story, she does kind of always say like, well, we wanted to make sure we got a name that works in English and Spanish, but I really think, just from observing my parents and growing up over time with them, um, I think it had a lot to do with social mobility. And so my mom was, when I was first born, that first year, we still lived in Juarez. And I think my mom coming over to the US, she really had hopes that her children would like, grow up differently from how she grew up. And she wanted us to be able to move more easily in American society. So, I think that she doesn't talk about whiteness, like consciously, she, she doesn't, she's not aware that she thinks that whiteness is better. Um, but I think that she definitely, in the way that she operates, she

believes that it's like moving up, becoming like, becoming more white, becoming more um, like higher class and stuff, um, is just like was giving us a better opportunity in life and that we were gonna do better than she had."

ARROW:

"So I, um, I do have two births given name. There was one that my grandparents gave me and there's one my parents... actually, the geomancer gave me."

"Yeah, my parents would like to re, I would like to rename myself because I don't like um, the name the grandparents gave me. It also relates to the bad relationship I had with them. But anyway, um, that's just an old name. And the new name was decided by the, provided by the geomancer, and I selected from one in four."

"Um, my parent, my grandpa, the name that my grandparents gave me does have a rock in it, like the rock character in it. So, um, the geomancer would say, this is not good for a girl because that means like, firm and hard. And it's not too fit for the girl, because it's gonna make this girl very hard and tricky.

And it's also not good for my character, which I think it's true, like back to then my character was kinda like, too hard to talk to, um, and it's also relates to my family, like, they didn't taught me how to express myself properly. So, the way that I'm expressing myself is kind of like just um, getting mad, getting upset and yelling, those kind of stuff. After the name changing, I do have a little change. Like, I'm going more peaceful, more calm, and also changing the way that I'm talking to people"

CHRISTINA:

"My mom named me. Um, so my mom's name is Ximena, X-I-M-E-N-A, and then Walter is Walter, right? So we have someone with a, what is considered would be a unique name and someone with a boring white person name. How can we represent this child of, of two

halves in the best way that we can. So they went through a couple of different names. Um, my dad wanted to name me Mercedes, um, and my mom said that that's a stripper name. So, I was not named Mercedes. They wanted to also named me Zoe with the umlaut, with the two dots over it, because my dad has a strong German descent. Um, so I was almost named Zoe. But they ended up with Christina, because it is a name that can be translated in both English and Spanish pretty easily, both in how it's spelled and how it's pronounced. And since all of my mom's family at the time lived in Chile, they wanted to make sure that all the family members could pronounce my name.

Um, Marie is, I don't know where the Marie came from, but it is a good 90s middle name. Um, since I find most people around my age are middle-named Marie in some capacity. And then Blankenship is my dad's last name. They chose not to combine last names or anything like that. My mom's last name is Morales, uh, which is a pretty typical Spanish last name, but they chose not to combine them. Um, so, I'm just Christina Marie Blankenship. And as you know, because you know me on a personal level, most people don't assume I'm brown and my name implies that I am not brown in any way, shape or form."

"Um, I think part of it is also just name trend. That was the name in the 90s. Christina is a very nineties-sounding name, Marie was a very nineties middle name. So, I think it's time and place contextual."

EMELINE:

"So, I was told that my dad's youngest sister, Auntie, we called her Auntie Carning. Her nickname is Auntie Shiony. She was the one that named all of the children in the family, and some um, are amongst, not just my, you know, my dad, the Eduardo Tolentino family, but also some of um, my other relatives. So, all of my siblings, my brothers, it's Eduardo...

so my dad's name is Ed, Eduardo. And then there's Edgardo, Alfredo, Gerardo and Arnaldo. So the boys all ended with a "do" just like my dad."

"And then when it came to my sister and I, it was Geraldine and Emeline. Um, so it was about you know, it ended with a L-I-N-E. And my sister got the nickname of Gigi out of Geraldine, and somehow I got the nickname of Mimi from Emeline."

KAI:

"Yeah, so um, I am the oldest. My parents both agreed on the name together. Um, they're very religious. Um... Catholic, very, very Catholic. Um, and my dad always wanted to name his first girl after the song by Meatloaf, uh, "Beth." Uh, and my mom always wanted a Biblical name. She liked the town of Bethany in the Bible. So, uh, they kind of came together on that name, uh, and came up with Bethany. Um, my middle name was chosen; they were going between two. I was born in Hawaii, um, and so they're going between Kainalu and Kaimalu. Uh, Kainalu means "big wave," Kaimalu means "peaceful ocean," and on the day I was born, there was a storm that knocked out a bridge in Hawaii. So, they said, well, Kainalu is more fitting than peaceful ocean, so, uh, they went with Kainalu."

"So, my mom's middle name is Elizabeth. And uh, so they kind of wanted to have that kind of continuation as well. So, the Beth kind of, ah, was a good... Beth was my nickname before Kai. And so, uh, kind of came from my mom, but mostly it was uh, kind of that, that song and the Biblical reference."

LIAN:

"Um, in South Korea, some people ask for good name, um, in the name expert's office. So, my grandparents went there and asked a very good name for my birth time, and year and day, and so they bought this name. So, yeah."

“Oh, no, they can, yeah, repeat it, but it is good for my own ying yang and five filler and things like that. It is kind of a Chinese philosophy and study about a destiny and name. Yeah, it's kind of cultural background, so...”

“Lyoung means, um, "brilliant" or "smart.." And hee means uh, "lady." So hee has the gender meaning.”

NASH:

“Yeah, it's, so my mom has this funny thing where she named all of us kids a longer name, and then called us all nicknames. My siblings have name nicknames that are more similar to their legal name than mine. I always kind of was frustrated with my mom because it felt so distant. Like, it, Addie is not a, um, a name that's a nickname for Natalie. Like it doesn't like match up. Like my brother's Alexander and goes by Alex. That is, that makes sense, that's a perfect match. My sister is Mallory and goes by Mally, which is a little bit different, but it, you can see where Mally, Mallory, Mal, you know, it all makes sense. Um, Natalie, Addie, like, I'm like, you really have to stretch like Nad- addely, you know, like, you really have to like stretch to make it make sense that those, that that's a nickname for Natalie. My mom always loved the name Addie. She always thought it was a good name for a child with brown hair. And my siblings were both born blonde and I was born with dark hair. And so she was like, oh, like, maybe that's a name that I could use on this kid. But she felt like it wasn't a proper name, like it needed a longer legal name to be matched up with, like it needed to be short for something because it's like, it felt nickname-y and she liked Natalie. Um, Addie is technically a family name. Her grand, her grandmother was Addie Um, but she didn't know that when she fell in love with the name. She found it because her friend's uh, niece was named Addie and she just really thought it was cute. And then she was telling her mom about it, and her mom was like, you know that's my mom's name. She was like

No, I didn't know that and so my great grandmother was Adeline and my mom told me before I changed my name that she wished she had named me Adeline as the legal name. And she doesn't know why she didn't do that. She always kind of liked Natalie and went with that. But she ended up, she called me Adeline pretty regularly as kind of a little nickname or a pet name. never called me Natalie. I never once have ever heard that name come out of her mouth. And so, it's kind of funny. Um, but so yeah, it's it's kind of a family name. But that's almost kind of an accident."

"You know, I felt like what, I always was really embarrassed of Natalie, because even before I was kind of um, figuring out my trans identity, I was always a tomboy, always kind of a masculine girl um, as a kid, and um, Natalie felt very feminine to me, and Addie felt a little more tomboyish. Um, like I could I could take that name and kind of feel like it was something that aligned a little more with my personality as a kid. And so then, you know, there are times that your legal name comes up, you know, or whatever, on the first day of school, they always have your legal name on the roster and call it out. And I was always really embarrassed of it, because I felt like it was really feminine, Natalie was. And um, I tried to make Addie work for me, I kind of tried to think of it as a little bit more androgynous um, of a name, because some people, like I had a soccer coach named Adam, who is from Wales. He was from the UK. And his nickname was Addie. And that's a common nickname for Adam in the UK. And so, I remember really liking finding that information out because it is a feminine name in the US, but I was like, I can make this work for me. Eventually, though, I did feel like Addie was too feminine for me to feel like I could keep it."

"in terms of do you feel the commonly identified gender identification and your personal gender identification are the same, like, that was a big problem with my name was, (clears

throat) you know, I was always pretty masculine. Like, I dressed like I do now, when I, before I transitioned, and when I had that name, and my name, because it has those feminine connotations, made people identify me as a woman. Even when I didn't identify that way. Like I, when I was nonbinary, but hadn't um, transitioned medically, like, my voice hadn't lowered, I didn't have some of the secondary sex characteristics that I exhibit now, um, I was, you know, my body was just as it had been, when I was born. I felt like my name was pigeonholing me into people perceiving me as a, as a lesbian or a woman who was kind of masculine or androgynous. And that's not how I identified, you know, I identified as nonbinary at the time even when I had that name. Um, and so, I felt like those were, that was a big disconnect, that my name was a barrier to people seeing me, and really understanding how I actually identified."

"I actually met someone like I had a friend named Addie for a little bit recently. And like, it was really hard for me to call her that, like, it's just hard. It's a hard thing to say. And it just feels so far away. And it's funny, because I carried it with me for the majority of my life, and now it just feels like that's not me."

OLIVIA:

"Yeah. So, first name is based on a Biblical role. My parents were extremely religious, and so they chose, like, children's names based on biblical roles. Um, so that's where the first name came from. Then middle name, my grandma's name is actually Phyllis, so Philip, for that was pulled over, so kind of a family connection."

"Not really, I am not religious. I don't follow with a religion at all, so I don't know too much of it. I just know that like, that was her explanation for all of us when she said, 'Oh, yeah, this is why your names were chosen.'"

Theme 2 – Self-Empowerment

ANAÍS:

“So, first, um, first, I transitioned by letting go of Tebay and then I switch when, when my partner and I got married. Um, I took his last name. And for me at the time, it felt empowering because being associated with my dad my entire life has been like, a horrible flavor in my mouth. My dad was very abusive, so, um, on it, like in all the ways and so, I think that like, getting away from his name, and his family's name, because his whole family's like a big, abusive, toxic mess. I was like, I want nothing to do with that. And I didn't grow up with them, they're all in Pennsylvania. So, I feel like absolutely no connection to them whatsoever.”

“And I was happy to take the last name I have as a married last name, because to me, it represented, changing my family name to um, a family that was much more healthy, and had healthy relationships, laughed together, got together and um, had a good time, respected each other, loved each other. So, to me, it was just like a no brainer. I was like, "Yeah, I don't want, I don't want this name that I've been carrying like a burden for so many years," you know?

So, that was my first um, when I changed my, my last name.”

“So, then around that time, I was making some new friends, um, and I remember I started introducing myself as Anais. And I, I think in the beginning, I felt like, um, a little bit of imposter syndrome. Like, I don't know, I don't know if I can do this. I don't know if I, if like people are gonna be like, is that really your name or, you know, like, and then when I started, I started having really good friendships with women of color, and they were calling me Anais, it just felt like, I felt like, yeah, that's who I am. Like, I'm not Nancy Gail, that doesn't, that doesn't um, resonate with me. It doesn't feel like who I am now, after going

through all these changes, um, wanting to move into a new way of moving in the world and being so."

ARROW:

"I mean, it's, it's cool. It takes a while for me to get accept to it. And I also thought about um, change it when I get into high school. No, not high school, I mean, college. And then I'll realize, well, it's been your name for three years, people know you as Arrow. And it's part of you and your identity, you shouldn't just take it away because it's not the ideal name that you want it. I mean, not everything is ideally, happening in your life. So, I would like to keep carry this name, like, for the future."

CHRISTINA:

"Um, and so Tom is connected to this big ol' whiskey inheritance that, my name's not in any of that paperwork, so I would never see. And so, I was like, yo, maybe I should change my last name, right? It's like marrying a Rockefeller or a Vanderbilt or something. But then I started getting my PhD. And I started dating Tom, right as I was starting the PhD, like literally week one, semester one of my doctorate. And I became very inspired by women in the field comm, and beyond comm, who didn't change the name. Susana's, name has not changed. Uh, many other women's names are not changed. And they're out here with the kids and they're out here getting married, and they're out here telling us men are clowns, and I was like, I want to do that instead, actually."

"So, my last name is something I've always brushed aside as white, as an annoyance, as a cognitive dissonance in comparison to my mother. But then my last name became more important when I started my PhD. Because I was like, but Christina Overholt didn't get the doctorate. Christina Blankenship got the doctorate. And whose name is on this publication? It says Christina Blankenship. But then at that point, I was like, What am I

really prioritizing? This love that I have for Tomasito and like a wonderful life we can have together or my accomplishments, my awards and my degree?

And I was like, you need to be honest with yourself, Christina. I was like, I'm an egocentric asshole.I love Tom, but I, it's me at the end of the day. The degree is for me, the degree is by me. The dissertation has my name on it. These publications and top journals have my name on it. These awards have my name on it. And I was at that point that I was like, no, I'm not going to change my last name. Uh, and even as I move out of academia, I still would not change my last name. Um, and if we have children, they can work out under Tom's insurance. Um, and they can have Tom's last name, and that doesn't bother me whatsoever. Um, and I was worried in telling my parents that, um, and they didn't really have any opinions about it. But at the same time, I probably wouldn't let them have any opinions about it, because they're baby boomers, and I don't care anymore."

"I put that shit to bed Pauline. Only Blankenship. It's only me. And that's it. But a lot of it, interestingly enough, it ultimately is rooted just in my academic accomplishments, which as we know in the real world really doesn't mean anything, um unless you stay in the academy. But if you get a job, or you decide to be a homemaker or like what the fuck else that's not related to the Academy, none of that actually really matters. Um, so for me, it's very much tied to my accomplishments. Um, probably because I have avoidant attachment styles, and I need validation at all times.

So, maybe because I have my own last name that's tied to my own academic credentials, maybe it creates a cycle of what is the closest that I can have to self-validation. And that might be it. I am too mentally strange and depressed to wake up and be like, I am a goddess, and I am a bad bitch. And I, everything that I want to manifest is going to come towards... it's too woowoo for me. Uh, since you know me well enough, it's all very woowoo

to me. But, if I can keep my last name out of my own choice, still have kids and maybe a marriage and a mortgage and all those good things, but still keep my name, even if it's only attached to these abstract awards, I think it's the closest thing to self-validation that I would probably get, unless I went to therapy, but I'm not there yet. Um, so I think yeah, I think for me, it's, it's self-validation. It's probably a little narcissistic, might be a little egotistical."

EMELINE:

"So, um, after getting a divorce um, and so, at the time of separation and divorce, um, I kept the Alvarez last name for the sake of my kids. Because in school, um, you know, and especially in this, I think, in today's generation, um, many of the teachers acknowledge that, you know, children are, it's no longer the traditional family. But when, um, at the time that my kids were going to school, it wasn't known yet. Usually, you know, on a family name, last name, um, you know, it was automatic that the children's last name, when you're talking to the parents, it's Mr. and Mrs. Alvarez. And so, everyone is known as Mrs. Alvarez. So, I was known as Mrs. Alvarez when the children were going, when you guys were all going to school. And I just felt with a divorce, that it would be very difficult to change my name, and, you know, with the, you know, with every, all of the kids in school, they were so accustomed along with their, their friends to know me as Mrs. Alvarez, and then to change that, um, I just felt that it was easier. So I kept my name, um, so long as my kids were in school."

"And then as they became older, and I became more independent, um, and my children became more independent, um, I had considered going back to my maiden name. Um, and being that my dad was accepting of me, and not just that, my accomplishments, because you know, it comes along with your name, your name association, who you network with, and your reputation, it, it's associated with your name. And when people

look for you, and they do a name search, it's according to your name. Even when good example, on Facebook, uh, people either hide a name for a reason, because they want to disguise themselves, or, you know, um, you put your name that you associate with if you want people to look for you within your network."

KAI:

"when I came out to my parents, and I was more like, I didn't tell them I was trans, I was transmasculine, I was like, you know, I think I'm in the middle somewhere. And I do feel more like that, um, but I did know I wanted to take hormones and do like, a medical transition. But I was like, you know, the one thing that I do want is I want to go by he/him or they/them pronouns, and I want to go by Kai. Uh, and my mom told me (laughter)... I laugh about it now. It was very traumatizing, but I laugh about it now. She said, I'll never call you anything other than what I named you. And it's hilarious because she named me Kainalu, so... um..."

"Yeah. So, um... I... there are a few different reactions that varied from like, great to terrible. Um, my youngest sister is probably the person who picked it up the fastest. She like, almost automatically changed, never messed up. She is one of my greatest supporters. Um, I had at the time, a previous partner and they were not super great. Um, they'd call me Kai, like, when we were with my friends and with each other but wouldn't call me that with their parents, and was just kind of against me being transgender in general. Um, so that wasn't super great. I mentioned my mom's reaction (laughter) before um, of "I'll never call you anything other than when I named you" which is dumb, but... uh, my roommates were really funny about it. It did take them a little while. It was harder for them. One of my like, I thought it was hilarious, one of them would always be like BethanyKai, just that like, that

like became more of my name. (laughter) BethanyKai, like in one, one breath. It always cracked me up.

But they were super supportive about it, whenever I told them they were like cool, uh, and they'd correct each other. I don't really ever have to correct them. uh, I lived in a house, we called it the half mansion um, by Netherland Park, and huge. We had seven roommates. Um, yeah, yeah, it was, it was insane. Um, and yeah, so like, if somebody wasn't getting it, there were like, five other people who would correct them, so I never had to. It was really, really cool. They're my chosen family, so... Like, I went home, they've been, been calling me Kai for a while and they had finally gotten it. It maybe took about a month or two, um, and then when I came home from coming out to my parents, they were like, that sucks, but you've got us now and they've been very supportive since then."

LIAN:

"Yeah, as you know, I've been in the United States about four years, and I use this name about three and a half years in Texas. And at that time, I started learning in in, learning and speaking in English again. So, this name is, this name is really close to um, how I look like at the moment, I missed a lot and I feared, I felt fear about speaking out and some kind of microaggression in Texas. The, the environment are very different from what I am experiencing right now. (laughter) Lot of peoples are white and I don't have any Asian friends, um, no Korean friends.

And everywhere I went, um, I felt and I observe the gaze from the white people. Yeah. So, when I decide to move to Albuquerque, I thought whether um, I changed my um, name again to Lyounghee because I want to huh, found, I want to bring real me to the new environment. (laughter)

So, I was think about it, um, but at the moment the reason why I choose to keep my English name Lian, um, bringing to the UNM was because, okay, um, Lian is also my identity and, I, and I'm gonna use this name to build and empower myself and this will be the process. The Lian, um, okay, let me say this way, weak Lian or-

Oh, yeah. Oppressed Lian, was also me, and comparatively lower level of English-speaking skills, Lian was also me, and I'm going to getting better. I know that and I want to give that name, I want, I want my name to have the chance. Okay, you're going to get better, you're going to get better. And after about five or four or five years when I get the PhD degree, and I will say okay, though, that Lian is improved, and I want to, I want to prove myself that I'm, I'm going to get better. So, that's why I keep the name.

Yeah, yeah. That's the story about my name. And it was a very good reminder that why I choose this name and hmm, how much I accept myself in the United States. Lian in the United States. (laughter) Yeah."

NASH:

"And we were going back and forth, and I was pushing for Nash, I wanted to name the dog Nash. And Abigail, my partner said, I don't really like that name. And I was like, what, like, I thought we were gonna name our kid that like, I love that name. And like, she was like, it's to kind of harsh and abrupt and I don't think it's good name for the dog. I don't want to name the dog that. And we settled on Jackson is what we named the dog. And within that conversation, Abigail said, I think you want to be named Nash. She was like, you are, you keep talking about how much you love the name. You're trying to give it to everything. You want to name the dog Nash, you want to name your kid Nash. Think about it, I think you want to be named Nash. And at that point, I had been thinking, Addicus, you know, that was what I was going to go with, because it was easier on everybody to just not even have to

change how they called me and all I was going to change was the legal documents and, and that was just my, gonna be my little thing, was gonna be a lot easier that way. But when she said that, I let it sink in. And I would do this thing, in, when I was in my car or thinking, daydreaming just in my head, where I would introduce myself with, you know, Hi, I'm Addicus, Hi, I'm Nash, I would imagine graduating college and you know, or graduate school or whatever. I imagine being at a graduation and then being like, Nash Addicus Nance Jones, you know, at the graduation ceremony and just trying to hear it resonate in your head, because until people start calling you that, I mean, you just have to kind of imagine people calling you that and think about how it felt. So, um, when she said that, that maybe I wanted to be named Nash, I let that start to simmer and I started exploring how that felt. And I was like, she's right. Like, that's the name for me. Mr. Nash is who I want to emulate in this transition. Um, it sounds, I love the name. It feels good. When I started imagining introducing myself as Nash, I was like, I like that, Nash Jones. Like that sounds good."

"...Nash just feels like me. Like, it feels like who I am. It makes sense. Um, it also, um, my career, I use it a lot. I am on the radio, and so I say my name regularly, you know, this is K-U-N-M, I'm Nash Jones, blah, blah, blah, you know, or it's 7:19 I'm Nash Jones, good morning. I have to say my name every time I get on the mic, because that's how the radio works. You know, like on TV, you can see who's speaking, they don't have to say their name a million times an hour... But I do. And so, and because people can't see me, I am my voice to my listeners and my name. And so my name has become um, well known in town because I, I'm on the radio every morning and people who listen to Morning Edition every day they, they feel like they know me and they know my name. And so that's kind of a funny thing um, is uh, when I meet people, they're like you're Nash Jones like, like it's

like it's a name that is out there and people know of and that's kind of funny because yeah, I'm I made it up, you know, I created my name. And so uh, and it's just a big part of my public persona is my name. And so, I'm glad I changed it um so that my public persona aligns with who I feel like I am..."

OLIVIA:

"Really, really good. And not everyone uses it at this point. So, I haven't been able to legally change it yet. I'm in that process. Um, but then I also have family members who are like very anti the idea, so a lot of people still use that other name when I'm teaching like on my bursars, and what students see is still that name, things like that. So, I'm in a difficult position of like figuring out how to actually present myself right now. So, I'm figuring that out at the, as we're going into the start of the semester, how I'm going to actually use it, but it's something that when I hear it, when I use it, I definitely feel empowered. And like, just like, that is me, I'm actually doing this and becoming the person that I am, that I like, see myself as and it's really, really encouraging."

"It really does. Yeah, that's I... so I have a therapist, because going through this process, you have to kind of have a therapist or a counselor, somebody that you're talking to and working through these things, especially to get signatures on things. And they're just like, you have to know that one of the things that you have to be willing to do is do this because you are worth it, right? If they're not going to support you and who you are, then that's something really toxic in your life. And so, like, as much as I want them to be willing to do this for me and like, willing to treat me the way I want to be treated, if they're not going to, then it's just not a healthy situation. So, I feel bad in some ways, but at the same time, I'm just like, bye Karen. Yeah. You're done."

Theme 3 – Self-Identity

ANAÍS:

“So I legally changed my name to Anais Amairani Lechuga. But the thing is, I changed it in court, but I would have to do like a bunch of different things to like, change it on my RN license, to change my passport, to change my, you know, it's like a whole bunch of stuff with like my insurance. And honestly, because we've moved so much, we went to Minnesota, now we've come back to New Mexico, every time it's like, "Okay, so am I gonna do it here? Or am I gonna wait and see if we move again?" Like, I just have not done it on my all my stuff. And so, at work, you know, at work, everybody calls me Nancy. And honestly, now that we're back here, I've also been growing as a person, so now that we're back here, I don't really correct people or anything. What I pretty much do is, when I'm friends with somebody, or I'm introducing myself to somebody outside of work, then because that's the name I most connect with and it's meaningful to me, then I'll share that with people but um, you know, in work or also sometimes the neighbors, I'm like you know, if they get my mail by accident or something, they're gonna (laughter) be like, who is this or something. So, um, so yeah, I, I kind of go by both depending on the circumstance, and I'm comfortable with either at this point.”

“Well, I think a part of when, let me backtrack a little bit. I think something that I was really trying to do in renaming myself was to mark myself as a woman of color, because I don't always get read that way. And now, I think I'm not as sensitive about it, and I'm not as um, I think back then I felt like I really had something to prove. And it was touchy, and I had, like, if I would get read as a white person, cause I didn't grow up that way, I didn't feel that way inside, so um, it was something kind of painful. But I feel like now, either way, um, my focus is a lot less on how I'm read, it's a lot less than like how, um, I don't know, I feel like now, I have put the onus back on myself to define myself by my actions, not, not

to try to get people to think of me in any sort of way, or curate what they get from me using my name. But like, instead just be more intentional about how I treat people, and then, you know, if I get read as a woman of color or not, like, I'm not holding on to that identity so tightly. And so, I think that's part of why I'm not so rigid about wanting to be called one thing or another. Um, I think that my identity now is in flux. So, I think that um, I'm also like, I have, in a way split identity, where I mentioned to you like at work, they call me Nancy, but um, I kind of have like, a work personality and a everything else personality, because at work, I can only be part of myself, I can't be my full self."

"And um, and then on the day that I made the appointment, I took my family with me. Huh? Oh, I had to publish the name change, like a notice of name change in two newspapers. So, I had to, like take out ads in the newspaper. And I didn't even like, cause, yeah, I didn't even like, try to buy the newspaper or anything. Um, but yeah, I did that. And then, then I had to drive up to Las Cruces on the day of, and then I had to explain to the judge why I wanted my name changed. And I, it was actually emotional for me, because I remember I explained, like, I connected a lot to the healing of my trauma. I had been doing a lot at that point, too. I mentioned my dad was real abusive, so I had, I had been trying to um, just like work on myself to not be so traumatized, and to not like, always be triggered by things and to just like own my own responses and to calm my nervous system. So, I really did feel like I was going through those transformations as well. So, in front of the judge, in front of all these other people, all these strangers, I explained about that, and I explained about the name meaning because Anais means passion, and I'm a very passionate person. And so, I really do try to live purposefully. And Amairani actually means, there's different meanings available for it, but one of them is a flower that does not wither. And so, um, yeah, I really love that meaning and resonates with me. And so in in

the courtroom, I, I explained all of that stuff...And, you know, it was just real meaningful to me to go through that. Because it felt like um, validation."

ARROW:

"The reason I named it is because like, when I first came to the States, I was like, 15, or 16. and I kind of recognized that my name is killing everybody's tone. So, I think I needed, I needed English name, for some reason. And I just don't want to be like, those um, common names that Asian girls use, like by then, like, people prefer, like Linda, Cindy, um, Karen, names like that. I mean, it's a good name. It's just not um, something that I want. I want something unique and to really stand out when people think about it."

"I think it's more like a cultural, I wasn't whenever people call me Arrow, I'm switching into a different character in their mind, Chinese character. I do have certain different behaviors and ways of talking and ideology change when I, once people call me Arrow, like back to the States, I will go more straightforward, or low context and um, more, more willing, but um, careful about what I'm saying. Because I'm not just um, representing myself, but also representing my race or country that um, back in there. So, I do want to pay careful attention, and I also um, want to have a nice impression there."

CHRISTINA:

"My name definitely has a more kind of, ah, hidden in plain sight. Because if you've never met me, if you've never met my mom, or even know my mom's name, you would assume I am like, a fucking cracker."

"Yeah, so my name has the H in it legally. Um, and that was always fine. I was really indifferent with my name growing up. I wasn't like, ashamed or embarrassed of it in any way. I was just like, yeah, I'm Christina. Um, in college, I, I got real experimental, across the board far and wide, in all aspects of my life. But one of my experiments did include my

name. Um, I didn't like the H in my name, I didn't like how white it sounded. And I guess in college, I was like, I'm going to be more brown. Um, I don't know how one becomes more brown, um but I was like, I'm going to be brown now. And I'm going to be really brown now. And so, in all of my legal school documents, it says, H, because it has to match, you know, all your legal stuff, but in all of my exams, and all of my preferred names, and all of my notes, it always says C-R-I-S-T-I-N-A, but my last name remained the same. This confused some of my professors because they were like, Is there a student in here that I didn't catch? Um, and some professors who knew that I was like, experimenting with my name would put my H, would put the H in parentheses. So, sometimes I would write C parentheses, H parentheses, R-I-S-T-I-N-A . Very Susana, if you ask me.

Um, and I even spelt my name like that on Facebook. So, I would put the H in parentheses. Um, I didn't tell my parents that I did any of this. Um, I don't know why. But I let all my professors call me that, my roommates called me that, even my early boyfriends would only say C-R and I was like, yeah, I'm, I am brown now because it says C-R in it. And eventually, I just stopped. Um, I don't know why."

EMELINE:

"Well, because it's almost like, um, because you, you didn't follow the tradition. Like, I was not listening to my father, and he didn't accept Paul, he didn't give his blessing for me to marry Paul. So, it was like, a disgrace to the family and to the family name. And, you know, my, my dad, and especially in the Philippines, you know, usually in many traditional families when you have a last name, it's something of honor, and it's something of, like, um, once you say someone's last name, it sort of gives the family history."

"Uh yeah, like, she doesn't have a child out of wedlock, and, but I think they call it something else in the Philippines. Um, but basically, it's almost like a disgrace, and you

know, you know, making sure that um, the Tolentino name wasn't going to carry down on my side. So, at that time, because that's how my father felt, I didn't carry on that Tolentino name with my children, and then I started using just the Alvarez. I didn't identify myself at that time with Tolentino."

"So for me, on Facebook, I carried all of my names. So, Emeline Mimi Tolentino Alvarez. And the reason it's that long is because Emeline Tolentino is what I was known in school, in elementary years. And as I got married, it became Emeline Alvarez. And then in the communities that I work in, um, in with work, I use my nickname of Mimi. So my colleagues at work know me as Mimi Alvarez. None of them really know me as Tolentino because I, you know, went away with that name, uh, since I got married, which was in my teen years. So, only those that associate me as Emeline Tolentino are only those that went to school with me.

So, I have a distinguish depending on where I was in my life, if you knew me in school, it was Emeline Tolentino. If you knew me after, after my education and into my married life, it was Emeline Alvarez. But in my career, everyone knows me as Mimi Alvarez, although my legal name is Emeline Alvarez. So, there are some legal documents that I do sign at work, and it is under Emeline Alvarez. Um, and that's for notary purposes and passports. Now, in regards to considering changing my name later in life, it became more difficult."

KAI:

"My first name, I did get it legally changed. And I changed it to Emerson and my sisters actually chose it for me. Um, I had been texting them, and I was like, you know, I'm thinking about taking on one of dad's names, Gerald or Kenneth, those are both family names. Uh, so I might do that. And they were like, "Meh, that's kind of old and boring, and like, why would you do that?" And they were like, "you know, your favorite writer is

Emerson," um, like one of the old romantic writers. So, they're like, "why don't you, why don't you go by Emerson?" And I was like, you know, I really like that. I like that it's gender neutral. I've known girls and guys named Emerson. Um, so I think that's a really cool choice. So, so, my younger sisters actually picked my name for me."

"Um, so Kainalu just, I think it just more aptly shows who I am. I've always been kind of around the water. I learned to swim before I was a year old. I was a few months old when I learned to swim. Um... and I've always loved the ocean, that, that conference uh, in Florida, I spent more time in the ocean than I did at the conference. (laughter) And I just always loved it. Like it, just, it fits me. Uh, it just kind of is more of who I am.

Um... And I think people see that too. I, I've been told before that they're like, "yeah, Kai fits you better than Beth ever did." Um, so, so it's really been a big part of who I am. Emerson, I don't use quite as often, it's more of just like, an, an official thing. Um, I do have my students call me Emerson. Uh, and I find that hilarious, because they probably think they're like, "Oh, yeah, it's so cool. I get to call my teacher by their first name." And I'm like, "yeah, nobody calls me that." (laughter) But uh, I think it also says a lot about who I am just because of like, you know, that my sisters chose it for me, it kind of says about who they are and how they accept me and how they love me. And I think it also says something about um, my love for, for writing and for education and for learning.

Um, and, yeah, so... I think they both really play into my identity these days. It took a lot, a long time deciding what it was I wanted to be called and I'm, I'm happy with the decisions."

LIAN:

"For me, I know the first one is most, uh, more used in the United States. But I preferred, I preferred the second one, because it is shorter, first, and secondly, I looked for this word in Google. And I found that Lean um, is the way Chinese people um, use the sounds of

Lian in their word, and in South Korea, we use a lot of um, words from China, a Chinese characteristics, characters, language character, so I figured, okay, Lian sounds, Lian sounds good for me. And that meaning has the flower lotus."

"Yeah, and I, I particularly like the flower, um, because as you know, as you might know, um, the flower has the meaning that um... because of these functions of plant, um, even though it is in the mess area or waters or things like that, it doesn't get hurt or it doesn't get messed. So, yeah. I've figured some meaning from it (laughter) now, um, um, when I, yeah, I, I assumed that I might have many challenges and differences, um, differences and difficult times in the United States than I might um, remind of the name, what I'm using, then I, perhaps, um, stand for myself, regardless of the difficult challenges, things like that."

"Mm-hmm. Okay, um, firstly, as I said earlier, Lian is kind of Asian name and not, not like South Korean, Korean name, but, you know, Chinese names, and American people doesn't, cannot differentiate Koreans from Chinese, so I think it doesn't matter if it's Chinese name or Korean name, apparently. But I know that meaning, and I use and created this name from my original name, so it's kind of related to my own identity from South Korea, but it also has a new identity that I am, that I created in the United States. Um. Okay, let me tell a quick story."

"It's like, um, when I was in high school, I yeah, I, I, told them. I told them. Okay, you can call me Lyoung I mean, I just wanted to delete the name of hee, that, um... that they make. I feel, I felt, that made the boundary of my gender."

NASH:

"So my full name legally now is Nash Addicus Nance Jones and I have two middle names. Um, I kept Nance, which was my grandmother's maiden name and my given middle name, because I loved her. Um, her name was Leigh Nance, and so that's another thing about

Natalie Nance, the fact that my first, that my name had her name in it, um, that I forgot to mention that but yeah, so my, my given name Natalie Nance and her name was Leigh Nance. And then she married Nick Jones and became Leigh Nance Jones and so my name was Natalie Nance Jones, and I loved my grandmother. She died when I was young, when I was in second grade. But um, I had, she was my favorite family member out of all my extended family, we were really tight. And so, I didn't want to, I didn't want to drop her name. And I felt like Nash Nance didn't have a great ring to it. Um, and I also was all torn up about leaving my old name behind. feeling like, am I going to be the same person? I want to be the same person I've always been. And I felt worried about dropping Addie and having lost who I am and who I've been this whole time. You know, I didn't change my name until I was 26 years old, and legally, and so I had 26 years of being Addie, and I was just um, thinking I wanted to incorporate that name, somehow into my name. And so, that's where I came up with Addicus, um, is it felt like, almost like that masculinized version of Addie that I'd always tried to tap into and feel okay with, where I was like, Addie could be a nickname for Atticus, which is a masculine name culturally. And so, it felt like honoring that name in the way that I always wanted it to be, which is as a, as a more masculine name. So, it's a non-traditional spelling of Atticus because Addie is spelled A-D-D-I-E. So, Addicus is A-D-D-I-C-U-S rather than with T's so that it kind of um, spoke to my old name."

"I loved the name Nash. Um, I got it because I, um, so Peter Nash, Mr. Nash was my eighth and ninth grade English teacher, and my junior year of high school poetry teacher, creative writing teacher. Um, I took his classes three times, and he was the most influential teacher I've ever had. Changed my life completely. Um, really, I was not doing well in school, and he turned that around for me...And he advocated for me with my parents with

my learning disabilities, and affirmed me um, that I you know, just because I couldn't spell well doesn't mean that I wasn't smart, and that I didn't have a lot of potential, and he was the safest person, and this very gentle man. Um, you know, I didn't, I have these kind of tough guys in my family, and um, he was such a gentle, affirming, safe, masculine person in my life, and really the only one I had in my life.

And when I was considering transitioning, something that I was really worried about was that I don't like men very much. And I didn't really want to be a man, you know, I like just, I didn't want to be misogynistic. I didn't want to be some macho guy. And when I thought about how to live as a masculine person in this world, or someone who's read as a man, because even if I don't identify that way, people were going to read me that way if I transitioned. People do now read me as a man regularly. How, you know, that Mr. Nash was the example that I could look to as like the way to be a good man, and to be a good person in this world, even though you benefit from patriarchy. Even though you have male privilege, how do you navigate that as a safe, gentle person, um, which is what I wanted to be. And so, he really resonated with me just in general, in terms of my vision of like, how to live as someone who's read as a man in this world."

"I like when other people like it. When people say, "Oh, I like your name," I always say, "Thanks, I chose it myself," you know, because even though my mom likes getting credit where she doesn't deserve it, I, I like to take credit for my name, because everyone assumes that your parents named you, but I named myself and I think that's really cool that I got to do that. And um, if somebody likes my name, I, I want credit for it because I chose it."

OLIVIA:

“I'm transgender? And as part of that, I want a name that more closely identifies with how I identify. And so having a more feminine name, something that I felt more attached to, was definitely something that was pretty high on my list.”

“Um, yeah, if I can remember all of it at this point. So, Olivia, basically is talking about olives or olive branches, olive trees, native to France, um, things like that. And basically, the idea behind the olive tree is peace, right? The thought of an olive branch. And that's something that I've like, always strove for in my own life is be like, try to be peaceful, and just like that mediating force in my family, I have a big family. So like, it's just kind of the role I fell into.

And then Claire is the French word for clear, often used for like, clean water. Um, and so with that, it's just like the idea of peace and tranquility, being clear in thought, clear in like personality and things. And that's just kind of like, the role I felt I've been in my family and just like in life, so it's like, this seems to fit a lot.”

“Well, I mean, kind of, like I said, with my role in my family, but also, again, it is definitely far more feminine than my previous name, definitely something that I think encapsulates more where I'm headed with my transition. It's something that I think the name better represents who I feel that I am. And just kind of shows that in an outward way, as people use it. I'm still getting used to people using it. It's really weird hearing, like, people call me by that name and going, "Oh, yeah, that's me. I have to respond." Things like that. Um... but yeah, I don't know. It's just kind of like, slowly ingraining itself into my identity. I don't know... if that answers your question.”

Theme 4 – Self-Reflection

ANAÍS:

“Then, um, and then when we were living in Denver, I was reading a lot of Alice Walker. Um, I was reading like, In Search of Our Mother's Gardens, um, The Temple of My Familiar, and I read this book of hers, it's called Now is the Time to Open Your Heart. But in the beginning, I think, I, I haven't read it recently. I just took it up because I was like, I think I remember in one of the, one of those books that I read of Alice Walker's, I was like, really into Alice Walker at the time, I was like, reading all her stuff. I, in that book, one of the characters, I think the main character, changes her name. And, um, and I remember, I think that my mom had already planted that seed because my mom changed her name. And she has always hated her name. So, she has like a lot of self-deprecation and self-hatred and stuff, but part of it was her name. So she was Juana Isabel and Juana Isabel Ruiz, and she always hated Juana. And whenever people called her Juana or Juanita like, it just grated on her. So, I grew up with her experiencing that and telling me about it, and then she legally changed her name to get rid of Juana and her name is just be Isabel. Well, I think that that like, planted a seed in me of ‘Oh, like there's a possibility we could change our name.’”

“And then when I, at the time where I was going through all these transformations inside, um, I read that book by Alice Walker and something like kind of clicked with me it's almost like it watered the seed and I was like, you know, this name, um, that I was having even more discomfort with, with Nancy and of course, I've always had discomfort with Gail. I never wanted to be associated with my paternal grandmother, but, um, like, I grew up with my mom and her Mexican family. And so, whenever anybody referred to me, it was like, Nancy, it wasn't um... when we moved to Denver, that's when people started getting like Nancy or hi Nancy or some people would even call me Nan. I was just like, oh my god, are you serious? And I have always joked with people that like, when even in El Paso

growing up, I would always joke with people when they would ask me their name and they had to write it down or something. I would be like Nancy Gail, you know, like Nancy Gail, like, to me it sounded like such um, like a name from the south or something. I just felt so disconnected from it even culturally, like, uh, like it was somebody else's name. And when we went to Denver, I even more because the only people I met that were Nancys are like, older ladies, cause I worked in a nursing home. And in El Paso there's a lot, because it's common for, for Mexican women to be named Nancy, or, you know. So, um, so, I felt in Denver, it was kind of like um, a point at which I, I realized, you know what I don't, I want to play around with this and figure out how to maybe call myself something different and do what my mom did and maybe even legally change my name. So, um, I think like, I was, I'm kind of a nerd. So I was like, kind of playing around with the sounds of it. And instead of N-A-N, I was like, Oh, I could switch it, and it would be A-N-A. (laughter) And then I was like, and instead of C, I could switch that, and it would be easy. I don't know, like, I'm just a dork like that. So, I was like, playing around with it, and I was like, Anaís, yeah, I could do that. That's a cool name. And I just felt way better about it than I did about um, Nancy Gail."

"Um, I have some ambivalence, because, I think as I told you that um, my mom had really had some hopes about, like class transition and, and me assimilating and moving smoothly in American culture, in white culture. And so I think... I don't, I don't have like a super good memory to where I can go back to the time when I was changing my name, and first introducing myself to people with a different name. But I know that when I introduce myself to people as Anais, if they're not people of color, the reaction that I get is very much like, like, I'm exotic or something, which, of course, I don't get, if I tell people my name is Nancy. Um, they're like, "oh," this, this happened to me in Minnesota, where a woman was

like, "Oh, where are you from," you know, she, and she, like, leaned in, and she was excited. And I was like, um, because I didn't want to feed her, her thing that she was doing, so I was like, I'm from Texas. And I could see her like, deflate and get like, oh, but, um... I think that when I chose the name Anais, as I explained, you know, I did that little, like, play on the sounds and everything. But, um, honestly, the name Anais, like, that's just another European name, you know, there's like, there are lots of Mexican people named Anais, but it's like a Spanish or French, you know, it does have kind of, like, a, an air of, I don't know, exoticism or something. And I feel like now that I've, I'm trying to do work to, like, examine my privilege and, and try to think of things differently. And, I mean, my mom changed her name from Juana, because she felt like that was like a low class, like, um, you know, like, she just hated it. And, and she always talked about, about her upbringing and herself and that name, like, with such disgust, you know? Um, and so I feel like my mom changed her name from like this name that she thought was like a really low class named like, one that was like, a little bit more um, middle class, and then I feel like I changed my name to like, one that's like, even probably, like a high class name or something, you know, what I mean? Like, I think part of me feels some ambivalence about, like, why did I feel I had the right to do that? Why did I feel comfortable? And, and it is a privilege to be able to, you know, there's people trying to get their documents in and trying to get status. And I'm over here, like, you know, in the court trying to just change the letters on my paperwork, or whatever. And, and so I feel, honestly, um, some ambivalence about it. Because I know, it has a lot of privilege carried with it. And I also think that, as I mentioned to you a little while ago, that the way that I treat people matters more. So, I try to be intentional about how I go into spaces, not thinking like, Oh, I deserve to be here, because I'm a woman of color and stuff. Or because, and, and to me, like, all of that relates

to my name, like, whatever, whichever name I'm using. I feel like you know, if people need me to leave the room to feel safer, or whatever, like, I'm going to do that, I'm not going to be like, no, my name is Anais, because, you know, or, like, trying to use that. Whereas before, I think that it was really important for me to um, to assert myself as a woman of color. Whereas now I'm like, No, I don't need to take up space. I don't need to center myself. I don't need to. And I think in the past, not like I was consciously trying to center myself, but because I was doing like that healing work, and it was like, I really wanted to be in conversation and in friendship with women of color, in community, like I really wanted, I saw, like my name partly as a strategy, like, as part of it. And um, I don't think I was like, aware or consciously thinking of it, and it's not the whole reason I was doing it. But I think now I'm like, hmm, I need to let go of that a little bit because there's some places where I, I should be, and then there's some places when we need to be taking up space and taking up yeah, I don't know. So, does that, that's, does that make sense with that ambivalence?"

ARROW:

"That happens when I was in a Master once. So, I was thinking maybe I should change it for my PhD, because that will be more like a name thing, not, because usually you don't see people name their selves Arrow, um, or their parents naming their kids Arrow. So, I would say I will, the reason I want to change is not because I don't like the name, but I'm tired of explaining to people when I'm going to Starbucks or shopping like that, um, to spell it out. So, I do have a idea about Chinese, to a more, to word like that's more related to a name, but then give out. So, I'm fine now. But I do use fake names when I go to Starbucks."

CHRISTINA:

“My mom is the one that runs into the most pronunciation issues, because the pharmacy thinks she's X-mina.

And it's funny, I remember growing up, back when the old school, ye olden days, where the uh, pharmacy would call your house right, and say, okay, your prescription's ready ,way before text and stuff. And I remember Walgreens would call and I'd pick up the phone, "Hello?" and they would be like, "Hi, we're looking for Xmina Blankenship." And because I'm an asshole, I would be like, "there's nobody here by Xmina. Do you mean Ximena? Because there's a Ximena here. That's my mom. But nobody here is Xmina." And then of course, the pharmacists would be like, "I don't give a fuck, you little shitty kid, like the prescription's ready." Um, so I used to troll anyone who would call on the phone and mispronounce her name. I'm like, there's no Xmina here, there's a Ximena though. So, I really enjoy pressuring adults to pronounce my mom's name correctly. To me that was very important.”

“Um, and I think she had a much more comfortable education environment growing up. I also went to a good school good, quote, unquote. But I went to a white private school, um, where there was one black kid. And one time in English class, the per-, the teacher turned off the lights to do a presentation, and then Jake Hendricks, who yes, is as racist as his name sounds like it said, "Hey, Sevvy where'd you go? I can't see you anymore." Ah. Right. And this was like fourth grade, Pauline. Like, we were like, nine. And I was like, "Well, fuck, they can't know I'm brown, like, shit. Like, they're making fun of Sevvy like that. I'm, I don't want to be made fun of like that." Um, so I definitely kept the light, the white, the white social mask on as a way to protect myself. Uh, and so I wouldn't be called, like, you know, dirty Mexican, because I totally anticipated it. I would have totally expected it. And I honestly would not have been surprised if someone had said it. So.”

“I think that was the only time I ended up defending myself, was randomly five minutes before a lecture, uh, Sophie, one of our, one of our coworkers, uh, was like, "Yeah, well, you know, Christina's white," and I just like, got in her face, like, immediately and I've never done anything like that before. And of course, she looked like she pissed her fucking pants and was like, I'm so sorry. And I was like, yeah. And then I was like, yeah, yeah. Even though in my head. I was like, "oh, shit, maybe I shouldn't have done that. Fuck these people barely know me." But then I was like, "No, they have to know. You have to know. Walter's last name fucks it all up a little bit, but you got to set them straight." Um, so yeah, it wasn't until I was in a fucking Ph.D. program, Pauline, that I defended myself.”

“You still a clown. But Sofia, I'm convinced because she has the more exotic sounding name she got to date all these international guys and being my dumb ass sounding white name, stuck with all these white men throughout my dating life. I don't know. That might not be related to your project at all. But just, in thinking about it now.”

EMELINE:

“So if you're going to change your name, and then that's not even, you know, getting the picture. So, you have to do all the application and all that. That's just one document. Now, go to DMV to do that, and then go to your bank, if you own a home, you're going to have to change the title on your um, house. That's a document that you have to prepare, a legal document that you have to prepare. And then not only that, you have to get it notarized and then record it with the county recorder's office. And those, you know, county recorder's office, there's a fee. Um... and then, you know, that's also the time associated with that. So, it's not easy. Um, some people I know I've got some co- workers at work. Um, and then not just that your email address. You know, if you've had a name, I, I personally have had my Yahoo account emelinealvarez@yahoo.com for years, for several

years. And just imagine if I were to change that. Um. You know, you know, I know my, your older sister, my daughter, she has since changed her name, but her email address is still amealvarez16 though her legal name is Ameline Lawson. So, you know, for women, um, you know, you could do that, but then you have to go back to all these, you know, documents and information and you know, it's pretty time consuming. I think back in the older day, olden days, it wasn't as difficult. The reason for it is because nothing was that permanent, um meaning like, we didn't have email back then... So, there wasn't that much, you know, like Social Security, there was not all these fees associated, um, like DMV, and, um, you know, passports. The cost of it was not that high. But in today's day, it's very time consuming, and it, there are fees associated now. So..."

"Well, I hoped someday in the future that I would change it. So, you know, I some day would like to remarry, but I'm not going to remarry, just for the sake of a name, um, for a name change, and that was also one of my um, considerations on changing my name back to my maiden name. Um, you know, do I want to spend the time and effort associating with that? So, at one time in point, I was considering it for my dad. But then, at that time, my dad and I also had a fallout, and that fallout stems back to the very first time that um, he, you know, he disowned me, basically. And so, it created a pause for me to say, hold on, wait a minute, I was doing this, because I thought you were proud of me, and we've overcome. We overcame, you know, what has happened in the past, but then he re, you know, rekindled it. And so I just said, you know, for the time and effort that I was gonna put into this, um, I just paused it and said, you know what, I'm, you know, I'll just do it at a later time. And the reason for it is, I believe, someday, I would probably remarry. And when that happens, I'll go through that process and procedure at that time."

“Am I proud to have Alvarez, um, as no longer being married to the person with Alvarez? Um, it's no longer an honor for me to carry that name, especially if you're making a name for yourself. Um, but for, I carry it for my kids' sakes, and then not just that, you know, I've got grandkids that carry on Alvarez. So, I've got a portion of my kids that are proud of it. And then another portion of them that is not proud of the last name. However, that's the last name that was given at that time. So, for me at this time, it's not, it doesn't hurt, t doesn't hurt me one way or another. And, you know, I believe in, you know, someday in the future that my name would change.”

KAI:

“Um, but when I was a kid, I never really like connected with Bethany very much. Um, and so I always liked my middle name, right? It's, it's so unique and different and it's cool. Um, and when I was 11, uh, my grandmother got remarried and uh, one of my step cousins, I don't know what it'd be, his name's Kainalu I learned that Kainalu's actually masculine name uh, for uh, most, most people who are named Kainalu. Um, and so, before even that, I wanted to go by Kainalu, um, but I had a hard time spelling it as a kid. So, anytime I'd be like, "hey, I'd rather go by Kainalu," they'd be like, you can't even spell it. So, it's not really an option. (laughter) Yeah, it was real bad. Uh, so, so then, like, I learned that it's more of a masculine name, and I still liked it, but um, I started like... I knew I needed to like, fit in so, I, I went by Beth instead of Bethany. Um, and when I finally came out as genderqueer, um, knowing that Kainalu was a more masculine name, and Kai itself is generally a more masculine name, but it's also pretty androgynous, I knew that it was kind of what I wanted to go by, and it's what I wanted to go by my whole life. So I, I started going by my middle name, uh, and shortened it to Kai, because most people would have a hard time saying Kainalu.”

LIAN:

“Mm-hmm, yeah. Um, it started from 2016 when I was prepare for moving to the United States. I asked my partner, he have lived in the United States about um, 17 years at that moment? I asked him, "Hey, my name is Lyounghee and I'm not sure whether Americans and other friends and professors can say my name. What do you think so? Oh, um, what do you think about that? So he said, "Oh, you're gonna get mad about their pronunciation." (laughter)

Yeah, I mean, yeah, he had that kind of experience, and he strongly recommend you, I need to have some short and kind of sound English name um, for better communication. And he told me, an American name culture um, are not like South Korea or other Asian countries, they just give the name from family or um, give a name with the um, uh, easy pronunciation, for easy pronunciation. So, you don't have to worry too much about the meaning of name, and just think about the short name that you can use and you like. So. I created some name list and he created some name list and then I choose one that I really, I, I liked the most. That was Lian.”

“Oh, yeah, it's about in middle school. In middle school, yeah. Okay. Um, I didn't tell you before but yeah, my birth give name is Lyounghee, but my mom accidently report my name as Younghee. She, she dropped L-

...because of um, some Korean language law.

Okay. For a better and law-based name, um, she thought she need to drop the L. So, I officially used the Younghee from elementary school to high school.

Well, I didn't realize what the problem was in my elementary school, but I figured, oh, my name was wrong. So, I started using Younghee on officially um, from the first day of class, in every year, so when we, when we introduce ourselves on the first class day, I always uh,

write my Chinese name on blackboard and then tell them what, uh, what, what is my name and what means. And you can tell me Lyounghee at the moment in my first grade of middle school, but when I found my gender identity, I started dropped hee in the second, um, second grade of middle school."

NASH:

"So, as people started using they pronouns for me, it helps them shift in their head, which gender I am. So they're not always conceiving me, of me as a woman, because they're always using she and Addie is a feminine name. So that was helpful, the pronoun step. Pretty shortly after I decided I needed to change my name, because as much as I was trying to make Addie work for me as an gender neutral name. It's just not. It is a culturally feminine name in our culture. And so people would say things like, Addie, that's my grandma's name. And it's just like, Oh, my God, like, this is not working. And so I decided that I needed to do it to live authentically in my gender. That's why I decided to change my name."

"So there's all these babies named Nash. And that's kind of funny is uh, it's kind of misplaced generationally, like there is nobody in their early 30s named Nash, besides people who changed their name, because that was not a name that anyone was naming their kid in the 80s. Um, but now, it's so common. So, that's kind of funny. It's like me, some other trans guys and like a bunch of babies (laughter) So that's why my mom gets compliments that she was like, ahead of the curve, because she was naming her kid Nash in the 80s, and nobody started naming their kid Nash until, you know, the late 2000s. But..."

"So you can see that with trans trans people a lot. We often name ourselves names that are popular when we change our name. So, generationally, they're off, like nobody is, nobody back in the 70s was named Aiden. But the number of 40 something year old trans guys

named Aiden is just like, through the roof. There's like a million of them. It's just kind of funny, where you're like, that name is generally, generationally misplaced. You know, it's misplaced in time."

"my partner Bagel, Abigail, she makes fun of me a little bit that it sounds like a very NPR name, Nash Jones, and she's like, maybe you kind of like, um, manifested your destiny by changing your name to that. Because I wanted to work in radio, I wasn't working in radio at the time when I changed my name. She's like, maybe like you made that happen by naming yourself a name that's like very NPR. So, that's kind of a joke, but still, I think maybe resonates with the fact that it's a big part of my identity, um, and it just feels like who I've always been, it feels reflective of who I've always been, and I never even really think about it anymore."

OLIVIA:

"Um, so you have to publish in the paper that puts out articles, or their paper at least once a week, so it has to run for two weeks in total. So, it would have to be about twice, um, at minimum. And I think you put it in the classifieds, and it's literally just saying, this person, you put your birth name, um, is changing their name to this person for such and such reason. And to me, it seems like it could put you in danger, especially if there are people who know you by name, but you don't know them, and they're anti-trans or they're this or they're that. If they're finding out these things, just seems not necessarily the safest, but it's just, yeah, yeah, I have to look into the process more on that one. I'm not quite sure why it exists."

"Yeah. Before, well not this specifically, but before I applied to any programs, I looked at women's rights in the area, for my wife, I looked at transgender rights in the state. I looked at just a bunch of things and then once we identified some states that we were like, okay,

these are slightly better places for people to live and actually be human, then we applied to PhD programs."

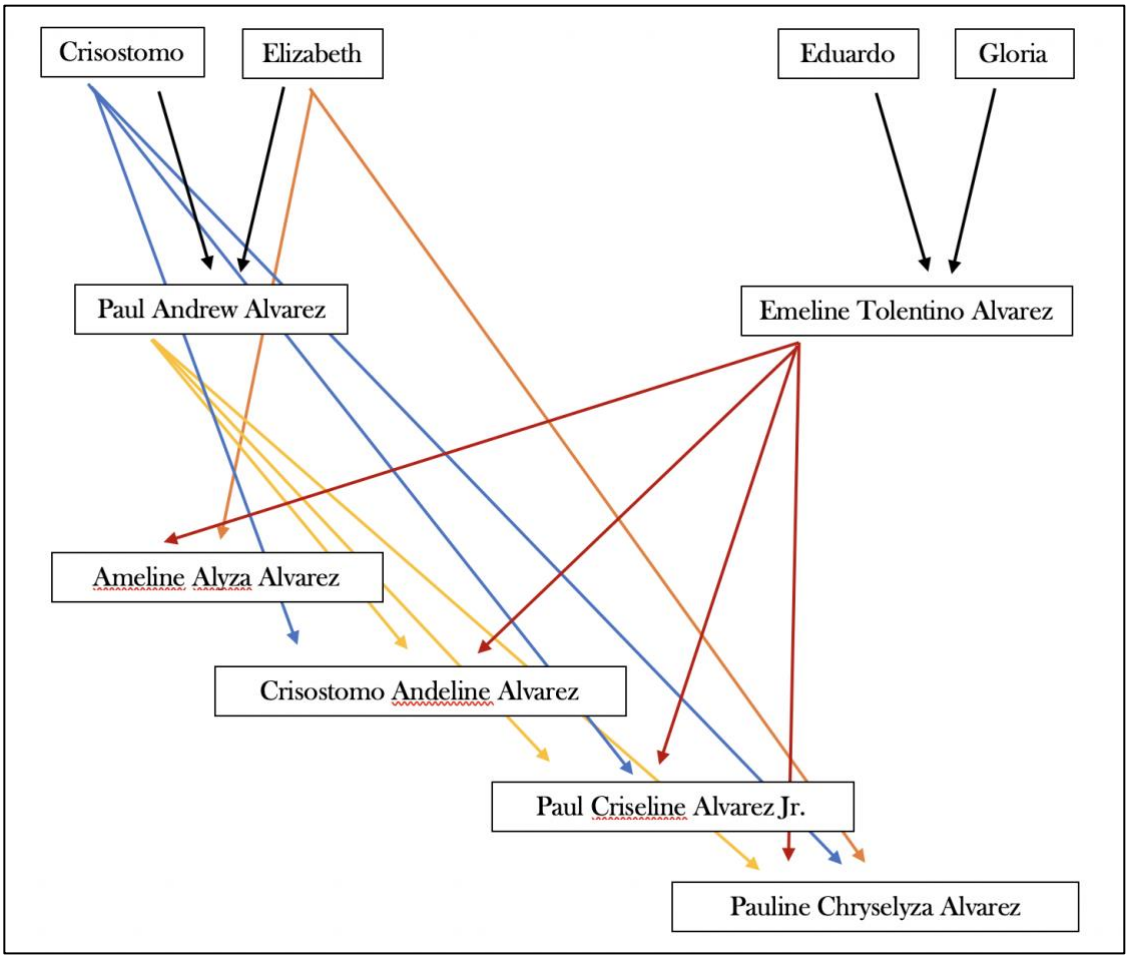

Figure 1: The diagram is a physical depiction of how Pauline and her siblings' names are connected to one another and how the names share a relationship between their paternal grandparents, parents, and siblings' names.

Initial Responsibilities and Representations of a Name

My name is Pauline Chryselyza Alvarez, and based on Figure 1, my name encompasses bits and pieces of all my siblings', parents', and paternal grandparents' names. 'Paul' is my biological father's and one of my older brother's name (Paul Jr.). 'Line' stems from my Mom's last part of her first name (Eme-'line'), similar to my sister's (Ame-'line'), and both brother's middle names (Crise-'line' and Anda-'line'). 'Chrys,' while spelt

differently, comes from my paternal grandfather's and brother's name ('Cris'-ostomo) and my other brother's middle name ('Cris'-eline). 'Elyza,' while also spelt differently, is part of my paternal grandmother's name ('Eliza'-beth) and sister's middle name (Alyza). Our last name (Alvarez) came from our paternal grandfather, who I never met since he died before I was born. However, legend has it, is that Lolo Cris (Crisostomo Alvarez) was biracial, Filipino and Guamanian. While I cannot speak for Guamanian history, I know that due to Spanish colonization in the Philippines many Filipinos have Latin/Spanish names due to the mix between indigenous Philipinos and Spaniards throughout the islands (Posadas, 1999).

Nonetheless, at a young age, I learned how my name represents and connects to all my family members, which makes me feel responsible to embody them in some way or another. When I was born, I spent a lot of time with my paternal grandmother, Lola Betty (Elizabeth Barnes). She often took care of me while my siblings went to school, and my parents went to work. Although, our relationship was cut short, when we left Paul's abuse in 2001 (when I was about six years old) and she had passed shortly after. Essentially, I never knew Lolo Cris and Lola Betty enough to know if I somehow resembled them, but I knew that because I carried their names, I needed to make them proud of who I would become. On the other hand, while I know my name Pauline is a combination of my biological father's name and Mom's name, I only thought of how my name always related to my siblings. Since each piece of my name was a part of my siblings' names, I thought that a piece of me always belonged to them. Similar to Ame, I am smart and independent. Similar to Cris, I am rebellious and loyal. Similar to PJ, I am generous and giving. The strongest attributes of each of my siblings are something that each of them instills in me,

and while they may not know it, the connections from our names have always kept us linked and our relationships strong.

On the contrary, growing up I thought resembling different family members would be a good thing, but as I got older I was left to question who I am without my family. Until I was 18 years old, I only knew who I was because of how my family saw me, which later made me realize that my self-esteem depended on them and not myself. My journey in discovering myself had a lot to do with how people thought of "Pauline Alvarez," and I begin to explain this journey from the beginning speaking to my nicknames as a kid.

Normalizing Hurtful Nicknames

In Filipino customs, names are traditionally carried how my Mom's name is formed (Emeline Tolentino Alvarez). Everyone in one family tends to carry the same middle and last names, as the middle names are their maternal last name and their last names are their paternal surnames (Posadas, 1999). Additionally, in Filipino families, because names represent strong connections to their family members, first names are often replicated. Even in my own family, my sister's name is similar to my Mom's, Crisostomo is both my brother and paternal grandfather's names, and Paul is both my biological father's and brother's names. In this sense, when Filipino families gather, and because names are identical to one another, nicknames are normalized (Posadas, 1999). While my name was not repeated in my family, I was given two nicknames, each from one of my parents.

My Mom's nickname for me is "Lil' One," and I have always thought that Lil' One symbolized how I am the youngest in our family. Although, recently, my Mom told me that Lil' One came from one of my favorite cartoons titled *Little Bear*. Growing up, her nickname for me always made sense. On the other hand, Paul (my biological father) used to call me, "fatso." Growing up, I was told that I was a "larger" kid, they (family members,

friends, and other Filipinos) would say, "you're so *taba*," translation, *you're so fat*. At first, being called fatso was normal for me. In fact, because Philipinos in the Philippines tend to be smaller due to financial difficulties and malnutrition, being *taba* appeared to be a "good" thing in the Philippines. Although, for children like me, who were Filipina-American, I do not know if being *taba* was a "good" thing. Inevitably, I think *taba* is an expectation for Filipino-Americans to physically indicate wealth. Being *taba*, meant that the individual consumed enough food to fill themselves, which inherently related to the economic advantage of affording food. However, the backlash of being *taba* also meant being "too ugly" to marry. I was often told, "you better be careful because men don't like women who are too *taba*." In essence, as I reflect about being *taba*, I recognize that *taba* was the first experience of subconsciously being stuck in in-betweenness.

Although, as I got older words like fatso and *taba* still echo in my head. When I was about five years old, before Paul became absent in my life, I asked him angrily, "why do you call me that?" Paul's response was, "because you're fat, but so what? So, fatso." At the time, I understood Paul's logic. His intentions were to empower me through my nickname. However, when I think about fatso, I question Paul's intentions. While I may never know Paul's intentions, fatso faded as soon as Paul did from my life.

How Places & Situations Change Names

By the time I became a teenager, my life had changed drastically. We survived physical abuse from Paul, but my internal wounds were far from healed. After living in-and-out of shelter homes and changing schools every couple of months, we settled in a new housing development area and my schooling became more stable, I also remember how my name transformed because of place. In the neighborhood that my family and I moved to, houses were still being built once we moved into our home. My siblings and I were

bussed to schools in a different district, because the closest school in either direction was roughly 30-minutes away. While our home was newly constructed, our friends and lifestyle followed us. I loved being surrounded by my brothers and their friends, who protected me at all cost. We watched show like, *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, *Martin*, *Smart Guy*, *Sister, Sister*, and *Proud Family*. We listened to artists like, Tupac, The Jacka, Mistah F.A.B., Keak da Sneak, The Game, and Chingy. Weekly get together, cookouts, at-home businesses, and word of mouth were simple things that were normalized in our home and community. As I grew up, I heard people say that my neighborhood was not the "best of areas," (what some people refer to as the "hood" or "ghetto"). I was taught to never tell anyone my name, especially if someone approached me to ask. In fact, anytime someone came around looking for me, my response needed to be, "who's asking?" Considering gang life and culture were part of my upbringing, I learned that when people look for you, you may never know the reason why (assuming that harm was always the intention), and I needed to protect myself at all cost. Therefore, for a point in time, I never told anyone who I was, what my name is, and I became Ame, Cris, or PJ's little sister or Mimi's daughter. Inevitably, people only knew me if they knew who I was connected to.

After a while, and maybe because I was told to not tell people my name, I struggled with my name internally. Every time I heard *Pauline*, I also heard *Paul*, and I hated myself for being traced to him. At that time, my hatred and anger made me want to alienate myself, and I thought by changing my name I would be able to do so. Throughout my middle school life, I began to use the name Tolentino to represent my relationship with my Mom's family. I can remember times where people would write out my name or ask, "so, Pauline Alvarez, right?" I would explain to them that my name was Pauline Tolentino Alvarez. In essence, I reverted back to Filipino culture and made sure my name resembled

my Filipina-ness rather than who my family was (which in my mind were separate, but in reality, was not different). Nonetheless, as a teenager, I wanted to disassociate with *Pauline Alvarez*, and I did so by inserting and insisting that I was "Tolentino."

However, the more I attempted to distance myself from *Pauline Alvarez*, the more I realized the harm I was doing to myself. Due to my internal state, I often acted out. I physically fought others at my middle school, and the office staff and administration faculty knew who *Pauline Alvarez* was, a troublemaker or "at-risk" youth. At the end of my eighth-grade year, *Pauline Alvarez* had assaulted a police officer on school grounds and was up for expulsion. My Mom had enough at that point, and when the school admin threated juvenile time, my Mom simply said, "Okay. Go ahead!" Later, when my Mom did not show up at school so that I could be released, the school admin learned how serious my Mom was, and so did I. Later, the school got ahold of my Uncle Matt (my adoptive Dad), listed as an emergency contact. When they explained to my adoptive Dad that I could be expelled and have to repeat the eighth-grade, my adoptive Dad told them, "Well, if that's what you all want to do, then that's what she'll have to do." In that moment, I realized how much damage I had done to myself, because the people who love me the most had given up on me, and I did not want that for myself anymore.

Once I entered high school, I did everything to change the meaning of *Pauline Alvarez*. I did not want to be *Pauline Alvarez* – the girl who would throw down at any time, but I also did not know how to be *Pauline Alvarez* – the individual, so I (again) reverted back to being Ame, Cris, or PJ's little sister or Mimi's daughter. In high school, I spent the time to renew my name, and I did so by being the "model" student. *Pauline Alvarez* may not have gotten all A's or the highest grade in the class, but *Pauline Alvarez* was a student that teachers wanted in class. In essence, I became "teacher's pet," which for me was a

small step towards being *Pauline Alvarez* – the individual. While "teacher's pet" has its own connotation, for me, being "teacher's pet" was the first time that I had not been associated as someone's sister, aunt, or daughter. I was just *Pauline Alvarez* – the teacher's pet, still connected to someone but also slowly breaking away.

Renewing a Name

By the time I was 17 years old, I began to feel pride in my name *Pauline Alvarez*, but more specifically, in *Alvarez*. While *Alvarez* was given to us by our abuser, *Alvarez* was also the family that stuck together through the rough times. Then, for my 18th birthday, I got an A tattooed on my right wrist. Similar to my brother PJ's first tattoo of his initials, I got the same, but only the A to symbolize my dedication to my family. At the time, I did not know it, but the A tattoo was a physical symbol that everyone (including myself) would see that always keeps me connected to my siblings and Mom. Afterwards, I was constantly bombarded with, "what's going to happen when you get married?" The question was fair, and at first my response was, "but I will always be Alvarez." As time passed, and the question, "but what about when you get married? That A isn't going to make sense" continued, I began to resent the idea that women were expected to change their last names to match their husband's. Hence, how "Always Alvarez," became something with more significance to me.

When I left California to pursue my undergraduate degrees, I felt strange. For the first time, in my life, I had a chance to be *Pauline Alvarez* – the individual. I went to Oregon State University and remade myself. I became *Pauline Alvarez* – the reliable, hardworking, determined employee. *Pauline Alvarez* – the responsible roommate who took care of bills and met with the landlord when we needed to. *Pauline Alvarez* – the one who studied abroad to Nicaragua and Cuba. *Pauline Alvarez* – the assistant and co-

facilitator for ED 219. *Pauline Alvarez* – the tutor who helped South Albany with their AVID program. *Pauline Alvarez* – the student teacher at Linus Pauling Middle School in the DLI (dual-language immersion) program. *Pauline Alvarez* – the undergraduate student who wrote a thesis. *Pauline Alvarez* – the undergraduate who earned three bachelor's degrees. I achieved more than I imagined, and since *Pauline Alvarez* became her own person, I wanted to continue to empower *Pauline Alvarez* for me. When I think about who I was trying to become without my family, I realized that I related what I could do to who I was. Essentially, I became my work. However, I never thought about me being a "career woman," in a negative way like some of my family members have implied. I would hear comments like, "You haven't started your life, because you're so busy with school or work," and, "Don't you want a life outside of school?" Or even questions like, "How do you expect to find a husband if you're so busy with work all the time?" While I understood what my family was telling me, I could not separate my actions from who I was attempting to become. Inevitably, I became an activist without being aware of it. The reason I do not separate myself from my work is because I do not want to. I want my work to be personal. I want my work to reflect me. Although, most importantly I want my work to be meaningful, and I cannot do that if I separate myself from my work and what I am privilege to do. Thus, I am *Pauline Alvarez* a career woman who can do many things in hopes to be an advocate for individuals who share my Otherness and in-betweenness in attempt to be a worthy activist.

Embracing a Name

Today, I think about the materialistic things that my name is attached to – my apartment, my car, my identification information, my tattoo, my degrees, my certificates, my papers, and my theses. While the materiality of things may not be significant, I think

about it in a way that my name was left somewhere that meant something to me. Before, my name echoed something of "at-risk," troublemaker, and someone to give up on, but now my name holds its own reputation. While material objects do not hold the importance of my name, it is the ability to be honored and worthy enough to put my name somewhere. Growing up, I thought the only thing my name would ever be on is a gravestone, and today my name has the protentional to be on something that someone might read one day. My name means something to my niece, who looks to me as a role model. My name is me – the past, the present, the future, the ugly, the achieved, the rough, the happy, and the success of me. To learn my name is to learn about me, and every name has a story.

Similar to how I asked participants to speak to their names, I spoke to my name in a way that highlights my self-empowerment by self-reflecting on my name in order to find my self-identity. In fact, my Name Narrative is what sparked this project. I questioned myself to investigate whether my feelings for my name could be shared with other folks and their own names, and gratefully, I am not alone. Name Narratives are complicated, messy, and even painful, but they are also a meaningful chance of self-empowerment and self-identity. Therefore, through our shared experiences, we (the volunteers and I) comprehend a standpoint that brings us together as a community. While we may not be a group that gathers, we are connected through our shared realities, and therefore we are a small sample of what could be a greater phenomenon. Thus, I declare that our small collection of Name Narratives urge for more allies, in hopes that our stories, experiences, and realities continue to be heard individually and collectively.

CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

Throughout the different chapters of this project, I revealed snippets of several Name Narratives that are organized through self-empowerment, self-identity, and self-reflection. While each interview serves as a single experience, the collection of narratives investigates whether a shared experience connects to a unified standpoint. In this analysis, I explain how individuals felt about their birth-given names relating their understandings of their birth-given names to the material power structures. Afterwards, I focus on how self-empowerment and self-identity relate to one another and how volunteers express how their identities changed when their names reflected who they felt they are. In regards to self-reflection, participants thought of how their changed and/or transitioned name affected them differently. Additionally, throughout the analysis I utilize all stories (including my own) to build a cohesive standpoint that both individualizes and merges our experiences. Importantly, as mentioned throughout the literature review, individuals who tend to change and/or transition their names are immigrants, women with different martial statues, and nonbinary folks (Boyko, 2017; Peters, 2018; Obasi, Mocarski, Holt Hope, & Woodruff, 2019). The categorizations of the participants while specified, also intertwine with one another which speaks to their in-betweenness and common experiences.

Theme 1 – Birth-Given Names and Material Power Structures

When navigating birth-given names, many connections link to the material power structures, hinting specifically to racial, cultural, religious, gendered, and familial aspects throughout the interviews. In cases of women who identified as Asian-immigrant/American, their families (specifically participants' parents) chose to practice a common cultural tradition of finding another person to name their child. For instance, both Arrow and Lian

explain how their parents went to a professional to name their children, and Emeline said that she was named by a family member.

> So I, um, I do have two births given name. There was one that my grandparents gave me and there's one my parents... actually, the geomancer gave me. (A. Xia, personal communication, January 25, 2021).
>
> Yeah, my parents would like to re, I would like to rename myself because I don't like um, the name the grandparents gave me. It also relates to the bad relationship I had with them. But anyway, um, that's just an old name. And the new name was decided by the, provided by the geomancer, and I selected from one in four. (A. Xia, personal communication, January 25, 2021).
>
> Um, in South Korea, some people ask for good name, um, in the name expert's office. So, my grandparents went there and asked a very good name for my birth time, and year and day, and so they bought this name. So, yeah. (L. Kim, personal communication, January 22, 2021).
>
> Oh, no, they can, yeah, repeat it, but it is good for my own ying yang and five filler and things like that. It is kind of a Chinese philosophy and study about a destiny and name. Yeah, it's kind of cultural background, so... (L. Kim, personal communication, January 22, 2021).
>
> So, I was told that my dad's youngest sister, Auntie, we called her Auntie Carning. Her nickname is Auntie Shiony. She was the one that named all of the children in the family, and some um, are amongst, not just my, you know, my dad, the Eduardo Tolentino family, but also some of um, my other relatives. So, all of my siblings, my brothers, it's Eduardo... so my dad's name is Ed, Eduardo. And then

there's Edgardo, Alfredo, Gerardo and Arnaldo. So the boys all ended with a "do" just like my dad. (E.Alvarez, personal communication, January 24, 2021).

And then when it came to my sister and I, it was Geraldine and Emeline. Um, so it was about you know, it ended with a L-I-N-E. And my sister got the nickname of Gigi out of Geraldine, and somehow I got the nickname of Mimi from Emeline. (E. Alvarez, personal communication, January 24, 2021).

Interestingly, when Lian noted that her name was a traditional Chinese practice, I thought about how colonization impacts the structure of names or naming practices. Both, South Korea and the Philippines were colonized by China, and, because of colonization, naming practices and structures continue to be influenced in a similar fashion, consciously (as Lian does) and unconsciously (as Emeline may have not recognized). Therefore, as Tuck and Yang (2012) mentioned, settler colonialism – a combination of internal and external – burdens individuals with and without a person's knowledge, making the roots of colonialism difficult to pinpoint. Additionally, Emeline does not mention that she continues to carry the traditional Filipino structure of her name, without practicing the same structure for her children, even though both her and her children are first and second generation Filipino-American immigrants. Inevitably, my Mom instills a tradition of her own Filipina-ness, but later changes to an American influence name practice for her children. While her reasonings for not following a traditional Filipino name structure are later discussed, my Mom and biological father choose to rely on American influence name structures to (sub)consciously assimilate their children into the U.S. American society.

While my Mom and biological father were both U.S. citizens, their choice for U.S. American name structures relates to Arrow's and Lian's experiences of changing to Anglo/English names, which echo the colonial control of immigrant's names. In addition,

Anaís describes a similar pattern with her birth-given name and the expectations that her parents had in naming her. In Arrow's case, when she was attending school in China at a young age, she reveals that she had a different English name, before naming herself Arrow when she came to the U.S. in her teen years. In Lian's situation, she was warned about how U.S. Americans would struggle to pronounce Lyounghee, and decides to change her name to an Anglo/English name to avoid the mispronunciations. Both Anaís and I experience birth-given names with expectations to assimilate into U.S. American customs.

> So, um, when my mom talks about it and tells the story, she does kind of always say like, well, we wanted to make sure we got a name that works in English and Spanish, but I really think, just from observing my parents and growing up over time with them, um, I think it had a lot to do with social mobility. And so my mom was, when I was first born, that first year, we still lived in Juarez. And I think my mom coming over to the US, she really had hopes that her children would like, grow up differently from how she grew up. And she wanted us to be able to move more easily in American society. So, I think that she doesn't talk about whiteness, like consciously, she, she doesn't, she's not aware that she thinks that whiteness is better. Um, but I think that she definitely, in the way that she operates, she believes that it's like moving up, becoming like, becoming more white, becoming more um, like higher class and stuff, um, is just like was giving us a better opportunity in life and that we were gonna do better than she had. (A. Lechuga, personal communication, February 12, 2021).
>
> I think it only takes about a few days or weeks for me to change the name. Because we usually don't see um, giving ourselves English name as a very um, serious thing. When we were in, um, like elementary school, we having, we're having English class

and the teacher would say, okay, everybody, do you have an English name? So, I used to have a name about Sandy. And that people will say, oh, Sandy is a boy. So, I definitely don't want a name shared with boys. So, I never mentioned that to anyone after the elementary school. (A. Xia, personal communication, January 25, 2021).

The reason I named it is because like, when I first came to the States, I was like, 15, or 16. and I kind of recognized that my name is killing everybody's tone. So, I think I needed, I needed English name, for some reason. And I just don't want to be like, those um, common names that Asian girls use, like by then, like, people prefer, like Linda, Cindy, um, Karen, names like that. I mean, it's a good name. It's just not um, something that I want. I want something unique and to really stand out when people think about it. (A. Xia, personal communication, January 25, 2021).

Mm-hmm, yeah. Um, it started from 2016 when I was prepare for moving to the United States. I asked my partner, he have lived in the United States about um, 17 years at that moment? I asked him, "Hey, my name is Lyounghee and I'm not sure whether Americans and other friends and professors can say my name. What do you think so? Oh, um, what do you think about that? So he said, "Oh, you're gonna get mad about their pronunciation." (laughter) (L. Kim, personal communication, January 22, 2021).

Yeah, I mean, yeah, he had that kind of experience, and he strongly recommend you, I need to have some short and kind of sound English name um, for better communication. And he told me, an American name culture um, are not like South Korea or other Asian countries, they just give the name from family or um, give a name with the um, uh, easy pronunciation, for easy pronunciation. So, you

> don't have to worry too much about the meaning of name, and just think about the short name that you can use and you like. So. I created some name list and he created some name list and then I choose one that I really, I, I liked the most. That was Lian. (L. Kim, personal communication, January 22, 2021).

Inevitably, Anaís, Arrow, Lian, and I assimilate our names because of our immigrant backgrounds whether being the first or only ones in our families to immigrate to the U.S. or being from an immigrant families. Boyko (2017), Pennesi (2019), and Xu (2020) analyze how immigrants feel pressure to assimilate to the country's societal expectations to integrate into the dominant cultural norms. Since names serve as a physical representation of who a person is before knowing who a person is, names (sub)consciously became a physical representation of how to assimilate into a country's dominant cultural norms. While Arrow and Lian experience a conscious choice to change their names due to assimilation, Anaís and I subconsciously accepted our names at first, because the decision to assimilate was made for us by our parents/name givers. Nevertheless, whether immigrants consciously or subconsciously accept the assimilation of their names, the material power structures (which I argue are colonial influences as well) effect the formation of birth-given and individuals or families of immigrant/generational immigrant backgrounds.

Furthermore, Anaís and Christina who identify as biracial express that their birth-given names address both of their cultural backgrounds. In essence, their parents chose names that were easily pronounced in both parents' native languages (both parents' languages being English and Spanish).

> I haven't really talked to my dad too much about it, but when my mom says it, it kind of sounds like they wanted to pick a name that would work in both Spanish

and English. But yeah, my mom and dad are the ones that chose um, my first name, my birth name. (A. Lechuga, personal communication, February 12, 2021).

My mom named me. Um, so my mom's name is Ximena, X-I-M-E-N-A, and then Walter is Walter, right? So we have someone with a, what is considered would be a unique name and someone with a boring white person name. How can we represent this child of, of two halves in the best way that we can. So they went through a couple of different names. Um, my dad wanted to name me Mercedes, um, and my mom said that that's a stripper name. So, I was not named Mercedes. They wanted to also named me Zoë with the umlaut, with the two dots over it, because my dad has a strong German descent. Um, so I was almost named Zoë. But they ended up with Christina, because it is a name that can be translated in both English and Spanish pretty easily, both in how it's spelled and how it's pronounced. And since all of my mom's family at the time lived in Chile, they wanted to make sure that all the family members could pronounce my name. (C. Blankenship, personal communication, January 12, 2021).

Um, Marie is, I don't know where the Marie came from, but it is a good 90s middle name. Um, since I find most people around my age are middle-named Marie in some capacity. And then Blankenship is my dad's last name. They chose not to combine last names or anything like that. My mom's last name is Morales, uh, which is a pretty typical Spanish last name, but they chose not to combine them. Um, so, I'm just Christina Marie Blankenship. And as you know, because you know me on a personal level, most people don't assume I'm brown and my name implies that I am not brown in any way, shape or form. (C. Blankenship, personal communication, January 12, 2021).

Interestingly, Anaís and Christina's biracial-ness also mirrors the pressures of assimilation for folks from immigrant backgrounds that experience a clear-cut duality because each of their parents represents a single cultural background. As Christina expresses plainly, "How can we represent this child of, of two halves in the best way that we can?" Essentially, the importance of representing race within names is best indicated through the connection of language. Pennesi (2019) reiterates how language and the recognition of language in governmental systems is pertinent to creating and formulating names with racialized context. The relationship between race and language then speaks to the power of how names are influenced through language. Both Nancy (Anaís' birth-given name) and Christina are names transferable from English to Spanish to accommodate possible language barriers and connect their biracial-ness. Thus, immigration – whether generational or not – continues to impact name structures for individuals within the United States.

In contrast, folks who identify as nonbinary or trans disassociate with their birth-given names due to their rejection of binary-ness and the trauma that stems from the names. Kai, Olivia, and Nash highlight that their birth-given names imply familial, religious, and gendered expectations, promises, and ideas that they themselves could not connect with. In Kai's case, their birth given name (Bethany) derived from their parents' admiration of Catholicism, where Kai themselves do not share the same faith. In addition, Kai's birth-given name appears as a continuation of their mother's name, of whom they no longer have a relationship with. Similarly, Olivia explains how their birth-given name had a biblical reference, where they do not prescribe to the same religious affiliation. In addition, Olivia's birth-given middle name (Philip) derived from their grandmother's name – Phyllis. On the other hand, Nash's birth-given name (Natalie) was referred to as legal precedence, but never connect to them generally. In fact, in all cases of folks who identify as nonbinary and

trans, they felt that their birth-given names never related to them, or as Nash said, “it [their birth-given names] felt so distant.”

> Yeah, so um, I am the oldest. My parents both agreed on the name together. Um, they're very religious. Um... Catholic, very, very Catholic. Um, and my dad always wanted to name his first girl after the song by Meatloaf, uh, "Beth." Uh, and my mom always wanted a Biblical name. She liked the town of Bethany in the Bible. So, uh, they kind of came together on that name, uh, and came up with Bethany. (K. Armstrong, personal communication, January 20, 2021).
>
> So, my mom's middle name is Elizabeth. And uh, so they kind of wanted to have that kind of continuation as well. So, the Beth kind of, ah, was a good... Beth was my nickname before Kai. And so, uh, kind of came from my mom, but mostly it was uh, kind of that, that song and the Biblical reference. (K. Armstrong, personal communication, January 20, 2021).
>
> Yeah. So, first name is based on a Biblical role. My parents were extremely religious, and so they chose, like, children's names based on biblical roles. Um, so that's where the first name came from. Then middle name, my grandma's name is actually Phyllis, so Philip, for that was pulled over, so kind of a family connection. (O. Roe, personal communication, January 13, 2021).
>
> Not really, I am not religious. I don't follow with a religion at all, so I don't know too much of it. I just know that like, that was her explanation for all of us when she said, “Oh, yeah, this is why your names were chosen.” (O. Roe, personal communication, January 13, 2021).
>
> Yeah, it's, so my mom has this funny thing where she named all of us kids a longer name, and then called us all nicknames. My siblings have name nicknames that are

more similar to their legal name than mine. I always kind of was frustrated with my mom because it felt so distant. Like, it, Addie is not a, um, a name that's a nickname for Natalie. Like it doesn't like match up... Um, Natalie, Addie, like, I'm like, you really have to stretch like Nad- addely, you know, like, you really have to like stretch to make it make sense that those, that that's a nickname for Natalie. My mom always loved the name Addie. She always thought it was a good name for a child with brown hair. And my siblings were both born blonde and I was born with dark hair. And so she was like, oh, like, maybe that's a name that I could use on this kid. But she felt like it wasn't a proper name, like it needed a longer legal name to be matched up with, like it needed to be short for something because it's like, it felt nickname-y and she liked Natalie. Um, Addie is technically a family name. Her grand, her grandmother was Addie Um, but she didn't know that when she fell in love with the name. (N. Jones, personal communication, February 19, 2021).

You know, I felt like what, I always was really embarrassed of Natalie, because even before I was kind of um, figuring out my trans identity, I was always a tomboy, always kind of a masculine girl um, as a kid, and um, Natalie felt very feminine to me, and Addie felt a little more tomboyish. Um, like I could I could take that name and kind of feel like it was something that aligned a little more with my personality as a kid. And so then, you know, there are times that your legal name comes up, you know, or whatever, on the first day of school, they always have your legal name on the roster and call it out. And I was always really embarrassed of it, because I felt like it was really feminine, Natalie was. (N. Jones, personal communication, February 19, 2021).

> Eventually, though, I did feel like Addie was too feminine for me to feel like I could keep it...in terms of do you feel the commonly identified gender identification and your personal gender identification are the same, like, that was a big problem with my name was, (clears throat) you know, I was always pretty masculine. Like, I dressed like I do now, when I, before I transitioned, and when I had that name, and my name, because it has those feminine connotations, made people identify me as a woman. Even when I didn't identify that way. Like I, when I was nonbinary, but hadn't um, transitioned medically, like, my voice hadn't lowered, I didn't have some of the secondary sex characteristics that I exhibit now, um, I was, you know, my body was just as it had been, when I was born. I felt like my name was pigeonholing me into people perceiving me as a, as a lesbian or a woman who was kind of masculine or androgynous. And that's not how I identified, you know, I identified as nonbinary at the time even when I had that name. Um, and so, I felt like those were, that was a big disconnect, that my name was a barrier to people seeing me, and really understanding how I actually identified. (N. Jones, personal communication, February 19, 2021).

As Obasi, Mocarski, Holt, Hope, and Woodruff (2019) note that the "name-body-identity" nexus for gender nonconforming individuals is imbalance. While gendered expectations stem from Kai's, Olivia's, and Nash's birth-given names, other factors contribute to the imbalance of their name-body-identity nexus. In Kai's and Olivia's cases, the religious influences in their names create a furthered feeling of disassociation, because neither of them shares the same religious beliefs as their parents/name givers. In addition, Kai and Olivia's birth given names hinted to familial connections that are later severed in their lives, reiterating the detachment from their birth-given names. In Nash's case, gendered

expectations are clear indications of disconnect, because of their nonbinary identification. As Nash explains, their birth-given name highlights who they were expected to be rather than discover who they knew themselves to be. Inevitably, all the nonbinary and trans volunteers express damage and trauma from their birth-given names, which emphasizes their reference of feeling that their birth-given names are different/separate people from themselves.

In conclusion, when comprehending the relationship between the material power structures and birth-given names, individuals need to recognize that the material power structures can be damaging and traumatizing to many individuals who embody several intersectionalities. Throughout the snippets of Name Narratives, participants express a split feeling from their birth-given name either consciously or subconsciously. In many cases, participants are left to accept their birth-given names without question regardless of whether their names embody who they are or not. The colonial influences that intertwine with the material power structures of naming practices force individuals to endure or live up to expectations that discredit themselves and harms their self-identities and self-esteems. Therefore, the importance of the following analysis of identity and empowerment within names reiterates an in-betweenness of birth-given and changed and/or transitioned names. In many cases, the empowerment of names relates to volunteer's changed and/or transitioned name, which are also how participants establish their identities. Thus, individuals who decide to change and/or transition their names are strong examples of a DE.E.P., because they acknowledge how the material power structures influence their birth-given names and (sub)consciously who they were before they changed and/or transitioned their names.

Theme 2 – With Empowered Names Comes Stronger Identities

Generally, once individuals changed and/or transitioned their names, they felt relieved, happy, and empowered. While in some cases, the changed and/or transitioned name is contextualized in time, which is dependent on their individual lifetimes, the general senses reveal a strong understanding in self. Nonetheless, several themes arose, which are shared through certain demographics. For instance, women who immigrated to the U.S. for educational purposes and consciously chose an Anglo/English sounding name illustrate how their empowerment depended on their self-identity within and after being comfortable in the U.S. society and customs. On the other hand, for nonbinary and trans folks, the act of changing and/or transitioning their names provide instant gratification to be seen, heard, and recognized as they see fit. Interestingly, for women with different martial statuses, their empowerment differed due to their intersectional dualities. Nevertheless, the unifying standpoint with changed and/or transitioned names came from the strategy of how to utilize their names, especially for individuals who simultaneously use their birth-given and changed/transitioned names.

For women who consciously chose to create an Anglo/English sounding name to pursue their education in the U.S., they explain how their identity took time to grow, become strong, and establish. In addition, while they initially did not have intentions of meaningful Anglo/English names, they later discover the significance of their names relating to who they feel they became after living in the U.S. longer.

> I think it's more like a cultural, I wasn't whenever people call me Arrow, I'm switching into a different character in their mind, Chinese character. I do have certain different behaviors and ways of talking and ideology change when I, once people call me Arrow, like back to the States, I will go more straightforward, or low context and um, more, more willing, but um, careful about what I'm saying.

Because I'm not just um, representing myself, but also representing my race or country that um, back in there. So, I do want to pay careful attention, and I also um, want to have a nice impression there. (A. Xia, personal communication, January 25, 2021).

I mean, it's, it's cool. It takes a while for me to get accept to it. And I also thought about um, change it when I get into high school. No, not high school, I mean, college. And then I'll realize, well, it's been your name for three years, people know you as Arrow. And it's part of you and your identity, you shouldn't just take it away because it's not the ideal name that you want it. I mean, not everything is ideally, happening in your life. So, I would like to keep carry this name, like, for the future. (A. Xia, personal communication, January 25, 2021).

For me, I know the first one [Leanne] is most, uh, more used in the United States. But I preferred, I preferred the second one [Lian], because it is shorter, first, and secondly, I looked for this word in Google. And I found that Lian um, is the way Chinese people um, use the sounds of Lian in their word, and in South Korea, we use a lot of um, words from China, a Chinese characteristics, characters, language character, so I figured, okay, Lian sounds, Lian sounds good for me. And that meaning has the flower lotus. (L. Kim, personal communication, January 22, 2021).

Yeah, and I, I particularly like the flower, um, because as you know, as you might know, um, the flower has the meaning that um... because of these functions of plant, um, even though it is in the mess area or waters or things like that, it doesn't get hurt or it doesn't get messed. So, yeah. I've figured some meaning from it (laughter) now, um, um, when I, yeah, I, I assumed that I might have many challenges and differences, um, differences and difficult times in the United States

> than I might um, remind of the name, what I'm using, then I, perhaps, um, stand for myself, regardless of the difficult challenges, things like that. (L. Kim, personal communication, January 22, 2021).
>
> So, I was think about it, um, but at the moment the reason why I choose to keep my English name Lian, um, bringing to the UNM was because, okay, um, Lian is also my identity and, I, and I'm gonna use this name to build and empower myself and this will be the process. The Lian, um, okay, let me say this way, weak Lian or- Oh, yeah. Oppressed Lian, was also me, and comparatively lower level of English speaking skills, Lian was also me, and I'm going to getting better. I know that and I want to give that name, I want, I want my name to have the chance. Okay, you're going to get better, you're going to get better. And after about five or four or five years when I get the PhD degree, and I will say okay, though, that Lian is improved, and I want to, I want to prove myself that I'm, I'm going to get better. So, that's why I keep the name. (L. Kim, personal communication, January 22, 2021).

In essence, the colonial act of changing/transitioning to an Anglo/English sounding name became an act of self-empowerment, because their choice to choose and keep their names meant recognizing the pain that came from their choice. Their need to support their decisions empowered themselves and their self-identity, because they internally made a choice to have a positive outcome. In the midst of being forced into something, Arrow and Lian also chose to find meaning and worthiness in who they became in the U.S. Inevitably, they accepted their duality to honor the person they were and the person they became.

Additionally, I argue that because Arrow and Lian chose how to name themselves for themselves, they also experience the freedom to become someone they envision. Their birth-given names are chosen for them and the expectations that came with their birth-given

names are what others chose for them. Alternatively, the act of choosing their names themselves allow them to reinvent themselves in their own image. Thus, while the changing/transitioning of immigrant's name is a colonial act, the decision to name themselves returns the power to the individuals who experience the oppression. As Freire (1970) asserts, "To exist, humanly, is to name the world, to change it. Once named, the world in its turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new naming" (p. 88). Essentially, naming is an empowering act because of the power in language, which Arrow and Lian experience first-hand when they hold the power to change/transition their name by choice.

Likewise, for people who identify as trans and nonbinary the act of changing/transitioning their names gives them the power to say who they are or who they hope to be. In Kai's, Olivia's, and Nash's decisions, their name change materialized their physical transitions to empower their trans and nonbinary identities. Furthermore, I argue that the act of changing and/or transitioning their names offer instant gratification, because their processes are premeditated. In contrast to immigrants where name changes and/or transitions are normalized, trans and nonbinary folks equally plan for their name changes and/or transitions, but in an opposite fashion. Immigrants experience the changing and/or transitioning of their name and then illustrate the meaning from their experience with their changed/transitioned name, as to where nonbinary and trans folks create the meaning for their changed/transitioned name and then experience the actual name change and/or transition.

> ...when I came out to my parents, and I was more like, I didn't tell them I was trans, I was transmasculine, I was like, you know, I think I'm in the middle somewhere. And I do feel more like that, um, but I did know I wanted to take hormones and

do like, a medical transition. But I was like, you know, the one thing that I do want is I want to go by he/him or they/them pronouns, and I want to go by Kai. Uh, and my mom told me (laughter)... I laugh about it now. It was very traumatizing, but I laugh about it now. She said, I'll never call you anything other than what I named you. And it's hilarious because she named me Kainalu, so... um... (K. Armstrong, personal communication, January 20, 2021).

My first name, I did get it legally changed. And I changed it to Emerson and my sisters actually chose it for me. Um, I had been texting them, and I was like, you know, I'm thinking about taking on one of dad's names, Gerald or Kenneth, those are both family names. Uh, so I might do that. And they were like, "Meh, that's kind of old and boring, and like, why would you do that?" And they were like, "you know, your favorite writer is Emerson," um, like one of the old romantic writers. So, they're like, "why don't you, why don't you go by Emerson?" And I was like, you know, I really like that. I like that it's gender neutral. I've known girls and guys named Emerson. Um, so I think that's a really cool choice. So, so, my younger sisters actually picked my name for me. (K. Armstrong, personal communication, January 20, 2021).

I'm transgender? And as part of that, I want a name that more closely identifies with how I identify. And so having a more feminine name, something that I felt more attached to, was definitely something that was pretty high on my list. (O. Roe, personal communication, January 13, 2021).

Um, yeah, if I can remember all of it at this point. So, Olivia, basically is talking about olives or olive branches, olive trees, native to France, um, things like that. And basically, the idea behind the olive tree is peace, right? The thought of an olive

branch. And that's something that I've like, always strove for in my own life is be like, try to be peaceful, and just like that mediating force in my family, I have a big family. So like, it's just kind of the role I fell into. And then Claire is the French word for clear, often used for like, clean water. Um, and so with that, it's just like the idea of peace and tranquility, being clear in thought, clear in like personality and things. And that's just kind of like, the role I felt I've been in my family and just like in life, so it's like, this seems to fit a lot. (O. Roe, personal communication, January 13, 2021).

Really, really good. And not everyone uses it at this point. So, I haven't been able to legally change it yet. I'm in that process. Um, but then I also have family members who are like very anti the idea, so a lot of people still use that other name when I'm teaching like on my bursars, and what students see is still that name, things like that. So, I'm in a difficult position of like figuring out how to actually present myself right now. So, I'm figuring that out at the, as we're going into the start of the semester, how I'm going to actually use it, but it's something that when I hear it, when I use it, I definitely feel empowered. And like, just like, that is me, I'm actually doing this and becoming the person that I am, that I like, see myself as and it's really, really encouraging. (O. Roe, personal communication, January 13, 2021).

So, as people started using they pronouns for me, it helps them shift in their head, which gender I am. So they're not always conceiving me, of me as a woman, because they're always using she and Addie is a feminine name. So that was helpful, the pronoun step. Pretty shortly after I decided I needed to change my name, because as much as I was trying to make Addie work for me as an gender neutral name. It's just not. It is a culturally feminine name in our culture. And so people

> would say things like, Addie, that's my grandma's name. And it's just like, Oh, my God, like, this is not working. And so I decided that I needed to do it to live authentically in my gender. That's why I decided to change my name. (N. Jones, personal communication, February 19, 2021).

Regardless of the demographic circumstances of each person, the act of naming themselves gave them all a similar feeling. The power relationship between receiving a name and choosing a name is the defining aspect between acceptance and empowerment of a person and their duality, intersectionalities, and identities. Thus, I emphasize how the act of changing and/or transitioning names is a DE.E.P., where an individual can understand *what* they can do in hopes to empower themselves and others through decolonial thoughts and actions.

Although, uniquely, for individuals who simultaneously utilize their birth-given and changed/transitioned names, they do so strategically and depending on three contextual factors: places, relationships, and personal timelines. Regardless of their individual intersectionalities, several volunteers provide examples of how their names transform.

> So I legally changed my name to Anais Amairani Lechuga. But the thing is, I changed it in court, but I would have to do like a bunch of different things to like, change it on my RN license, to change my passport, to change my, you know, it's like a whole bunch of stuff with like my insurance. And honestly, because we've moved so much, we went to Minnesota, now we've come back to New Mexico, every time it's like, "Okay, so am I gonna do it here? Or am I gonna wait and see if we move again?" Like, I just have not done it on my all my stuff. And so, at work, you know, at work, everybody calls me Nancy. And honestly, now that we're back here, I've also been growing as a person, so now that we're back here, I don't really

correct people or anything. What I pretty much do is, when I'm friends with somebody, or I'm introducing myself to somebody outside of work, then because that's the name I most connect with and it's meaningful to me, then I'll share that with people but um, you know, in work or also sometimes the neighbors, I'm like you know, if they get my mail by accident or something, they're gonna (laughter) be like, who is this or something. So, um, so yeah, I, I kind of go by both depending on the circumstance, and I'm comfortable with either at this point. (A. Lechuga, personal communication, February 12, 2021).

Well, I think a part of when, let me backtrack a little bit. I think something that I was really trying to do in renaming myself was to mark myself as a woman of color, because I don't always get read that way. And now, I think I'm not as sensitive about it, and I'm not as um, I think back then I felt like I really had something to prove. And it was touchy, and I had, like, if I would get read as a white person, cause I didn't grow up that way, I didn't feel that way inside, so um, it was something kind of painful. But I feel like now, either way, um, my focus is a lot less on how I'm read, it's a lot less than like how, um, I don't know, I feel like now, I have put the onus back on myself to define myself by my actions, not, not to try to get people to think of me in any sort of way, or curate what they get from me using my name. (A. Lechuga, personal communication, February 12, 2021).

Um, and I think she had a much more comfortable education environment growing up. I also went to a good school good, quote, unquote. But I went to a white private school, um, where there was one black kid. And one time in English class, the per-, the teacher turned off the lights to do a presentation, and then Jake Hendricks, who yes, is as racist as his name sounds like it said, "Hey, Sevvy where'd

you go? I can't see you anymore." Ah. Right. And this was like fourth grade, Pauline. Like, we were like, nine. And I was like, "Well, fuck, they can't know I'm brown, like, shit. Like, they're making fun of Sevvy like that. I'm, I don't want to be made fun of like that." Um, so I definitely kept the light, the white, the white social mask on as a way to protect myself. Uh, and so I wouldn't be called, like, you know, dirty Mexican, because I totally anticipated it. I would have totally expected it. And I honestly would not have been surprised if someone had said it. So. (C. Blankenship, personal communication, January 12, 2021).

I think that was the only time I ended up defending myself, was randomly five minutes before a lecture, uh, Sophie, one of our, one of our coworkers, uh, was like, "Yeah, well, you know, Christina's white," and I just like, got in her face, like, immediately and I've never done anything like that before. And of course, she looked like she pissed her fucking pants and was like, I'm so sorry. And I was like, yeah. And then I was like, yeah, yeah. Even though in my head. I was like, "oh, shit, maybe I shouldn't have done that. Fuck these people barely know me." But then I was like, "No, they have to know. You have to know. Walter's last name fucks it all up a little bit, but you got to set them straight." Um, so yeah, it wasn't until I was in a fucking Ph.D. program, Pauline, that I defended myself. (C. Blankenship, personal communication, January 12, 2021).

But Sofia, I'm convinced because she has the more exotic sounding name she got to date all these international guys and being my dumb ass sounding white name, stuck with all these white men throughout my dating life. I don't know. That might not be related to your project at all. But just, in thinking about it now. (C. Blankenship, personal communication, January 12, 2021).

So, I was known as Mrs. Alvarez when the children were going, when you guys were all going to school. And I just felt with a divorce, that it would be very difficult to change my name, and, you know, with the, you know, with every, all of the kids in school, they were so accustomed along with their, their friends to know me as Mrs. Alvarez, and then to change that, um, I just felt that it was easier. So I kept my name, um, so long as my kids were in school. (E. Alvarez, personal communication, January 24, 2021).

And then as they became older, and I became more independent, um, and my children became more independent, um, I had considered going back to my maiden name. Um, and being that my dad was accepting of me, and not just that, my accomplishments, because you know, it comes along with your name, your name association, who you network with, and your reputation, it, it's associated with your name. And when people look for you, and they do a name search, it's according to your name. Even when good example, on Facebook, uh, people either hide a name for a reason, because they want to disguise themselves, or, you know, um, you put your name that you associate with if you want people to look for you within your network. (E. Alvarez, personal communication, January 24, 2021).

So for me, on Facebook, I carried all of my names. So, Emeline Mimi Tolentino Alvarez. And the reason it's that long is because Emeline Tolentino is what I was known in school, in elementary years. And as I got married, it became Emeline Alvarez. And then in the communities that I work in, um, in with work, I use my nickname of Mimi. So my colleagues at work know me as Mimi Alvarez. None of them really know me as Tolentino because I, you know, went away with that name,

uh, since I got married, which was in my teen years. So, only those that associate me as Emeline Tolentino are only those that went to school with me.

So, I have a distinguish depending on where I was in my life, if you knew me in school, it was Emeline Tolentino. If you knew me after, after my education and into my married life, it was Emeline Alvarez. But in my career, everyone knows me as Mimi Alvarez, although my legal name is Emeline Alvarez. So, there are some legal documents that I do sign at work, and it is under Emeline Alvarez. Um, and that's for notary purposes and passports. Now, in regards to considering changing my name later in life, it became more difficult. (E. Alvarez, personal communication, January 24, 2021).

Emerson, I don't use quite as often, it's more of just like, an, an official thing. Um, I do have my students call me Emerson. Uh, and I find that hilarious, because they probably think they're like, "Oh, yeah, it's so cool. I get to call my teacher by their first name." And I'm like, "yeah, nobody calls me that." (K. Armstrong, personal communication, January 20, 2021).

Oh, yeah, it's about in middle school. In middle school, yeah. Okay. Um, I didn't tell you before but yeah, my birth give name is Lyounghee, but my mom accidently report my name as Younghee. She, she dropped L-

...because of um, some Korean language law. (L. Kim, personal communication, January 22, 2021).

Okay. For a better and law-based name, um, she thought she need to drop the L. So, I officially used the Younghee from elementary school to high school. (L. Kim, personal communication, January 22, 2021).

> Well, I didn't realize what the problem was in my elementary school, but I figured, oh, my name was wrong. So, I started using Younghee on officially um, from the first day of class, in every year, so when we, when we introduce ourselves on the first class day, I always uh, write my Chinese name on blackboard and then tell them what, uh, what, what is my name and what means. And you can tell me Lyounghee at the moment in my first grade of middle school, but when I found my gender identity, I started dropped hee in the second, um, second grade of middle school. (L. Kim, personal communication, January 22, 2021).

In cases where individuals identify as biracial and are white passing (meaning that they physically appear lighter due to their phenotype), Anaís and Christina utilize their names based on place. In Christina's situation growing up in an area where she witnesses blatant racism, she did not advocate for herself as a woman of color to ameliorate discrimination. Although, when she began to defend herself publicly as a woman of color, Christina was in an academic space where her knowledge supports her duality and biracial identity. At the same hand, Anaís applies her name similarly to be read as a woman of color, explaining that she wants her name to align with how she grew up as a brown woman. In essence, the duality from their names is also exhibited in their actions of how they use their names publicly and privately.

Additionally, time presents itself as an aspect to consider how participants manage their names. Both Emeline and Lian display different parts of their names throughout their lives, because of different situations. For example, Emeline (my Mom) feels that when I was younger, the use of 'Ms./Mrs. Alvarez' is easier to be connected to her family. My Mom explains how her volunteerism and participation in her kids' (my siblings' and my) lives made being recognize as Ms./Mrs. Alvarez accommodates others in how she is read at

a particular time in her life. Although, individuals in her life also know my Mom as Emeline Tolentino, Emeline Alvarez, and/or Mimi Alvarez, which are all names that she continues to identify as, because each name represents a different time in her life. In comparison, Lian outlines how her Korean name Lyounghee also transforms through time. When she was born, her mother omitted the 'L' in her documentation which she later fixes, but is legally (through documentation) is name Younghee. While Lian introduced herself as Lyounghee through school, she also describes how she used Lyoung without '-hee' to not be bound by gender roles. Throughout different times in Lian's life, she shaped Lyounghee to fit her fluidity, because at different points in her lifetime her name represents a different part of her.

Furthermore, relationships with others are a defining factor in how individuals operate through their names. Anaís, Christina, Emeline, and Kai depict how different parts of their names are used to highlight specific relationships they have with people in their lives. For instance, in Kai's case, they use a shortened version of their birth-given middle name (Kainalu) for their personal friendships and acquaintances. Although, in their classroom they allow their students to address them by their first name (Emerson). In this sense, Kai differentiates their name to mark a difference in their relationship with people. Additionally, Anaís and my Mom portray how their names alter in separate relationships, which is also in part dependent on place. My Mom explains how her co-workers which are also some of her closest friends know her as Mimi, and Anaís is known as Nancy to her co-workers or neighbors due to her separation between work and personal relationships. Furthermore, my Mom is also known as Emeline to some of her friends who met her when she was younger (from her childhood), and Anaís uses her name to strengthen her relationships with other women of color and in her community in general. Interestingly,

while Christina does not change her name at all, her name is a bridge between her relationships with her family members on both her paternal and maternal sides. Additionally, she argues that because of her name and its close relationship to whiteness, she romantically dates white men, as opposed to her sister (Sofia), which is perceived as a more exotic name compare to Chrisitina's. Basically, names whether transformed from birth-given or their changed and/or transitioned name are strategically identified to create, build, maintain, and separate relationships to either connect or create a boundary within their relationships with people.

Lastly, economics is another circumstance to consider, because the finance to change and/or transition names legally and to be reflected on legal documentation cost money. Any individual who decides to legally change their name and have their documentation reflect their change and/or transition name encounters a financial barrier. Anaís, Kai, Olivia, and Nash divulge the process to change their names in the state of New Mexico, where they filled out paperwork, appeared before a judge, published their changed and/or transitioned name in newspapers, and then went through the process of also changing all their other documentation (license, passports, birth certificates, school affiliated information, ID cards, medical records, etc.) which all accrued financial compensation. In addition, Lian mentions how her change in her legal documentation from Younghee to Lyounghee also required a monetary cost, which she dealt with after taking the Korean SAT. Lastly, my Mom reports that the finance to legally change documentation extends further to larger assets (car registration, housing deeds, bank accounts, insurances, etc.) and smaller ones (kids' school information, physical mail, email addresses, social media websites, etc.) that may or may not have financial barriers

dependent on the type of documentation. Nevertheless, the cost of changing and/or transitioning a name can prevent a legal name change and/or transition.

Thus, for individuals who experience a change and/or transition in their name, the process is extensive, tiring, and exhausting, but benefits the person emotionally through their self-identity, which boost their self-empowerment. Importantly, participants who narrate their happiness in changing and/or transitioning (or not changing and/or transitioning) their names do not do so to discredit or disrespect their parents' or name givers, but instead to solidify who they believe themselves to be. In fact, I argue that in the progress of changing and/or transitioning their names to break away from the material power structures, individuals grow with their names internally as an act of self-love. Hence, reiterating that the changing and/or transitioning of names is a DE.E.P. act, because the performance of renaming is an embodiment of how individuals free themselves from colonial powers and a step towards *what* people can do to empower themselves through decolonial thoughts and actions.

Theme 3 – Reflecting on In-Betweenness of Our Names

After analyzing the material power structures within names and the connections between self-empowerment and self-identity, I review a third pre-determined theme of self-reflection. Specifically, I question how individuals who change and/or transition their names feel about their name change and/or transition after spending some time with/in their changed and/or transitioned name. Unexpectedly, as I review their individual transcriptions over and over, I thought about how their individual Otherness and in-betweenness continue to determine their varied emotions and feelings. Nonetheless, I argue that the common theme between all the volunteers (while explained and expressed differently) is that they battle between their constant intersectionalities, making them

un/comfortable in their Otherness and in-betweenness. While the general act of changing and/or transitioning names is a positive self-love step towards a DE.E.P., their overall name change and/or transition is a reminder of their (sub)conscious in-betweenness. For instance, Anaís thought about the privilege that she is given to change and/or transition her name within the U.S.

> Like, I think part of me feels some ambivalence about, like, why did I feel I had the right to do that? Why did I feel comfortable? And, and it is a privilege to be able to, you know, there's people trying to get their documents in and trying to get status. And I'm over here, like, you know, in the court trying to just change the letters on my paperwork, or whatever. And, and so I feel, honestly, um, some ambivalence about it. Because I know, it has a lot of privilege carried with it. And I also think that, as I mentioned to you a little while ago, that the way that I treat people matters more. So, I try to be intentional about how I go into spaces, not thinking like, Oh, I deserve to be here, because I'm a woman of color and stuff. Or because, and, and to me, like, all of that relates to my name, like, whatever, whichever name I'm using. I feel like you know, if people need me to leave the room to feel safer, or whatever, like, I'm going to do that, I'm not going to be like, no, my name is Anais, because, you know, or, like, trying to use that. Whereas before, I think that it was really important for me to um, to assert myself as a woman of color. Whereas now I'm like, No, I don't need to take up space. I don't need to center myself. I don't need to. And I think in the past, not like I was consciously trying to center myself, but because I was doing like that healing work, and it was like, I really wanted to be in conversation and in friendship with women of color, in community, like I really wanted, I saw, like my name partly as a strategy, like, as part of it. And um, I don't

> think I was like, aware or consciously thinking of it, and it's not the whole reason I was doing it. But I think now I'm like, hmm, I need to let go of that a little bit because there's some places where I, I should be, and then there's some places when we need to be taking up space and taking up yeah, I don't know. So, does that, that's, does that make sense with that ambivalence? (A. Lechuga, personal communication, February 12, 2021).

Anaís' self-reflexivity offers the opportunity to think about her positionality and her growth in privilege as someone who is documented within the U.S. While I do not believe that her choice to change and/or transition her name hinders her overall positive feelings towards her name, I do argue that her self-reflection of her name change encourages a deeper DE.E.P. When Anaís recognizes her privilege in her U.S. citizenship, she admits that her privilege changes her choices and self-perception, which in itself is an act towards a DE.E.P. On the other hand, Christina illustrates her last name as an "annoyance," but also something that she plans to continue to carry post marriage.

> So, my last name is something I've always brushed aside as white, as an annoyance, as a cognitive dissonance in comparison to my mother. But then my last name became more important when I started my PhD. Because I was like, but Christina Overholt didn't get the doctorate. Christina Blankenship got the doctorate. And whose name is on this publication? It says Christina Blankenship. But then at that point, I was like, What am I really prioritizing? This love that I have for Tomasito and like a wonderful life we can have together or my accomplishments, my awards and my degree? (C. Blankenship, personal communication, January 12, 2021).
>
> And I was like, you need to be honest with yourself, Christina. I was like, I'm an egocentric asshole.I love Tom, but I, it's me at the end of the day. The degree is for

> me, the degree is by me. The dissertation has my name on it. These publications and top journals have my name on it. These awards have my name on it. And I was at that point that I was like, no, I'm not going to change my last name. Uh, and even as I move out of academia, I still would not change my last name. Um, and if we have children, they can work out under Tom's insurance. Um, and they can have Tom's last name, and that doesn't bother me whatsoever. (C. Blankenship, personal communication, January 12, 2021).

While Christina blames her last name (Blankenship) for making her white-passing physical appearance and name disassociation discredit her brown realities, she also prioritizes Blankenship for her academic accomplishments. Therefore, she juggles her in-betweenness of her name duality. In addition, a clear evident in-betweenness of names is my Mom's (Emeline's) thought of changing and/or transitioning to her birth-given last name or maintaining her current surname.

> Am I proud to have Alvarez, um, as no longer being married to the person with Alvarez? Um, it's no longer an honor for me to carry that name, especially if you're making a name for yourself. Um, but for, I carry it for my kids' sakes, and then not just that, you know, I've got grandkids that carry on Alvarez. So, I've got a portion of my kids that are proud of it. And then another portion of them that is not proud of the last name. However, that's the last name that was given at that time. So, for me at this time, it's not, it doesn't hurt, it doesn't hurt me one way or another. And, you know, I believe in, you know, someday in the future that my name would change. (E. Alvarez, personal communication, January 24, 2021).

> Well, I hoped someday in the future that I would change it. So, you know, I someday would like to remarry, but I'm not going to remarry, just for the sake of a name, um, for a name change, and that was also one of my um, considerations on changing my name back to my maiden name. Um, you know, do I want to spend the time and effort associating with that? So, at one time in point, I was considering it for my dad. But then, at that time, my dad and I also had a fallout, and that fallout stems back to the very first time that um, he, you know, he disowned me, basically. And so, it created a pause for me to say, hold on, wait a minute, I was doing this, because I thought you were proud of me, and we've overcome. We overcame, you know, what has happened in the past, but then he re, you know, rekindled it. And so I just said, you know, for the time and effort that I was gonna put into this, um, I just paused it and said, you know what, I'm, you know, I'll just do it at a later time. And the reason for it is, I believe, someday, I would probably remarry. And when that happens, I'll go through that process and procedure at that time. (E. Alvarez, personal communication, January 24, 2021).

My Mom explains that in Filipino culture family names carry the reputations of individuals, which is why she struggles between her maiden and surname. In both cases, Tolentino rehashes wounds between her and my Lolo (grandpa in Tagalog), and Alvarez connects her to her past abuser and someone that she no longer links to. Although, Alvarez as she mentions is a family name that her kids and grandkids hold that Emeline connects with. Therefore, her in-betweenness of surnames continuously enacts her DE.E.P., because her reflection to identify with either name is harmful which she recognizes but does not necessarily have a solution. Remember, DE.E.P. is a series of actions, and while my Mom pinpoints the colonial powers that dictate her decisions, she has yet to know *when* to accept

decoloniality and *how* she might free herself from the colonial powers. Nonetheless, Kai also shares a similar situation, but in regards to their birth-given first and middle names, before they legally changed their name.

> Um, but when I was a kid, I never really like connected with Bethany very much. Um, and so I always liked my middle name, right? It's, it's so unique and different and it's cool. Um, and when I was 11, uh, my grandmother got remarried and uh, one of my step cousins, I don't know what it'd be, his name's Kainalu I learned that Kainalu's actually masculine name uh, for uh, most, most people who are named Kainalu. Um, and so, before even that, I wanted to go by Kainalu, um, but I had a hard time spelling it as a kid. (K. Armstrong, personal communication, January 20, 2021).
>
> So, anytime I'd be like, "hey, I'd rather go by Kainalu," they'd be like, you can't even spell it. So, it's not really an option. (laughter) Yeah, it was real bad. Uh, so, so then, like, I learned that it's more of a masculine name, and I still liked it, but um, I started like... I knew I needed to like, fit in so, I, I went by Beth instead of Bethany. Um, and when I finally came out as genderqueer, um, knowing that Kainalu was a more masculine name, and Kai itself is generally a more masculine name, but it's also pretty androgynous, I knew that it was kind of what I wanted to go by, and it's what I wanted to go by my whole life. So I, I started going by my middle name, uh, and shortened it to Kai, because most people would have a hard time saying Kainalu. (K. Armstrong, personal communication, January 20, 2021).

Since a young age, Kai asserts their middle name as their preferred name, but because they wrestled with the spelling of Kainalu, others discredited Kai's name. In Kai's memory, the in-betweenness is that Kainalu was not recognized even though that is one of their birth-

given names. Kainalu is not something changed and/or transitioned, but rather a name that they have been identified with since their birth, and interestingly others disregard Kai's name. Therefore, the in-betweenness of fighting to always be Kainalu is how Kai establishes their DE.E.P. Their choice to be seen as Kai is the fight against the colonial powers stemming from their birth-given name, which in their reflection keeps Kai stuck in-betweenness. Additionally, Nash points out how nonbinary/trans folks tend to have names that generationally are misplaced due to the trends of names at specific times.

> So there's all these babies named Nash. And that's kind of funny is uh, it's kind of misplaced generationally, like there is nobody in their early 30s named Nash, besides people who changed their name, because that was not a name that anyone was naming their kid in the 80s. Um, but now, it's so common. So, that's kind of funny. It's like me, some other trans guys and like a bunch of babies (laughter) So that's why my mom gets compliments that she was like, ahead of the curve, because she was naming her kid Nash in the 80s, and nobody started naming their kid Nash until, you know, the late 2000s. But- (N. Jones, personal communication, February 19, 2021).
>
> So you can see that with trans trans people a lot. We often name ourselves names that are popular when we change our name. So, generationally, they're off, like nobody is, nobody back in the 70s was named Aiden. But the number of 40 something year old trans guys named Aiden is just like, through the roof. There's like a million of them. It's just kind of funny, where you're like, that name is generally, generationally misplaced. You know, it's misplaced in time. (N. Jones, personal communication, February 19, 2021).

In Nash's case, they describe how their name became popular in the 2000s, but in fact they were born in the 1980s, which misplaces their name generationally. The generational reorganization addresses the in-betweenness as Nash claims how nonbinary/trans folks who legally change their names often follow trends of the time that they change and/or transition their names rather than what their name trends were when they were born. Inevitably, the in-betweenness that Nash is finds is between generations of identities which particularly happens due to name trends. Moreover, Olivia provides an experience of in-betweenness because of mobility to live humanly in certain places.

> Yeah. Before, well not this specifically, but before I applied to any programs, I looked at women's rights in the area, for my wife, I looked at transgender rights in the state. I looked at just a bunch of things and then once we identified some states that we were like, okay, these are slightly better places for people to live and actually be human, then we applied to PhD programs. (O. Roe, personal communication, January 13, 2021).

Their decision to apply to certain PhD programs depended on the radicalization of the state/area legal rights and laws. Olivia express their concern for living in particular places, because of the legality of their livelihood. As a result, I argue that Olivia lives in a state of in-betweenness because their decisions to live in certain place is confine to their ability to move freely (in comparison to cis-privilege individuals). Lastly, for Arrow and Lian, since they chose Anglo/English sounding names, their names are a physical barrier between their home lives (back in their home countries) and their lives in the U.S.

> [*Question that I asked to Arrow*] Okay. And so, um, do you ever use like, so for instance, right now you use Arrow. Do you ever use Arrow back home in China? (P. Alvarez, personal communication, January 25, 2021).

[*Arrow's response to my question*] Um, I don't. The first reason is people don't get used to it. They also don't pronounce English very well. Um, generations like my grandparents or my parents' generation, they are um , lack of English education. So, it's not a very convenient way for them to call me, but my mom sometimes would make fun of it. (A. Xia, personal communication, January 25, 2021).

Yeah, yeah. That's the story about my name. And it was a very good reminder that why I choose this name and hmm, how much I accept myself in the United States. Lian in the United States. (laughter) Yeah. (L. Kim, personal communication, January 22, 2021).

[*Question that I asked to Lian*] I'm also a little curious, do you happen to use Lian when you go back home or just in the United States? (P. Alvarez, personal communication, January 22, 2021).

[*Lian's response to my question*] Um, just in the United States, because, yeah, all the people I know in South Korea, they call me Lyoung. Not Lyounghee, they call me Lyoung. Yeah. (L. Kim, personal communication, January 22, 2021).

Both Arrow and Lian explain that their Anglo/English names are not used in their home countries, because the phonetic difference and pronunciation. Therefore, their in-betweenness lies between their use of either of their names. Since their names are contextualize by place – meaning that they use their English/Anglo names in the U.S. and their birth-given names in their home countries – their names serve as a material representation of in-betweenness.

Furthermore, while each person that changed and/or transitioned their name reflects on their name differently, they continuously live in their in-betweenness to strengthen, begin, and build their DE.E.P. While some participants mirror a deeper

DE.E.P., they all encounter a small fraction of decoloniality in themselves, which are displayed through their name changes and/or transitions. Hence, I claim that the DE.E.P. is evident through different steps of the understanding of material power structures that influence birth-given names, the comprehension of self-empowerment and self-identity through changed and/or transitioned names, and the awareness of self-reflection with names.

Initially, I connected material power structures to colonial name practices where individuals (specifically immigrant/international individuals, women with different martial statuses, and non-binary/trans folks) are force to endure a name that disconnects them to themselves. Unfortunately, the practice of names and name giving is another form of how settler colonialism (sub)consciously survives to perpetuate a continued harmful and violent act towards people. Throughout the eight Name Narratives told within this project, we felt the trauma from our names, and for some of us even our childhood nicknames. The distance between ourselves and our names suppressed our beings, and we were left to be subjugated for years. However, in order to re-invent ourselves we needed to remember our strength. Similar to Maxine Waters, rather than "reclaiming our time," we reclaimed our names.

Furthermore, for individuals who do reclaim their names, they do so out of self-identity, self-awareness, and self-love. While individuals who change and/or transition their names may operate from a cultural, racial, gendered, class, religious, linguistic, familial connections, trends, etc. perspective (which do stem from colonial material power structures), they do so by recognizing who they are, not for what others' hope for them or how others might want them to be. In essence, they utilize colonial powers to empower themselves in a way to ridicule the colonialism that they (sub)consciously tolerated. As the

legacy of Anzaldúa, Pinay-Mestiza consciousnesses, Feminist/Pluralist standpoints, intersectionalities, Otherness, and in-betweenness mention, we (the participants and I) are proof that in order to dismantle and decolonize institutional colonial structures, we cannot separate ourselves from it; instead, we become part of it to change and reestablish it (Castillo-Garsow, 2012). Thus, the changing and/or transitioning of names is an act of self-love to reclaim ourselves, which is translated through steps of a Decolonial Embodiment Process.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

Throughout the analysis, the three major findings are that: (1) material power structures continue to be evident in name practices and structures (sub)consciously throughout generational immigration in the United States, (2) the changing and/or transitioning of names are a demonstration of a DE.E.P. where individuals feel empowered through their self-identities, and (3) individuals who changed and/or transitioned their names consistently live in in-betweenness since their names are physical representations of their intersectionalities and duality. Importantly, the changing and/or transitioning of names is not an act of disrespecting their parents or name givers, but instead an act of self-love and healing. Mindfully, since I argue that a DE.E.P. is an internal process that progresses through people differently, decolonizers need to individually decide which truths validate their own actions. Considering the depths of colonial influences, deolonizers hold the responsibility to reflect on their actions, knowledges, and beings to ensure that their decoloniality advocates for themselves and those around them.

Furthermore, Mignolo and Vazquez (2013) explain that, "decolonial aestheSis starts from the consciousness that the modern/colonial project has implied not only control of the economy, the political and knowledge, but also control over the senses and perception" (p. 4). When individuals (sub)consciously recognize that their names colonize their identities, their reaction in healing is to change and/or transition their name to empower who they are. However, in some cases, not changing and/or transitioning names is also an act of self-love, because volunteers express how their feelings of their names do not bound them to the colonial material power structures. Furthermore, Mignolo and Vazquez (2013) reiterate that:

> This doesn't mean "cultural relativism" and "everything goes." It means that the differences are played out not by denying the validity of the options but by recognizing their distinctive locations, their particular horizons, their commonalities, and their tensions. It is as an option that the decolonial posits itself as a locus of enunciation (p. 16).

Inevitably, while name changing and/or transitioning is an act of a physical representation to break away from colonial material power structures, another element of healing is through mentality of names and how their self-identities are strengthened through their feelings and names. Thus, names continue to be a significant indicator of self-identities and self-empowerment, and Changing and/or Transitioning Name Narratives advance the DE.E.P. that individuals display to separate or acknowledge the resistance against colonial material power structures.

Nevertheless, I began this project after sitting and conversating with Lechuga in his office during his office hours one day. The day prior we had a meeting regarding my thesis topic, and Lechuga's honesty left me crushed. I previously hoped to focus on critical pedagogy and mixed methods, and Lechuga explained how my master's thesis and program could not support my vision. The truth was hard to swallow, but admittedly, Lechuga was right. I took the evening to think about what he said, cried about what I would do, and had little sleep because of my fears. Our meeting the next day, we revisited our conversation. I remember Lechuga asked me, "What are you interested in?" I sat for a moment, and then like word vomit, I expressed my interests in music, movies, and people. We went back and forth about the topics, and I still felt like what we talked about did not sit right with me. There was something about the topics that felt misplaced and not worth a thesis topic. After a moment of silence and thinking, I asked, "What about my name?

Could that be something I can study?" Lechuga looked at me confused, and said, "it could be, but what do you mean?" I struggled to find the words, because the story behind my name needed to be visually represented in order to understand. With my tongue tied, I asked, "I can show you, but do you have a piece of paper?" Lechuga passed me a sticky note and pen, and I wrote my siblings' names all down along with mine. Similar to Figure 1 in Chapter 5, I showed how my name connected to each of my siblings' names, and told him, "but it goes further than that, but the sticky note isn't big enough." As Lechuga leaned back in his chair, with his hands folded together, and pondering for a moment, he replied, "I like where this is going." He then told me about his partner who had changed her name to fit her identity after their marriage. In that moment, I figured, *this is it*, and I ran with the idea.

Lastly, while the focus of my thesis is Name Narratives, another contributing subject is decoloniality, and I support the notion to maintain decolonial research and scholarship. However, in order to understand how we – current, future, new, old, novice, veteran, etc. – move forward with decolonial work, it is important to reflect on the colonial influences that impact us to do so. Throughout my thesis, I reiterate and stress that decoloniality is an internal process rather than something that happens externally and separate from ourselves. In fact, Mignolo and Vazquez (2013) prove that colonialism infects economy, politics, minds, and consciousness. Therefore, as mentioned in the introduction of Chapter 1, by Ndhloovu (2016), "it [decolonial thought] goes a step further to call for a completely new way of thinking – about languages, about cultural identities, about regimes of knowledge and knowledge production, and just about everything else we do (p. 36). In my opinion, the purpose of decolonial research and scholarship is to be creative and explore in

a way that centers our experiences to resist what we are force to accept. So eloquently put, Rodriguez (2017) interprets that decoloniality relates to vulnerability:

> Vulnerability is also about generosity – the ability to be selfless for the sake of mutual understanding. It is about (a) giving others the time and space to be heard, (b) affirming the positions of others, (c) refraining from condemning and prejudging, (d) trying to understanding the circumstances and experiences that make for different viewpoints and (e) refraining from dehumanizing others by employing dehumanizing language and symbols (p. 184).

Being vulnerable is not weakness, but rather the colonial influence demonizes vulnerability negatively to control a specific image of its colonized bodies. Hence, we decolonize ourselves by being free from how we should act, be, and think. Our time to relearn something can be whenever we chose to, but in order to so, we need to first learn what controls us. Holding a mirror to ourselves to comprehend our actions, thoughts, and consciousness is scary, but so is growth and change. Therefore, decoloniality encourages creativity, vulnerability, and change within ourselves in order to continue our work, research, and scholarship inside and out. Thus, to decolonize ourselves can be to rename ourselves, to reclaim who we are through our names. To be vulnerable enough to share our Name Narratives that are messy, complicated, and even painful, in a way to remind ourselves of our strength, worthiness, and self-love. We deserve to be seen through a lens that we create, rather than through a vision of who others' think we should be. Our embodiment, our choice, our name is how we reclaim, decolonize, and love ourselves.

APPENDIX A: Changing and Transitioning Name Narrative Essay Instructions

Changing and Transitioning Name Narratives: The DE.E.P. Standpoints of Identities

Changing and Transitioning Name Narrative Essay

Important Note: This project is a replication of the Name Narrative Project created by Margaret E. Montoya, Irene M. Vasquez, and Diana V. Martínez (2014). Additional, materials created for the Changing and Transitioning Name Narratives Project have also been adopted from the original Name Narrative Project.

Citation of original Name Narrative Project:

Montoya, M. E., Vasquez, I. M., & Martínez, D. V. (2014). Name Narratives: A Tool for Examining and Cultivating Identity. *Chicana/o Latina/o Law Review, 32*(2), 113-152.

Instructions: Participants should complete the Name Narrative and Cultural Profile Worksheet for both their birth-given name and changed/transitioned name before writing their essay. The chart will allow participants to brainstorm their ideas about the relationships between possible identity traits and their names. Once the chart is completed, participants should plan to complete their Changing and Transitioning Name Narrative Essay. Since the essay is a narrative, participants should do their best to speak to their own experiences. There is no page length requirement, since it is the participant's choice on how much they would like to divulge. Additionally, there are no formatting requirements. Participants should feel free to express themselves through their written forms however they may choose. The only request is that the Changing and Transitioning Name Narrative be submitted to the student researcher (Pauline Alvarez) pcalvarez@unm.edu in a PDF document, if possible. Participants, however, should not feel constrained to submit their Changing and Transitioning Name Narrative in a particular way, as all formats are acceptable.

Suggested Outline: Participants should begin their essay by speaking to their birth-given name, including all brainstorming ideas from the Name Narrative and Cultural Profile Worksheet. Afterwards, participants should speak about what might have influenced their change or transition in their name, and what their changed/transitioned name is.

- What event might have motivated the participant to change their name?
- Why might they have wanted to change/transition their name?
- What were they feeling as they changed/transitioned their name?
- And lastly, what were their own thoughts about changing/transitioning their name?

Finally, after explaining the change/transition of their name, participants should refer back to their brainstorming ideas that relate to their changed/transitioned name. Explain in-depth detail how their changed/transitioned name might empower them base on their feelings of their names and how their identity might relate to their name change/transition.

Name Narrative and Cultural Profile Worksheet

Important Note: This worksheet is, "adapted from tools created by UNM Law School Professors Margaret Montoya and Christine Zuni-Cruz, adapted for the Albuquerque Public School Cultural Proficiency Teachers Training and further elaborated by Professor Irene Vasquez for her Chicana/Chicano Studies course" (p. 149, 2014). Additionally, the Name Narrative and Cultural Profile Worksheet has been replicated to fit the Changing and Transitioning Name Narrative Essay.

Instructions: Please complete the Name Narrative and Cultural Profile Worksheet *BEFORE* writing the Changing and Transition Name Narrative.

Birth-Given Name:

Category:	Name Aspect:	Identity Trait:	Participant's Thoughts:
Birth Order	Some cultural practices display a person's birth order in relation to their names.	Has your birth order affected the way you identify personally or socially?	
Languages	Does the language you speak identify you as being from a particular social group?	Does the language you speak identify you as being from a particular cultural/ethnic group? How so?	
Accents	Does your name have any accents according to your native language alphabet/spelling?	How is the accent related to your ethnic/cultural group?	
Ethnicity	Is there an ethical aspect determined from your name?	Do you see yourself as part of an identified ethnic group because of your name? Why or why not?	
Race	Does your name provide a clue to your racial background? How?	Do you see yourself as part of an identified racial group because of your name? Why or why not?	
Racial/Cultural Ambiguity of Appearance	Does your name mask your racial/ethnic background?	In what ways does your name not illustrate your racial/ethnic background?	
Geography	Does your birthplace, current, or residence of area influence your racial/ethnical background?	If your name has a geographical influence, how might place relate to your name?	

Birth-Given Name:

Category:	Name Aspect:	Identity Trait:	Participant's Thoughts:
Native/Indigenous Ancestry	Does your name indicate a Native American or indigenous ancestry?	How does your name reflect cultural practices?	
Gender	Does your name give away or hint to a gender identity?	Are you commonly identified as belonging to a particular gender identification? What gender do you identify with? Are they the same? How might family expectations contribute to gendered names?	
Intermarriage	If you are bi-/multi-racial, how might your name reflect your bi-/multi-racial identity?	How has being bi-/multi-racial affect the way that you identify and relate to both cultural/familial traditions or customs?	
Tribute or Honoring Rituals	Does your name point to a specific tribute or honoring ritual?	How is the tribute/ritual tied to your cultural/ethnic group identity?	
Intergenerational Linkages	Were you named after someone in your family?	Who gave you your familial name and why?	
Religion	Does your name have religious influence? Might your name derive from a holy/sacred book/text?	If your name has a religious influence, what does it mean to you and what familial expectations might impact your name?	
Political/Ideological Choices	Does your name reflect you or your familial political beliefs?	How do you or your familial politics relate to your familial historical experiences/background?	

Name Narrative and Cultural Profile Worksheet

Important Note: This worksheet is, "adapted from tools created by UNM Law School Professors Margaret Montoya and Christine Zuni-Cruz, adapted for the Albuquerque Public School Cultural Proficiency Teachers Training and further elaborated by Professor Irene Vasquez for her Chicana/Chicano Studies course" (p. 149, 2014). Additionally, the Name Narrative and Cultural Profile Worksheet has been replicated to fit the Changing and Transitioning Name Narrative Essay.

Instructions: Please complete the Name Narrative and Cultural Profile Worksheet *BEFORE* writing the Changing and Transition Name Narrative.

Changed/Transitioned Current Name:

Category:	Name Aspect:	Identity Trait:	Participant's Thoughts:
Birth Order	Some cultural practices display a person's birth order in relation to their names.	Has your birth order affected the way you identify personally or socially?	
Languages	Does the language you speak identify you as being from a particular social group?	Does the language you speak identify you as being from a particular cultural/ethnic group? How so?	
Accents	Does your name have any accents according to your native language alphabet/spelling?	How is the accent related to your ethnic/cultural group?	
Ethnicity	Is there an ethical aspect determined from your name?	Do you see yourself as part of an identified ethnic group because of your name? Why or why not?	
Race	Does your name provide a clue to your racial background? How?	Do you see yourself as part of an identified racial group because of your name? Why or why not?	
Racial/Cultural Ambiguity of Appearance	Does your name mask your racial/ethnic background?	In what ways does your name not illustrate your racial/ethnic background?	
Geography	Does your birthplace, current, or residence of area influence your racial/ethnical background?	If your name has a geographical influence, how might place relate to your name?	

Changed/Transitioned Current Name:

Category:	Name Aspect:	Identity Trait:	Participant's Thoughts:
Native/Indigenous Ancestry	Does your name indicate a Native American or indigenous ancestry?	How does your name reflect cultural practices?	
Gender	Does your name give away or hint to a gender identity?	Are you commonly identified as belonging to a particular gender identification? What gender do you identify with? Are they the same? How might family expectations contribute to gendered names?	
Marital Status	If you are married, did you change your name?	What motives might you have had to change/transition your name? What might this change/transition symbolize for you?	
Intermarriage	If you are bi-/multi-racial, how might your name reflect your bi-/multi-racial identity?	How has being bi-/multi-racial affect the way that you identify and relate to both cultural/familial traditions or customs?	
Tribute or Honoring Rituals	Does your name point to a specific tribute or honoring ritual?	How is the tribute/ritual tied to your cultural/ethnic group identity?	
Intergenerational Linkages	Were you named after someone in your family?	Who gave you your familial name and why?	
Religion	Does your name have religious influence? Might your name derive from a holy/sacred book/text?	If your name has a religious influence, what does it mean to you and what familial expectations might impact your name?	
Political/Ideological Choices	Does your name reflect you or your familial political beliefs?	How do you or your familial politics relate to your familial historical experiences/background?	

APPENDIX B: Changing and Transitioning Name Narrative Virtual Interview Questions

Important Note: For participants who decide to have two interview sessions, questions 1 – 7 will be part of the first session, and the second session will consist of questions 8 – 13.

1. What was your birth-given name?

2. Who named you?
    - ⇨ Did they (the person(s) who named you) explain why they chose that name for you?

3. Were you named after someone in your family?
    - ⇨ What familial traditions or expectations might have influenced your identity?

4. Does your name give away or hint to a gender identity?
    - ⇨ Are you commonly identified as belonging to a particular gender identification?
    - ⇨ What gender do you personally identify with?
    - ⇨ Do you feel that the commonly identified gender identification and your personal gender identification are the same?
    - ⇨ How might your family expectations contribute to gendered names?

5. Were there any cultural traditions or expectations that stemmed from your name?

6. Does your name stem from a religious holy/scared text/book?
    - ⇨ If so, how does religion impact your identity through your name?

7. How might your family's political beliefs influence your name?

8. How has your name changed or transitioned from your birth-given name to the name you currently go by?

9. What influenced you to change or transition your name?

10. How did you decide to change or transition your name?
    - ⇨ Did someone help or influence you?
    - ⇨ Did you seek advice from someone?
    - ⇨ What three (or more) major things did you consider when you decided to change/transition your name?

11. What pre-existing aspects (gender, cultural, ethnical, racial, familial, biblical, political, etc.) do you think still might influence your changed/transitioned name?

12. How do you think your changed/transitioned name relates to your identity now?

13. How do you feel about your changed/transitioned name?

APPENDIX C: UNM's IRB Project Approval Letter

OFFICE OF THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

DATE:	November 13, 2020
IRB #:	17620
IRBNet ID & TITLE:	[1666902-1] Changing and Transitioning Name Narratives: The DE.E.P. Standpoints of Identities
PI OF RECORD:	Michael Lechuga, PhD
SUBMISSION TYPE:	New Project
BOARD DECISION:	APPROVED
EFFECTIVE DATE:	November 11, 2020
EXPIRATION DATE:	N/A
RISK LEVEL:	MINIMAL RISK
PROJECT STATUS:	ACTIVE - OPEN TO ENROLLMENT

DOCUMENTS:

- Advertisement - Recruitment Email (UPDATED: 11/2/2020)
- Application Form - Project Info (UPDATED: 10/4/2020)
- Consent Form - Consent Form (UPDATED: 11/2/2020)
- CV/Resume - CV Lechuga (UPDATED: 10/4/2020)
- Other - Project Team (UPDATED: 10/4/2020)
- Other - ScientificValidity (UPDATED: 10/4/2020)
- Protocol - Protocol (UPDATED: 10/30/2020)
- Questionnaire/Survey - Interview Questions (UPDATED: 10/4/2020)
- Questionnaire/Survey - Name Narrative Essay (UPDATED: 10/4/2020)
- Training/Certification - CITI Lechuga (UPDATED: 11/2/2020)
- Training/Certification - CITI Alvarez (UPDATED: 10/30/2020)
- Training/Certification - CITI deMaria (UPDATED: 10/30/2020)
- Training/Certification - CITI Ashworth (UPDATED: 10/30/2020)

Thank you for your New Project submission. The UNM IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an acceptable risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks to participants have been minimized. **This project is not covered by UNM's Federalwide Assurance (FWA) and will not receive federal funding.**

The IRB has determined the following:

- Informed consent must be obtained and documentation is required for this project. To obtain and document consent, use only approved consent document(s).

This determination applies only to the activities described in the submission and does not apply should any changes be made to this research. If changes are being considered, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to submit an amendment to this project and receive IRB approval prior to implementing the changes. A change in the research may disqualify this research from the current review

APPENDIX D: Anaís Lechuga Interview Transcripts

Pauline 0:14
And then I just want to remind you that you are being recorded. Um, are you okay with being recorded?

Anais 0:19
Yes, that's fine.

Pauline 0:22
Um, and then at any point again, during, before, after, even like a week later, um, a month later, if you don't want to be a part of the study, please feel free to text me, email me and say, Hey, Pauline, like, I don't want to do this anymore. I'll completely understand. Um, so yeah, and then-

Anais 0:41
Thank you. I won't do that to you, don't worry. I don't know if what I have to say will be useful to you. But, yeah.

Pauline 0:50
I think all of it is useful for me. I... I, even when people are like, "Oh, I don't know if that's useful," and I'm like, No, no, no, no, this is good. Talk more. (laughter). But yeah. All right. So, let's get started. Um, what was your birth given name?

Anais 1:08
So, my birth given name was Nancy Gail Tebay. So, uh, yeah, I don't know if you want me to go further. I think the other questions go more into it, right?

Pauline 1:22
Um, and then just for clarification-

Anais 1:24
And I can type it. Yeah, I can type it in the chat for you.

Pauline 1:27
Oh, okay. That works. Um, and so, where did your name, who named you, um, was there a specific person that chose this name for?

Anais 1:36
Yeah. Yeah. So, um, my mom and dad, they were still together at that point. So, my, my mom is from Juarez in Mexico, and my dad is from like, backwoods Appalachia in Pennsylvania. And he was in the army, so he went down and met my mom that way. Um, and so he chose the middle name, Gail, because that's his mom's name.

Pauline 2:07
Okay.

Anais 2:07
Um, and then I think, from what I have gathered from both of them, it sounds like, I haven't really talked to my dad too much about it, but when my mom says it, it kind of sounds like they wanted to pick a name that would work in both Spanish and English. But yeah, my mom and dad are the ones that chose um, my first name, my birth name.

Pauline 2:33
Okay. Were you named after anyone in your family? I heard you say Gail was from your paternal grandmother?

Anais 2:42
Yes. Yeah. So, um, Nancy, was not. I don't believe there's anybody I've been named after, um, with that, but, Gail, yes, she was, she's an ancestor now. She's actually an ancestor that has caused a lot of harm in the family, so, yeah, I was named after her with my middle

name. And then um... when... cause in the second question, I don't know if you asked that already about, explain why they chose that name for me. Was that part of, should I go into that yet?

Pauline 3:18
Sure, of course.

Anais 3:20
So, um, when my mom talks about it and tells the story, she does kind of always say like, well, we wanted to make sure we got a name that works in English and Spanish, but I really think, just from observing my parents and growing up over time with them, um, I think it had a lot to do with social mobility. And so my mom was, when I was first born, that first year, we still lived in Juarez. And I think my mom coming over to the US, she really had hopes that her children would like, grow up differently from how she grew up. And she wanted us to be able to move more easily in American society. So, I think that she doesn't talk about whiteness, like consciously, she, she doesn't, she's not aware that she thinks that whiteness is better. Um, but I think that she definitely, in the way that she operates, she believes that it's like moving up, becoming like, becoming more white, becoming more um, like higher class and stuff, um, is just like was giving us a better opportunity in life and that we were gonna do better than she had.

Pauline 4:39
Okay, and then just to provide a little bit of context, did you, you said that your mom was one from Juarez, right?

Anais 4:47
That's right. Yeah.

Pauline 4:48
Um, so then when she had you she was in the United States or was she in Juarez?

Anais 4:54
So, she, I was born in El Paso, cause... so Juarez and El Paso span the border So, um, like she crossed the border to give birth to me and then, but they were still living in in El Paso. I mean in Juarez, excuse me, they were still living in Juarez for my first year of life. And it wasn't until after that, that they, they moved to El Paso, and I grew up there.

Pauline 5:17
Oh, okay, interesting. So, very much like, how you were talking about how she really wanted that whiteness um, to be presented in your life? Is your, do you feel like your name gives away any like hints to your gender, or um, commonly identified with a particular gender identity?

Anais 5:41
Yeah, absolutely. I think that, um, well, I'm a cis woman. So, it's definitely a cis woman name. I, I don't think I've ever been misgendered or, you know, when people write to me, and they don't know who I am, but you know, an email or something, it's always Miss, Mrs.... um.

Pauline 6:02
And then were there any cultural traditions or expectations that stemmed from your name?

Anais 6:08
Um, cultural traditions or expectations, I think less with the traditions. Maybe they were going for a tradition when they tried to need me after my white grandmother, and not my, my abuelita. Um, so maybe they were trying to like anchor me a little bit more to that, that history, I guess, or that um, intergenerational lineage. But as far as um, expectations, I think

that the expectation was really, as I mentioned, you know, my mom, I grew up with her telling me stories of her growing up, and how she really looked down on um, on their way of life growing up, my grandmother and my abuelo. My maternal grandmother and abuelo. They were very, very poor, and they didn't go to school for very long. So, my grandfather was homeless when they met. My abuelita was, she grew up in Oaxaca, and Veracruz, so um, my mom would always tell me stories when I was growing up about like, how, in Juarez, my abuelita would spit on the floor inside. And when my mom would tell me, she would tell me like, with disgust, you know, like, that's how I grew up. And she was like, trying to explain to me what she was trying to get away from. And so I think with the name that they gave me, I mean, I don't know, I haven't spent too much time talking to my dad, and, and analyzing it or anything, but with my mom, I really think that she wanted me to become more white, more, like, middle class, you know?

Pauline 7:53

Yeah.

Anais 7:54

And she, yeah, she even put me in etiquette classes. Like, she really wanted me to, yeah, she really wanted me to like, transcend the class boundaries, I guess. Yeah.

Pauline 8:11

That's a lot of expectations.

Anais 8:13

Yeah, I think well, and the reason I explain all that is because I think that that's why they gave me the name of the did, so that I could do that.

Pauline 8:25

Does your name stem from any religious or holy sacred texts or book?

Anais 8:31

I don't believe so. Um, no.

Pauline 8:36

And then, um, were there any, like political influences behind your name?

Anais 8:43

I don't think I'm aware of any. But I think that, um, it's more, like I said, the class stuff. Because I didn't grew up... my parents were not very um, religious as I was, when I was small. They were kind of ambivalent about religion. And so, um, it was mostly the class stuff that seemed important to them, to my mom, especially, and I grew up mostly with my mom and my abuelita, so.

Pauline 9:08

Okay. And then how has your um, name changed or transitioned from your birth name?

Anais 9:18

So, first, um, first, I transitioned by letting go of Tebay and then I switch when, when my partner and I got married. Um, I took his last name. And for me at the time, it felt empowering because being associated with my dad my entire life has been like, a horrible flavor in my mouth. My dad was very abusive, so, um, on it, like in all the ways and so, I think that like ,getting away from his name, and his family's name, because his whole family's like a big, abusive, toxic mess. I was like, I want nothing to do with that. And I didn't grow up with them, they're all in Pennsylvania. So, I feel like absolutely no connection to them whatsoever. And I also, even though um, in some ways, you know, now I don't feel the same way about marriage or about names as I used to.

But that was about a decade ago. And I was just off this like, big Jesus trip that I had been on for a while. And I had gotten out of it, and so I think I was still not aware of how some of those like tentacles were still, um, in my mind, and I had not like undone a lot of that stuff. So I think that I was thinking like, "Oh, yeah, I'm thinking progressively or whatever." Because I had gotten out of church, I had gotten out of stuff. But at the same time, like, I still was thinking like, "Oh, I'm going to get married, I'm going to take my husband's last name." And that stuff still made a lot of sense to me like, to do. And I was happy to take the last name I have as a married last name, because to me, it represented, changing my family name to um, a family that was much more healthy, and had healthy relationships, laughed together, got together and um, had a good time, respected each other, loved each other. So, to me, it was just like a no brainer. I was like, "Yeah, I don't want, I don't want this name that I've been carrying like a burden for so many years," you know?
So, that was my first um, when I changed my, my last name. Then, um, and then when we were living in Denver, I was reading a lot of Alice Walker. Um, I was reading like, In Search of Our Mother's Gardens, um, The Temple of My Familiar, and I read this book of hers, it's called Now is the Time to Open Your Heart. I don't know, I can't really, I can't see myself, but I don't know if you've read this book or seen it.

Pauline 12:15

Yeah, I have.

Anais 12:15

But in the beginning, I think, I, I haven't read it recently. I just took it up because I was like, I think I remember in one of the, one of those books that I read of Alice Walker's, I was like, really into Alice Walker at the time, I was like, reading all her stuff. I, in that book, one of the characters, I think the main character, changes her name. And, um, and I remember, I think that my mom had already planted that seed because my mom changed her name. And she has always hated her name. So, she has like a lot of self-deprecation and self-hatred and stuff, but part of it was her name. So she was Juana Isabel and Juana Isabel Ruiz, and she always hated Juana. And whenever people called her Juana or Juanita like, it just grated on her. So, I grew up with her experiencing that and telling me about it, and then she legally changed her name to get rid of Juana and her name is just be Isabel. Well, I think that that like, planted a seed in me of "Oh, like there's a possibility we could change our name."

Pauline 13:21

Yeah.

Anais 13:21

And then when I, at the time where I was going through all these transformations inside, um, I read that book by Alice Walker and something like kind of clicked with me it's almost like it watered the seed and I was like, you know, this name, um, that I was having even more discomfort with, with Nancy and of course, I've always had discomfort with Gail. I never wanted to be associated with my paternal grandmother, but, um, like, I grew up with my mom and her Mexican family. And so, whenever anybody referred to me, it was like, Nancy, it wasn't um... when we moved to Denver, that's when people started getting like Nancy or hi Nancy or some people would even call me Nan. I was just like, oh my god, are you serious? And I have always joked with people that like, when even in El Paso growing up, I would always joke with people when they would ask me their name and they had to write it down or something. I would be like Nancy Gail, you know, like Nancy Gail, like, to me it sounded like such um, like a name from the south or something. I just felt so

disconnected from it even culturally, like, uh, like it was somebody else's name. And when we went to Denver, I even more because the only people I met that were Nancys are like, older ladies, cause I worked in a nursing home. And in El Paso there's a lot, because it's common for, for Mexican women to be named Nancy, or, you know. So, um, so, I felt in Denver, it was kind of like um, a point at which I, I realized, you know what I don't, I want to play around with this and figure out how to maybe call myself something different and do what my mom did and maybe even legally change my name. So, um, I think like, I was, I'm kind of a nerd. So I was like, kind of playing around with the sounds of it. And instead of N-A-N, I was like, Oh, I could switch it, and it would be A-N-A. (laughter) And then I was like, and instead of C, I could switch that, and it would be easy. I don't know, like, I'm just a dork like that. So, I was like, playing around with it, and I was like, Anais, yeah, I could do that. That's a cool name. And I just felt way better about it than I did about um, Nancy Gail. So, then around that time, I was making some new friends, um, and I remember I started introducing myself as Anais. And I, I think in the beginning, I felt like, um, a little bit of imposter syndrome. Like, I don't know, I don't know if I can do this. I don't know if I, if like people are gonna be like, is that really your name or, you know, like, and then when I started, I started having really good friendships with women of color, and they were calling me Anais, it just felt like, I felt like, yeah, that's who I am. Like, I'm not Nancy Gail, that doesn't, that doesn't um, resonate with me. It doesn't feel like who I am now, after going through all these changes, um, wanting to move into a new way of moving in the world and being so. Sorry.

Pauline 16:40
No!

Anais 16:41
That was a long answer, but...

Pauline 16:44
I love it so much. Um, I'm just kind of a little curious. Do you still hold on to Gail? Um, or is it more so like that-

Anais 16:56
Yeah, so I forgot to mention. So, when, after we had our daughter, um, we moved down to the south of New Mexico that's on the border with El Paso. And I did, I went to court and I legally changed my name. But I'm real extra, so on the morning, that we're gonna go to the court appointment. I don't know. Like, I hadn't written it on the paperwork yet. And there's this, (laughter) don't shake your head, um, there's this name that I love, I love, love, love. And it was one of my friends, her daughter's name. And she, she told me about how she came about it. And um, looking up the meaning and everything, it was like so meaningful to me that if we ever had another daughter, I was like, that's the name, I want to name that child. But I was also like, having a lot of postpartum depression and stuff, so I was thinking like, yeah, we're probably never gonna have another kid. And, um, and so that morning of the appointment, the court appointment. I don't know why I did this, because it doesn't make sense to me now, but I put as a first name Anais, and as a second name, I put Amairani, that's the name.

Pauline 18:14
Oh.

Anais 18:15
Amairani. So, I legally, in the state of New Mexico, changed my name- so loud, this is being recorded! So I legally changed my name to Anais Amairani Lechuga. But the thing

is, I changed it in court, but I would have to do like a bunch of different things to like, change it on my RN license, to change my passport, to change my, you know, it's like a whole bunch of stuff with like my insurance. And honestly, because we've moved so much, we went to Minnesota, now we've come back to New Mexico, every time it's like, "Okay, so am I gonna do it here? Or am I gonna wait and see if we move again?" Like, I just have not done it on my all my stuff. And so, at work, you know, at work, everybody calls me Nancy. And honestly, now that we're back here, I've also been growing as a person, so now that we're back here, I don't really correct people or anything. What I pretty much do is, when I'm friends with somebody, or I'm introducing myself to somebody outside of work, then because that's the name I most connect with and it's meaningful to me, then I'll share that with people but um, you know, in work or also sometimes the neighbors, I'm like you know, if they get my mail by accident or something, they're gonna (laughter) be like, who is this or something. So, um, so yeah, I, I kind of go by both depending on the circumstance, and I'm comfortable with either at this point.

Pauline 19:55

Okay, understood. Great. I like how you utilize your name in ways to build connections with people. Um, and then, um, how do you think your changed or transitioned name kind of relates to your identity now?

Anais 20:12

Well, I think a part of when, let me backtrack a little bit. I think something that I was really trying to do in renaming myself was to mark myself as a woman of color, because I don't always get read that way. And now, I think I'm not as sensitive about it, and I'm not as um, I think back then I felt like I really had something to prove. And it was touchy, and I had, like, if I would get read as a white person, cause I didn't grow up that way, I didn't feel that way inside, so um, it was something kind of painful. But I feel like now, either way, um, my focus is a lot less on how I'm read, it's a lot less than like how, um, I don't know, I feel like now, I have put the onus back on myself to define myself by my actions, not, not to try to get people to think of me in any sort of way, or curate what they get from me using my name. But like, instead just be more intentional about how I treat people, and then, you know, if I get read as a woman of color or not, like, I'm not holding on to that identity so tightly. And so, I think that's part of why I'm not so rigid about wanting to be called one thing or another. Um, I think that my identity now is in flux. So, I think that um, I'm also like, I have, in a way split identity, where I mentioned to you like at work, they call me Nancy, but um, I kind of have like, a work personality and a everything else personality, because at work, I can only be part of myself, I can't be my full self.

Pauline 22:07

Yeah, right.

Anais 22:08

And so I think that with my identity, I've kind of like compartmentalized it a little bit. And for now, I don't think that's sustainable for a long time. I don't want to do that for a while, but for now, I'm like, well, it serves my purpose, so, lets me do what I need to do, so...

Pauline 22:25

Yeah, completely understandable. Um, I heard you talk a little bit about how you legally changed your name. Can you talk a little bit about that process and what it looked like?

Anais 22:36

Yeah, sure. So um, and I didn't bring that paperwork with me, I don't know, if you would want to see it. If I could, like, scan it. I don't know if that's important to you or not. But,

um, so I had to make an appointment with the, the um, county court. And um, and then on the day that I made the appointment, I took my family with me. Huh? Oh, I had to publish the name change, like a notice of name change in two newspapers. So, I had to, like take out ads in the newspaper. And I didn't even like, cause, yeah, I didn't even like, try to buy the newspaper or anything. Um, but yeah, I did that. And then, then I had to drive up to Las Cruces on the day of, and then I had to explain to the judge why I wanted my name changed. And I, it was actually emotional for me, because I remember I explained, like, I connected a lot to the healing of my trauma. I had been doing a lot at that point, too. I mentioned my dad was real abusive, so I had, I had been trying to um, just like work on myself to not be so traumatized, and to not like, always be triggered by things and to just like own my own responses and to calm my nervous system.
So, I really did feel like I was going through those transformations as well. So, in front of the judge, in front of all these other people, all these strangers, I explained about that, and I explained about the name meaning because Anais means passion, and I'm a very passionate person. And so, I really do try to live purposefully. And Amairani actually means, there's different meanings available for it, but one of them is a flower that does not wither. And so, um, yeah, I really love that meaning and resonates with me. And so in in the courtroom, I, I explained all of that stuff. That Michael said there was actually a guy in the very back, like some Trump guy that was like, laughing at me but I didn't hear it. I wasn't aware. And, you know, it was just real meaningful to me to go through that. Because it felt like um, validation.

Pauline 25:05
Mm-hmm.

Anais 25:07
For the, yeah, some old white guy to be like, put a stamp on it. (laughter)

Pauline 25:14
Yeah. And then so the last question is how do you feel about your changed and transitioned name now?

Anais 25:20
Um, I have some ambivalence, because, I think as I told you that um, my mom had really had some hopes about, like class transition and, and me assimilating and moving smoothly in American culture, in white culture. And so I think... I don't, I don't have like a super good memory to where I can go back to the time when I was changing my name, and first introducing myself to people with a different name. But I know that when I introduce myself to people as Anais, if they're not people of color, the reaction that I get is very much like, like, I'm exotic or something, which, of course, I don't get, if I tell people my name is Nancy. Um, they're like, "oh," this, this happened to me in Minnesota, where a woman was like, "Oh, where are you from," you know, she, and she, like, leaned in, and she was excited. And I was like, um, because I didn't want to feed her, her thing that she was doing, so I was like, I'm from Texas. And I could see her like, deflate and get like, oh, but, um... I think that when I chose the name Anais, as I explained, you know, I did that little, like, play on the sounds and everything. But, um, honestly, the name Anais, like, that's just another European name, you know, there's like, there are lots of Mexican people named Anais, but it's like a Spanish or French, you know, it does have kind of, like, a, an air of, I don't know, exoticism or something. And I feel like now that I've, I'm trying to do work to, like, examine my privilege and, and try to think of things differently. And, I mean, my mom changed her name from Juana, because she felt like that was like a low class, like,

um, you know, like, she just hated it. And, and she always talked about, about her upbringing and herself and that name, like, with such disgust, you know? Um, and so I feel like my mom changed her name from like this name that she thought was like a really low class named like, one that was like, a little bit more um, middle class, and then I feel like I changed my name to like, one that's like, even probably, like a high class name or something, you know, what I mean? Like, I think part of me feels some ambivalence about, like, why did I feel I had the right to do that? Why did I feel comfortable? And, and it is a privilege to be able to, you know, there's people trying to get their documents in and trying to get status. And I'm over here, like, you know, in the court trying to just change the letters on my paperwork, or whatever. And, and so I feel, honestly, um, some ambivalence about it. Because I know, it has a lot of privilege carried with it. And I also think that, as I mentioned to you a little while ago, that the way that I treat people matters more. So, I try to be intentional about how I go into spaces, not thinking like, Oh, I deserve to be here, because I'm a woman of color and stuff. Or because, and, and to me, like, all of that relates to my name, like, whatever, whichever name I'm using. I feel like you know, if people need me to leave the room to feel safer, or whatever, like, I'm going to do that, I'm not going to be like, no, my name is Anais, because, you know, or, like, trying to use that. Whereas before, I think that it was really important for me to um, to assert myself as a woman of color. Whereas now I'm like, No, I don't need to take up space. I don't need to center myself. I don't need to. And I think in the past, not like I was consciously trying to center myself, but because I was doing like that healing work, and it was like, I really wanted to be in conversation and in friendship with women of color, in community, like I really wanted, I saw, like my name partly as a strategy, like, as part of it. And um, I don't think I was like, aware or consciously thinking of it, and it's not the whole reason I was doing it. But I think now I'm like, hmm, I need to let go of that a little bit because there's some places where I, I should be, and then there's some places when we need to be taking up space and taking up yeah, I don't know. So, does that, that's, does that make sense with that ambivalence?

Pauline 30:15

Yeah, of course, of course. That's a beautiful story of your name and your changed name and how you utilize it and all that fun stuff. Um, if you wouldn't mind, would you also spell the Anais name-

Anais 30:31

Oh, yeah, I can put it in the chat too. Give me one sec.

Pauline 30:36

Just cause I don't know how to sell it.

Anais 30:37

For sure. I'll be right up with that okay?

Pauline 30:43

And then I'm going to go ahead and stop sharing my screen and stop the recording.

APPENDIX E: Arrow Xia Interview Transcripts

Pauline 0:06
All righty, so I just want to remind you that of course, at any point, if you don't want your name narrative to be used throughout the study, you can always um, text me or email me and tell me that you don't want to be involved anymore. And then I just want to remind you that I'm also recording. Uh, so as long as you're okay with that, we can proceed. Is that okay?

Arrow 0:25
Yeah, that's okay.

Pauline 0:29
Um, so what is your birth given name?

Arrow 0:33
So I, um, I do have two births given name. (dog barking in background) There was one that my grandparents gave me and there's one my parents... actually, the geomancer gave me.

Pauline 0:51
You said the who?

Arrow 0:53
The geomancer, who is more like some kind of um, I probably need to translate it like how does that, uh, the geomancer, it's not like something witchy, but um, it just like they're knowing, they're your birthday, and they're calculating, like, uh, what sets you the most about a name?

Pauline 1:25
Oh, okay. And then you said, there's one that your grandparents gave you, and then one that your parents gave you, right?

Arrow 1:35
Yeah, my parents would like to re, I would like to rename myself because I don't like um, the name the grandparents gave me. It also relates to the bad relationship I had with them. But anyway, um, that's just an old name. And the new name was decided by the, provided by the geomancer, and I selected from one in four.

Pauline 2:01
Oh, okay. And so, um, what, do you mind explaining, or like explaining that whole process of like, you said, there were one to four options?

Arrow 2:12
Yes, there were four options. And pretty much the last name doesn't change at all. And there's, um, there's two letters. Um, or I should say (coughs), e`xcuse me, there's two words after the last name. So, it's like three characters in Chinese. So, I would phrase the middle one as the middle name, but we usually, we usually don't have a middle name. Does that confuse you?

Pauline 2:42
No. It, it's essentially like, this idea of the first name, right? And then your last has a few characters after that, so you don't have a middle name?

Arrow 2:55
Yes, though first name has two characters. So, it does have like, um some kind of in the middle.

Pauline 3:04
Okay, that's cool. And so, um, is this like a common like, tradition in Chinese, right?

Arrow 3:13
Yeah, it's a common tradition but um, not a lot of people would do that. One of the reason is that um, when the government tried to um propaganda, the non religious stuff in the decades ago, so people are having more um trust on these. And another reason is that it does cost a few money to do it. So, it's a little bit expensive, but affordable. It depends on if you want it or not. And it's also hard to find a trusted trustworthy geomancer as well.
Pauline 4:03
Oh, okay. So, what do you mean like a trustworthy one? That's just like based off of word of mouth type of tradition?
Arrow 4:11
Yeah. If there's a nice geomancer, usually they would um, work out housing more like to tell you what's the benefit of the house you are buying, you're going to buy, what's the best place you need to put something there or here or the size of the door you need to select, which we did a lot with our house renovation this time. It's all design. And what is it is about, these geomancers usually don't take small businesses.
Pauline 4:50
Oh, okay.
Arrow 4:50
And they don't, um, they don't deal with a lot of, I would say, most of the people in life because they think um, there's nothing special or um surprise to look in their life to look into their lives. So, what that means is, geomancer can tell your life line-
Pauline 5:23
Oh, okay.
Arrow 5:23
Or there's a guideline in your life. So, it does tell you like when your parents is having some kind of issue or um, when you're going to get married, when you're gonna meet someone. That kind of stuff.
Pauline 5:39
Oh, okay. Okay. So it's kind of like, is it kind of like, um, the name that they give you, it's like the expectations that you'll live out as you continue to grow?
Arrow 5:52
Yes. Um, it's not as I continue to grow, but more fits my character, and they are trying to correct some kind of um, character that they think it's not good enough on me.
Pauline 6:09
Oh, okay. Okay. That makes sense.
Arrow 6:12
Yeah, my, the name that, it's kind of hard to explain, like, how do I phrase them in a proper way. Um, my parent, my grandpa, the name that my grandparents gave me does have a rock in it, like the rock character in it. So, um, the geomancer would say, this is not good for a girl because that means like, firm and hard. And it's not too fit for the girl, because it's gonna make this girl very hard and tricky.
And it's also not good for my character, which I think it's true, like back to then my character was kinda like, too hard to talk to, um, and it's also relates to my family, like, they didn't taught me how to express myself properly. So, the way that I'm expressing myself is kind of like just um, getting mad, getting upset and yelling, those kind of stuff. After the name changing, I do have a little change. Like, I'm going more peaceful, more calm, and also changing the way that I'm talking to people.

Pauline 7:39
Mm-hmm. Does your name give away like or hint at your gender identity at all?
Arrow 7:46
Um, it does. The name that my grandparents, that my grandparents gave me does have a word, word means like, smells good. Or um, it means like, nice character, or um personality. And that usually used on girls. So, that's one. And for the current name, I'm using, the middle one would be like peace and calm. So, that's usually for boys and girls, but girls use it more.
Pauline 8:25
Mm-hmm. Oh, interesting. And so is that, does that, does that gender identity come out in not just your name, but in other people's names as well?
Arrow 8:33
Yes.
Pauline 8:36
So, it's kind of like, a, like, a, I don't want to see a cultural thing, but it sounds like it can be a cultural thing?
Arrow 8:45
I think it's a cultural thing. Because usually, there are certain characters that girls use more and when we are using it, and guys, they're just thinking, Oh, you're too girly.
Pauline 8:58
Oh.
Arrow 8:59
So, that definitely has identity, or gender identity with it.
Pauline 9:07
Yeah. And then I heard you say, because both your parents and your grandparents gave you um, names, I guess, legally, which one is like on your identification? Like your birth certificate, or are they both on there?
Arrow 9:25
Um, they were both on there. But um, there was a current name and on the other page, it says the previous used name.
Pauline 9:35
Oh, okay.
Arrow 9:36
So, they're first there, um, but in the IDs that I used in the United States, I don't have the previous name there.
Pauline 9:48
Oh, okay. And then, um, I don't know if it's possible, but would you be able to use the chat feature to show me the characteristics from um, the names that your parents and your grandparents gave you?
Arrow 10:00
Sure. Um, let's see. And also, the interesting thing is, I do have both of my former and current first name on my bank account.
Pauline 10:16
Oh, that's cool. So, does a lot of your documentation, does it recognize both of the names?
Arrow 10:25
No, because um, the bank account issue is they cannot change my name without the government documentation, and the documentation we issued here is in Chinese,

definitely, they don't get it. So, there's a banker trying to help, putting my current first name as the first name and the former first name as the middle name. So I do have a middle name now.

Pauline 10:53

Oh, okay. Okay. And so when you added that middle name, was that more, that was more of like the American, was that more of like, influence from the, your immigration to the United States? Or was that just something that you wanted to add?

Arrow 11:10

Um, I have to add there, because otherwise, there's no way I could change my name. I need to open a new account.

Pauline 11:17

Oh, okay. Okay. Gotcha. And so, um, was there any, like, familiar, like political beliefs that was influenced in your birth name?

Arrow 11:31

Um, I don't see it. Because I mean, there are several groups or parties of politics in China, but there's only one in charge. So, I don't see it. And also, my parents don't, like, we're not doing elections, like back in the States, like we're voting. Like each US citizens vote, but here is more like an inside of the party thing.

Pauline 12:04

Oh, okay, okay. Gotcha. And then, so, how has your name changed or transitioned from your birth given name to what you currently go by?

Arrow 12:18

Do you mean like why I change that?

Pauline 12:22

Yeah, so I know you as Arrow, for instance, right? Um-

Arrow 12:25

Uh-huh.

Pauline 12:26

How has that, was, is that like, the characteristic, is that literally like how it's, how it's translated as arrow, and that's how you came up with the... or?

Arrow 12:41

No, they're not related at all. Um-

Pauline 12:44

Oh, okay.

Arrow 12:44

The reason I named it is because like, when I first came to the States, I was like, 15, or 16. and I kind of recognized that my name is killing everybody's tone. So, I think I needed, I needed English name, for some reason. And I just don't want to be like, those um, common names that Asian girls use, like by then, like, people prefer, like Linda, Cindy, um, Karen, names like that. I mean, it's a good name. It's just not um, something that I want. I want something unique and to really stand out when people think about it.

So, I was thinking about it, and I think I just took somebody else's name. Like I was walking down the street, I was seeing um, a jewelry designer store. And there was a designer tag on there. And so, I just see that name. I was like, Aaron starts with an A, does that mean I'm gonna get an A grade? I was like, Matt Cole. I'll go with that. And so, like everybody asked me, do you mean the real, real arrows like, and they're trying to tell me like, what the arrow means, like, I don't know, but I think that's a name. So, when I google

it, I was like, oh okay, I get what's the error name, but that happened too late after I'm telling everybody my name is Arrow, so, I was like, fine, I'll just go with it. And I do see that name influenced me a little bit about in going straight, and maybe firm.
Because (dogs barking). Oh my God, give me a second.
Pauline 14:38
No problem.
Arrow 14:58
No, you are not going to see anything.
Pauline 15:05
(laughter)
Arrow 15:05
... blinds on so they don't see anything.
Pauline 15:08
(laughter).
Arrow 15:09
They kind of bark like crazy because I have four dogs. So there's no bark at all one time, too loud.
Pauline 15:21
(laughter)
Arrow 15:21
So, where were we?
Pauline 15:24
Um, you were talking about, you googled arrow, and then the definition that you saw really related to your direction and your firmness.
Arrow 15:36
Right, because I'm the one that's grown up in the tradition, Chinese culture. And what I've been taught, or what I see from the family is we endures, we try to sacrifice part of our um, emotion or rights to please someone else. And I really don't like that. But there's no one taught me how to not do it, and how to stand out for yourself. So, by then, I'm trying to say, hmm, I do expect something from this name.
And I do see it changing now. Like, I used to be very um, shy, or I should say, scared to speak out for myself, because I don't know if it's the right or wrong thing. Um, Chinese prefer you to say things in a proper way, or just to meet someone's expectation. Like, when Chinese are talking in the high context, I usually don't get their signals. So, I would just ask, answer what they were asking.
And that doesn't really help the conversation to continue or to make my parents feel like, happy because they don't think I understand, the thing I don't understand what other peoples are talking about, which I really don't. So I think, um, it's more about how I want to put myself in a way.
Pauline 17:33
Mm-hmm. And so, um, I heard you say that, um, you came to the US about 15, 16. And it was after a lot of mispronunciation that you decided to change your name to an English name, um, or an Anglo sounding name. What was, how ,what, what was that period of time? Was it like, oh, you got to the US and you're like, okay, I'm gonna switch it? Or was it more of, of like, it took you a couple years after being in the US where you were like, okay, now I'm going to switch it? Oh, Arrow, you're muted. I don't know if you're talking.
Arrow 18:26

Oops. Yeah, I'm talking.
Pauline 18:29
Sorry.
Arrow 18:30
I think it only takes about a few days or weeks for me to change the name. Because we usually don't see um, giving ourselves English name as a very um, serious thing. When we were in, um, like elementary school, we having, we're having English class and the teacher would say, okay, everybody, do you have an English name? So, I used to have a name about Sandy. And that people will say, oh, Sandy is a boy. So, I definitely don't want a name shared with boys. So, I never mentioned that to anyone after the elementary school.
Pauline 19:17
Oh, okay. So, in elementary school, you did have an English name, specifically only for your English class, right?
Arrow 19:26
Yes.
Pauline 19:27
Okay. And so, um, do you ever use like, so for instance, right now you use Arrow. Do you ever use Arrow back home in China?
Arrow 19:38
Um, I don't. The first reason is people don't get used to it. They also don't pronounce English very well. Um, generations like my grandparents or my parents' generation, they are um , lack of English education. So, it's not a very convenient way for them to call me, but my mom sometimes would make fun of it. `
Pauline 20:07
Aww.
Arrow 20:07
Um, other than that, I mean, my classmates or my friends back in high school in the States would call me Arrow.
Pauline 20:19
Oh, okay. Okay. And so, um, how do you think your change or change your, I guess your English name relates to your, um I guess your American-ish identity, or your immigrant identity?
Arrow 20:36
I am not an immigrant. So, I'm still holding the visa um, to come back and forth.
Pauline 20:42
Oh, okay.
Arrow 20:45
I think it's more like a cultural, I wasn't whenever people call me Arrow, I'm switching into a different character in their mind, Chinese character. I do have certain different behaviors and ways of talking and ideology change when I, once people call me Arrow, like back to the States, I will go more straightforward, or low context and um, more, more willing, but um, careful about what I'm saying. Because I'm not just um, representing myself, but also representing my race or country that um, back in there. So, I do want to pay careful attention, and I also um, want to have a nice impression there.
Pauline 21:52
Gotcha. Gotcha. Makes sense. And so, how do you feel about your English name?
Arrow 22:02

I mean, it's, it's cool. It takes a while for me to get accept to it. And I also thought about um, change it when I get into high school. No, not high school, I mean, college. And then I'll realize, well, it's been your name for three years, people know you as Arrow. And it's part of you and your identity, you shouldn't just take it away because it's not the ideal name that you want it. I mean, not everything is ideally, happening in your life. So, I would like to keep carry this name, like, for the future.

Pauline 22:48

Good. That's good. And so do you, do you still have that feeling? Like even now even though, what you have probably been in college now for what, a couple of years now? Do you still get that feeling of maybe I want to change my English name to something else?

Arrow 23:07

That happens when I was in a Master once. So, I was thinking maybe I should change it for my PhD, because that will be more like a name thing, not, because usually you don't see people name their selves Arrow, um, or their parents naming their kids Arrow. So, I would say I will, the reason I want to change is not because I don't like the name, but I'm tired of explaining to people when I'm going to Starbucks or shopping like that, um, to spell it out. So, I do have a idea about Chinese, to a more, to word like that's more related to a name, but then give out. So, I'm fine now. But I do use fake names when I go to Starbucks.

Pauline 24:02

(laughter) I think a lot of us do. I do the same thing. (laughter)

Arrow 24:09

Because I'm lazy for the pronunciation just like, like just give me my drink. I seriously don't want to explain it every time. Because usually, um, there wasn't just one people making your drink. So, I'll say hmm, let's use a name.

Pauline 24:26

That's fair. That's fair. And then, um, I'm looking in the chat right now, and I saw the, that you put the characters of your previous and your current name.

Arrow 24:37

Uh-huh.

Pauline 24:38

Can you say, can you, is there a way to pronounce these characters or what the symbols, what the characters mean?

Arrow 24:48

Yes, if you want to look at the um, symbols in like English characters, I could spell it out.

Pauline 25:02

Okay, yeah.

Arrow 25:05

That's the first, the previous one.

Pauline 25:08

Okay.

Arrow 25:09

And I started was my last name, so it, it stays at the very front, that's in Chinese.

Pauline 25:16

Oh, okay. So, the first character is your last or your family-

Arrow 25:22

Yes. Mm-hmm.

Pauline 25:24

Okay. And then it goes your, your, the second character name, and then the second, the last character is also your first name, right?
Arrow 25:35
Yes.
Pauline 25:37
Okay. Awesome. And so what was the, is it (Chinese?)
Arrow 25:45
Uh huh.
Pauline 25:46
(Chinese) is that, that was the, was that the one that your grandparents gave you or your parents gave you?
Arrow 25:53
That's from my grandparents.
Pauline 25:55
Oh, okay. Okay. And the (Chinese), how do you say this one?
Arrow 26:00
(Chinese)
Pauline 26:02
Okay. Is that the one that your parent, your, your parents currently gave you?
Arrow 26:07
Uh-huh, yeah, that's what I currently have.
Pauline 26:10
Gotcha. So, okay. And so, which one, which, I guess which part of the name symbolizes like the gender identity that you were explaining to me earlier?
Arrow 26:24
Okay. Um, for the previous one, it's the last one.
Pauline 26:28
Okay, the thing?
Arrow 26:31
Uh huh. And for the current one, I think both of my first name would be phrase for girls. I mean, me is more like a um, in the middle. Ah? Ah? Ah? Okay. My mom just got back and she's like hurry up.
Pauline 26:55
No problem.
Arrow 26:57
Um, so I think the both of them are just um, going fine. But I would say (Chinese) is more related to girls. (Chinese) is more like in the middle, like girls and boys could also use it.
Pauline 27:15
Oh, okay, so it's more of a gender neutral.
Arrow 27:19
Yeah, it's more like a less controversial.
Pauline 27:21
Oh, okay. Awesome. All righty. That's cool. And so, in general, how do you feel about the, I guess, your Chinese name? Especially because it looks like your Chinese name also changed, not just your English name.
Arrow 27:43

Right. Um, there's not a lot of people calling me in the current name because they know me when I was using the previous name. So, they're pretty much calling me the previous name. The current name is not very useful, or well known. I mean, people know it, but it's not people get used to call it, so I'm still going by the previous name, but just documentarily, I have a new name.

Pauline 28:24

Oh, okay. And do you like that process? Or like, do you like being, um going by the same name, your previous name versus your documented name, I should say?

Arrow 28:37

Um, I would say I'm fine. Because, I mean, I don't like the name, but I like the people, or I like people who are calling the names like, mostly my friends and family members. So, I'm fine with it.. Name is just a representation. I mean, to me, as long as I don't mind who names me?

Pauline 28:59

Yeah. Understandable. Understandable. All righty.

Arrow 29:03

So, that's really yeah, the convenience for my friend and family is more important than they call me because I mean, even though they call me like, doggy, I would get it, like, they're calling me.

Pauline 29:17

Yeah. Okay. That makes sense. Yeah. All righty. I'm gonna stop sharing and I'm going to finish the recording.

Pauline 0:07
All righty, so we're here today to do the name narrative interview, I wanted to remind you that this is being recorded. Um, and so, based on your consent form, you do not want to use a pseudonym, and you're okay with using your birth-given and current name, and any changes that may have occurred throughout your life. Um, but I just wanted to remind you that you are being recorded, and I want to make sure that you are okay with that,

Christina 0:32
I am totally fine with that I have to put on my R Kelly jacket.

Pauline 0:38
(laughs). No problem. And then, of course, at any point, either during, um, or after the interview, if you do not want to be part of the study anymore, please just let me know. You can text me, you can email me, and I will omit all of your information and also delete it.

Christina 0:56
Cool.

Pauline 0:58
All righty. So, I do have the interview questions up, and I'll be taking notes. Um, but I wanted to ask if you wanted me to share the screen so that you can also see the questions?

Christina 1:07
Yeah, that would be great. Because when I start talking, I tend to forget what the question was. So...

Pauline 1:15
No problem. Alright, one second. One second. All righty, can you see the questions?

Christina 1:30
Yes.

Pauline 1:31
All right, perfect. And so, um, just because I know you personally, I already knew your birth given name, Christina Marie Blankenship. And I just want to make sure that I spelled it correctly.

Christina 1:42
You did spell it correctly... you spelled it correctly on my birth certificate, but I tried to spell it a few different ways throughout my life. But yes, that's what it says on the on the, on the social security, the birth certificate and all of that.

Pauline 1:57
And then who gave you this name?

Christina 2:00
My mom named me. Um, so my mom's name is Ximena, X-I-M-E-N-A, and then Walter is Walter, right? So we have someone with a, what is considered would be a unique name and someone with a boring white person name. How can we represent this child of, of two halves in the best way that we can. So they went through a couple of different names. Um, my dad wanted to name me Mercedes, um, and my mom said that that's a stripper name. So, I was not named Mercedes. They wanted to also named me Zoe with the umlaut, with the two dots over it, because my dad has a strong German descent. Um, so I was almost named Zoe. But they ended up with Christina, because it is a name that can be translated in both English and Spanish pretty easily, both in how it's spelled and how it's pronounced. And since all of my mom's family at the time lived in Chile, they wanted to make sure that all the family members could pronounce my name.

Um, Marie is, I don't know where the Marie came from, but it is a good 90s middle name. Um, since I find most people around my age are middle-named Marie in some capacity. And then Blankenship is my dad's last name. They chose not to combine last names or anything like that. My mom's last name is Morales, uh, which is a pretty typical Spanish last name, but they chose not to combine them. Um, so, I'm just Christina Marie Blankenship. And as you know, because you know me on a personal level, most people don't assume I'm brown and my name implies that I am not brown in any way, shape or form.
Um, in contrast, though, when Sofia was born in 1998, I want to say, they chose a significantly more uh, brown sounding name because she's Sofia, S-O-F-I-A. She has a accent mark over the I. Her middle name's also Belin for Bethlehem, and then she also has Blankenship as her last name. Uh, so it's interesting how between my sister and I, same parents, same household growing up, that we have very, very, very different sounding names. So, that's, that's the story of the birth name. I hope that was enough information for you.

Pauline 4:27
One hundred percent. You touched on a lot of different aspects. Um, I'm a little curious on, so you talked about how like, when your sister was born a little bit later it was more of this like, Chilean kind of influence. Have you ever had that conversation with your parents of like, well, why didn't you do that with me?

Christina 4:47
Yeah. So, Sofia has definitely a more Spanish-sounding name and she also has a religious middle name as well. Um, but I don't. Ironically though, in a, in a good twist, I went to church more often with my mom than Sofia ever did. But I, as you know, am the furthest thing from Catholic. I'm only Catholic in a crisis, when I need to turn on the god switch, and I'm like, "Hey, I know, we haven't chatted in a hot minute, but I'm stressed out, so lead me, lead me the way."
Um, so I've spoken to my parents about it. Um, I think part of it is also just name trend. That was the name in the 90s. Christina is a very nineties-sounding name, Marie was a very nineties middle name. So, I think it's time and place contextual. With Sofia, I think perhaps my mom was maybe less fearful of being brown in the United States, and therefore wanted to be more proud of it. My name definitely has a more kind of, ah, hidden in plain sight. Because if you've never met me, if you've never met my mom, or even know my mom's name, you would assume I am like, a fucking cracker. But with Sophia, as you would probably assume otherwise, like, she must be pretty Brown. Um, so for me, I would suspect it would be because my mom became less not shameful, um, but less of a need to heavily assimilate her children. Um, and that also kind of dives into how Sophia and I were raised, too. I don't know if you touch on that, um, but we were raised quite differently, as well. So.

Pauline 6:27
Nice. And then, I felt like you answered a lot of the first section of where your name comes from. Um, can you talk a little bit, because you mentioned it earlier, um, the spelling of your name and how you grew up and like, wanting to change? Um, can you talk a little bit about- ?

Christina 6:47
Yeah, so my name has the H in it legally. Um, and that was always fine. I was really indifferent with my name growing up. I wasn't like, ashamed or embarrassed of it in any way. I was just like, yeah, I'm Christina. Um, in college, I, I got real experimental, across

the board far and wide, in all aspects of my life. But one of my experiments did include my name. Um, I didn't like the H in my name, I didn't like how white it sounded. And I guess in college, I was like, I'm going to be more brown. Um, I don't know how one becomes more brown, um but I was like, I'm going to be brown now. And I'm going to be really brown now. And so, in all of my legal school documents, it says, H, because it has to match, you know, all your legal stuff, but in all of my exams, and all of my preferred names, and all of my notes, it always says C-R-I-S-T-I-N-A, but my last name remained the same. This confused some of my professors because they were like, Is there a student in here that I didn't catch? Um, and some professors who knew that I was like, experimenting with my name would put my H, would put the H in parentheses. So, sometimes I would write C parentheses, H parentheses, R-I-S-T-I-N-A . Very Susana, if you ask me.
Um, and I even spelt my name like that on Facebook. So, I would put the H in parentheses. Um, I didn't tell my parents that I did any of this. Um, I don't know why. But I let all my professors call me that, my roommates called me that, even my early boyfriends would only say C-R and I was like, yeah, I'm, I am brown now because it says C-R in it. And eventually, I just stopped. Um, I don't know why. And then with Sophia, uh, she never wanted to put a P-H-I-E, like Sophie. She was always it's S-O-F-I-A. Uh, and usually when she spells, when she says her name on the phone, she'll always be like, it has an F in it. It's F-I-A, not P-H-I-E. Uh, so Sofia tends to be more (laughs) defensive about it. Um, and then here I have noticed since moving to New Mexico, was if somebody asked for my name on the phone, I always go, it's Christina with a C-H, because here I'm more likely to run into somebody whose name is actually C-R due to the cultural context that we're in. So, by habit, now, we tend to say C-H, even in places where there isn't a lot of New Mexican, Mexican, Hispanic, Latinx populations. So, even in North Carolina, I'll say it on the phone, only because I've lived out here long enough that I know that the spelling is valid either way. So.

Pauline 9:47
Have you ever been um, like, I guess have an experiment or like, been really like, strict about the pronunciation of your name?

Christina 9:59
No, I haven't. Um, and I think that's partially because of growing up in the South, um, where like... brown people exist everywhere, right? But in the South, they're very confused about brown people, um, because they're like, are you all Mexicans? Or are you those, those damn Cubans from Cuba and Miami and Florida, and I'm like, I am neither. Um, so it's always just been Christina. Um, so a very kind of tense pronunciation. Um, nobody has been not able to pronounce my name. Sofia runs into more issues with that. My mom is the one that runs into the most pronunciation issues, because the pharmacy thinks she's X-mina.
And it's funny, I remember growing up, back when the old school, ye olden days, where the uh, pharmacy would call your house right, and say, okay, your prescription's ready ,way before text and stuff. And I remember Walgreens would call and I'd pick up the phone, "Hello?" and they would be like, "Hi, we're looking for Xmina Blankenship." And because I'm an asshole, I would be like, "there's nobody here by Xmina. Do you mean Ximena? Because there's a Ximena here. That's my mom. But nobody here is Xmina." And then of course, the pharmacists would be like, "I don't give a fuck, you little shitty kid, like the prescription's ready." Um, so I used to troll anyone who would call on the phone and mispronounce her name. I'm like, there's no Xmina here, there's a Ximena though. So, I

really enjoy pressuring adults to pronounce my mom's name correctly. To me that was very important. Uh, but for me, I mean, they called me Blankenshit in high school. So.

Pauline 11:53

Ooh. No. Oh no.

Christina 11:55

They'd be like, "Hey, Blankenshit," and I would...

Pauline 11:59

So, where did that, where did that, I guess trolling come from?

Christina 12:05

Ooh, I don't... I don't know.

Pauline 12:09

Did someone play with your name one day and it came up or, and how did it get back to you?

Christina 12:16

So people would just call me Blankenshit like to my face in high school? (laughter) No, I don't, I don't have, I have a long last name, but it's not hard to pronounce, right? Like it's English, UK English as fuck. It's just Blankenship. Um, but a lot of people would call me Blankenshit. Um, and then when I would go to the bars, when I would turn 21 they would look at my last name, and there'll be like "That looks made up" and I would be like, "most last names are made up anyway, like-"

Pauline 12:52

(laughter).

Christina 12:48

Like what? So, I would get that a lot, especially in public places where I would have to show my ID, so, so especially bars. They would be like "That last name looks made up" and I'd be like, "well, I can't I can't fucking help you with that." Um, I don't know why they called me blanket shit. I hated High School, Pauline, I can't answer that. Um, but the trolling for people that called, that's called my mom incorrect names, I think came from a defense after just seeing how immigrants adjust to the United States. My mom had a really strong accent growing up. Uh, she had, you know, a funny, a funny name. She was articulate. And she you know, she hits all those good American qualities, right? She's articulate, she's highly educated, she works at a good private school as a teacher, teaching is a respectable career. Um, you know, or that's what, that's what they told us up until now, right? But teaching is a respectable career. Uh, she makes good money in her household. She's married. She's a good Catholic.

Um, but I would also see my mom get followed at stores, I watched my mom get pulled over a lot, for no particular reason. Um, I watched the other moms at the swim camp not know how to talk to my mom because of her accent. Um, and as a timid introvert in the 90s, I think the best way for me to fight back in defense of her, to be the first line of defense, was to troll like the pharmacist who like didn't, probably didn't even care, was just trying to get the medicine out. But I felt the need to troll as a form of defense for my mom, even though she could defend herself and she always had.

Pauline 13:31

Mm-hmm.

Christina 13:56

But for me, it was, it was very uncomfortable to watch, because then I knew my mom was different. And that made me really self-conscious. Because I was like, "well, if my mom's

different, and I know she's different, that means I'm different." Um... and as we know, growing up in the 90s, in the early 2000s, that was a no-no, right? So, I think that's where the mix of the trolling came from. Also I'm just a troll in general, as you know, so, you know...

Pauline 15:05
So, do you, do you have the same reaction, um, with Sofia's name, for instance, do you tend to be very defensive when it comes to her name as well?

Christina 15:14
No. (laughter)

Pauline 15:16
(laughter)

Christina 15:16
No. I leave her out to dry.

Pauline 15:21
(laughter)

Christina 15:23
No, Sofia did make fun of though, in school, they called her sofa. (laughter)

Pauline 15:33
(laughter) I feel bad that we're laughing.

Christina 15:33
She, she would want us to laugh. They called her sofa (laughter). Or loveseat. (laughter). They would go, "Hey sofa." So no, I actually didn't, poor Sofia. (laughter) Um, but no, I actually didn't defend Sofia as much. Um, we are about seven years apart. So, by the time she was like, 10, I was already in college. And Sophia also grew up and she had, she had the opportunity to be in more, quote unquote, heavy quotations, culturally sensitive education environments than me. Um, she went to like, a charter school, a very small one, but there were more people of color. Uh, there were more brown people there, more BIPOC, you know, insert, insert diversity quota here, uh, there was a lot more people that looked different or looked more like her. Um, and I think she had a much more comfortable education environment growing up. I also went to a good school good, quote, unquote. But I went to a white private school, um, where there was one black kid. And one time in English class, the per-, the teacher turned off the lights to do a presentation, and then Jake Hendricks, who yes, is as racist as his name sounds like it said, "Hey, Sevvy where'd you go? I can't see you anymore." Ah. Right.

Pauline 16:01
Oh my god.

Christina 17:05
And this was like fourth grade, Pauline. Like, we were like, nine. And I was like, "Well, fuck, they can't know I'm brown, like, shit. Like, they're making fun of Sevvy like that. I'm, I don't want to be made fun of like that." Um, so I definitely kept the light, the white, the white social mask on as a way to protect myself. Uh, and so I wouldn't be called, like, you know, dirty Mexican, because I totally anticipated it. I would have totally expected it. And I honestly would not have been surprised if someone had said it. So.

Pauline 18:02
Wow, that's insane.

Christina 18:04
But Sofa, Sofa's out on her own so. (laughter).

Pauline 18:10
Well, it sounds like also just based off of what you said, it sounds like she's really good at defending herself as well.
Christina 18:16
Oh, yes.
Pauline 18:17
Right. Not the P-H.
Christina 18:19
Right. Yes. She definitely is not, is less fearful than I was growing up and even to this day, as well. She never had any big major name changes, um, she never felt the need to defend herself. I can also see it, it's interesting, I don't know if this would connect with your project and just thinking about, about good old Sofa. Um, she also throughout all of her puberty and into now she's only dated international guys, Pauline. All of them. I just date these fucking white men, these fucking clowns. Um, it's probably cause I have a clown name. Um, but Sofia-
Pauline 19:06
Love Tom.
Christina 19:08
I love Tom but he's still a clown. (laughter).
Pauline 19:14
Oh, so funny. (laughter).
Christina 19:15
You still a clown. But Sofia, I'm convinced because she has the more exotic sounding name she got to date all these international guys and being my dumb ass sounding white name, stuck with all these white men throughout my dating life. I don't know. That might not be related to your project at all. But just, in thinking about it now. Um.
Pauline 19:36
That was a, that was a deep thought. I didn't even think about that until um, you said it. I'm like, oh, how can names connect to this idea of who we want to portray ourselves to be, right?
Christina 19:50
Right.
Pauline 19:50
About how, um, you weren't going to tell these folks in fourth grade that you were a brown girl.
Christina 19:58
Hell no. Because I saw the way they treated Sevvy Gasket and I was like, nope, nope. If I can blend as much as I can. And it wasn't until college, where I went to college where nobody knew me, or very few people from my town went to that college, so I was like, well, nobody knows who I am, it's time for a fresh, new start. We can really mess with identity and play with it. See what works. And I even run into it in grad school. Sophie was like, "So you know, Christina's white," and I was like, hold the fucking phone, please.
Pauline 20:32
(laughter)
Christina 20:36
You will not Jake Hendricks me. I have learned. Um, and yeah, that was, I think that was the only time I ended up defending myself, was randomly five minutes before a lecture, uh,

Sophie, one of our, one of our coworkers, uh, was like, "Yeah, well, you know, Christina's white," and I just like, got in her face, like, immediately and I've never done anything like that before. And of course, she looked like she pissed her fucking pants and was like, I'm so sorry. And I was like, yeah. And then I was like, yeah, yeah. Even though in my head. I was like, "oh, shit, maybe I shouldn't have done that. Fuck these people barely know me." But then I was like, "No, they have to know. You have to know. Walter's last name fucks it all up a little bit, but you got to set them straight." Um, so yeah, it wasn't until I was in a fucking Ph.D. program, Pauline, that I defended myself.

Pauline 21:32

Yay. We get there eventually-

Christina 21:34

Right?

Pauline 21:34

We get there eventually. So, do you feel like you defend your name a little bit more so now to really look at that biracial identity more so now than you were when you were a kid?

Christina 21:46

Yes. I think as a kid, I definitely played into whiteness in all its forms, clothing, dress, education, all of that, as a way so that the Jake Hendricks's of the world would not pester me, right? And so, and it's funny, if I speak Spanish, you can hear like a hint of an accent, but a lot of it is heavily diluted over time. I speak less and less Spanish. I was embarrassed to speak Spanish growing up. Because of, because of people like that, you know? And I saw, you know, that memory of Sevvy is so vivid in my head, because even though it didn't happen to me, it's things that I had been kind of adjacent to with my mom growing up, and I saw it unravel in front of me. And I was like, Oh, no, no, no, no, no, I, I don't want that. They can't know, or I'm going to diminish it as little as, as much as I can so it's never brought up in conversation. So, people almost forget. Nowadays, though, it's interesting, I feel, I anticipate that people think I'm white, um, by my face, maybe by the way that I dress, by my name for sure. Um, and so now I almost, I'm like the person that's like holding the punch right here, like waiting for someone to be like, "Oh, well you know you're white-" Wrong. Incorrect. Have you met my mother? That's me right there. It's all Walter's fault. Um, so nowadays, I like, have the slingshot kind of like, held back like, I'm ready, I anticipate hearing it. Though, in New Mexico, I definitely don't hear it as much, and in the department, I haven't heard it that much, either. And I think people who do believe that I am like fully white, 100%, white, whatever that means, are usually corrected, as soon as like, they hear my mom talk on the phone. "Hola Christina, como estas, how are you? Only $65,000? I don't know. I'm not very impressed with that." And then they hear it and they're like, "Oh, okay." But it's funny. It's either, I'm either protecting my mom, I'm either ashamed of my mom, or I'm using my mom as a, as a legitimacy tool. So, she goes through these multiple variations throughout my life. Um maybe that's why we have mommy and daughter issues, too.

(laughter)

Pauline 22:22

I know, we just, it just keeps going.

Christina 24:26

Mm-hmm.

Pauline 24:27

Um, but let's transition a little bit and talk about um, the change and transition meaning. So, we've had conversations about you changing your names in terms of just taking the H. Um, and then personally, we've had conversations about how you plan to change your last name, um, so I'm going to just open it up to a very general question and how do you feel about changing your last name?

Christina 24:55

Ooh, what a big question. Also, before I answer it, I hope I haven't, I hope I've been giving you like useful things for your interview, not just like talking your ear off-

Pauline 25:07

I love the stories anyway, so it's all good.

Christina 25:09

Okay, okay, good. Good. Um, yeah, so my mom changed her last name when she married Walter, right? Like a good Catholic woman does. (laughter) My cousins, all of my, I don't have a big, I don't have a big extended family, but the extended family that is still alive and well, I'm one of the youngest, kind of in my whole family tree. So, and I think Sofia is like the youngest right now. Um, but everyone has changed their last names in some capacity. Um, so my cousin, when he married his wife, she changed her last name to Morales. So, he's Francisco Morales, she changed her name, so she's Eleanor Morales now and that's a clusterfuck in someone's head alone, right? That's some strong cognitive dissonance right there. She is a nice white lady.

Um, and so, so for me, I... my inner anti-capitalist is going to come out. I don't want to change my last name. And I told my mom this, and she goes, "well, you know, changing your last name is one of the most important landmarks and trademarks of marriage, it's very important." But me being me, I go, "Well, you know, you just have the same last name. So under the theory of capitalism, you're seen as the same worker. And I don't really like that, because it's not always about capitalism, Christina," and then I have to hang up on the phone and not talk to her.

Um, so for me, not changing the last name became very important when I started dating Tom. I had a previous long-term relationship with he who will not be named, uh, but his last name was Baker. And I wanted to change my last name to be Christina Marie Baker, which, interestingly, has the same initials as my current set of initials. And I was like, how wonderful everything I ever monograms will never have to change, because my initials are the same.

Pauline 27:16

Yeah.

Christina 27:17

But the relationship didn't work out, even though we were together for a long time, and we had seriously considered moving forward with an engagement or a legal institution of marriage of some sort. So then I became very butthurt as you do when humans fuck you over. And I was like, I thought men are clowns, I fucking hate them all. I'm gonna burn these earth, and I'm going to scorch men of it. And then I met Tom, and I was like, Oh, never mind, it's fine. Tom's last name is Overholt, which is a very boring last name, until you realize that he has the giant whiskey inheritance when his parents die. And I was like... hmm. I'm not saying that I'm marrying for money. But I'm not saying I'm not marrying for money, either. I'm just curious.

Pauline 28:09

(laughter)

Christina 28:10
Um, and so Tom is connected to this big ol' whiskey inheritance that, my name's not in any of that paperwork, so I would never see. And so, I was like, yo, maybe I should change my last name, right? It's like marrying a Rockefeller or a Vanderbilt or something. But then I started getting my PhD. And I started dating Tom, right as I was starting the PhD, like literally week one, semester one of my doctorate. And I became very inspired by women in the field comm, and beyond comm, who didn't change the name. Susana's, name has not changed. Uh, many other women's names are not changed. And they're out here with the kids and they're out here getting married, and they're out here telling us men are clowns, and I was like, I want to do that instead, actually.
Pauline 28:55
(laughter)
Christina 28:57
So, my last name is something I've always brushed aside as white, as an annoyance, as a cognitive dissonance in comparison to my mother. But then my last name became more important when I started my PhD. Because I was like, but Christina Overholt didn't get the doctorate. Christina Blankenship got the doctorate. And whose name is on this publication? It says Christina Blankenship. But then at that point, I was like, What am I really prioritizing? This love that I have for Tomasito and like a wonderful life we can have together or my accomplishments, my awards and my degree?
And I was like, you need to be honest with yourself, Christina. I was like, I'm an egocentric asshole.I love Tom, but I, it's me at the end of the day. The degree is for me, the degree is by me. The dissertation has my name on it. These publications and top journals have my name on it. These awards have my name on it. And I was at that point that I was like, no, I'm not going to change my last name. Uh, and even as I move out of academia, I still would not change my last name. Um, and if we have children, they can work out under Tom's insurance. Um, and they can have Tom's last name, and that doesn't bother me whatsoever. Um, and I was worried in telling my parents that, um, and they didn't really have any opinions about it. But at the same time, I probably wouldn't let them have any opinions about it, because they're baby boomers, and I don't care anymore.
So I said, this is the way that's it's gonna be mom, and by the way, I'm not going to get married in a Catholic Church, and my children are not going to be baptized Catholic, uh, and also, I'm not going to change my last name, if I get married? IF I get married. Maybe I'm gonna have children out of wedlock. I don't even know. So, I'm just like, slapping her with all this fucking information. And she's just like, whatever, you're an adult. I don't care. I'm retired now. I forgot what you said five minutes ago. Um, it ended up not being a big thing between my mom and I, but I was very worried that it would like, create the wedge of the wedge. Um, but no, I'm pretty sure she, she's so deep in her retirement that I'm pretty sure she like already fucking forgot all of this already.
Pauline 31:18
(laughter) And then I remember at one point you talked about hyphenating your last name, so Blankenship slash or hyphen Overholt. Or, how has that, how has that idea developed or has it adios, or-
Christina 31:37
I put that shit to bed Pauline. Only Blankenship. It's only me. And that's it. But a lot of it, interestingly enough, it ultimately is rooted just in my academic accomplishments, which as we know in the real world really doesn't mean anything, um unless you stay in the academy.

But if you get a job, or you decide to be a homemaker or like what the fuck else that's not related to the Academy, none of that actually really matters. Um, so for me, it's very much tied to my accomplishments. Um, probably because I have avoidant attachment styles, and I need validation at all times.
So, maybe because I have my own last name that's tied to my own academic credentials, maybe it creates a cycle of what is the closest that I can have to self validation. And that might be it. I am too mentally strange and depressed to wake up and be like, I am a goddess, and I am a bad bitch. And I, everything that I want to manifest is going to come towards... it's too woowoo for me. Uh, since you know me well enough, it's all very woowoo to me. But, if I can keep my last name out of my own choice, still have kids and maybe a marriage and a mortgage and all those good things, but still keep my name, even if it's only attached to these abstract awards, I think it's the closest thing to self validation that I would probably get, unless I went to therapy, but I'm not there yet. Um, so I think yeah, I think for me, it's, it's self validation. It's probably a little narcissistic, might be a little egotistical. Uh, but women only get like what 78 cents to the dollar than men? Women in the economy are pushed aside constantly as you and I know. Um, and yeah, I think a lot of my late 20s has been forging my own path ,has been forging a sense of pride with my name even if it is tied with you know, shallow accomplishments and stuff like that. But I'm at peace with it. Yeah, I'm Dr. Blankenship and Dr. Blankenship got the degree not Dr. Overholt. Who is she? She doesn't exist. Ooh, girl boss.

Pauline 33:52
(laughter) All right, I'm gonna stop sharing my screen.

Christina 33:55
Okay.

Pauline 33:56
I hear you and I'm also going to stop the recording.

Pauline 0:03
All right. Thanks mom for um, agreeing and willing to participate in my interview, um, slash thesis. So, just a reminder throughout the, throughout the recording, if you don't want your name, or your name narrative to be used anymore, just text me or email me and let me know that, and then I can omit all of your information. And then as well, just a reminder, we are recording. Um, and yeah.
But um, I'm going to go a little bit off script from the questions just because one, you're my mom and I know which questions apply to you and which questions don't apply to you. But you'll see some overlap in the questions that I sent to you. Um-
Emeline 0:46
Okay.
Pauline 0:47
... so first question, what was your birth given name?
Emeline 0:54
Emeline Barnes Tolentino.
Pauline 0:57
All right. And so, where does, I know where Barnes and Tolentino comes from because Barnes is your mom's name, or your mom's technically maiden name um, or your maiden name. And then your dad is Tolentino. But how do they form, like, how did they name you Emeline?
Emeline 1:15
So, I was told that my dad's youngest sister, Auntie, we called her Auntie Carning. Her nickname is Auntie Shiony. She was the one that named all of the children in the family, and some um, are amongst, not just my, you know, my dad, the Eduardo Tolentino family, but also some of um, my other relatives. So, all of my siblings, my brothers, it's Eduardo... so my dad's name is Ed, Eduardo. And then there's Edgardo, Alfredo, Gerardo and Arnaldo. So the boys all ended with a "do" just like my dad.
Pauline 2:05
Mmm-hmm.
Emeline 2:05
And then when it came to my sister and I, it was Geraldine and Emeline. Um, so it was about you know, it ended with a L-I-N-E. And my sister got the nickname of Gigi out of Geraldine, and somehow I got the nickname of Mimi from Emeline.
Pauline 2:24
Oh. Okay, so, um, do you know if like, the "line" has anything to do with like Lola's name?
Emeline 2:35
No.
Pauline 2:36
No? And it, does it have anything to do with Lolo's name?
Emeline 2:40
Mm, no.
Pauline 2:41
No, it was just something that Lolo's sister came up with.
Emeline 2:46
Right.
Pauline 2:47

Oh, okay. Do you know if that um, tradition is like practice amongst other Filipino families? Like is there one person in the family who's kind of like, the name maker for their family?

Emeline 2:59

So, the reason that Auntie Shiony or Carning was given that opportunity was because she couldn't have kids. So, she was the youngest sister, who also helped uh, raise the kids in the Philippines. I wasn't born in the Philippines. I was born in the United States, but um, she was given the privilege, being that she was the youngest, um, and that she couldn't have kids. So, she didn't have any children of her own. And um, between my mom and my dad, um, they took her recommendation and liked um, the names that she came up with.

Pauline 3:46

Mm-hmm. Okay.

Emeline 3:47

So-

Pauline 3:48

Okay. So it's more of just like, a family tradition or a family thing-

Emeline 3:53

It's out of respect. And I think it comes down to the parents, like if the um, parents are willing to um, carry that name. So, good example, I don't know if you want to go into our family, when um, you know, when giving the name of the four kids, Ameline and Pauline comes from, Emeline, came from my name. And Paul was the one who came up with the idea of naming Ameline to mirror image my name. And, and Pauline was Paul and Emeline put together. So, for the girls, you know, that is something between Paul and I came up with and went along with just to carry out the girl, the girls within the family. Then, on the boys, that was something between Paul wanting to carry his father's name on his boys, so Crisostomo is named after his grandfather on his dad's side. And then Paul Jr. was something that um, is named after Paul. But then Paul Jr. was born on his grandfather's birthday on, from Crisostomo Alvarez, his grandfather. Although, although PJ, Paul Jr. is named after his father, but his birth date is actually his grandfather's birthday.

Pauline 5:49

Hmm, that's cool. I didn't even know that. (laughter) But, um, so let's go a little bit back and talk about how your name transitioned when you got married. Um, what did your name change to when you got married?

Emeline 6:04

Emeline Tolentino Alvarez. So, basically, my last name um, when I was born became my middle name, and then I carried over um, the, my husband's name at that time.

Pauline 6:26

Mm-hmm. And then next, I know that's tradition, um... and so what was the decision of like, because I know Paul's name doesn't follow the tradition, his middle name is Andrew, right? He didn't carry the Barnes from his mom's name? So, what was the decision? Like? How did you guys make, how did you all make that decision between like, your kids have like, oh, they're not gonna have the traditional Filipino, like, last name, middle name versus let's create our own middle names for our kids. What was that?

Emeline 7:03

So not only did, um, your father had like the American, so Americanized, you know, it's two, basically two first names, that it's very rare that you carry over the mom's um, last name. And because he did that with his name, that's sort of what we did with our children's

name, but then it also has to do with um, my father didn't accept um, Paul as my husband. And basically, he uh, would, he called us sort of basically did not want me to carry on the Tolentino name at that time. So-

Pauline 7:53

What do you mean, like, Lolo didn't want you to have Tolentino in your name at all?

Emeline 8:01

Well, because it's almost like, um, because you, you didn't follow the tradition. Like, I was not listening to my father, and he didn't accept Paul, he didn't give his blessing for me to marry Paul. So, it was like, a disgrace to the family and to the family name. And, you know, my, my dad, and especially in the Philippines, you know, usually in many traditional families when you have a last name, it's something of honor, and it's something of, like, um, once you say someone's last name, it sort of gives the family history.

Pauline 8:47

Mmm-hmm.

Emeline 8:48

Well, because I was very young when I had my daughter, my dad basically said, I don't have a daughter that has a daughter, like, and what do you call this... it's like, um, when, when you're not married, and you have kids?

Pauline 9:08

Wedlock?

Emeline 9:09

Uh yeah, like, she doesn't have a child out of wedlock, and, but I think they call it something else in the Philippines. Um, but basically, it's almost like a disgrace, and you know, you know, making sure that um, the Tolentino name wasn't going to carry down on my side. So, at that time, because that's how my father felt, I didn't carry on that Tolentino name with my children, and then I started using just the Alvarez. I didn't identify myself at that time with Tolentino.

Pauline 9:54

Mm-hmm. Okay.

Emeline 9:55

And it was it was a disgrace for my, you know, on my dad's side to have a daughter at a very young age, you know, in the teenage years, to be having children, and, you know, without his approval and so forth.

Pauline 10:10

Gotcha. So, then when you all made the decision for Ame to have it, I guess I, a, non-traditional Filipino name. Did you just want to carry that on with all of us just because you didn't want her to be left out?

Emeline 10:28

Yep. I think that decision was already made by um, my dad. You know, he felt that it was a disgrace, and it was, you know, like, you know, don't identify yourself as a Tolentino, you're not my daughter, um, and so that's sort of what had happened.

Pauline 10:49

Mmm-hmm. Okay. And so then, I heard you talk a little bit about how you kind of, you, you also disassociated with saying like, "oh, I'm Emeline Tolentino Alvarez.." Would tell me a little bit more about that. So like, when people ask you, like, you, what your name was, did you just say, "Oh, it's Emeline Alvarez," or?

Emeline 11:09

Yep. From that time on, um, until my dad sort of reaccepted me then, then I started, you know, using my Tolentino. But um, until then, it was Emeline Alvarez, and same thing with my children. It was, you know, Ameline, Crisostomo, Paul Jr., and Pauline Alvarez.. And then if they asked for a middle name, it was the middle name that they were given at the time of birth.

Pauline 11:43

Okay. And then, um, just because I, just because I know, obviously, you're my mom, and we've talked about this, um, can you tell me a little bit about the struggle between you wanting to go back to your birth name, and then you wanting to say as like, dropping Alvarez and going back to Barnes Tolentino? Can you talk a little bit about that? And what that's like?

Emeline 12:06

So... huh?

Pauline 12:08

What? (laughter) It's a loaded question. But you know,

Emeline 12:11

So, um, after getting a divorce um, and so, at the time of separation and divorce, um, I kept the Alvarez last name for the sake of my kids. Because in school, um, you know, and especially in this, I think, in today's generation, um, many of the teachers acknowledge that, you know, children are, it's no longer the traditional family. But when, um, at the time that my kids were going to school, it wasn't known yet. Usually, you know, on a family name, last name, um, you know, it was automatic that the children's last name, when you're talking to the parents, it's Mr. and Mrs. Alvarez. And so, everyone is known as Mrs. Alvarez. So, I was known as Mrs. Alvarez when the children were going, when you guys were all going to school. And I just felt with a divorce, that it would be very difficult to change my name, and, you know, with the, you know, with every, all of the kids in school, they were so accustomed along with their, their friends to know me as Mrs. Alvarez, and then to change that, um, I just felt that it was easier. So I kept my name, um, so long as my kids were in school.

Pauline 13:09

Mmm-hmm.

Emeline 13:27

And then as they became older, and I became more independent, um, and my children became more independent, um, I had considered going back to my maiden name. Um, and being that my dad was accepting of me, and not just that, my accomplishments, because you know, it comes along with your name, your name association, who you network with, and your reputation, it, it's associated with your name. And when people look for you, and they do a name search, it's according to your name. Even when good example, on Facebook, uh, people either hide a name for a reason, because they want to disguise themselves, or, you know, um, you put your name that you associate with if you want people to look for you within your network.

Pauline 14:45

Mmm-hmm.

Emeline 14:46

So for me, on Facebook, I carried all of my names. So, Emeline Mimi Tolentino Alvarez. And the reason it's that long is because Emeline Tolentino is what I was known in school, in elementary years. And as I got married, it became Emeline Alvarez. And then in the

communities that I work in, um, in with work, I use my nickname of Mimi. So my colleagues at work know me as Mimi Alvarez. None of them really know me as Tolentino because I, you know, went away with that name, uh, since I got married, which was in my teen years. So, only those that associate me as Emeline Tolentino are only those that went to school with me.
So, I have a distinguish depending on where I was in my life, if you knew me in school, it was Emeline Tolentino. If you knew me after, after my education and into my married life, it was Emeline Alvarez. But in my career, everyone knows me as Mimi Alvarez, although my legal name is Emeline Alvarez. So, there are some legal documents that I do sign at work, and it is under Emeline Alvarez. Um, and that's for notary purposes and passports. Now, in regards to considering changing my name later in life, it became more difficult. Um, so at the time of divorce, I kept Emeline Alvarez for the sake of my kids, and then when they became adults, which is, you know, 15 years later (laughter)

Pauline 16:39
(laughter)

Emeline 16:39
... in their adult lives. So after, you know, me owning a home, having bank accounts, getting my passport, California IDs, your car registration, all these, you know, the banks, everything, your credit cards, everything has your name, as however you built it on.

Pauline 17:08
Mm-hmm.

Emeline 17:08
And to go back and change it, with, whichever way, it not only is it time consuming because you have to retain an attorney, you have to file it with the courts. So, there's a filing fee to change your name back, and then the costs associated when you have to renew your passport or get another passport issued to you, to go to Social Security, to go to uh, DMV to change your um, driver's license. All of these, you know, just based on the minimal information that I provided, it's very time consuming, it's, it's a lot of documentation. Um, and nowadays, it costs money to make all those changes. To change your name, there's a lot of money associated, I could say that it costs probably about $1,000 to $2,000, uh, because you know the fees. Like just imagine, right now, US passports are about $120, just for a passport.

Pauline 18:16
Mmm-hmm.

Emeline 18:16
So if you're going to change your name, and then that's not even, you know, getting the picture. So, you have to do all the application and all that. That's just one document. Now, go to DMV to do that, and then go to your bank, if you own a home, you're going to have to change the title on your um, house. That's a document that you have to prepare, a legal document that you have to prepare. And then not only that, you have to get it notarized and then record it with the county recorder's office. And those, you know, county recorder's office, there's a fee. Um... and then, you know, that's also the time associated with that. So, it's not easy. Um, some people I know I've got some co- workers at work. Um, and then not just that your email address. You know, if you've had a name, I, I personally have had my Yahoo account emelinealvarez@yahoo.com for years, for several years. And just imagine if I were to change that. Um. You know, you know, I know my, your older sister, my daughter, she has since changed her name, but her email address is

still amealvarez16 though her legal name is Ameline Lawson. So, you know, for women, um, you know, you could do that, but then you have to go back to all these, you know, documents and information and you know, it's pretty time consuming. I think back in the older day, olden days, it wasn't as difficult. The reason for it is because nothing was that permanent, um meaning like, we didn't have email back then.

Pauline 20:13

Mmm-hmm.

Emeline 20:13

So, there wasn't that much, you know, like Social Security, there was not all these fees associated, um, like DMV, and, um, you know, passports. The cost of it was not that high. But in today's day, it's very time consuming, and it, there are fees associated now. So...

Pauline 20:39

If you didn't have the final, like the final, the financial like, gatekeeping, would you change your name back to um, Barnes Tolentino?

Emeline 20:53

Mmm... I don't think it's so much financial. Um... you know, it.. I mean... I, you know, part of me said, yeah, I wanted to do it. But, you know, I think ultimately, it's time consuming.

Pauline 21:12

Mmm-hmm.

Emeline 21:13

It's not so much financial, it's the time and effort to do it is very time consuming. And everyone's time is very valuable. So, and I think people will pursue it if it means a lot to them. You know, what would I, what does it mean to them to have that name? Is it, how valuable is it? So, you know, like, in most marriages, um, you know, usually the man, depending if they're going to have a family, you know, it means a lot to a man um, to have their wives take their name, because that was, that's been the tradition. Um, but we've noticed that some of those traditions have since changed.

So, it just depends on, you know, I mean, you know, it, it just depends. And I know, um, you know, I work for the government, and there are retirement plans. And um, you know, when I, when you start working with the government, and you're talking about money, they always want you to prove who you are. So, you have to make sure all of your paperwork is in order, because if there is some error somewhere, you're gonna have to prove it, notarize it, and um, you know, it, it, it can be frustrating later, you know, later on, so.

Pauline 22:58

So, out of curiosity, we talked a lot about Tolentino and Alvarez. Have you ever thought about bringing Barnes back into your name? Or when you dropped that, that was just like, it was dropped?

Emeline 23:12

I think um, once it was dropped, uh, I think... I mean, I don't see a reason why to keep it. You know, I know... I can, I know and I can identify my, myself. You know, who it is and so forth. But you know, and you just hope that you carry that on, you know, with your family and your kids. And I think there's more information today on tracking information like that than there were years ago. Um, so for me, as far as the name it is, you know, it becomes more difficult for the women than it does for the men.

Pauline 24:05

Mmm-hmm.

Emeline 24:05

But, you know, um, I think, you know, I've got, there's enough paperwork to trace back to the Barnes.

Pauline 24:16

Yeah, yeah, that's fair. And so overall, how do you feel just about your Emeline Tolentino Alvarez name, you feel like... it's, it is still a loaded, I talk about it when I talk about my name narrative, about how my name essentially comes from this person who abused me. Right? Um, and so how do you feel about just in general, your name being Emeline Tolentino Alvarez?

Emeline 24:47

Well, I hoped someday in the future that I would change it. So, you know, I some day would like to remarry, but I'm not going to remarry, just for the sake of a name, um, for a name change, and that was also one of my um, considerations on changing my name back to my maiden name. Um, you know, do I want to spend the time and effort associating with that? So, at one time in point, I was considering it for my dad. But then, at that time, my dad and I also had a fallout, and that fallout stems back to the very first time that um, he, you know, he disowned me, basically. And so, it created a pause for me to say, hold on, wait a minute, I was doing this, because I thought you were proud of me, and we've overcome. We overcame, you know, what has happened in the past, but then he re, you know, rekindled it. And so I just said, you know, for the time and effort that I was gonna put into this, um, I just paused it and said, you know what, I'm, you know, I'll just do it at a later time. And the reason for it is, I believe, someday, I would probably remarry. And when that happens, I'll go through that process and procedure at that time.

Pauline 26:32

Yeah.

Emeline 26:33

Am I proud to have Alvarez, um, as no longer being married to the person with Alvarez? Um, it's no longer an honor for me to carry that name, especially if you're making a name for yourself. Um, but for, I carry it for my kids' sakes, and then not just that, you know, I've got grandkids that carry on Alvarez. So, I've got a portion of my kids that are proud of it. And then another portion of them that is not proud of the last name. However, that's the last name that was given at that time. So, for me at this time, it's not, it doesn't hurt, t doesn't hurt me one way or another. And, you know, I believe in, you know, someday in the future that my name would change.

Pauline 27:28

Yeah.

Emeline 27:29

I know.... your grandmother, Elizabeth Barnes, when she divorced, um, she revert, it took her a long time into the future to do a name change back to her maiden name, but before she retired, I believe is when she changed her name back. So, when she died, she died as Elizabeth C. Barnes.

Pauline 28:06

What's the C?

Emeline 28:08

Cortez, which was her mother's, but she no longer was associating as Elizabeth Alvarez. I don't know. You know, like I said, back then, um, in that time, and those ages, it was easier to change your name back. I mean, it's, it was still in cumbersome, but it wasn't as costly. It

was time consuming, but um, you know, she made the time to do it. Um... but, you know, um, so before she died, you know, she had her maiden name back.

Pauline 28:52

Well on her, on her grave it's Barnes. I know that.

Emeline 28:58

Mm-hmm.

Pauline 28:59

Do you happen to know what um, Lolo Chris's name was? Crisostomo something Alvarez, I'm assuming?

Emeline 29:07

I don't know what his middle name was.

Pauline 29:10

Aw. I was just curious.

Emeline 29:11

That's something you'll have to ask your Auntie Myrna. Or uh, Tito Nonong.

Pauline 29:19

Okay. I was just curious. Okay, I'm gonna stop the recording now.

APPENDIX H: Kai Armstrong Interview Transcripts

Kai 0:05
Sweet.
Pauline 0:07
So, I just want to make sure that, um, to remind you that this is being recorded. If you do not want to be recorded, please let me know now.
Kai 0:17
Recording's great.
Pauline 0:19
All righty. And then, um, I have the questions listed on my computer. Did you want me to share my screen and you can see them with me or what would be best for you?
Kai 0:31
Yeah, that, that'd work.
Pauline 0:37
All righty. Nice. Can you see them?
Kai 0:39
Yes.
Pauline 0:40
Okay. And then of course, while you're talking, I may be taking some notes just to let you know. So, if there's like a delay, just know that I'm not ignoring you. I'm just making notes. (laughter)
Kai 0:49
Yep, sounds good.
Pauline 0:51
All righty. Um, let's start with question number one. What was your birth given name?
Kai 0:57
Bethany Kainalu Armstrong. B-E-T-H-A-N-Y, K-A-I-N-A-L-U and then Armstrong like?
Pauline 1:18
Yeah.
Kai 1:18
Armstrong.
Pauline 1:18
Interesting. All righty. So, can you tell me a little bit about your name? Like did someone in your family give you this name?
Kai 1:26
Yeah, so um, I am the oldest. My parents both agreed on the name together. Um, they're very religious. Um... Catholic, very, very Catholic. Um, and my dad always wanted to name his first girl after the song by Meatloaf, uh, "Beth." Uh, and my mom always wanted a Biblical name. She liked the town of Bethany in the Bible. So, uh, they kind of came together on that name, uh, and came up with Bethany. Um, my middle name was chosen; they were going between two. I was born in Hawaii, um, and so they're going between Kainalu and Kaimalu. Uh, Kainalu means "big wave," Kaimalu means "peaceful ocean," and on the day I was born, there was a storm that knocked out a bridge in Hawaii. So, they said, well, Kainalu is more fitting than peaceful ocean, so, uh, they went with Kainalu.
Pauline 2:27

Nice. Oh, I didn't know that. I, I always, I saw how your middle name was written before, um, because you, you still have your middle name, right? And so, I was like, Oh, are you Hawaiian?

Kai 2:41

No. It, It's funny. Because when I tell people my middle name's Hawaiian, they're like, "oh, you're Hawaiian." Um, and I talked about that a little bit and intercultural, that like, every once in a while people don't read me as white, and so I get read, I think, as Hawaiian every once in a while, but I am white. Um, my parents just really wanted to have a Hawaiian name since I was born there.

Pauline 3:04

Awesome. Awesome. Can I ask what part of Hawaii were born in?

Kai 3:08

I was born uh, on Oahu and in Ha- Honolulu on the Air Force Base.

Pauline 3:17

Oh, nice. Nice. Yeah, my sister is also in the military. And she in Kaneohe.

Kai 3:24

Okay.

Pauline 3:24

And so both of my nephews also have that Hawaiian um, influence in their middle names. Um, Kekona, second, which is my younger nephew, and his older brother is Kahikina. And so, I always loved how, how the Hawaiian names come into people's names.

Kai 3:47

It seems to be a common thing there. Yeah, that picking kind of Hawaiian names for your kids when you're there.

Pauline 3:53

Yeah, yeah. Um, so were you... I know, you talked a little bit about the religious aspect of Bethany. Um, does any, any part of your name come from your family?

Kai 4:07

So, my mom's middle name is Elizabeth. And uh, so they kind of wanted to have that kind of continuation as well. So, the Beth kind of, ah, was a good... Beth was my nickname before Kai. And so, uh, kind of came from my mom, but mostly it was uh, kind of that, that song and the Biblical reference.

Pauline 4:31

Nice, nice. And then were there any, um, well, we I guess we did talk about the cultural traditions because we talked about how um, your middle name um, came from Hawaii, and um, the tradition from that. That's really cool. Awesome. Were there any political references um, or influences that came, came from your name?

Kai 4:57

Not that I know of. I don't think so.

Pauline 5:00

Okay. And then um, how has your name change or transition from your birth name to the name you live by currently?

Kai 5:09

So, my... when I was a kid, it's funny because I wrote about this in my thesis as well. Um, my, I did like an autoethnography and I talked about my name change and how it kind of uh, worked with my identity and the relationship with my family. Um, but when I was a kid, I never really like connected with Bethany very much. Um, and so I always liked my

middle name, right? It's, it's so unique and different and it's cool. Um, and when I was 11, uh, my grandmother got remarried and uh, one of my step cousins, I don't know what it'd be, his name's Kainalu I learned that Kainalu's actually masculine name uh, for uh, most, most people who are named Kainalu. Um, and so, before even that, I wanted to go by Kainalu, um, but I had a hard time spelling it as a kid.
So, anytime I'd be like, "hey, I'd rather go by Kainalu," they'd be like, you can't even spell it. So, it's not really an option. (laughter) Yeah, it was real bad. Uh, so, so then, like, I learned that it's more of a masculine name, and I still liked it, but um, I started like... I knew I needed to like, fit in so, I, I went by Beth instead of Bethany. Um, and when I finally came out as genderqueer, um, knowing that Kainalu was a more masculine name, and Kai itself is generally a more masculine name, but it's also pretty androgynous, I knew that it was kind of what I wanted to go by, and it's what I wanted to go by my whole life. So I, I started going by my middle name, uh, and shortened it to Kai, because most people would have a hard time saying Kainalu.
Um... and yeah, and that, that stuck. That stuck and it's stayed. My first name, I did get it legally changed. And I changed it to Emerson and my sisters actually chose it for me. Um, I had been texting them, and I was like, you know, I'm thinking about taking on one of dad's names, Gerald or Kenneth, those are both family names. Uh, so I might do that. And they were like, "Meh, that's kind of old and boring, and like, why would you do that?" And they were like, "you know, your favorite writer is Emerson," um, like one of the old romantic writers. So, they're like, "why don't you, why don't you go by Emerson?" And I was like, you know, I really like that. I like that it's gender neutral. I've known girls and guys named Emerson. Um, so I think that's a really cool choice. So, so, my younger sisters actually picked my name for me.

Pauline 8:00
Aww. That's such a cute story.

Kai 8:03
Yeah, I love my name.

Pauline 8:05
I think it's interesting how, just because you couldn't spell your middle name, it was like, well, you can't use it. But it was like, it was like this interesting, like, but it, it is you. Because I know individuals who go by their middle name all the time.

Kai 8:24
Yeah.

Pauline 8:24
So, this is interesting, this like idea of like, oh, well you can't spell it, so you can't go by it. It's like, but it's still me.

Kai 8:34
And it's really funny going off that cause when I, when I came out to my parents, and I was more like, I didn't tell them I was trans, I was transmasculine, I was like, you know, I think I'm in the middle somewhere. And I do feel more like that, um, but I did know I wanted to take hormones and do like, a medical transition. But I was like, you know, the one thing that I do want is I want to go by he/him or they/them pronouns, and I want to go by Kai. Uh, and my mom told me (laughter)... I laugh about it now. It was very traumatizing, but I laugh about it now. She said, I'll never call you anything other than what I named you. And it's hilarious because she named me Kainalu, so... um...

Pauline 9:16

You're like, "but that's my name, I'm not asking for anything different, mom." Just call me by my name.

Kai 9:23

Just call me by my name. Just a different one of the two names that you chose. So yeah, uh, it's really interesting the reasons that she decided, she's just really stuck on Bethany for whatever reason, uh, and refuses to really see the Kainalu, which is just really weird. It's always been weird, but that's just kind of my mom.

Pauline 9:44

Yeah. Okay. Let's see. Um, so what influenced you to change your name? Was there any other influences besides that Bethany didn't mirror you?

Kai 9:54

Yeah, and Bethany was very gendered as well. Um, and so I, you know, applying to graduate school, applying to jobs, knew that I needed something that was at the very least androgynous or something more masculine. So, I decided I need to change it.

Pauline 10:17

Um, how did you decide? Because I know, because there was a legal process involved, um, how did you decide to more do the legal part of all of it?

Kai 10:30

So, I've been going by Kai for a while. I went by Kai through my junior and senior year, that's when I really started to change it, and be out with that name. And uh, so my senior year of undergrad, I had the capstone course that they have here, uh I don't know if they still do it, uh, but they did when I was here. Um, and they had us in groups, and we had to find an organization to work with, uh, and do like a service project with that. And uh, my group, we decided to do the Transgender Resource Center. Um, and so we had gone to meet with them, and we're talking, uh, and, you know, we were like, so we want to know more about your organization, what are the things that we can do, what's like something we can do our service project with? Um, and while they were telling us about the organization, one thing, they were like, "Oh, yeah, we helped do name changes, we have a scholarship program for that," and kind of, like continued on, it was just kind of like a , a side thing. But after the meeting, I, I, went up to uh, Zane, who, who used to be uh, in charge, uh, but retired this last year, um, and was like, "Hey, you guys do name change stuff? I've been thinking about that. I was wondering, you know, if you have information on that?" And uh, he sent me home with this packet of just all the information about how to legally change your name in New Mexico, and I from there was like, "Now this is what I'm going to do," and filled out the paperwork. And they, Zane went with me to the courthouse, uh, for the, the hearing, and it, it was just a really cool process.

Pauline 12:15

Nice. Can you explain a little bit about the process? Uh, what is it, what is the process essentially?

Kai 12:22

Yeah, so, here in New Mexico, there is first that you have to file like a plea that you want to do this. Um, and then you have to post your name in the newspaper and say, I am changing my name, so if anybody has any debts against me, now's the time to come get it or something like that. It's like, a really like, formal things, so that way, there's documentation for people in the public if they're searching for you. So, you have to publish it in the newspaper and it costs like, it costs a bit of money. I know that they helped me pay for that since I was a student. Um, then you go down and you file the paperwork at the courthouse

and there's like a whole bunch of times you have to do stuff like that and get certain stamps, and it's been a few years, I don't remember the exact process.
But then you'll get a court date, where you go up in front of a judge with the paperwork and uh, the judge will ask you, so why is it you want to change your name? And so my answer was, it doesn't match my gender identity, I want, I want something that matches who I am. And they'll say, "Yep, cool mark it to go." The judge that I had looked at my paperwork and couldn't see the spelling of Kainalu. I think he saw that as a U, and he read it out loud, and I was like, "Oh, no, that's an A" and he's like, "I want you to refill out the paperwork with better handwriting, and then I'll sign it and you'll be good." (laughter) All for that one letter. So, I had to refill out the paperwork. (laughter)

Pauline 13:56
Interesting.

Kai 13:57
But yeah, uh, it was super easy. Like I, I sat in the, the pew the, I don't know, the rows of seating that they had in the courthouse, refilled it out, gave it to the clerk. It was signed, and uh, I went downstairs and it was official. After that I had to go do all the official stuff, so I had to go update my, my uh, my driver's license, my uh, my social security card, uh, all those kinds of things they use day to day identification wise, uh, I had to go and get those updated and I just brought that form that the, the judge signed and they would update it for me.

Pauline 14:43
Okay. It just sounds like a lot of paperwork. (laughter)

Kai 14:49
A lot of paperwork.

Pauline 14:50
A lot of financial um, gatekeeping. I'm gonna say gatekeeping. If that makes sense, is the right word.

Kai 15:00
That is entirely the correct word. Um, and I'm very, very fortunate that I had the Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico to help me out because, yeah, I mean, I was a poor college student, my parents had financially cut me off like a year before, um, I wouldn't have been able to really afford that stuff without, without their help. So, I am deeply, deeply indebted to them.

Pauline 15:25
For the center, what is the center called again?

Kai 15:31
The Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico. T, T-G-R-C-N-M.

Pauline 15:38
Okay, well, I'm glad that they're able to have resources for folks, just in general, because I imagine that not many (inaudible) are willing to be all accepting as everybody should be. Or need to be accepting in.

Kai 15:59
They're a super great organization, yeah.

Pauline 16:03
Yay. Yay! At least, at least one, right? We just got, we just need at least one to keep everybody else afloat.

Kai 16:13

Exactly. Exactly. Chosen family, community, those are the, those are the important parts of life.

Pauline 16:22

Um, so how do you think your current name, relates to your identity?

Kai 16:31

So many different ways. (laughter) I mean, I think about either one. Um, so Kainalu just, I think it just more aptly shows who I am. I've always been kind of around the water. I learned to swim before I was a year old. I was a few months old when I learned to swim. Um... and I've always loved the ocean, that, that conference uh, in Florida, I spent more time in the ocean than I did at the conference. (laughter) And I just always loved it. Like it, just, it fits me. Uh, it just kind of is more of who I am.

Um... And I think people see that too. I, I've been told before that they're like, "yeah, Kai fits you better than Beth ever did." Um, so, so it's really been a big part of who I am. Emerson, I don't use quite as often, it's more of just like, an, an official thing. Um, I do have my students call me Emerson. Uh, and I find that hilarious, because they probably think they're like, "Oh, yeah, it's so cool. I get to call my teacher by their first name." And I'm like, "yeah, nobody calls me that." (laughter) But uh, I think it also says a lot about who I am just because of like, you know, that my sisters chose it for me, it kind of says about who they are and how they accept me and how they love me. And I think it also says something about um, my love for, for writing and for education and for learning.

Um, and, yeah, so... I think they both really play into my identity these days. It took a lot, a long time deciding what it was I wanted to be called and I'm, I'm happy with the decisions.

Pauline 18:32

Yay! Can you talk a little bit about what the reactions were just in general from people when you did change your name?

Kai 18:44

Yeah. So, um... I... there are a few different reactions that varied from like, great to terrible. Um, my youngest sister is probably the person who picked it up the fastest. She like, almost automatically changed, never messed up. She is one of my greatest supporters. Um, I had at the time, a previous partner and they were not super great. Um, they'd call me Kai, like, when we were with my friends and with each other but wouldn't call me that with their parents, and was just kind of against me being transgender in general. Um, so that wasn't super great. I mentioned my mom's reaction (laughter) before um, of "I'll never call you anything other than when I named you" which is dumb, but... uh, my roommates were really funny about it. It did take them a little while. It was harder for them. One of my like, I thought it was hilarious, one of them would always be like BethanyKai, just that like, that like became more of my name. (laughter) BethanyKai, like in one, one breath. It always cracked me up.

But they were super supportive about it, whenever I told them they were like cool, uh, and they'd correct each other. I don't really ever have to correct them. uh, I lived in a house, we called it the half mansion um, by Netherland Park, and huge. We had seven roommates. Um, yeah, yeah, it was, it was insane. Um, and yeah, so like, if somebody wasn't getting it, there were like, five other people who would correct them, so I never had to. It was really, really cool. They're my chosen family, so... Like, I went home, they've been, been calling me Kai for a while and they had finally gotten it. It maybe took about a month or two, um, and then when I came home from coming out to my parents, they were like, that sucks, but you've got us now and they've been very supportive since then.

Um, so, it definitely ran the spectrum of just like, really terrible to just really great. And it was really weird whoever was able to do it. Like, my youngest sister, her entire life has known me and was able to pick it up right away, and there are people who knew me for less time and had harder, uh, bigger struggles with it. People are weird.

Pauline 21:24

Does your little sister um, ever gloat about, like, "Oh, I chose your name?" (laughter)

Kai 21:30

I don't think she does. I don't think she even remembers that she did. Um... I should ask her that, that's actually funny. Yeah, I don't know. Maybe she does. But I don't think she even remembers. It was a very like, sidebar conversation, it was like a Facebook like, instant message thing that we did. And yeah, they were like, "why don't you do this?" And I was like, "Oh, that's actually kind of great." And I don't think they ever really put it together that they chose my name.

Pauline 21:58

(laughter) Well, it's okay, cause you still give them credit. I'm sure one day they'll probably think about it and be like, "Oh, yeah." (laughter)

Kai 22:10

"I chose his name!" Yeah.

Pauline 22:14

All right. I'm going to go ahead and stop sharing my screen and then I'm going to also, um, finish the recording.

APPENDIX I: Lian Kim Interview Transcripts

Pauline 0:04
All righty. So, I just want to remind you that we are recording and then at any point, if you want to um, withdraw from the, the interview, from the whole process, you still can, just let me know. You can just text me um, and say like, "hey, Pauline, I don't want to be part of the study anymore," and I'll delete all your information. And um, no harm, no foul. Is it okay, if I share my screen with you? I have the questions up.

Lian 0:32
Um, I have my question, the interpretation here, so you don't have to share your screen.

Pauline 0:40
Oh, okay. That's fine. Alrighty, so I will be making notes. So on the off chance, there's an awkward silence just know it's because I'm typing and making notes. (laughter). Sometimes people are like, wait, you didn't say anything? There's an awkward silence. I'm like, I'm sorry, I'm trying to type as fast as I can. (laughter)

Lian 0:58
Okay. If you're more comfortable with screen sharing, you can do it. I mean...

Pauline 1:04
No, it's okay. Okay.

Lian 1:05
(laughter)

Pauline 1:06
You have them. That's fine. Um, but let's start with question number one. What was your birth given name?

Lian 1:14
Yeah, my birth given them is Lyounghee Kim,, as you can see here in the monitor-

Pauline 1:20
Mm-hmm.

Lian 1:20
On the screen.

Pauline 1:23
And can you say that for me one more time?

Lian 1:25
Lyounghee?

Pauline 1:26
Lyounghee?

Lian 1:27
Yes. So, L-Y-O-U-N-G is one word, Ylong`, one word. The young like L plus young, lyong, and hee is the different word.

Pauline 1:38
Oh.

Lian 1:38
Lyong, and hee is the different word. Those are my first name Young hee.

Pauline 1:45
Okay. And then it so is Kim your last name?

Lian 1:50
Yes.

Pauline 1:51

And then is it common in your culture to have a middle name? Or is that like an American idea?

Lian 1:58

Lyounghee, is, no, no, that's the traditional Korean name.

Pauline 2:06

Oh, okay.

Lian 2:07

We don't have middle name, but Lyounghee is my first name.

Pauline 2:11

Oh, okay. Okay. And so, um, who named you? Like, did your parents name you, did your grandparents? What was the process of how you got your name?

Lian 2:22

Um, in South Korea, some people ask for good name, um, in the name expert's office. So, my grandparents went there and asked a very good name for my birth time, and year and day, and so they bought this name. So, yeah.

Pauline 2:52

Oh, so then, can names, you said that they bought the name. So then can the names not be repeated?

Lian 2:59

Oh, no, they can, yeah, repeat it, but it is good for my own ying yang and five filler and things like that. It is kind of a Chinese philosophy and study about a destiny and name. Yeah, it's kind of cultural background, so...

Pauline 3:26

Okay, that's cool. Yeah. And then, um, were you named after anyone in your family?

Lian 3:32

No, no, no.

Pauline 3:35

And then, does your name give away any hints to your gender identity?

Lian 3:41

Yes, it is. Um, in... okay, let me explain the meaning of my name.

Pauline 3:50

Okay, yeah.

Lian 3:50

Lyoung means, um, "brilliant" or "smart.." And hee means uh, "lady." So hee has the gender meaning.

Pauline 4:01

Oh, okay, interesting.

Lian 4:03

Yeah.

Pauline 4:03

Interesting. Um, what were some cultural traditions that might have um, stemmed from your name?

Lian 4:15

Um, perhaps the hee, I mean, yeah. For girls, they tend to give name like hee or uh, the name, and with hee or some word, sun, yung, things like that. So and Sun, I mean, when I see Dr. Hong's name, Yangsun Hong, I can see Oh, she's, um, the professor will be she or her. Yeah.

Pauline 4:55
Okay. Do they also do that in um, male names as well?
Lian 4:58
Uh, some word is, some word is very close to the male name. Like, um, I have a Korean student in my class this semester, and his name is K---e, and I see his name and I recognize "Oh, okay, this student is male." Oh, yeah.
Pauline 5:24
Oh, interesting. That's interesting. Um, do you happen to know if your name stems from like, any religious background, holy sacred text or anything of that sort?
Lian 5:36
No, it is not related to them.
Pauline 5:39
Okay. And then would there be any, like political beliefs influenced in your birth given name?
Lian 5:46
No, no, no, no.
Pauline 5:48
Okay. And then how has your name changed since you've come to the United States? Hmm.
Lian 5:55
Mm-hmm, yeah. Um, it started from 2016 when I was prepare for moving to the United States. I asked my partner, he have lived in the United States about um, 17 years at that moment? I asked him, "Hey, my name is Lyounghee and I'm not sure whether Americans and other friends and professors can say my name. What do you think so? Oh, um, what do you think about that? So he said, "Oh, you're gonna get mad about their pronunciation." (laughter)
Pauline 6:42
(laughter)
Lian 6:42
Yeah, I mean, yeah, he had that kind of experience, and he strongly recommend you, I need to have some short and kind of sound English name um, for better communication. And he told me, an American name culture um, are not like South Korea or other Asian countries, they just give the name from family or um, give a name with the um, uh, easy pronunciation, for easy pronunciation. So, you don't have to worry too much about the meaning of name, and just think about the short name that you can use and you like. So. I created some name list and he created some name list and then I choose one that I really, I, I liked the most. That was Lian.
Pauline 7:04
Okay. Okay. And so what, I'm just curious, what other names did you all come up with?
Lian 8:00
Oh. Um, different spelling of Lean, there was two, sounds the same, Lean, Lian. And the other thing was Lisa, or (laughter) Lily or spelling, starting with spelling L, you know, mostly. Mm-hmm.
Pauline 8:23
Okay. And so was the, I heard you say that there was other different spellings of Lian. What, what did the spelling mean to you?
Lian 8:33

Mmm. Okay, let me show you Lian was the first candidate and that was what I am using right now.

Pauline 8:46

Mmm-hmm.

Lian 8:47

For me, I know the first one is most, uh, more used in the United States. But I preferred, I preferred the second one, because it is shorter, first, and secondly, I looked for this word in Google. And I found that Lean um, is the way Chinese people um, use the sounds of Lian in their word, and in South Korea, we use a lot of um, words from China, a Chinese characteristics, characters, language character, so I figured, okay, Lian sounds, Lian sounds good for me. And that meaning has the flower lotus.

Pauline 9:46

Oh.

Lian 9:46

Yeah, and I, I particularly like the flower, um, because as you know, as you might know, um, the flower has the meaning that um... because of these functions of plant, um, even though it is in the mess area or waters or things like that, it doesn't get hurt or it doesn't get messed. So, yeah. I've figured some meaning from it (laughter) now, um, um, when I, yeah, I, I assumed that I might have many challenges and differences, um, differences and difficult times in the United States than I might um, remind of the name, what I'm using, then I, perhaps, um, stand for myself, regardless of the difficult challenges, things like that.

Pauline 10:54

Ah. Okay. I like how you found the meaning in your name. Um, relating to the lotus.

Lian 11:03

Yeah, yeah, I realized that, um, especially after I read your questions, and I was thinking about my name again. And then I found, okay, there's a name, it was created for instrumental purpose first, but um, the more I found and I dig, and I give the meaning, or the name, the name is getting more meaning and more deeper meaning for myself and my identity. So yeah, I really like the subject of your thesis.

Pauline 11:50

Thank you. (laughter)

Lian11:52

Yeah.

Pauline 11:54

How do you think your name now relates to your identity, now being like, I guess a, an immigrant but also still relating back to your Korean culture?

Lian 12:05

Mm-hmm. Okay, um, firstly, as I said earlier, Lian is kind of Asian name and not, not like South Korean, Korean name, but, you know, Chinese names, and American people doesn't, cannot differentiate Koreans from Chinese, so I think it doesn't matter if it's Chinese name or Korean name, apparently. But I know that meaning, and I use and created this name from my original name, so it's kind of related to my own identity from South Korea, but it also has a new identity that I am, that I created in the United States. Um. Okay, let me tell a quick story.

Pauline 13:04

Okay.

Lian 13:04

Yeah, as you know, I've been in the United States about four years, and I use this name about three and a half years in Texas. And at that time, I started learning in in, learning and speaking in English again. So, this name is, this name is really close to um, how I look like at the moment, I missed a lot and I feared, I felt fear about speaking out and some kind of microaggression in Texas. The, the environment are very different from what I am experiencing right now. (laughter) Lot of peoples are white and I don't have any Asian friends, um, no Korean friends.

Pauline 14:04
Mm-hmm.

Lian 14:05
And everywhere I went, um, I felt and I observe the gaze from the white people. Yeah. So, when I decide to move to Albuquerque, I thought whether um, I changed my um, name again to Lyounghee because I want to huh, found, I want to bring real me to the new environment. (laughter)

Pauline 14:49
(laughter)

Lian 14:49
So, I was think about it, um, but at the moment the reason why I choose to keep my English name Lian, um, bringing to the UNM was because, okay, um, Lian is also my identity and, I, and I'm gonna use this name to build and empower myself and this will be the process. The Lian, um, okay, let me say this way, weak Lian or-

Pauline 15:39
No. No, no. Not weak Lian. Strong Leann always.

Lian 15:45
Okay.

Pauline 15:45
Maybe a little bit oppressed.

Lian 15:47
Oh, yeah. Oppressed Leann, was also me, and comparatively lower level of English speaking skills, Lian was also me, and I'm going to getting better. I know that and I want to give that name, I want, I want my name to have the chance. Okay, you're going to get better, you're going to get better. And after about five or four or five years when I get the PhD degree, and I will say okay, though, that Liannis improved, and I want to, I want to prove myself that I'm, I'm going to get better. So, that's why I keep the name.

Pauline 16:39
Yeah. So, this is just, I just want to pick your brain a little bit about it. Um, on your PhD, are you going to have both your Korean and your English name then?

Lian 16:50
Um, it's tricky, because it's about my um, green card and things like that, so I should do official name.

Pauline 17:01
Oh, okay. And then both the, you know, Lyounghee and Lian earned the PhD and it just speaks more to this great story of like, empowering your name.

Lian 17:15
Hmm, yeah, that's good idea.

Pauline 17:18
(laughter)

Lian 17:20
Actually, my master's thesis has both name.
Pauline 17:24
Oh, good. Or you can, you just, you can, you can tell them "Oh, I did it before, I can do it again."
Lian 17:33
(laughter)
Pauline 17:35
Then it'll be your PhD. And it's like, No, I have this paper that says I'm an expert.
(laughter)
Lian 17:43
Yeah, yeah. That's the story about my name. And it was a very good reminder that why I choose this name and hmm, how much I accept myself in the United States. Lian in the United States. (laughter) Yeah.
Pauline 18:10
I'm also a little curious, do you happen to use Lian when you go back home or just in the United States?
Lian 18:17
Um, just in the United States, because, yeah, all the people I know in South Korea, they call me Lyoung. Not Lyounghee, they call me Lyoung. Yeah.
Pauline 18:28
Oh, okay. And so, why do they shorten it? Is it just like a nickname?
Lian 18:36
It's like, um, when I was in high school, I yeah, I, I, told them. I told them. Okay, you can call me Lyoung I mean, I just wanted to delete the name of hee, that, um... that they make. I feel, I felt, that made the boundary of my gender.
Pauline 19:07
Mm-hmm, okay.
Lian 19:08
Yeah. So-
Pauline 19:10
You didn't want to be bound by the hee.
Lian19:13
Yeah.
Pauline 19:14
Okay. That's, that's awesome. Um, can you tell me a little bit more about that story? When did you decide to just tell people like, kind of drop the hee?
Lian 19:25
Oh, yeah, it's about in middle school. In middle school, yeah. Okay. Um, I didn't tell you before but yeah, my birth give name is Lyounghee, but my mom accidently report my name as Younghee. She, she dropped L-
Pauline 19:51
Oh!
Lian 19:53
...because of um, some Korean language law.
Pauline 19:57
Oh, okay.

Lian 19:58
Okay. For a better and law-based name, um, she thought she need to drop the L. So, I officially used the Younghee from elementary school to high school.
Pauline 20:17
Mmm-hmm.
Lian 20:17
Well, I didn't realize what the problem was in my elementary school, but I figured, oh, my name was wrong. So, I started using Younghee on officially um, from the first day of class, in every year, so when we, when we introduce ourselves on the first class day, I always uh, write my Chinese name on blackboard and then tell them what, uh, what, what is my name and what means. And you can tell me Lyounghee at the moment in my first grade of middle school, but when I found my gender identity, I started dropped hee in the second, um, second grade of middle school.
Pauline 21:12
Wow. That's great. That's so much like, history to your name.
Lian 21:18
Yeah. (laughter)
Pauline 21:19
(laughter) So, then, um, so is your name officially now the Lyounghee or how did that, how did that, when did that change on your official documents?
Lian 21:33
Um, I changed it the official document in, in, when I was in 19, after a Korean SAT.
Pauline 21:44
Oh. Okay. What was that... I'm sorry, what were you saying?
Lian 21:49
Oh, yeah. Before we go to university, so my official files at after high school is all or the old with Lyounghee, the name of the Lyounghee.
Pauline 22:05
Okay. Was it hard to change from Younghee to Lyounghee?
Lian 22:11
Um, I thought so. I feel so at the time, so I, uh, I asked the experts, the law expert. I paid a lot of money, about $350 to change the name.
Pauline 22:32
Oh my goodness.
Lian 22:34
Yeah, but some people who are very familiar with name change, the legal name change, they just do it so they, they don't have to pay a lot of money.
Pauline 22:48
Okay, okay. What besides paying money, is there anything else that um, you have to do for the process of changing your name?
Lian 22:57
Yes, I had to submit some paperwork, like why do I need to change my name? Mmm-hmm. And I need to prove some uh, two people who prove why I need to change my name. Things like that.
Pauline 23:17
Oh, okay.
Lian 23:18

Yeah, little yeah. Yeah,. bother, bothering things.

Pauline 23:23

Okay, awesome. So then, when you were growing up, did you spell your name Lyounghee, or did you spell it Younghee?

Lian 23:35

Lyounghee. With L, yeah.

Pauline 23:41

Sure. Awesome. All right. I'm gonna go ahead and stop the recording.

Lian 23:44

Okay.

Pauline 0:02
... record first. (laughter) Sorry.
Nash 0:05
That's good.
Pauline 0:07
All righty, thank you again, for agreeing to do a name narrative with me. And of course, if you don't feel like you want to respond to any of the questions, feel free to just kind of pass it. Um, and then of course, if you don't want to do this before, during even a month, a week later, um, you don't like what you've said, what's written, feel free to just text me, email me and say, Hey, Pauline, I don't want to do this anymore.
Nash 0:34
Okay.
Pauline 0:35
Perfectly fine. Um, like Yeah, so let's get started. Um, would you mind telling me your birth given name?
Nash 0:44
Yeah, so I was thinking about this. It's kind of, um, it's not as simple as just one name. So, I, my parents put on my birth certificate, Natalie was my um, my given name, legally, but they never once called me that ever they always called me Addie. That was my nickname. And I have never, I never once in my entire life heard my parents use the name Natalie, but that was what was on my birth certificate, and what they named me um, but I was always Addie. That was my name that I, that I used.
Pauline 1:17
Oh, interesting. And then um, did they also give you like a middle name or um?
Nash 1:25
Yeah, Nance, which is my grandmother's, on my dad side's, maiden name. So, legally, I was born with the name Natalie Nance Jones. Um, but I always went by Addie.
Pauline 1:37
Oh, okay. Did it, how did Addie come about?
Nash 1:42
Yeah, it's, so my mom has this funny thing where she named all of us kids a longer name, and then called us all nicknames. My siblings have name nicknames that are more similar to their legal name than mine. I always kind of was frustrated with my mom because it felt so distant. Like, it, Addie is not a, um, a name that's a nickname for Natalie. Like it doesn't like match up. Like my brother's Alexander and goes by Alex. That is, that makes sense, that's a perfect match. My sister is Mallory and goes by Mally, which is a little bit different, but it, you can see where Mally, Mallory, Mal, you know, it all makes sense. Um, Natalie, Addie, like, I'm like, you really have to stretch like Nad- addely, you know, like, you really have to like stretch to make it make sense that those, that that's a nickname for Natalie. My mom always loved the name Addie. She always thought it was a good name for a child with brown hair. And my siblings were both born blonde and I was born with dark hair. And so she was like, oh, like, maybe that's a name that I could use on this kid. But she felt like it wasn't a proper name, like it needed a longer legal name to be matched up with, like it needed to be short for something because it's like, it felt nickname-y and she liked Natalie. Um, Addie is technically a family name. Her grand, her grandmother was Addie Um, but she didn't know that when she fell in love with the name. She found it because her friend's

uh, niece was named Addie and she just really thought it was cute. And then she was telling her mom about it, and her mom was like, you know that's my mom's name. She was like No, I didn't know that and so my great grandmother was Adeline and my mom told me before I changed my name that she wished she had named me Adeline as the legal name. And she doesn't know why she didn't do that. She always kind of liked Natalie and went with that. But she ended up, she called me Adeline pretty regularly as kind of a little nickname or a pet name. never called me Natalie. I never once have ever heard that name come out of her mouth. And so, it's kind of funny. Um, but so yeah, it's it's kind of a family name. But that's almost kind of an accident.

Pauline 4:08

Mm hmm. Okay. Wow. And thank you so much for all that history in your name. I think you covered a good portion of um, some of the questions. Um, let's move to question number four. Did you feel like your name, or for your birth given name hinted to your gender identity a lot or a little?

Nash 4:29

Yeah, it definitely did. You know, I felt like what, I always was really embarrassed of Natalie, because even before I was kind of um, figuring out my trans identity, I was always a tomboy, always kind of a masculine girl um, as a kid, and um, Natalie felt very feminine to me, and Addie felt a little more tomboyish. Um, like I could I could take that name and kind of feel like it was something that aligned a little more with my personality as a kid. And so then, you know, there are times that your legal name comes up, you know, or whatever, on the first day of school, they always have your legal name on the roster and call it out. And I was always really embarrassed of it, because I felt like it was really feminine, Natalie was. And um, I tried to make Addie work for me, I kind of tried to think of it as a little bit more androgynous um, of a name, because some people, like I had a soccer coach named Adam, who is from Wales. He was from the UK. And his nickname was Addie. And that's a common nickname for Adam in the UK. And so, I remember really liking finding that information out because it is a feminine name in the US, but I was like, I can make this work for me. Eventually, though, I did feel like Addie was too feminine for me to feel like I could keep it.

Pauline 6:05

Okay, that's fair. That's fair. Um, were there any cultural traditions or expectations that stem from your birth given name?

Nash 6:14

Cultural traditions or expectations? Um, I mean, yeah, I mean, just the fact that it's feminine, I guess. Um, you know, there's expectations that I was a girl, you know, um, my parents would not have named me that if they didn't think, you know, being assigned female at birth meant that I was going to be a girl and grow into a woman. And that is a culturally feminine name that you would not give to somebody who was assigned male at birth, or somebody who you weren't sure was going to grow up to be a girl. You know, like, even if I was assigned female at birth as a kid, if my parents had not thought that that meant, of course I would be a girl, of course I would be a woman, I think they would have chosen a more gender neutral name. Um, but they did have those expectations, like most people do, that everyone is cis, that everyone is cisgender, and, um, so that that's the whole reason there's gender reveal parties, right is people think that a sex assigned at birth means a gender. And so they name these babies with feminine or masculine cultural names. So, I would say the cultural traditions is the gender binary, being the only way to live and the

only, and the expectation is that a baby assigned female at birth, of a baby with a particular body, um, is going to grow into a particular gender and identify in that way and behave in a, in a stereotypical way along the gender binary. So, I guess the expectation is that babies assigned female at birth are going to become women, and the cultural tradition is that women are feminine. And I, I was neither of those. (laughter)

Pauline 8:11

(laughter) That's fair. Um, Do you happen to know if your name, your birth given name, stem,ed from like a religious or holy text or had some type of-

Nash 8:23

I do believe, and this is something that I, you know,I haven't confirmed, but my, what I was always told is that Addie is, uh, stems from, it's a traditional American slave name. Um, it was a nickname given to African slaves when they were brought over to the US along with like, Sadie and a few names like that. Um, so that's what I was always told is that that's the tradition. Um, there is a American Girl doll named Addie and she's the, the the American Girl doll, who's a slave. She's the African American, um, American Girl doll. And that's her (clears throat) backstory is that she escaped from slavery. And so I believe that that's the tradition of the name.

Pauline 9:13

Very interesting.

Nash 9:15

Do you, I was noticing the sub, sub questions in four, do we need to talk about those or no?

Pauline 9:22

I feel like you answer them as you go and answer the question. So, um, if you want to, of course, definitely talk about them you can.

Nash 9:32

Well, I guess, I guess I was thinking that we should talk about it just, I mean, you know, me personally, so you might know but you know that I'm trans and I'm non binary, so I don't identify as a man or a woman, and I'm, but I am masculine presenting. And so that's the gender I identify with is non binary. And the, you know, that has a lot to do with my relationship to my given name and my name now. (dog barking in background)

Pauline 10:02

Yeah, definitely go ahead and give a little bit more about that.

Nash 10:07

Sure. Um... so, um, in terms of do you feel the commonly identified gender identification and your personal gender identification are the same, like, that was a big problem with my name was, (clears throat) you know, I was always pretty masculine. Like, I dressed like I do now, when I, before I transitioned, and when I had that name, and my name, because it has those feminine connotations, made people identify me as a woman. Even when I didn't identify that way. Like I, when I was nonbinary, but hadn't um, transitioned medically, like, my voice hadn't lowered, I didn't have some of the secondary sex characteristics that I exhibit now, um, I was, you know, my body was just as it had been, when I was born. I felt like my name was pigeonholing me into people perceiving me as a, as a lesbian or a woman who was kind of masculine or androgynous. And that's not how I identified, you know, I identified as nonbinary at the time even when I had that name. Um, and so, I felt like those were, that was a big disconnect, that my name was a barrier to people seeing me, and really understanding how I actually identified. Um, and family expectations were, you know,

when my parents really liked my name, you know, I think that it's, it's hard to change your name when your parents gave it to you and they really liked it. Um, and there was expectations that I could be who, you know, eventually, my parents got to a place where they were okay with my gender expression, they were okay with me being masculine and um dressing the way I dress and all of that, but um, they, especially my dad, thought I could be as masculine as I wanted to be, and still have my name and still keep my name, that it was important to them, that it felt disrespectful to them to, to, to get rid of my name. So, there was an expectation that sure, be who you are, but like you can be who you are with that name.

Pauline 12:31

Yeah. Interesting. Interesting. So, and I'm just curious, I guess this kind of goes into more um, of your you going through the legal process of changing your name. Um, but was there a lot of pushback in you wanting to change your name?

Nash 12:47

Yeah. Yeah, not, not so much with my friends or coworkers, luckily. I was working in an LGBTQ Center at the time, so they were all very affirming, because that was something we helped people do is navigate the name change process. So, I was really lucky in that way. Um, I know a lot of people have a really hard, you know, changing your name is daunting. Your name is on everything. And so it's, you have to tell everybody, and it becomes, especially if it's something you were thinking about privately for a long time, um, it all of a sudden becomes very public. And it has to, um, so that you can change all your documents and tell everyone and everyone can start changing the way that they refer to you. My parents had a very hard time with it, um, more so than anything else in my transition or anything. That was the hardest thing, was the name. They really liked it. They gave it to me. So, they felt offended that I was getting rid of it. Um, and my mom, her initial reaction, when I, I told her first, I told her before I told my dad that I was changing it, her initial reaction is no one is ever going to call you that, when I said I want to go by Nash. She was like, "No one is ever going to do that for you. No one's ever going to call you Nash. Um, Don't be silly. This is ridiculous. You're making yourself inaccessible to people," like basically you're making yourself too weird to be liked um, by doing that kind of thing. Like it's, it's too far. You can do whatever you want with your appearance, but do not do this. And she equated it, she shared a story with me at the time that was one of her girlfriends, like one of her, her cis women friends was um, wanting to go by her middle name. You know, like her name was Janet and she wanted to go by Stacey. But it wasn't a gender thing, it was just she wanted to go by her middle name, but she's like, you know, in her 50s or 60s. And my mom was like, I mean, it's ridiculous that she wants us to do that, no one's, everyone's having a really hard time with it. It makes it a whole, big thing. Like, and I was like mom, like, first of all, you should probably call her Stacy if that's what she wants to be called. But also like, this is different, like what I'm doing is different. Um, it's it's a gender transition and that's different.

That said, she's great about it now, she never messes up my name. She likes my new name, um, and she's really sweet about it. She gets compliments on my name because people think she named me. If they don't know that I'm trans, then they're like, oh, Nash, that is so cute. I love that name. And she's like, Oh, thanks. You know, she gets credit for my name and she likes that. Um, my dad, um, is not as good at remembering my name, he still messes up, calls me, Addie. And um, he works on it, but he's not good at it, and um, he also uses the wrong pronouns for me and all that. So it all goes kind of hand in hand. But

when I told him I was going to change my name, he was the last person I told. So, my mom was the first person I told, besides my partner, and then I rolled it out with my friends, and I changed it at work, and I got new business cards, and a new email address and all that. And then I told my dad, and he was really upset about that and offended that I hadn't come to him first. I was living elsewhere at the time, and he wanted me to hold off on telling anybody else and come home for the holidays, and have a family discussion about whether I could change my name. And he wanted it to be a family decision. And I basically had to tell him like, it's already done. You don't get any say in this, and this is what it is. I'm, my name is Nash now. And he threw a fit, hung up on me, that kind of thing. And he called me back later that day, having obviously thought really hard about not loving the way he had responded, and um, he told me, (throat clear) his dad was named Nic, well, his name was Norman, but he went by Nick. And um, I guess my grandfather, who I never met, on my dad's side, um, who went by Nick, at work, his friends called him Nace. N-A-C-E. And um, he said, would you consider Nace instead of Nash, because that was my dad's name, and it would still be a family name, and it would be showing respect for me and your family and your grandfather. And I think it would be really cool if you went by Nace.

Pauline 17:24

Mm-hmm.

Nash 17:24

Because that was my dad's name, or his nickname. And um, that was really sweet. It was his way of trying to be involved and, and show me that he's okay with me changing my name, but just wanted some involvement in it. And I was like, that's cool. I was like, Dad, you could totally call me Nace if you want to, like that could be our little nickname or whatever, but um, I've decided on my name, Nash is it, I, this was not a thoughtless process. I've gone through a lot to decide on this name, and, and this is the one I'm going with. And that was hard. It was hard for a long time. Um, he's better at it now. Um, he doesn't bristle when I say you know, call and I say, hey, it's Nash or whatever. But um, yeah, they, my parents were the hardest by far, when, in terms of pushback.

Pauline 18:15

Oh, wow. Like, I hope that your dad continues to recognize who you are as a person now.

Nash 18:22

It's a process. It's a process. He had a hard time. He had a hard time. He still, he says, Hey, girl, and that kind of stuff to me all the time. You know, it's, it's a process. (chuckles)

Pauline 18:36

I'm glad that your mom has found some pride in it. Oh, you like Nash?

Nash 18:41

Yeah, exactly. Yeah, and now that I'm on the radio, and I say my name, you know, 17 times an hour on the radio and stuff and people know my name in town. And uh, she really likes that and there'll be like, "You're Nash Jones's mom?" You know, just like super stoked on that so yeah, she, she did find some pride in it.

Pauline 19:02

Nice, nice. Um, and so we've talked a little bit about how your name's changed, um, but could you tell me, did you change, did you fully change your middle name as well? I saw that you kept Jones, um...

Nash 19:16

Yeah, so I, I added a middle name but I kept my original middle name. So my full name legally now is Nash Addicus Nance Jones and I have two middle names. Um, I kept

Nance, which was my grandmother's maiden name and my given middle name, because I loved her. Um, her name was Leigh Nance, and so that's another thing about Natalie Nance, the fact that my first, that my name had her name in it, um, that I forgot to mention that but yeah, so my, my given name Natalie Nance and her name was Leigh Nance. And then she married Nick Jones and became Leigh Nance Jones and so my name was Natalie Nance Jones, and I loved my grandmother. She died when I was young, when I was in second grade. But um, I had, she was my favorite family member out of all my extended family, we were really tight. And so, I didn't want to, I didn't want to drop her name. And I felt like Nash Nance didn't have a great ring to it. Um, and I also was all torn up about leaving my old name behind. feeling like, am I going to be the same person? I want to be the same person I've always been. And I felt worried about dropping Addie and having lost who I am and who I've been this whole time. You know, I didn't change my name until I was 26 years old, and legally, and so I had 26 years of being Addie, and I was just um, thinking I wanted to incorporate that name, somehow into my name. And so, that's where I came up with Addicus, um, is it felt like, almost like that masculinized version of Addie that I'd always tried to tap into and feel okay with, where I was like, Addie could be a nickname for Atticus, which is a masculine name culturally. And so, it felt like honoring that name in the way that I always wanted it to be, which is as a, as a more masculine name. So, it's a non-traditional spelling of Atticus because Addie is spelled A-D-D-I-E. So, Addicus is A-D-D-I-C-U-S rather than with T's so that it kind of um, spoke to my old name.

Pauline 21:41

I like the play on with the spelling as well. That's really cool. And then what influenced you to change or transition your name?

Nash 21:50

My gender. Um, I was trying, like I said, really hard to make Addie work for me. Um, there was a while where I considered naming myself Addicus so that I could keep the nickname Addie and everyone could still just call me Addie and I wouldn't have to change my name. But I would just drop Natalie and replace it with Addicus, uh, so that um, it was a nickname for a more affirming legal name for me because Natalie was super triggering in terms of my gender dysphoria. I have um, gender dysphoria, I'm diagnosed with gender dysphoria, I'm trans and I'm, I'm not only transgender, but I'm transsexual I, I've medically transitioned and um, I, before I even decided to start testosterone and have surgeries and things, I knew that I wanted to change my name. That was the first thing I wanted to do. Because I was trying to live authentically as a nonbinary person. Well, actually, let me take that back. I changed my pronouns first to they pronouns. Um, that was the first thing I did. And I felt like that was really a helpful step in terms of other people starting to see me and interact with me, you know, like, I don't use my own pronouns, other people do.

Pauline 23:13

Mm-hmm.

Nash 23:13

So, as people started using they pronouns for me, it helps them shift in their head, which gender I am. So they're not always conceiving me, of me as a woman, because they're always using she and Addie is a feminine name. So that was helpful, the pronoun step. Pretty shortly after I decided I needed to change my name, because as much as I was trying to make Addie work for me as an gender neutral name. It's just not. It is a culturally feminine name in our culture. And so people would say things like, Addie, that's my

grandma's name. And it's just like, Oh, my God, like, this is not working. And so I decided that I needed to do it to live authentically in my gender. That's why I decided to change my name.

Pauline 24:01

That's totally fair. And then, how did you decide to come up with Nash? Did someone influence it? Did you seek someone for like, some advice for it?

Nash 24:11

Yeah, so that's, I don't, it was the top name that I wanted to name my child. It was on my top, it was on my baby name list. I loved the name Nash. Um, I got it because I, um, so Peter Nash, Mr. Nash was my eighth and ninth grade English teacher, and my junior year of high school poetry teacher, creative writing teacher. Um, I took his classes three times, and he was the most influential teacher I've ever had. Changed my life completely. Um, really, I was not doing well in school, and he turned that around for me. I, we started the poetry unit in our eighth grade English class. I remember very well, I said, poetry sucks. I said that out loud in class. He was like, oh, Addie, like, we're gonna figure that out for you, um, give it a chance. And I fell in love with poetry, I was really depressed at that time in my life, and poetry saved me. And I started writing tons, and I wanted to be an English teacher just like him. And I did my senior project, TAing in his class and taught the poetry unit to the eighth graders, and he just, he changed my life. And he advocated for me with my parents with my learning disabilities, and affirmed me um, that I you know, just because I couldn't spell well doesn't mean that I wasn't smart, and that I didn't have a lot of potential, and he was the safest person, and this very gentle man. Um, you know, I didn't, I have these kind of tough guys in my family, and um, he was such a gentle, affirming, safe, masculine person in my life, and really the only one I had in my life.

And when I was considering transitioning, something that I was really worried about was that I don't like men very much. And I didn't really want to be a man, you know, I like just, I didn't want to be misogynistic. I didn't want to be some macho guy. And when I thought about how to live as a masculine person in this world, or someone who's read as a man, because even if I don't identify that way, people were going to read me that way if I transitioned. People do now read me as a man regularly. How, you know, that Mr. Nash was the example that I could look to as like the way to be a good man, and to be a good person in this world, even though you benefit from patriarchy. Even though you have male privilege, how do you navigate that as a safe, gentle person, um, which is what I wanted to be. And so, he really resonated with me just in general, in terms of my vision of like, how to live as someone who's read as a man in this world.

And I always liked the name, I had wanted to give it to my child. And in fact, we adopted my dog, the year that I changed my name. And I was going back and forth with my partner and my roommates about what we were going to name the puppy. And we were going back and forth, and I was pushing for Nash, I wanted to name the dog Nash. And Abigail, my partner said, I don't really like that name. And I was like, what, like, I thought we were gonna name our kid that like, I love that name. And like, she was like, it's to kind of harsh and abrupt and I don't think it's good name for the dog. I don't want to name the dog that. And we settled on Jackson is what we named the dog. And within that conversation, Abigail said, I think you want to be named Nash. She was like, you are, you keep talking about how much you love the name. You're trying to give it to everything. You want to name the dog Nash, you want to name your kid Nash. Think about it, I think you want to be named Nash. And at that point, I had been thinking, Addicus, you know, that was what I was going

to go with, because it was easier on everybody to just not even have to change how they called me and all I was going to change was the legal documents and, and that was just my, gonna be my little thing, was gonna be a lot easier that way. But when she said that, I let it sink in. And I would do this thing, in, when I was in my car or thinking, daydreaming just in my head, where I would introduce myself with, you know, Hi, I'm Addicus, Hi, I'm Nash, I would imagine graduating college and you know, or graduate school or whatever. I imagine being at a graduation and then being like, Nash Addicus Nance Jones, you know, at the graduation ceremony and just trying to hear it resonate in your head, because until people start calling you that, I mean, you just have to kind of imagine people calling you that and think about how it felt. So, um, when she said that, that maybe I wanted to be named Nash, I let that start to simmer and I started exploring how that felt. And I was like, she's right. Like, that's the name for me. Mr. Nash is who I want to emulate in this transition. Um, it sounds, I love the name. It feels good. When I started imagining introducing myself as Nash, I was like, I like that, Nash Jones. Like that sounds good. Um, and so, um, yeah, so I asked Abigail to start calling me that privately. She started calling me that. I then rolled it out to my two roommates at the time that I was living with They started calling me that, and we only used it in the house and nobody else knew. Then I started really liking it. And I was like this, this feels right, this feels right. And so I started rolling it out more broadly after that.

Pauline 30:12

Aw, I love how Abigail helped you kind of like, you want to be called Nash. (laughter)

Nash 30:18

Exactly. She was like you're giving this to everybody you love and all these cute little things around you like, just give it to yourself. You can have it. You're allowed to have it.

Pauline 30:27

That's so sweet of her. I'm glad that she, she knew you so well to the point where it's like, okay, let's, let's stop playing around you want this name.

Nash 30:36

Yeah, she knew I was taking the easy way out with Addicus, that it was not my favorite name. I was only choosing it because it would be easier on other people. Um, and that's something that I do all the time, you know, do things because it's easier for other people. And um, my transition was probably the number one thing I've done in my life that was really just for me, even if other people didn't want it for me, even if they didn't understand or it made our relationship harder. Um, and so I'm really glad that I ended up choosing a name that was the one I wanted, not the name that would make things easier for other people.

Pauline 31:13

Yeah, um, definitely. Were there any, any other major things that you thought about when you took on Nash?

Nash 31:18

A weird one is that I felt really conflicted, that it what, didn't start with an A. Um, it's funny because it Nash is actually it sounds kind of derivative of Natalie, it's like kind of similar, the N-A, and, you know, but that was never my name. So, it was like, it kind of made sense, you know, on documents, that I went from Natalie to Nash, you know, they're kind of similar. But Natalie wasn't my name, Addie was, and so I always identified as being someone with an A name. And I know that might kind of sound weird, but like, there's something about the first letter of your name that like, kind of has a personality to it, it kind

of, it kind of just, you have a vibe about you because you have a P name or an A name or, you know, whatever. There's just something about that, and it was really, that was the hardest part for me was like, I really liked this name. And I'd rather have had an A name because I'm an A name person. Like, that's just, I always come first in the alphabet with my first name, and there's just something personality wise that resonates with that. And uh, so that was a funny thing that I had to consider and decided, you know, I like the name. I think it makes sense that it resonates with my legal name. In that I've always actually, my true initials were always N-N-J and then they still are. So, I kind of let it go. But that still is a thing where I'm like, did I change the like, trajectory of my life by not having A name anymore?

Pauline 32:52

Yeah. Well, okay, that's fair. Um, were there any pre-existing aspects? So, familial, racial, ethical, ethnical, sorry, um, et cetera that is still, still might influence Nash?

Nash 33:14

Yeah, so... culturally, it's masculine, and it resonates with people as a, as a guy's name. And so, that's helpful in terms of me being read more authentically as myself, though, I'm not a man. So it's, it's kind of like, it's never gonna actually be fully aligned. Like, you know, I went from being read as a woman all the time to being read as a man all the time. Neither are correct. I feel more comfortable being, being read as a man than a woman. So, you know, pick your poisons, like, you know, best, you know, best of two evils or whatever they say, lesser of two evils. Um, so, um, there's that. I think it means under the ash tree, or of the ash tree, um, but that's not really part of why I chose it. It's typically a last name. And so that's kind of funny is you know, Nash is, is a last name, that's where I found it was Peter Nash. And um, there's, there's definitely that aspect to it, is that it's a surname, and it's also somebody else's family's name, and that I like took on for myself. So, that's kind of funny, um, because it's not my family name. You know, that's not a name within my culture. Um, I don't know a lot about where it comes from as a surname or the kind of cultural heritage of it as a surname, as a last name. Um... let's see... uh, it's...yeah, I guess that's not really cultural. I was trying to think like, it's um, something else that changed, in addition to me not having an A name anymore, is that it's really it's now I have two names that are, they're both last names, but they're also both one syllable. It's very, like Nash Jones. And before I had Addie Jones, and people always said that, people always said, Addie Jones, Addie Jones, like people would always do that. And my mom is Patti, and my sister is Mally. So our names were all really similar. And my mom always gets that, Patti Jones and Mally Jones, and uh, people don't do that anymore, to me. That changed because it's, it's a different beat. So people, you know, Nash Jones is just it's not, doesn't have the flow to it. So that, that really changed. Um, ut yeah, pre-existing aspects. I think those are them. I think that it's it's a last name mostly, that it's masculine, um I think it's... oh, one other thing, I guess is it's become a very common name recently for babies that have been recently born.

Pauline 36:15

Oh, yeah?

Nash 36:16

Yeah. It's all of a sudden, its popularity has skyrocketed, ever since, pretty much the year that I changed my name, which was in 2013, um, 2014, legally, but 2013 is when I started using it um, socially, around 2013, the popularity of that as a first name started going up. So there's all these babies named Nash. And that's kind of funny is uh, it's kind of misplaced

generationally, like there is nobody in their early 30s named Nash, besides people who changed their name, because that was not a name that anyone was naming their kid in the 80s. Um, but now, it's so common. So, that's kind of funny. It's like me, some other trans guys and like a bunch of babies.

Pauline 37:03
(laughter)

Nash 37:03
So that's why my mom gets compliments that she was like, ahead of the curve, because she was naming her kid Nash in the 80s, and nobody started naming their kid Nash until, you know, the late 2000s. But-

Pauline 37:15
Oh, that's funny. Alrighty-

Nash 37:19
So you can see that with trans trans people a lot. We often name ourselves names that are popular when we change our name. So, generationally, they're off, like nobody is, nobody back in the 70s was named Aiden. But the number of 40 something year old trans guys named Aiden is just like, through the roof. There's like a million of them. It's just kind of funny, where you're like, that name is generally, generationally misplaced. You know, it's misplaced in time.

Pauline 37:48
Hmmm. That's interesting. All right. And then, um, how do you think your current name Nash relates to your identity now?

Nash 37:59
Mm so much. I feel affirmed in it. I mean, it definitely just resonates with me, just feels like who I am, like it worked. You know, it really did like, my old name, like saying Addie aloud to you is actually like, weird. It does something weird in my head, like alarm bells go off, um, it's, it's almost kind of triggering um, to hear that name. I actually met someone like I had a friend named Addie for a little bit recently. And like, it was really hard for me to call her that, like, it's just hard. It's a hard thing to say. And it just feels so far away. And it's funny, because I carried it with me for the majority of my life, and now it just feels like that's not me. Nash just feels like me. Like, it feels like who I am. It makes sense. Um, it also, um, my career, I use it a lot. I am on the radio, and so I say my name regularly, you know, this is K-U-N-M, I'm Nash Jones, blah, blah, blah, you know, or it's 7:19 I'm Nash Jones, good morning. I have to say my name every time I get on the mic, because that's how the radio works. You know, like on TV, you can see who's speaking, they don't have to say their name a million times an hour.

Pauline 39:18
Yeah.

Nash 39:20
But I do. And so, and because people can't see me, I am my voice to my listeners and my name. And so my name has become um, well known in town because I, I'm on the radio every morning and people who listen to Morning Edition every day they, they feel like they know me and they know my name. And so that's kind of a funny thing um, is uh, when I meet people, they're like you're Nash Jones like, like it's like it's a name that is out there and people know of and that's kind of funny because yeah, I'm I made it up, you know, I created my name. And so uh, and it's just a big part of my public persona is my name. And so, I'm glad I changed it um so that my public persona aligns with who I feel like I am and

um, my partner Bagel, Abigail, she makes fun of me a little bit that it sounds like a very NPR name, Nash Jones, and she's like, maybe you kind of like, um, manifested your destiny by changing your name to that. Because I wanted to work in radio, I wasn't working in radio at the time when I changed my name. She's like, maybe like you made that happen by naming yourself a name that's like very NPR. So, that's kind of a joke, but still, I think maybe resonates with the fact that it's a big part of my identity, um, and it just feels like who I've always been, it feels reflective of who I've always been, and I never even really think about it anymore.

Pauline 40:55

Definitely. And then how do you feel about Nash?

Nash 40:59

I love it. It's a good name. I'm glad that I didn't name my dog that.

Pauline 41:04

(laughter)

Nash 41:05

I'm glad that I got to keep it. I'm glad that I didn't, you know, save it for my kid, that I get to have it. Um, I really like it. I like that it has the story of Mr. Nash in it, um, I get to carry him with me, um, everywhere, and, and, and honor him and what he did for me and who he is as a person in carrying this name with me. Actually, when I moved back to Albuquerque in 2017, got to see him and tell him that I changed my name to Nash, and that um, he was really touched by that, and un, he listens to me on the radio and gets to hear me say, "It's Nash Jones," and he, you know, he knows that that's his name, and that that's why I carry it with me, that he changed my life in that way.

Pauline 41:54

Yeah.

Nash 41:54

Um, yeah, I like it. I like when other people like it. When people say, "Oh, I like your name," I always say, "Thanks, I chose it myself," you know, because even though my mom likes getting credit where she doesn't deserve it, I, I like to take credit for my name, because everyone assumes that your parents named you, but I named myself and I think that's really cool that I got to do that. And um, if somebody likes my name, I, I want credit for it because I chose it. (laughter).

Pauline 41:21

(laughter). Of course! Of course. All righty. I'm going to stop sharing my screen and stop the recording.

Pauline 0:05
All righty. Thank you so much for doing the name narrative. Um, I just wanted to remind you that one I am recording, and hopefully you're okay with that. If you're not, I can totally stop the recording at any point. Um, and then even afterwards, if you don't want to be recorded and/or don't want to be part of the study anymore, please just let me know, and that's perfectly fine, um, and I can omit all of your information and also delete all of it. Um, so just a fair warning. Are you okay with all the recording? And all that fun stuff?
Olivia 0:38
That's just fine.
Pauline 0:40
Okay. And then I do have the questions up. So, I was wondering if you wanted me to share the screen?
Olivia 0:45
Um, I have them up also. So.
Pauline 0:49
Oh, okay, so what would be better? Would you want, do you want me to share the screen? Or do you prefer that, no, it's not a big deal?
Olivia 0:56
No, if it's an issue for you to share the screen, I don't think because I do have them right here. As long as this 13 questions, this is, I'm on the right thing, right?
Pauline 1:04
Yes. Yeah. So I'll be, if you hear me typing, I'm just making little notes on my end, um, just to let you know, um, for like background noise and all that fun jazz and like, why isn't she? What's the delay? I'm swear I'm not ignoring you. (laughter)
Olivia 1:18
No, you're good. Again, I've been through this process on your end, so I completely understand.
Pauline 1:23
I know that's one of the things I'm really grateful for and like, a lot of the people they, they know the process, so it's like, I don't have to worry about it, but I still want to be like cautious.
Olivia 1:32
Yes. always better to be cautious.
Pauline 1:35
Right? Alrighty, so we're gonna start with question one, and then what was um, your birth given name?
Olivia 1:43
Andrew Phillip Roe.
Pauline 1:46
Andrew... wait.
Olivia 1:47
What?
Pauline 1:50
Um... Andrew is A-N-D-R-E-W?
Olivia 1:52
Mm-hmm.

Pauline 1:54
And then you said Phillip? Is it P-H-I-L-L-I-P?
Olivia 1:59
Just L-I-P.
Pauline 2:00
Okay. And then you said Roe was R-O-W-E.
Olivia 2:04
No, just R-O-E.
Pauline 2:05
R-O-E, sorry about that
Olivia 2:08
No worries.
Pauline 2:09
All righty. And then, um, who named you, or do you happen to know who gave you your name?
Olivia 2:16
My mom did.
Pauline 2:20
And then did they ever fix, did your mom ever explain like, where your name came from, or any of that fun stuff?
Olivia 2:27
Yeah. So, first name is based on a Biblical role. My parents were extremely religious, and so they chose, like, children's names based on biblical roles. Um, so that's where the first name came from. Then middle name, my grandma's name is actually Phyllis, so Philip, for that was pulled over, so kind of a family connection.
Pauline 2:48
Awesome. Awesome. So, it actually leads into our third question of were you named after somebody in your family? And that's perfect, because you talked about how your grandmother's middle name was, or no, your grandmother's name is Phyllis, your middle name is Philip. Well, was. Um, do you feel like your name had a very, a huge influence on your gender identity? No? Okay. And then were there any cultural traditions or expectations that stemmed from your name?
Olivia 3:28
No.
Pauline 3:30
And then I heard you mentioned earlier that there was a um, religious aspect to Andrew, right? Can you talk a little bit more, a little bit more about that?
Olivia 3:40
Not really, I am not religious. I don't follow with a religion at all, so I don't know too much of it. I just know that like, that was her explanation for all of us when she said, "Oh, yeah, this is why your names were chosen."
Pauline 3:51
Oh, okay, gotcha, gotcha. And um, I'm sorry, could you, would you remind me, is your mother, how does she identify in terms of religious identity?
Olivia 4:05
That's a very, very long story, but currently Jewish, I think.
Pauline 4:10

Okay. Okay. I was just trying to understand the like, is, did Andrew come from, like, the what, Christian Bible, or?

Olivia 4:19

I think it did at the time. At the time they were Catholic. But they have, they have gone through many religious transitions, um, so it's hard for me to know exactly.

Pauline 4:31

No, that's perfectly fine. Um, and then was there any political beliefs that influenced your birth given name at all?

Olivia 4:39

Uh, not that I'm aware of.

Pauline 4:42

Okay. And then (crosstalk) Oh, I'm sorry, go ahead.

Olivia 4:47

No, I was just saying that that I know of, sorry.

Pauline 4:49

Okay. No, you're totally fine. Um, and then so now we're going to go towards a little bit more of your changed in transition name. Um, so what is your changed or transitioned name?

Olivia 5:01

Olivia Claire.

Pauline 5:04

Olivia Claire Roe? Roe? And so is the Roe spelt the same way? And then I see on the zoom call how Olivia's spelt?

Olivia 5:12

Yep, the rest, it's the same last name.

Pauline 5:15

Okay, and then Claire, is it C-L-A-I-R-E?

Olivia 5:19

Yep.

Pauline 5:21

Awesome. I see. And so, how has your name changed? Well... that's... sorry, I was just reading the questions as I was going.

Olivia 5:33

No, you're good.

Pauline 5:35

Let's go to question number nine. What influenced you to change or transition your name?

Olivia 5:41

I'm transgender? And as part of that, I want a name that more closely identifies with how I identify. And so having a more feminine name, something that I felt more attached to, was definitely something that was pretty high on my list.

Pauline 5:56

Oh, okay. And then how did you decide to change your name? Like, did someone help you influence, um, the like Olivia Claire? Like, where did, where does Olivia Claire come from?

Olivia 6:09

So it actually comes from my wife and I sitting down with a, just like list of baby names, like the booklets, just all kinds of names, and going through and just like writing down all of the

ones we like, for first names, all the ones we like for middle names, seeing what sounded good, and then crossing out things as we went, to end up with like three different names. And then I'm just like, well, Olivia Claire's actually what I thought of before we even started that. It's like, it's still on this list, so this is what we're going with. It was a fun process.

Pauline 6:42

Yay. So, did you feel like the, you said that you got it from the baby book. Did you feel like the baby book actually was like, something that you appreciated having? And like finding a name?

Olivia 6:54

I mean, it was, it was like an online website version, but yeah, it was useful just to see cause it's got name meanings, it's got things like thatt. And I didn't want something that had like weird name meanings that were just like, disconnected or anything like that. So, it was helpful to have the background information on it, for sure.

Pauline 7:10

Nice. And so would you be willing to tell me a little bit about like, some of the background information that you found about um, Olivia Claire?

Olivia 7:17

Um, yeah, if I can remember all of it at this point. So, Olivia, basically is talking about olives or olive branches, olive trees, native to France, um, things like that. And basically, the idea behind the olive tree is peace, right? The thought of an olive branch. And that's something that I've like, always strove for in my own life is be like, try to be peaceful, and just like that mediating force in my family, I have a big family. So like, it's just kind of the role I fell into.

And then Claire is the French word for clear, often used for like, clean water. Um, and so with that, it's just like the idea of peace and tranquility, being clear in thought, clear in like personality and things. And that's just kind of like, the role I felt I've been in my family and just like in life, so it's like, this seems to fit a lot.

Pauline 8:10

Wow, that's so cool. I love how it, it speaks to a cultural aspect, because you talk about how you, um your French heritage is really involved in it. And then you also talked about how your position and family of being the mediator and like, calming. That was really cool.

Olivia 8:27

Yeah.

Pauline 8:29

There was so much thought in it. And I love it. I love the, the story beyond names. Um-

Olivia 8:35

Yes.

Pauline 8:36

I mean, that's why I'm doing this project. Right?

Olivia 8:38

Exactly. When you told me you're doing this, I'm just like, that is a great project, because it's definitely something that's like, I think it's really interesting, but that's cool.

Pauline 8:49

And so out of curiosity, what was the decision in keeping your last name Roe?

Olivia 8:55

Um, so it's the name that my, my wife took by name, we actually went back and forth between taking my name or her name when we got married, and it's something that we

were like, well, we'll stick with this. It's something we have talked about actually changing before, but that would be a different, that would be a different decision down the road, depending on where we end up going down the road, basically.

Pauline 9:17

Oh, okay. Awesome. And then how do you think um, your change or your current name, um, relates to your identity now?

Olivia 9:32

Well, I mean, kind of, like I said, with my role in my family, but also, again, it is definitely far more feminine than my previous name, definitely something that I think encapsulates more where I'm headed with my transition. It's something that I think the name better represents who I feel that I am. And just kind of shows that in an outward way, as people use it. I'm still getting used to people using it. It's really weird hearing, like, people call me by that name and going, "Oh, yeah, that's me. I have to respond." Things like that. Um... but yeah, I don't know. It's just kind of like, slowly ingraining itself into my identity. I don't know... if that answers your question.

Pauline 10:13

No, that totally does. Um, how do you feel, I know like you talked about um, how it takes a second for you to realize like, "Oh, wait, I'm, I'm Olivia, people are, are talking to me." Um, how has that transition been, and just kind of realizing, or empowering this name, Olivia?

Olivia 10:33

Really, really good. And not everyone uses it at this point. So, I haven't been able to legally change it yet. I'm in that process. Um, but then I also have family members who are like very anti the idea, so a lot of people still use that other name when I'm teaching like on my bursars, and what students see is still that name, things like that. So, I'm in a difficult position of like figuring out how to actually present myself right now. So, I'm figuring that out at the, as we're going into the start of the semester, how I'm going to actually use it, but it's something that when I hear it, when I use it, I definitely feel empowered. And like, just like, that is me, I'm actually doing this and becoming the person that I am, that I like, see myself as and it's really, really encouraging.

Pauline 11:14

Mmm-hmm. And so how do you feel when people um, I don't want to say, like, I don't want to see get mixed up, but I guess, because I heard you say, like, some family members are a little bit more, I don't want to use your new name-

Olivia 11:31

Yeah, they don't get mixed up, they are very decisive about their choices.

Pauline 11:38

Okay. And so, how do you fight against that, um, in that way?

Olivia 11:44

Um, just correct them. And I mean, if they continue doing it, I have cut off some of my family, and that's just where it's going to be.

Pauline 11:53

(laughter)

Olivia 11:54

What's that?

Pauline 11:55

Is it good for you? I know, it's really difficult, but I think it speaks so much to your self worth. And-

Olivia 12:02
It really does. Yeah, that's I... so I have a therapist, because going through this process, you have to kind of have a therapist or a counselor, somebody that you're talking to and working through these things, especially to get signatures on things. And they're just like, you have to know that one of the things that you have to be willing to do is do this because you are worth it, right? If they're not going to support you and who you are, then that's something really toxic in your life. And so, like, as much as I want them to be willing to do this for me and like, willing to treat me the way I want to be treated, if they're not going to, then it's just not a healthy situation. So, I feel bad in some ways, but at the same time, I'm just like, by Karen. Yeah. You're done.
Pauline 12:51
Yes. I love it. It's like move with me or progress with me or you get left behind.
Olivia 12:57
Yeah, exactly.
Pauline 12:59
So, um, out of curiosity, because I've heard you talk about it a little bit, can you explain to me what the like, I guess, the legal side of everything looks like?
Olivia 13:08
For... ?
Pauline 13:09
Changing your name, sorry.
Olivia 13:12
Yeah, I'm just getting into it now. So, it's a pretty extensive process I'm finding out. I wasn't quite aware, but there is an initial petition that you have to put in for your name change, then you take it to the courts, and you get it notarized and you submit it. After that you're given like this prerequisite of it, and you have to go to like, a newspaper or something in your local area, and publish that you're actually changing your name in the newspaper, which is just crazy. In my mind, it's such a weird thought.
Um, it can be waived in certain instances, but after you get that done, and it's run in the newspaper for two weeks, you take the proof of that with you and you go back to the court and you have a hearing date with a judge. And it's like, 15 minutes in the judge's chambers they ask you to specifically to say why you want to change your name, what that would look like for you, what the purpose is.
And then after that, um, it gets notarized and you actually get a petition from the court saying this is legally changed, things have to follow it. And you can take that and get your driver's license name changed, you can change it for official reasons, such as the Bursars here at UNM and identifying documents. Um, you can get your birth certificate name change, though not necessarily the gender, it depends on the state you're in. But yeah, there's a lot of steps to it. So, I'm just, just starting to get into that process.
Pauline 14:30
Wow, I, I, that's, that's an extensive process. How do you feel about the process because of the fact that it's pretty extensive?
Olivia 14:41
It's frustrating, like, but I also understand why it's extensive because, in general, like I can see other reasons why people might want to change their names and there might be maybe a need for more legal process for it. But for something like transition, I definitely think this is it maybe a little bit more extensive than it really needs to be, especially publishing your

name in a newspaper. That to me is just like, a really weird thought. Like, I don't understand quite the purpose for that. But yeah, in general, I think it's, I mean, the process is there for a reason.

Pauline 15:18
Yeah. What is, so, I'm just a little curious about this, like publishing in the newspaper, what is the expectation for that?

Olivia 15:27
Um, so you have to publish in the paper that puts out articles, or their paper at least once a week, so it has to run for two weeks in total. So, it would have to be about twice, um, at minimum. And I think you put it in the classifieds, and it's literally just saying, this person, you put your birth name, um, is changing their name to this person for such and such reason. And to me, it seems like it could put you in danger, especially if there are people who know you by name, but you don't know them, and they're anti-trans or they're this or they're that. If they're finding out these things, just seems not necessarily the safest, but it's just, yeah, yeah, I have to look into the process more on that one. I'm not quite sure why it exists.

Pauline 16:12
Yeah. I just, it baffles me, because when I think of like the women standpoint, right, because women change their names all the time-

Olivia 16:21
Yeah, exactly.

Pauline 16:23
And I'm like, I don't have to put it in the newspaper.

Olivia 16:25
Exactly.

Pauline 16:26
I just have to sign a piece of paper.

Olivia 16:28
Right. It's a very strange stipulation specifically for doing it as a transgender person. And I'm not sure how that policy came about, but it's definitely something that like, I'm gonna look into, and if there's a way to get it waived, which it sounds like there is, I'm definitely going to go through that process as well.

Pauline 16:46
Yeah, definitely. And then do you happen to know if this is the same process, like everywhere in the United States, or...?

Olivia 16:53
No, it varies by states, or actually, some states are a lot more strict on it. So, some states to get your name changed as a transgender person at all, you have to get um, medical proof that you've gone through gender reassignment or gender conforming surgeries already, which a lot of trans people do not end up doing ever, so that is kind of a big gatekeeping issue for a lot of people. Some states are a little bit easier than this, they don't have the news issue, or they have just you go in and you get your court date, and you go to that court date and that's it. There's no other like, in between steps or processes. New Mexico is, from what I've read on the like, better side, the more like... more equality, fewer issues, easier process than a lot of states, but it's still like, it has its problems also.

Pauline 17:44
Yeah. Wow, that is a very interesting process. I never realized how difficult it could be.

Olivia 17:55
I did not either.
Pauline 17:58
I wouldn't say difficult, though, but I feel like difficult is the right word, just because like, as I'm just sitting here thinking about it, and I'm like, this isn't fair. Because as a woman, you know, when I get, if I decide to get married, uh, it's like, it's not a big deal if I change my last name, and then I also have the opportunity, because I'm changing my last name to change the rest of my name.
Olivia 18:23
Yes.
Pauline 18:23
So I'm going like, what? This, to hear the process. I'm just like, I want, I want to do more research and figure this out, because I'm like what-
Olivia 18:34
There's a lot to it.
Pauline 18:35
... peeved by it.
Olivia 18:36
Yeah, our, our society has been built in a very specific way. It's interesting, too, because if you were a guy who's getting married, if you chose to change your last name, there's a lot more steps to go through than as a woman getting married and changing your name. It's, our society is structured in a very specific way that's built on a very heterosexual, heteronormative patriarchal society.
Pauline 19:00
Wow. But I really do hope that the process goes a little bit easier. Um, it, it sounds like at least from what you said, that New Mexico is a little bit on the more lenient side um...
Olivia 19:15
That's why I moved here. I came here for school.
Pauline 19:19
Oh wow.
Olivia 19:19
Yeah, actually. Oh, it's one of the things I looked into before like even applying to places.
Pauline 19:25
Oh, wow. So, did you base like, some of your like, PhD decisions on like, where it was easier to do this?
Olivia 19:35
Yeah. Before, well not this specifically, but before I applied to any programs, I looked at women's rights in the area, for my wife, I looked at transgender rights in the state. I looked at just a bunch of things and then once we identified some states that we were like, okay, these are slightly better places for people to live and actually be human, then we applied to PhD programs.
Pauline 19:57
Wow. Well, it makes me happy that New Mexico was, is one of those things that make it easy for you. But it also bad in the reality of like, not a lot of states do it.
Olivia 20:09
Yeah.
Pauline 20:10

Right?
Olivia 20:10
That's fair.
Pauline 20:11
So I'm like, oh, no, it's like, progress, but we still need to meet, we still need more work.
Olivia 20:18
There's a lot of progress to be made on a lot of things for sure.
Pauline 20:22
Yeah. So, would you mind telling me a little bit about um, how, because a part of your decision was influenced by how easy or difficult it would be to change your name, um, can you explain like, maybe a different state that you looked into and what the process might look like, just so I have something to kind of compare it by?
Olivia 20:44
Yeah, so actually, another say looked into was Maine, and it had almost an identical process. It was very, very similar. One place I specifically didn't go was Iowa, because its process is based on getting doctor's notes and getting information like that. So, um, to give you a, an example of how that looks for, for two different things.
So, here I explained the process for getting like, your name changed. There, to get your name change, you have to have a note from a doctor and from a therapist both saying this is something that's not just medically necessary, but is necessary for you to continue life in any happy or meaningful way. And you have to either have scheduled or already had gender confirming or gender reaffirming surgeries for being transgender as either a trans man or as a trans woman. And that's similar in birth certificate. So here, once you get your name change, you can actually with the note of a counselor, get your gender designation changed on your birth certificate. It's very, very simple after that point. In Iowa, you have to again have gone through those surgeries. So, it's something that is very much so more gatekeepy.
So, a lot of states, they're kind of one way or the other. Either they allow you to do these things with maybe just a court order and going to a court, sometimes they require you to post in newspaper like New Mexico does. Sometimes they don't. Other states are very, very hardline, like every single gate is shut in front of you and you have to really work hard to get through it, and unless you go 100% all the way right away, you're just not going to be able to get those, those kind of signifiers and designations that really help affirm who you are.
Pauline 22:25
Wow, that is Insane. And I just never, I never knew. Like how difficult it could be. Wow. All righty. All righty. Well, um, those are all the questions that I have for you, so if you're okay, I'm going to stop recording.
Olivia 22:43
Sure.

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