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**Toward a Nuevomexicana Consciousness:  
An Exploration of Identity through Education as Manifest through the Colonial  
Legacy**

**BY**

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**B.A., Chicana/o Studies, University of New Mexico, 2016**

**THESIS**

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## **Dedication**

This thesis project is dedicated to my abuela, Elena Larrañaga de Ávila, whose experiences growing up in rural New Mexico in the 1930s and 40s, navigating a school system that tried to silence her, was the catalyst for this project. Her tenacious spirit and commitment to her mother tongue despite the adversity she faced and continues to face, pushes me to reclaim what parts of my identity were denied to me. Elena's "green thumb" and enduring remedios have taught me what ancestral wisdom looks like enacted and have made it clear that a shared *querencia* is something that can be found within. For demonstrating that we are the place-based knowledge we seek, for finding beauty in every moment we've shared, and for feeling your mother when you grasp my hands. You are one of my greatest inspirations on this earth and I love you more than you can ever know. Bless you.

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to explore the implications of the colonial legacy in informing the New Mexican Educational System in the present day. I engage a group of three self-identified young Nuevomexicana students in seeking to understand the spaces in which one must maneuver in order to thrive in an otherwise marginalizing system of Western Academia. Through a qualitative study, I hope to identify the intricacies of the New Mexican identity and the relationship these students hold with their determined homeland. By implementing the methods of interview, and participant observation in an undergraduate freshmen classroom, I will investigate my research questions through an examination of identity on their terms. I employ a decolonial and intersectional examination of the findings coupled with an analysis of secondary documents regarding New Mexico's history of institutional education. I seek to understand behaviors of resistance that disrupt the dominant narrative of learning and educational attainment through a system of Western Academia and demonstrate the historic complexities that have allowed for a differential maneuvering of such a system.

**KEYWORDS:** QUERENCIA, NUEVOMEXICANIDAD, EDUCATION, PLACE, MEMORY, ANCESTRAL WISDOM, COLONIZATION, PEDAGOGIES, RESILIENCE

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# Chapter One: Introduction

Really New Mexico is my home. Like, eventually I *do* wanna leave and eventually I do wanna see different places for a little bit, but I think New Mexico is always gonna be somewhere where I come *back* to and somewhere where I think of as my home. Because, being Chicana and being Maranteña and being New Mexican is a very strong part of my identity. So, it's always gonna be my home. —Marisa Gonzales

*Nuevomexicanidad* is a concept that is perhaps obscure to those who do not understand its legacy of resistance. Nuevomexicanas/os, situated in both the aftermath of Spanish colonization and U.S. Imperialism, maintain a divergent history from the Mayflower Pilgrims whose ambitions Nuevomexicanas/os are meant to emulate. The narrative of the Nuevomexicana/o is oftentimes distorted as a harmonious intricacy of coalescing cultures, violent structures blossoming into a land of charm and ease (Trujillo, 2009). For many New Mexicans, we are rather the forgotten ones, forged from 500 years of resistance to violent and imposing structures, which seek to dominate and exploit us according to their appetite. Many Nuevomexicanas/os who have inhabited this land intergenerationally carry legacies of both the oppressed and the oppressor. They have withstood Spanish Colonization and the inception of both Mexican Nationalism and U.S. Imperialism (Nieto-Phillips, 2008). Our malleability in epochs of extreme brutalization has determined our resistance. Among the most stringent of encroachments on the land that is now New Mexico is the introduction of Western civilization, its notion of “progress,” and its assumed supremacy.

The deviation from indigenous ways of knowing has devastated both the physical and the spiritual ways of life. Through rigid establishments and under the guise of education and salvation, Spanish colonization and U.S. Imperialism eradicated countless lives (Gutierrez, 1991). It is my assertion that Westernized institutions of learning cannot explicitly benefit those they were designed to eradicate, including Nuevomexicanas/os. Thus, such institutions demand spaces of resistance, ancestral ways of knowing, and the development of critical consciousness to benefit young New Mexicans, particularly women. Through engaging a qualitative study of self-identified young Nuevomexicana

students, I will explore how the colonial legacy has impacted the education of Nuevomexicana women in the present day. I seek to examine the ways in which historical trauma has endured in our educational system and in the identities of the young Nuevomexicana scholars, simultaneously exploring the ways in which the U.S. government has further marginalized New Mexican students.

According to *Education Week's* 2018 Quality Counts Report, New Mexico was ranked 50th in Education, receiving an overall grade of 'D-' (Edweek, 2018). As a state, New Mexico has placed between 49th and 50th for at least the past decade, consistently receiving negative attention nationally for our perceived inadequacies in serving our youth. These adverse judgments result from a misunderstanding of our state's legacy of extreme systemic, institutional, and interpersonal violence; however, they continue to shape the dominant narrative of New Mexicans. This narrative can be particularly damaging to the psyche of young Nuevomexicana students trying to navigate the oftentimes harsh terrain of academia, as they feel not only isolated within the institutions, but also isolated by the pressure to reproduce the idea of the U.S. nation through their existence.

To explore the ways in which this liminal identity has allowed for Nuevomexicanas to maneuver through a dominant system of Western Academia in a nationally marginalized place, I call on the framework of *querencia* to foreground my analysis. I will examine this through theories of *mestizaje*, *mestiza consciousness*, *pedagogies of the home*, and *sentipensante pedagogy* in a Chicana feminist lens. Visionaries such as Estevan Arellano (1997), Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), Paulo Freire (1972), Dolores Delgado Bernal (2006) and Laura Rendón (2009) have provided me a

space for articulation. More specifically, I will use the Nuevomexicana/o framework of *querencia* to identify behaviors of resistance that have facilitated youth to both maneuver through and prosper in such an oppressive system. These scholars will inform my work as I investigate the following research questions:

1. How do young Nuevomexicana college students describe the influence of New Mexican schools on their identity development?
2. What ancestral knowledge or resistance techniques have Nuevomexicanas used to navigate the school system in times of perceived marginalization?
3. How do young Nuevomexicana students perceive their relationship with institutionalized education?

I will not only examine the factors that have resulted in the New Mexican Educational System as it exists in the present day, but also I will recognize ways of knowing that have endured intergenerationally and its manifestation in young Nuevomexicana students (Arellano, 2007). Although these Western institutions have worked to further marginalize Nuevomexicana students, and in some cases have been successful in perpetuating the idea of the ‘incapable New Mexican,’ what results is that these students become autonomous in their education and how they want to inform their communities. Space, in this capacity, becomes inherent in the identity of both the individual and the collective. My intention is to examine the ways in which *mestizaje* has informed this bond as well as problematize the duality of both colonizer and colonized (Soja, 1996).

Born and raised in the same city in central New Mexico, my experience with the educational system in New Mexico has been complex. My mom comes from a family of

poor whites from Alexandria, Virginia. Due to their whiteness and opportunities granted through athletic scholarships, they gained middle-class status and moved out to New Mexico when my mom was in high school to pursue industrial opportunities. My mom did not pursue higher education for long, but chose to attend a trade school in Phoenix for fashion design, but began working when she was sixteen. She inevitably pursued and attained a bachelor's degree when I began my undergraduate degree. I did not grow up with most of my mother's family. I did, however benefit from whiteness in how my teachers perceived me as timid, non-threatening, and behaviorally sufficient.

My dad's family has been in New Mexico for upward of 20 generations, my abuela born in raised in the small town of Encino in Northeastern New Mexico and my abuelo from Roswell. Their ancestry is mestizo and though both of them claimed their indigenous identity, because of interest convergence, my abuela denied her "Mexican" identity in English, though she would identify in Spanish as *Mexicana*. The oldest of 7, my father began working to make adobes under his father's instruction at the tender age of 4. His family faced extreme poverty and discrimination growing up and experienced significant language oppression. Both of my paternal grandparents spoke Spanish as their first language, as did several of their older children. However, as the climate around bilingualism in New Mexico grew more toxic, they began to encourage their children to be passively bilingual and engage in the Spanish language only in the home.

Growing up in a household of seven, "family first" was the most significant pedagogy of the home bestowed upon me. My abuela lived with me for most of our adolescence and was caretaker and educator to us before our experience with the public school system. She spoke to us in both English and Spanish, though most of our

redirection and punishment was carried out in the Spanish language. She demonstrated to us how to cook tortillas, wash clothes at a very young age and how to properly nurture plant life. I began reading even before elementary school and was one of the few students in my Kindergarten and first grade classes who could read fluently in both English and Spanish. I remember the recitation of the book, “La Mariquita Malhumorada”, within my home after school one day, brought my Spanish instructor tío to tears, in my first grade year. I grew up as mostly passively bilingual and have had to make a continuous effort to feel confident in my conversational abilities.

I identify as what you might call “culturally Catholic”, as CCD and Sunday mass was strongly emphasized in my formative years, and eventually wavered when my abuela moved to my tío Trini’s house. My mom enrolled both me and my younger sister in kindergarten at the age of four, because we were born after the August deadline and we had already demonstrated an incredible yearning and curiosity to learn. Though I struggled with anxiety and social situations (we often struggled financially, and my parents both worked full-time, sometimes overlooking our physical appearance), I found solace in learning throughout elementary school. Not until middle school did it become readily apparent the histories of Latina/o and indigenous Nuevomexicana/os had been obscured and fabricated. My strongest memory being the praising of the Mexican American War and the glorification of events around the Alamo, when we took a fieldtrip to the downtown theater to watch the Dennis Quade blockbuster as a reward for finishing the unit.

Around the age of seven, me and my sister began to spend significant time with my father’s younger sister who had helped to establish the MECha chapter at Brown,

university while pursuing her undergraduate degree. Growing up in organizing and social justice work, with predominantly socialist people of color, helped me to problematize the histories being presented to me and helped me to articulate what my educational experiences had denied me. Like most young women, my affinity for math and science as a young girl completely reversed as I entered middle school, and I still find this an obstacle as I consider pursuing an alternative teaching license and once again engaging in standardized testing to validate my understanding and ability to teach completely unconnected subjects.

I have seen my hometown depicted negatively through the media throughout my life. Though my hometown has birthed various cultural events and institutions that are “leading” both nationally and internationally, we are known instead for our high crime rates and substance abuse issues. Narratives such as *Breaking Bad* while entertaining to many, have in my opinion created a national narrative of corruption and incapability within our schools and I have refused to engage with such a narrative. Living a reality of what it means to be educated in the same New Mexico city from Kindergarten through graduate school, and having an intergenerational history of education in New Mexico has provided me a particular lens with which to examine this topic.

Through an investigation of present-day explorations of New Mexican education and literature regarding pedagogy and educational experience for “Hispanic” students, I hope to identify the structural legacies of colonialism and U.S. imperialism that contribute to our status as 50th in the nation in education. This study will result in a thorough analysis of the ways in which the New Mexico has been systemically categorized as an entity of the Global South rather than an integral part of the nation,



simultaneously examining the ways in which we thrive (Mignolo, 2005). Particularly, Nuevomexicanas have been rendered most disposable in this history. I hope future generations of New Mexico educators will employ my study to emphasize the particularities of Nuevomexicana identity in regards to Western education. This study will create, within the textual interaction, a rupturing of the dominant narrative and an encouragement of a counternarrative in developing a critical consciousness by locating the self. Though time and resource constraints of the project will not allow for a comprehensive intergenerational investigation of the Nuevomexicana through a thesis study, I hope to return to this work in a Doctoral Dissertation and explore this idea more thoroughly.

# Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Before it can ever be a repose for the senses, landscape is the work of the mind. Its scenery is built up as much from strata of memory as from layers of rock. —Estevan Arellano

Before I make my conjecture regarding the theoretical linkages between, decolianiality, critical theory and mestizaje, I must first contextualize the implications of the Spanish arrival in a “precontact” New Mexico. The first accounts of Spanish arrival in New Mexico took place in the 1500s, originating with Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca (1535) one of few survivors of the Narváez Mission (1527). Shortly after, began the expedition by Francisco Vázquez de Coronado (1540) and inevitably followed the settlement by Juan de Oñate and his battalion of 400 plus conquistadors (1598) toward the turn of the century. So began the destruction of indigenous life with the Acoma Massacre which led to the death of about 800 innocent persons (Barrett, 2012)

This settlement endured for nearly a century until the Pueblo Revolt led by Popé in 1680. This action was the first crucial signifier of indigenous resistance to Spanish rule and an early manifestation of organizing in and across communities. The uprising was supported by several pueblos, as well as the Zuni and Hopi people and was coordinated undeterred by barriers of language. The success of the action meant the expulsion of the Spanish people and their institutions for over a decade. Don Diego de Vargas, the first New Mexican governor, led the reconquest in 1692, twelve years after the people of the region had regained their freedom. This time, their presence remained fixed and interminably impregnable. Spanish Global Imperialism followed the Reconquista in Spain under King Ferdinand II de Aragon and Queen Isabel I de Castilla. The “discovery” of the New World was an endeavor of the Spanish Inquisition initiated in an effort to gain world power and disseminate the Catholic faith eastward. After having been at war with Islam for nearly a millennium, the Catholic Spanish monarchy was resolved to expand outward. As is widely-accepted, the first contact being the

onslaught of Cristoforo Colombo's misguided disembarkation in Hispaniola in 1492 (Gutierrez, 1991). His commanded genocide of the indigenous people of that island began what would become the colonization of the Americas, and the perpetual occupation of indigenous land in what is today perceived as the nation state. However, in this study, my focus is particularly to the region in the Southwestern United States known as New Mexico.

### **Cultural Upheaval**

The first attempts of indoctrination began with the erecting of Spanish missions, the first being La Misión San Gabriel with the arrival of Juan de Oñate in 1598. These establishments were oftentimes built directly on top of indigenous sites (Barrett, 2012). The physical erasure of such structures to inaugurate those believed inherently superior is characteristic of the oppressive and chauvinistic ideology prevalent in Western Civilization and practiced across the Americas. Rather than seeking a peaceable intermingling of cultures, the endeavor toward domination is representative of an early hegemonic systemization. Naturally, the Spanish conversion of the Natives to Catholicism was portrayed as an attempt at salvation for "uncivilized heathens", who like the Moors, were racialized as inferior due to their dark bodies. With the indoctrination of religion, also came the construction of patriarchy in a previously matrilineal dominant society.

Colonization brought with it notions of race and gender which had not previously existed. Western thought is centered in the primarily categorical, with compartmentalization of states of being in order to determine a more obstinate structure, rooted in the idea of natural taxonomy. Oftentimes, in an attempt to justify the brutality

of colonization, we are subjected to rhetoric regarding the state of warring tribes pre-contact. Although this may have been the case, we can be sure that the technological and biological warfare implicit in colonization was far more devastating an invasion than intertribal conflict.

Through colonization, the *mestizo* (someone of “mixed ancestry”, often of indigenous, European and African descent) was created, holding both the history of the colonizer and the colonized. Oftentimes, the mestizo came to be, through a history of extreme violence and coercion. Living this duality created an insecurity and rupture in their identity of belonging. The theoretical foundations which provide us language to describe the identities forged through such destruction will allow for a more thorough interrogation of the literature. I investigate decoloniality, mestizaje and differential consciousness as theoretical frameworks implemented in the creation of the third space through which the colonial legacy and inheritors of colonization must navigate the settler colonial state. It is through occupying the liminal that their transformation is possible.

### **Mestizaje**

As I will explore in subsequent sections, the creation of race through the Casta System in New Mexico was among the most irrevocable implications of Spanish Colonization. I examine, through the lens of critical race theory, the fundamental categorization of race through the colonial. Race, as a construct is forged through the stratification of the settler colonial state, dominated by the colonizers, benefitted by the settlers and condemning of the natives (Fanon, 1961). In the New World, the concept of *mestizaje* or miscegenation with indigeneity is inherently subordinate. Apart from notions of blanqueamiento in mestizaje which Jose Vasconcelos introduces to us in *La Raza*

*Cosmica*, and I will address later (Vasconcelos, 1923). Those who were of mixed blood, or who do not possess blood purity (being of complete “Spanish” makeup), were relegated to the lower strata of status. Though there were some people who were able to achieve elevated status in such a system, they were customarily ascribed status by phenotypic characteristics. Essentially, one who was demonstrably “mixed” could not be rendered the reverse.

Walter Mignolo examines the racial construction of the “New World” as a result of Bartolomé de Las Casas, a Dominican Priest and historian who served as the First Resident Bishop of Chiapas in the early 1500s. His accounts of indigenous people in the New World were perhaps the first written record of systemic racialization of the West versus the world. He argues however, that this power hierarchy was established on the basis of theology and its representation rather than skin color. His categorization of “barbarians” versus the “civilized” Spaniards held indelible implications for the colonial legacy. The notion of the “other” he employed is the primary means by which most of the world categorize and stratify those who appear unlike them. This, he categorizes as the introduction of “Occidentalism” which fixes *the locus of enunciation* in the West, constituting its knowledge as universal and subjugating all other ways of knowing. The binary logic of Occidentalism operates through the call for the other and thus inscribes “Orientalism” as the liminal space (Mignolo, 2005, p.35). Mignolo argues:

Las Casas offered, toward the middle of the sixteenth century, a classification of “barbarians” which was, of course, a racial classification, although not based on skin color. It was racial because it ranked human beings in a top-down scale assuming the ideals of Western Christians as the criteria and measuring stick for the ranking. Racialization does not simply say, “you are Black or Indian, therefore you are inferior.” Rather, it says, “you are not like me, therefore you are inferior,”

which in the Christian scale of humanity meant Indians in America and Blacks in Africa were inferior. (Mignolo, 2005, p.17)

Though he was once a slave owner and active in the brutalization of indigenous people on the island of Hispaniola, after Las Casas was denied confession by Fray Antonio de Montesinos for the atrocities he encouraged and supervised, he began to reform his ways. Ultimately, this led him to denounce slavery and release his slaves as well as renounce his *encomienda* to return to Spain. There, he became the “*Protectoría de indios*” advocating, instead, the operation of black slaves from Africa--conveying a clear distinction of blood “purity” through the system of colorism. The proximity of Africa to the nation of Islam in the 16th century likely influenced his notion of barbarism. (Nieto-Phillips, 2004, p. 150) The implications of theology as a means of constituting humanity has carried well into the 21st Century, rendering anyone who is non-Christian necessarily subhuman and thus a project for conversion.

Upon the release of his report “*Memorial de Remedios para Las Indias*”, Spain’s legacy of brutality echoed throughout the Western world. The notion of the “Black Legend” came to be utilized as a means of hegemonic stratification amongst imperial powers in the quest for domination. As Mignolo explains, the theological shift from Catholicism to Protestantism constituted the latter the “lesser of evils” in their claim for the world’s salvation. The “blackening” of the Catholic Church was indicative of the attribution of ideological righteousness with pigmentation. Mignolo introduces the concept of the *imperial difference* in rendering this distinction. He asserts:

British and French exploitation of the Caribbean was as greedy as the attitude that those same countries attributed to Spanish conquistadores. The “Black Legend” of Spanish corruption, which the British initiated to demonize the Spanish Empire in a ploy to get a grip on the Atlantic economy during the seventeenth century, was part of a European family

feud over the economic, political, and intellectual (in the general sense of accumulation and control of knowledge including science and technology, of course) riches of the “New World.” Therein originates the *imperial difference* that would become widespread in the eighteenth century and shape the conception of “Latin” America. (Mignolo, 2005, p. 55).

This conception of the Global South created a clear distinction of a valid knowledge and privileged historicity. Imperial England could now easily condemn Spanish coloniality as barbaric and thus unfit for sovereignty, rendering all colonial projects undoubtedly compromised and accessible for deliverance. The darkness of Spain would now accompany its language, religion and customs, attributing a subjugated status to anyone that Spanish colonization reached; particularly for those outside the realm of nobility.

### **El Sistema de Castas**

With colonization came the legacy of racialization, this meant the reorganization of human beings through a conceived power hegemony. After centuries of Islamic rule in Spain, a theological racialization rendered Muslim and Hebrew faiths infernal, creating a system of “blood purity” based on institutional religion. This stratification ultimately manifesting in the othering of bodies based on the implication of faith through pigmentation. In New Mexico, La Sistema de Castas privileged recent Spanish colonizers and their progeny and deemed certain indigenous groups as more salvageable than others as determined by their inclination toward “barbarity” or, in other words likelihood of subversion. Through the Casta System, the concept of *Mestizaje* was introduced to describe a mixed racial union. It later became a tool for “whitening” to elevate status and was used by José Vasconcelos in *La Raza Cosmica* to conceptualize the idea of homogeneity among “Latinos” in the Global South as a process of achieving a greater global power (Vasconcelos, 1923).



Though there was certainly perceived difference between indigenous groups pre-colonization, the introduction of the Casta System meant the physically signified other. Through Western methods of categorization, people were determined based on blood quantum and phenotypic traits as being superior or inferior in status. Those who were most validated being the *peninsulares*, or direct migrants from Spain, or *Criollos* first generation of Spanish settler in the New World. Those who were of mixed blood or “half-breed” were given the label of *color quebrado* and classified according to their percentage of indigeneity or African descent. To be Indio, although exceedingly subjugated in position was still construed as being more favorable than being constructed as black. This is likely due to historical conflict between the Islamic and Christian faith. Islam, practiced by the Moorish people and associated with 800 years of extreme violence, were likely internalized as being inherently unsound (Gutierrez, 1991).

In the racial stratification through the Casta System, Plains Indians and Genízaros were considered of a lesser status than those of the Pueblo. This ultimately has to do with the early supposed conversion of Pueblo natives to Catholicism based on the convertibility of their standing structures. For the Plains natives, their nomadic tendencies rendered them a probable threat as they were not easily pinpointed. In the text *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico*, author Ramón Gutierrez explains the complexities of the relationships between groups through the use of derogatory labels. He asserts:

Indian slaves were considered socially dead and marginal to both Pueblo and Spanish society. I suspect this is why the children of slaves were known as *coyotes*. The canine association probably arose from the sexual aggressiveness of Indian women. The friars complained that Indian women preferred sexual intercourse in “bestial fashion,” in *more camino*, or in the way of dogs. Dogs were the only beasts of burden the Indians knew before the arrival of European

livestock. One common way for Spaniards to dehumanize Indians and half-breeds was to hurl the epithet “dog” in combination with some other expletive: dirty dog, Indian dog, half-breed dog. The caciques of fourteen pueblos complained to the viceroy in 1707 that New Mexico’s citizens were referring to them as dogs and demanding labor of them as such (Gutierrez, 1991, pg. 197).

This form of slander remained in the 20th century during the era of U.S. segregation with signs that read “No Dogs or Mexicans Allowed” meant to prevent entrance of people of color into establishments. These warnings associated the racialized other with the zoological, rendering them subhuman. Additionally, the interpreted sexual deviation of the indigenous female was indicative of an exoticization through corporal differentiation, creating within her an assumed depravity and thus exploitability. Such terminology, once internalized is difficult to overlook, resulting in a permanent notion of disposability of the brown female body in this land. Likewise, the indigenous male was thus painted as a beast of burden whose sole purpose was to alleviate the physical demands of the intended advancement in technology (Gutierrez, 1991).

### **Limpieza de Sangre and Occupation**

Race status, in Colonial New Mexico was coupled with livelihood in that groups were not allowed to deviate from positions determined pertinent to their caste. Those with official status were typically determined by the Spanish Monarchy, Spanish Settlers being assigned the role of agrarian in the “new land”. Gutierrez explores the racial implications of profession in the following quote:

Throughout colonial Spanish America, race functioned as a metalanguage: with few exceptions, a person’s occupation and status were often quickly deduced by simple appearance. For such visual evaluations of race to be correct, a close correlation had to exist between all the constituting elements of racial definition: legal color, actual physical color, and phenotype. When such a correspondence existed, it meant that in the daily life of a face-to-face community, race was a

visual metonymic sign of a person's position in the social division of labor, symbolic of a propinquity to the infidel, or in the case of slaves, their dishonor and social death (Gutierrez, 1991, pg. 202).

Thus, the phenotypical demarcation of race rendered such position inescapable. The only alternative being to manipulate one's appearance as a means of status elevation. Because technologies did not necessarily allow for such a metamorphosis, peoples' roles remained intergenerational and stagnant. Status position became structural and thus inherent through colonization.

### **Education and the Catholic Church**

Violence as a means of indoctrination was established fairly early in Spanish settlement. To completely eradicate one's endemic religion, one must implement various means of conditioning. One of them being the corporal punishment for the practice of perceived "pagan" rituals. Comportment in Catholic churches was among the most crucial elements of conversion, being that it is faith heavy in restrictions and stigma. To disobey meant the peril of the soul and a likelihood of eternal damnation. For the indigenous people, predisposed to sin by chance of biological makeup, this meant an even harsher enforcement of order. Gutierrez examines the structure of such in the subsequent text:

Indispensable for the missions' educational goals were the *policia espiritual*, native assistants who served the friars as "spiritual police." Each parish had several friars as "spiritual police." Each parish had several *fiscales* (church wardens), disciplinarians who maintained order during services, punished the morally lax, and supervised ecclesiastical building projects. *Fiscales* freely administered half a dozen lashes to anyone found negligent in their Christian duties, prompting many Indians to regard the whip as the Christian symbol of authority. Equally important were the *temastian* (Indian catechists), who led converts in prayer and memorization of the catechism. (Gutierrez, 1991, pg.81).

The concept of rigid authority in the realm of the spiritual is, in itself, a crisis of identity in that its expression should not be contingent on structural imposition. One may argue that the institution of religion is imperial in nature in that it demands of its community, a routine outside of one's intrinsic beliefs with the notion of danger through departure. Although this notion is not strictly Western, we may draw a correlation to the imposition of compulsory religious structures and the identity of Catholic subservience.

The first evidence of institutional education in New Mexico arose in the 18th century, during which there was a movement from missions to formalized academies. The first school, established in 1717 in Santa Fe was proposed by Fray Antonio Camargo of Santo Domingo Pueblo. His intention, with their establishment, was the complete cultural eradication of the Native. Through archival evidence, examined in Bernardo Gallegos' *Literacy, Schooling, and Society in Colonial New Mexico, 1692-1821* we can discern his intentions through this written passage:

...the solutions will be to place a school in the Villa of Santa Fe, and select four children from each of the Indian pueblos in the vicinity to attend. The school shall be in charge of Lay religious [secular priest], who shall educate and indoctrinate them, being careful also to accustom the parents and family to provide assistance in the maintenance of the children...the governors and caciques of the pueblos should be informed of this plan with much care and with gentle words...and the ministers at the missions should also execute the mandate...and if possible in the other two villas, Santa Cruz and Albuquerque, schools should be established so that the children of the surrounding pueblos and the Spanish children may be indoctrinated in the manner described above. (SANM 11, doc 283a) (pg 23) (Gallegos, 1992, pg. 23).

It is evident through this account that the Spanish colonizers relied heavily upon such institutions to oversee the complete conversion of the indigenous youth. Further, we may note that the selective nature of such a system allowed for only the attendance of the social elite from each Pueblo. Pueblo children having been determined as worthy

subjects, were provided more opportunity to elevate in rank than the Plains Natives. Though they were not seen as inherently virtuous, their ability to integrate through these institutions was in itself, extremely auspicious.

Within these structures, came the shedding of the indigenous tongue in favor of the European one. Through this came the significant loss of languages spoken in the region, now being traced to only a few resilient language groups. Gallegos explores, “the language of instruction in the missions was not Spanish, but Latin, which was also the language of instruction in the early colonial period in the Valley of Mexico (Heath; 1972; Ricard 1966). Regarding Latin, Ruiz wrote that “they read this better than Castilian” (Adams and Chavez, 1956, p.311) (Gallegos, 1992)”. The use of Latin as the official language likely due to its status in the church as uncontested, being used to host mass in many Catholic churches, to this day. Soon, most indigenous people in contact with the Catholic Church and Spanish missionaries spoke primarily in Spanish, speaking their language only in secret, many of them losing the ability entirely.

### **“Informal” Education**

Though the Pueblo natives were incorporated into Spanish communities and considered a necessary component of everyday life, their salvation being the ultimate aspiration, those who did not belong to such communities had a very diverging experience. Their education, though expected, was not granted the same status as was that of the Pueblo youth. This meant, also a potentially harsher sentence by the authoritative figures who were not centralized within the church and held to their standards of piety. The risk of unanswerable positions of power, as we are aware, being the complete

deviation from set intentions. Gallegos explores the implications of informal education for non-Pueblo natives as follows:

Necessary for examining informal education is the information regarding the everyday lives of children at home. Perhaps a history of childhood in New Mexico would be a way of addressing this issue. The effectiveness of the process of informal education in the incorporation of Plains Indians, however, is evident in the virtual disappearance of tribal identity, even in the villages in which they lived. Cordova (1979) examined the process and also presented an interesting discussion of resistance of the genizaros and its consequences. (Gallegos, 1992, pg. 37).

This is indicative of the status stratification of pueblo Indians who were regarded as culturally superior. For the natives without close proximity to the church and its laws, there existed a policing which exacted complete impunity. If the harshness of the church was not enough of an imposition, its rural operatives, may be more brutal still. For the genizaro, the status of bondage rendered them at merciless hands, not even the “sanctity” of the church granting them relief. Gutierrez explores their plight in the subsequent text:

If a genizaro was found guilty in participating in any form of ritual not officially sanctioned, he or she would be severely punished. Several genizaros were accused, tried and convicted of crimes ranging from participating in ritual and spiritual practices to murdering a priest (Cordova, 1979, chap. 5) Many of the captives testified that they had learned these practices while living among their biological families as young children. Penalties ranged from flogging to a sentence of servitude, sometimes for life.... (Gallegos, 1992, pg. 37).

If imprisoned, there was no likelihood of survival, the death toll being over five slaves in a month (Gallegos, 1992). For the indigenous slave, education became a means of exclusion. Genizaros, however, were extremely resistant to cultural assimilation, being that they could never officially members of the dominant group. Their condemned status of servitude allowed for an “alien” consciousness as Anzaldúa explores through her re-constituting of the concept of *mestizaje* in *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*

(Anzaldúa, 1987). Rather than accept their role as condemned, their separation from the other allowed for a rejection of dominant ideology and ways of knowing. Corporal punishment being an expectation, rather than a risk, allowed for less fear of validation from the dominant group.

*Vecinos*, or heads of household were not necessarily relegated to just the Spanish settlers. Their education, though required was not so easily accessible as was the Pueblo natives. The expectation of self-discipline being a major determinant of honor. The lack of which could have potentially dire implications. Gutierrez reflects:

The education of vecino children in New Mexico were also carried on most fervently in an informal setting. Adults were expected to provide religious instruction for their children, along with general training in the customs and ways of participating in culture. Failure to comply with this responsibility resulted in the removal of children from a household (Gallegos, 1992, pg. 38).

This removal likely resulted in intervention from the church or placement in a surrogate household. For an indigenous youth, this relocation would ultimately result in slave status in a Spanish household. “Participating in culture”, in this capacity, was deemed valid only in its compliance to the dominant group. Practicing of indigenous traditions meant bodily risk in the event of discovery, creating within indigenous people an instinct of survival in maneuvering such a liminal space.

Though educational institutions were established in New Mexico in an effort to make indoctrination of indigenous people more straightforward, the Casta System through which race was ascribed made it a project of hierarchy. This resulted in mostly the validation of Pueblo natives with the complete cultural upheaval of Plains natives. Those genizaros, or “lost ones” who were relegated to slave-status were not expected to

receive a “valid” education, rather, serve as physical alleviation to the project of Spanish settlement and modernity.

### **US Imperialism and New Mexican Ineptitude**

After centuries of Spanish Colonialism and Mexican Independence from Spain in 1821, (with the inception of Mexicanidad as the national identity in New Mexico), US exceptionalism made its way to the region under the movement of *Manifest Destiny* in the middle 1800s. Through the Mexican-American War (1846-1848), what was then considered Mexican territory was essentially stolen by the US in the name of Protestantism and Capitalism. *The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo* was ratified in 1848 which claimed the territory that consists of present day New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, California, Nevada, Wyoming and Utah. The peace treaty expressly guaranteed Mexicans in the territories, “the right to their property, language, and culture”, though little was done to enforce this declaration (The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, 1848). Article X which guaranteed land rights to previously Mexican citizens was later stricken from the document leaving present-day New Mexicans, once again, without a “legitimate” government in a growing imperial environment. Mexican citizens had the “choice” to migrate to the newly conceived Mexican territory or become U.S. citizens within a year of its ratification, otherwise they would forfeit their rights and be considered sub-citizens by default (Gómez, 2007).

On September 9, 1850 New Mexico was introduced as a territory of the United States. The liminal status of Mexicanidad accompanying a rhetoric of ineptitude wherein New Mexicans were declared incapable of self-governance. With the introduction of this legislation came a necessity to establish an identity that rendered the region valid and



competent through the renunciation of a Mexican national identity. Since New Mexicans had so long occupied a liminal position of both Spanish and Mexican territories, the makings of a racial erasure had long been hanging in the balance. With the introduction of the Black Legend in Europe in the mid-16th Century, came the *imperial difference* which conceived of Spanish colonies as in need of salvation. This thought certainly informed the portrayal of Mexican citizens as racially inferior and subhuman. Since they were the product of both the “primitive” natives and the “vicious” Spaniards, autonomy was out of the question. In his book, *The Language of Blood, The Making of Spanish-American Identity in New Mexico: 1880s-1930s*, John M. Nieto-Phillips explores the implication of the Black Legend in the racial construction of New Mexicans. He writes:

The Black Legend that sustained a popular contempt for Spanish history and culture was bequeathed to North Americans by England. On a purely political level, the Black Legend was a rhetorical tool that the British had plied to assert a moral advantage over their colonial rivals, the Spaniards. Following independence, Americans generally followed suit. David J. Weber writes that, in their initial dealings with Spaniards from the Floridas to the Californias, Americans frequently viewed Spaniards as “unusually cruel, avaricious, treacherous, fanatical, superstitious, cowardly, corrupt, decadent, indolent and authoritarian.” These pejoratives constituted the basic features of the Black Legend, and they captured the moral deficiencies that presumably brought about the collapse of Spain’s once-enviable empire. The individual who, rather ironically, is associated with the origins of the Black Legend was none other than Fray Bartolome de Las Casas, Spain’s first Protector de Indios (appointed in 1516) whose treatises on Spain’s abuses of the Indians spawned centuries of global condemnation. (Nieto-Phillips, 2004, p. 150)

As the move toward statehood became less conceivable Mexican Americans began to fabricate the Spanish American identity in alignment with Western concepts of “civilization” through Christianity and domination. Through an appeal to whiteness by introducing a European kinship, New Mexicans had re-inscribed the rationale of La Sistema de Castas, in a campaign for racial purity in denying their *mestizaje*. However

urgent the quest toward statehood in establishing rights, New Mexicans were, for the most part, adamant against complete assimilation to the US mainstream. A stipulation of statehood was the push for public education as a means of producing “civilized” New Mexicans, eliminating the authority of the Catholic Church who had previously overseen all “formalized” education efforts. Nieto-Phillips (2004) examines:

Ignoring Nuevomexicanos’ growing consensus on admission to the Union, congressional opposition managed to squelch New Mexico’s statehood efforts on five occasions between 1888 and 1889 by invoking overly racist arguments. Ironically, during this period, a principal obstacle to statehood--the lack of public education--was overcome. In 1889, the territorial legislature--in spite of the Catholic Church’s opposition--established public education on primary, secondary, and postsecondary levels, including land grant universities and normal schools. By 1890, New Mexico boasted 342 public schools, 143 of which taught exclusively in the English language and 106 in the Spanish language; 93 were bilingual. In addition, there were numerous private Catholic schools. Despite improvements in education, congressmen continued their oppositions, thwarting every move toward admission between 1888 and 1895. (pg 80).

It wasn’t until the late 1800s that New Mexican girls were introduced to formal educational institutions. Among them, were boarding schools which sought to eradicate indigenous culture in an attempt to “Kill the Indian and save the man”. A project of Manifest Destiny and U.S. Exceptionalism, these schools forbade students to speak their native languages, practice their religion or express their culture through appearance or practice. For indigenous girls this meant the adoption of US conceptions of respectful behavior and gender roles as well as those imposed through Spanish Colonization. For “Spanish” girls, the racialization of their womanhood as impure and coquettish by U.S. society countered by the virtues of *la honra* through chastity and decorum in the Catholic faith, rendered their educational experience axiomatically adverse.

Thus, to be mestiza meant the shedding of an indigenous identity of womanhood and the adopting of a particular way of being manifest in the notion of the “good

woman”. This was coupled with notions of silence and virtue in which sexuality was never discussed and one was expected to answer to male figures within the household and within the Catholic Church. This culture of silence carried through into institutions of education.

### **Into the 20th Century**

The territory of New Mexico saw the introduction of the Public Education act in 1891, then began the shift toward implementing English as the predominant language of the classroom. Until the 1940s, both Spanish and English were used under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. However, this shift saw particular resistance from both Mexicano and Indigenous people of New Mexico. In the article, “Crossing Social and Cultural Borders- The Road to Language Hybridity” within the text, *Speaking Chicana*, author Maria Dolores Gonzales examines language attrition in New Mexico schools. She explains:

It was assumed that any public education system established in a territory in the United States would use English as a medium of instruction, especially since the strongest rationale for providing schooling in the first place (at least among those who saw a public school system as a precondition for statehood) was to provide English instruction for those children who came from non-English speaking homes” (Milk, 1980: 215). Resistance to public education on the part of many Mexicanos during the territorial period contributed not only to the confrontation between the two groups but also helped strengthen group solidarity and unity because of the threat to native language and cultural traditions. (Gonzales, 1999, pg. 15).

A major concern outside of language attrition, was the role education would play in assimilation, as cultural values and identity were very much a significant part of identity in the lives of Mexicanos and indigenous people. This is significant in that, due to the experience these populations had with “formalized” schooling insofar, they were

incredibly resistant to ideas of institutional education for the very realities we see carried out today. Gonzales introduces, “Besides the limited resources as a result of the tax base and the role of the Catholic Church in education, the native population was skeptical about the establishment of public education. They were not as willing to sacrifice traditional values in the name of “progress” as were the Anglo newcomers and the elite Hispanos.” (Gonzales, 1999, pg. 14). This idea of “development” or modernization was something these particular populations were uninterested in attaining in exchange for such integral parts of who they were. The article elaborates:

In fact, one Mexicano perspective was that “a common school system for all children aside from being alien to their cultural tradition, was an idea that symbolized a covert attempt on the part of Anglo outsiders to subvert their culture the inculcation of alien values in their children” (Milk 1980: 214). The native population was not wrong in suspecting that a public education system would mean the loss of the mother tongue and culture domination by Anglos. The language question was at the heart of the school issue. (Gonzales, 1999, pgs. 14-15).

When New Mexico gained statehood in 1912, 62 years after its introduction as a territory, U.S. education had already imposed cultural upheaval on young students as a means of reproducing a dominant narrative. Institutions for children of color were segregated from U.S. facilities and had reproduced the idea of racial inferiority and inscribed the idea of the Protestant White, English Speaking Male as the locus of knowledge and the absolute Truth.

In the text, *Forgotten People: A Study of New Mexicans*, George Isadore Sanchez explores the implications of education in New Mexico in the 20th century:

The explanations for these conditions is to be found in the nature and quality of the educational facilities available to these children. In the counties with the largest proportions of Spanish-speaking people, school terms are shorter, teachers are less well prepared and their salaries are lower, and materials of instruction and school buildings are inferior to

those found elsewhere in the state. As a matter of fact, careful analysis reveals that as the percentage of Spanish-speaking population increases, educational opportunity decreases. (Sanchez, 1940, pg. 33).

Thus began the spatial privileging of larger cities in New Mexico as their participation in the industrial revolution had rendered them worthwhile. “Rural” towns who had been largely ignored by the US government received little resource or investment in enforcing these Western institutions of education. The introduction of curriculum with little cultural relevance, coupled with the necessity of child labor in sustaining families after the introduction of industry and the usurping of lands constituted a disconnect between young students and educational content. Sanchez articulates:

The special nature of the problem of educating this cultural minority has never been properly recognized by federal and state governments. Educational practices in New Mexico have been patterned after those developed in the Middle West in the East for peoples and conditions vastly different from those obtaining here. The selection of educational officials by popular election is a practice that is particularly incongruous in this situation. So is the district system. The use of standard curricula, books, and materials among these children is a ridiculous procedure (Sanchez, 1940, pg. 32).

Though this study was conducted in the 1940s, his words hold especially true today, as New Mexican students continue to be marginalized by a curriculum that serves a Western epistemology and reproduces the dominant narrative of the United States. This conceptualization of New Mexicans ignores the complexity of our identity as occupying a particularly marginalized status as the “afterthought” of the United States government. Lack of investment in our emotional, spiritual, physical and economic well-being has amounted in a statistically dire position. We are seen as the blight of United States’ success, ignorant rhetoric in the current political climate even calling for our exile to a

now unfamiliar homeland. Sanchez examines the failures of U.S. schools to serve their students and demonstrate an ethics of authentic caring. He problematizes the prohibition of the Spanish language in public schools as testimony of their destructive intention:

The language problem illustrates the inadequacy of current instructional practices. Imagine the Spanish-speaking child's introduction to American education. He comes to school, not only without a word of English but without the environmental experience upon which school life is based. He cannot speak to the teacher and is unable to understand what goes on about him in the classroom. He finally submits to rote learning, parroting words and processes in self-defense. To him, school life is artificial. He submits to it during class hours, only partially digesting the information which the teacher has tried to impart. Of course he learns English and the school subjects imperfectly! The school program is based on the fallacious assumption that the children come from English-speaking homes--homes that reflect American cultural standards and traditions (Sanchez, 1940, pg. 32).

Language oppression grew as a result of U.S. Imperialism in which New Mexicans who had long-since adopted the Spanish language were required to reject it to fulfill the narrative of English as the "official" language of the United States. Corporal punishment and humiliation tactics were utilized in enforcing this ideology. My *abuela* Elena often recounts being punished for speaking her first language in school, being paraded around in a "dunce cap" upon having been caught. My father recalls having been smacked on the hand with a ruler for speaking Spanish in "English only" settings in the 1970s, nearly 30 years after the violence first enacted on his mother. This intergenerational trauma is not uncommon in the narrative of the present day New Mexican and is why you'll find many a person with a Spanish surname who claim an understanding of the language with the inability to speak words to power in an act of cultural resistance.

Gonzales examines the significance of language loss and assimilation at the hands of the U.S. government especially after the supposed protection of the people of the region under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, after New Mexico was ceded to U.S.

in the aftermath of the U.S./Mexico War, “The proliferation of the Anglo population left the Spanish-speaking people vulnerable to an intrusive language and culture. By the end of the nineteenth century, complete economic, social, and political subjugation had occurred in spite of the fact that the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo had provided formal guarantees to preserve language, property and political rights for the new Spanish-speaking citizens (Acuña 1972).” (Gonzales, 1999, pg. 14). As language is a central component of identity, the loss of both the indigenous language and later the Spanish tongue in many mestizo Nuevomexicanos has resulted in a disconnected state of being. For many New Mexicans in the generations after U.S. Imperialism, the process of language attrition leaves in them a historical trauma and a longing to restore within themselves the sense of belonging language can provide. Thus, Nuevomexicanidad and language play inform on another intensely.

In *Madame Ambassador: The Shoemaker's Daughter*, Mari-Luci Jaramillo writes a memoir of her experience being raised in extreme poverty, becoming schoolteacher and eventually a professor at major universities in New Mexico, and finally being appointed the U.S. Ambassador to Honduras in 1976. She reflects on her educational experience in Las Vegas, NM growing up in the 1930s and 40s:

With Spanish Americans being a minority, our school was very Anglo oriented. There was seldom any Spanish spoken unless it was in Spanish class. There was no overt pride or joy in being a Spanish American...Because of our upbringing of being only seen and not heard, we had no idea whether our ways were acceptable to others or not. After all, when we were much younger, in elementary school, we had been separated from those children who were considered smarter than we. As young adults, our parents still did not discuss these types of subjects with us. (Jaramillo, 2002, pg. 43).

Jaramillo's alignment with the Spanish American identity was indicative of the appeal to white interests in order to gain statehood, due to the 62 years as a territory under U.S.

rule, with limited rights or recognition. Though her father was from the region then designated Mexico and she interchangeably identifies as Mexican American or Mexicana, this identity in terms of Las Vegas schooling is meant to reflect this ideological and cultural adoption as whiteness as a means of property (Bell, 1992).

The 1960s and 70s saw a significant shift in thought and policy throughout the world and meant the uplifting of minoritized voices within the United States. In New Mexico, this meant the Civil Rights Movement as predominantly reflected in the Chicano Movement and American Indian Movement where ethnic studies were first introduced to University settings and representation within curriculum (although particular to only certain fields), was first realized. However, this shift in narrative didn't necessarily correspond to a caring and uplifting relationship with Nuevomexicano students in families by teachers whose attitudes toward them had already been articulated. Jaramillo reflects:

It was a consciousness-raising time for the Hispanics who had been left out of the opportunity structure in our nation. It was also a realization for me. I had been raised to believe that education was all one needed to crawl out of the bottomless well of poverty. My civil rights work had taught me that it wasn't so. Skin color could influence how a teacher would react and behave toward you. Expectations could be very different for Hispanics. Children could be treated as though they weren't very smart and as a result, their aspirations as adults were, not surprisingly, low (Jaramillo, 2002, pg. 77).

This culture of low self-esteem and deficit view of Nuevomexicano students who experience incredible poverty has not necessarily shifted, though we are now well-into the 21st Century. Institutional education, although an upward means of social stratification for the dominant group, is not necessarily the reality for minoritized groups. However, it is still a space of liberational potential, and in the wake of the *Yazzie/Martinez v. State of New Mexico* decision, may see a shift in how we begin to



school students in a state significantly under-resourced (New Mexico Center for Law and Poverty, 2018).

# Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Let me begin by saying that I came to theory because I was hurting—the pain within me was so intense that I could not go on living. I came to theory desperate, wanting to comprehend—to grasp what was happening around and within me. Most importantly, I wanted to make the hurt go away. I saw in theory then a location for healing.

—bell hooks

New Mexican scholar Estevan Arellano has defined *Querencia* as, ‘The inclination or tendency of man and certain animals to return to the site where they were raised or have a tendency of returning to. For our purpose it also means “affection,” “longing,” or “favorite place.” But it also implies a sense of responsibility to that place, a particular ethic toward the land. It is the place that people say “conoce como sus manos,” he knows like his hands” (Arellano, 1997, p. 51). Though this idea of spatial attachment and accountability is prevalent in many communities and cultures, the term *querencia* is particular to New Mexico.

I use the New Mexican framework of *querencia* to explore participants’ relationship with their education in New Mexico, looking in particular at how the history of colonization has been reproduced through the generations in Western Academia. I explore through the lens of *querencia*, and Gloria Anzaldúa’s *mestizaje* (Anzaldúa, 1987), in helping to define what a Nuevomexicana consciousness is and could be.

I examine *querencia* as a *difrasismo* in marrying the concepts of “querer”: want, love and “herencia”: heritage, legacy, inheritance. I hope to identify ways in which young Nuevomexicana’s connection with place and the reality of culture and relationality within it, have provided them a particular way to navigate institutions that were built explicitly to subjugate them. I use Laura Rendón’s *Sentipensante Pedagogy* (2009) to articulate what a pedagogy with coalitional capacity, marrying both western knowledge and ancestral or intergenerational ways of knowing could look like.

Further, I complicate the accepted definition of *querencia* as tied to land in acknowledging the continued violence of settler colonialism that occurs on occupied indigenous land. I envision *querencia* as particular to place and relationality, something

Arellano examines when he says, “Querencia doesn’t always imply place, for it can also be a certain time of the day, a certain type of weather, music, art, literature, food, taste, or smell.” (Arellano, 1997, p.50). I will base such ways of knowing from Dolores Delgado Bernal’s “pedagogies of the home” in determining the particular ways in which these young Nuevomexicana students have learned to navigate the New Mexican Educational System (Delgado Bernal, 2006).

I intend to use a Chicana Feminist framework in this investigation. Throughout the pursuit of my graduate degree, critical theory has served me well in understanding the structural implications of systems such as Capitalism, Patriarchy and White Supremacy, but I have often found within it a question of “what can be done?” without a sense of hopefulness. A Chicana Feminist framework allows for a creative re-envisioning and counternarrative to realities lived by these Nuevomexicana students.

### **The Colonial Wound**

In *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* Gloria Anzaldúa describes colonization as “una herida abierta”, essentially an enduring systemic injury from which we are manifest. In endorsement of Anzaldúa, Mignolo examines the *colonial wound* as a major epistemic shift in the fabric of being that privileged materiality and currency and created a hegemonic stratification intact and reproduced in the 21st century. He explains:

...after the arrival of the conquistador Hernán Cortés, or even earlier, in the place of the Taino population in the Caribbean islands after the arrival of Christopher Columbus, you will witness the arrival of a group of unknown people soon after that, see your population dying, killed, raped, and exploited, all of which will be experienced by a massive revolution of disruption and destruction. Thus, the “foundation” that allowed European entrepreneurs, monarchs, and bourgeois to fulfill their supposed destiny was, for people in Tawantinsuyu and Anahuac, a *Pachakuti*: violent destruction, relentless invasion, and disregard for their way of life--a convulsion of all levels of existence and the moment of *the founding colonial wound of the modern/colonial world*. Indigenous peoples in the Americas

have not stopped struggling with that initial wound and are making their presence felt today. (pg 53).

This destruction, or *Pachakuti* is felt on a global scale. With the projects of Neoliberalism and Globalization, its legacy endures as a perpetual violence toward ancestral ways of knowing and othered bodies. In New Mexico, in particular, our notion of post-coloniality has rendered many blind to the enduring legacy of those often valorized through the *Discovery Doctrine*. Modernity is thus seen as having positive implications in the mapping of our world, rather than a rupture in our innate realization of humanity. This machination of the world imperceptible to those who understand it as inherent and a product of “civilization” and “progress”.

### **Conceiving La Nuevomexicana**

Nuevomexicanas are continuously marginalized from the historical legacy of New Mexico. We operate within the liminal space, outside the empirical and in institutional education only found our footing well-into the 20th century. Our societal roles, incepted through colonization and reproduced through U.S. Imperialism are often void of the characterization as thinkers. However, our occupation of the in-between has allowed us a particular worldview that has served us in navigating such harsh terrain. As discussed earlier, La Sistema de Castas produced a concept of *mestizaje* meant to condemn indigeneity and reproduce whiteness through blood purity. In *Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Gloria Anzaldúa, a woman of color feminist and queer theorist, reexamines the significance of *mestizaje*. Rather than exist in a condemned state as the racial stratification of colonialism sought to impose, she renders it a necessary means of existence. She poses:

At the confluence of two or more genetic, streams, with chromosomes constantly “crossing over,” this mixture of races, rather than resulting in an inferior being, provides hybrid progeny, a mutable, more malleable species with a rich gene pool. From this racial, ideological, cultural and biological crosspollination, an “alien” consciousness is presently in the making--a new mestiza consciousness, una conciencia de mujer. It is the consciousness of Borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987, pg. 99).

Rather than internalize the racialized demarcation of status as inherently less, Anzaldúa asserts that this duality or multiplicity of being is essential in navigating the imposing structures of dominance which we find ourselves. To deviate from the mainstream, though typically conceptualized as inherently subordinate becomes a function of survival, our ideologies uncompromised by the burden of violence and fractured humanity which accompanies the dominant status. Chela Sandoval, Chicana and postcolonial scholar explores this third or liminal space in her book *Methodology of the Oppressed*, she asserts:

True, it is the violence of colonial invasion and subjugation by race that opens this border between skin and mask, where faces shatter into the wretchedness of insanity, capitulation, or death. But this location, which is neither inside nor outside, neither good nor evil, is an interstitial site out of which new, undecidable forms of being and original theories and practices for emancipation, are produced (Sandoval, 2000, pg. 84).

This mestiza consciousness as a product of being both colonizer and colonized allows for a differential maneuvering of such violent structures as a means of surviving and thriving. It allows for the co-existence of both ancestral and Western knowledge in rupturing this hegemony of power. I examine, then, the need for a pedagogical model that empowers and cultivates Nuevomexicana consciousness rather than seeking to assimilate it. In the confines of an institutionalized western education would require such a rupture in coming to know. To employ such a pedagogy may mean the eradication of the internalization of

inadequacy known as the *Imposter Syndrome* which has plagued many students of color in higher academia, and in New Mexico manifests in our administrative efforts from primary school onward as well.

I am particularly hopeful about and enamored by Laura Rendón's introduction of a Sentipensante (Sensing/Thinking) Pedagogy which constitutes a holistic, critical pedagogy, rooted in social justice. This pedagogy emphasizes emotionality as necessary for learning, though it is almost always rendered an afterthought in the search for the "rational". Rendón employs Eduardo Galeano's re-envisioning of the concept of Sentipensante introducing his reflection:

Why does one write, if not to put one's pieces together? From the moment we enter school or church, education chops us into pieces: it teaches us to divorce soul from body and mind from heart. The fishermen of the Colombian coast must be learned doctors of ethics and morality, for they invented the word, sentipensante, feeling-thinking, to define language that speaks the truth (Galeano as cited in Rendón, 2009, p. 131).

This compartmentalization of knowledge Galeano refers to has often resulted in an educational disconnect for students who come to know through a process of intergenerational wisdom. To privilege Western thought, is in essence, a false construction of identity that misconstrues the ideological and inclusive intent of such a system. Through a mestiza consciousness, Nuevomexicanas must call on their emotional and spiritual intelligence in navigating the institutions that reproduce this ideology. This necessitates an epistemological shift from Truth and the empirical, to "truths" and ways of knowing. Rendón explains many indigenous societies have no specific word for education, rather it is articulated as a process of "coming to know" in the quest for knowledge and recognition. Rather than privileging "hard" knowledge, such as math and

science, this coming to know includes discounted forms of knowledge such as emotional expression, dance, song, color, death and renewal (Rendón, 2009, p. 17).

In *Sentipensante Pedagogy*, Rendón shares a distinction between knowledge and wisdom that de-centers the West as the locus of enunciation (Mignolo, 2005, p. 8). The privileging of Western knowledge has long resulted in the conceptualization of people of color as “emotional” while the dominant group occupies the same of “rational”. The following quote serves as an explanation for the shift in terminology as a rejection of such a hegemony:

Thompson and O’Dea (2001) write: Knowledge and wisdom are related yet different. Knowledge is the result of empirical observation and represents the consolidation of interpretations by observers of whatever is observed. It has been the hallmark of the Western scientific paradigm and has served a useful purpose. Wisdom is borne of personal and communal reflection on life as it unfolds; on happiness, suffering and the causes of each. It requires a maturing process which incorporates courage, insight, and, at times, letting go of the need to know and resting in paradox. Unlike knowledge, wisdom is rooted in much deeper psychological and spiritual soil. It requires the cultivation of multiple intelligences. (p. 6) (Thompson and O’Dea as cited in Rendón, 2009, p. 88)

It is through the dialectic rather than binary logic that sites of resistance are often produced. *Sentipensante Pedagogy* acknowledges the validity of Western thought while simultaneously uplifting the intrinsicness of ancestral knowledge. The co-existence of such ideologies represent a third space wherein students come to know as a practice of negotiating. This pedagogical *Nepantla* or “inbetweenness” allows for the cultivation of a *mestiza* consciousness as an intervention to the violence experienced by minority students in most present-day educational institutions. (Soja 1996, Anzaldúa 1987).

Rendón explores the objective of the *Sentipensante* pedagogy in the following quote:

This pedagogic approach recognizes the connection between Western and non-Western ways of knowing, the scientific method, and knowledge



derived from the humanities and social sciences, as well as the spiritual experience. The pedagogy values intellectual understandings derived from scientific exploration yet is also open to the role of intuition, creativity, and imagination. Sentipensante Pedagogy values the individual's quest for knowledge yet also acknowledges the importance of dialogue and the shared construction of meaning. A sensing/thinking pedagogy also strives for balance and harmony; there is consonance between inner work, focusing on emotional and spiritual nurturance, and outer work, involving service and action in the world (Rendón, 2009, p. 135)

Rendón introduces present-day Western educational institutions as fundamentally detrimental in that they were established during the Industrial Revolution in an attempt to universalize education. Their constituents, primarily white Christian male and of an elite class, allowed for the reproduction of the West as the ultimate intellectual authority (Rendón, 2009, p. 12). The necessity of social justice in a Sentipensante Pedagogy is a result of the indoctrination of the dominant narrative in the educational experience of students of color. Rendón asserts, "Social justice becomes a theme anytime faculty work with underserved students (i.e., low-income, first-generation, underrepresented) in a way that seeks to liberate them from past invalidating experiences that have fostered self-limiting views in order to transform them into powerful learners" (Rendón, 2009, p. 92). This disruption of a negative and potentially harmful self-image of students of color is essential in the (re)envisioning of New Mexican educational institutions. Rather than internalizing the dominant narrative of failure as perpetuated by the mainstream media through portrayals such as *Breaking Bad* and an emphasis on criminality in national news headlines, students may begin to imagine themselves as producers of knowledge through such a pedagogy.

Though I believe an employment of such a pedagogical approach is necessary in establishing an educational reform in the state of New Mexico, I hope to affirm and

identify the implementation of such a pedagogy through individual and collective practices among young Nuevomexicana scholars. That is, to determine how the preservation of ancestral knowledge has enabled them to maneuver a system which seeks to further marginalize them and reproduce the notion of ideological and intellectual inferiority. A de-centering of the institutional classroom and emphasis of the lived environment as a locus of wisdom and mestiza consciousness may be essential in this examination.

A particular aspect of the Nuevomexicana identity I would like to interrogate is the realization of the self through the spatial. For many New Mexicans, their tie to “home” is a fundamental element of their identity. In my experience, families have oftentimes occupied the same space for centuries, their proximity to one another an essential component of their being. Frequently, even those who choose to leave the state for a stint of time always find their way back, homesickness striking an essential chord.

John Nieto-Phillips examines the attachment to land as a political movement as a prevention of US annexation in 1872, during the push for statehood. The racialization of land came as a result of displacement through Manifest Destiny. He asserts:

The legislature passed a resolution condemning Colorado’s proposed annexation and affirming New Mexico’s sovereignty. As long as New Mexico remained a territory, declared the resolution, it was subject to periodic raids on its land. At state, however, was more than just land. Colorado’s annexation (carried out in 1876 threatened the very livelihood of “native” New Mexicans. Statehood was seen as the only sure protection from such incursions. “We are impelled to [t]his course by our pride and our independence,” the resolution stated, “and to prevent our people, our relations and our interests from being separated, divided and made tributary to a neighboring Territory; and we call on the people throughout the whole Territory, as they love their native soil, their homes, their wives and children...to vote on our admission into the Union.” The resolution’s reference to “native soil” marked the beginning of a movement to politicize Nuevomexicanos’ identity and historical attachment to their land. Statehood offered protection for

traditional Nuevomexicano land and lifeways and thus was a vehicle for what historian Robert J. Rosenbaum has called “the sacred right of self-preservation.” (Nieto-Phillips, year, 64).

Though this likely attributed to the perception of the spatial as inherent, I imagine the connection also stems from the complexity of the New Mexican identity as a product of mestizaje through colonization, entrenched in an imperial system. The liminal space which New Mexicans occupied necessitated a calling homeward, as a means of survival. Having been decentered for centuries through different imperial legacies, New Mexicans established an identity which rendered them immobile. This fixity is a means of resistance through our inception from the *colonial wound* and a rejection of assimilation to the U.S. Mainstream.

### **Querencia and Pedagogical Realizations**

The idea of *Querencia* is unique to New Mexico, describing the sensed spiritual, emotional and physical connection to the land. Laura Rendón offers the idea of “difrasismo” as a component of Aztec ritual speech in which two seemingly different concepts are married to create a third concept or space. Difrasismo is employed in the manifestation of “Sentipensante Pedagogy” as well as the notion of “querencia”. The verb *querer* in Spanish exists in somewhat of a dialectic between wanting and loving. The noun *herencia*, meaning a legacy or heritage of something. This coupling of the two ideas is something unique to Nuevo Mexicanidad, referring to a certain intrinsic belonging of self to the land with which we identify (Arellano, 1997. P. 36). In his article, “La Raza Bioregionalism”, Juan Estevan Arellano defines *querencia* in various ways, among them being:

The inclination or tendency of man and certain animals to return to the site where they were raised or have a tendency of returning to. For our purpose it also means “affection,” “longing,” or “favorite place.” But it also implies a sense of

responsibility to that place, a particular ethic toward the land. It is the place that people say “conoce como sus manos,” he knows like his hands (Arellano, 1997, p.50).

This responsibility to the land has resulted an intergenerational situation. It is through the land that ancestral knowledge has endured, wisdom manifesting in awareness of herbalism, the lived environment and a “pace of life” which deviates from the U.S. mainstream. These ways of knowing serve as a trialectics of space in that they privilege the spatial in examining the social and historical manifestation of Nuevomexicanidad (Soja, 1996.) In a mestiza consciousness, the land as a process of knowing has served intergenerationally in a legacy of healing and care cultivated through our border thinking.

Defining nuevomexicanidad in understanding education is not a transparent task. In reflecting on the Nuevomexicano, Michael Trujillo in his book, *Land of Disenchantment: Latina/o Identities and Transformations in Northern New Mexico* explores how this identity manifests. He writes:

Such questions of representation are not new to New Mexicans, as is evident from the fact that the terms for Nuevomexicanos are fraught with tension and difficulty, as I suggested in this book’s preface. Academics and the popular media have argued over them extensively for far more than one hundred years..the exploration of these terms reveals the complexities of Nuevomexicano self-conceptions and ethnic/racial assignment as they each positively identify what New Mexican Latinos are and negatively are not. The more recent academic debates are waged over claims to an exceptional and isolated New Mexican Latino culture and gene pool and another vision that finds greater continuity with Mexico and the indigenous Southwest in terms of descent and culture. In popular terms, this debate is framed in battles over terms of identification: Spanish or Spanish American versus Chicano and Mexican or Mexican American (Trujillo, 2009, pg. 43).

This quote emphasizes the complexity of the Nuevomexicano identity as established through a politics of refusal in how Nuevomexicanos come to understand ourselves. In understanding ourselves through education, this can be particularly violent in that

oftentimes our ways of knowing are often not validated within educational institutions. Much like in Angela Valenzuela's text, *Subtractive Schooling: U.S.-Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring*, where she examines western institutions, administrators and educators as viewing Latino students through the *deficit model* of education, in the state of Texas, New Mexico educators have reproduced notions of inadequacy and lack of intelligence in our schools (Valenzuela, 1999).

This is particularly tragic when educators from New Mexico project these notions of student inferiority through an internalized oppression through the dominant narrative of the incapable New Mexican portrayed throughout the United States. Because our state is state is the 50th in education, 50th in poverty and 49th in childhood well-being, the deficit view of families experiencing poverty continues to perpetuate inequities in learning experiences and emotional violence to the psyche.

As I explore intergenerational behaviors of resistance learned outside of the "traditional classroom", I identify particularities of the Nuevomexicana identity that allow for the rupturing of such a narrative coupled by such daunting statistics. In her text, "Learning and Living Pedagogies of the Home: The Mestiza Consciousness of Chicana Students" from *Chicana/Latina Education in Everyday Life*, Dolores Delgado Bernal explores mestiza consciousness in students and how they've learned to articulated this identity through what she identifies as "pedagogies of the home":

These pedagogies of the home extend the existing discourse on critical pedagogies by putting cultural knowledge and language at the forefront to better understand lessons from the homespace and local communities. For example, because power and politics are at the center of all teaching and learning, the application of household knowledge to situations outside the home become a creative process that interrupts the transmission of "official knowledge" and dominant ideologies. While I understand that household knowledge can not only interrupt but also reinforce the transmission of dominant ideologies, in this

chapter I take a strengths perspective and examine how Chicana college students draw from pedagogies of the home to enhance their academic success (Delgado Bernal, 2006, pg. 114).

Moving away from ideas of capital or currency in terms of what we are learning in our homespace Delgado Bernal's specific identification of the mestiza consciousness and appeal to community spaces aligns more significantly with Rendón's "ancestral wisdom", that explores teachings we have either intentionally or subconsciously adopted intergenerationally, many times as a means of survival in maneuvering a system introduced specifically to eradicate us. By identifying particular pedagogies of the home identified by the participants, I can employ a strengths-based approach to understanding how their experiences within formalized education in New Mexico has informed their identity. Simultaneously, I can determine how these particular pedagogies of the home helped them to maneuver such formalized spaces that were meant explicitly as tools of erasure for mestizo and indigenous students in New Mexico and were cultivated first for the Spanish elite and then appropriated as a means of realizing Manifest Destiny.

The framework of *querencia* will allow us to investigate these pedagogies of the home as intrinsic to the conceptualization of the Nuevomexicana identity within the systems that they navigate. Particularly, as both the temporal and spatial connection to New Mexico has interwoven to inform this sense of belonging in the various spaces we inhabit.

# Chapter 4:

# Methodology

Chicana Feminist pedagogies are partially shaped by collective experiences and community memory. Community and family knowledge is taught to youth through such ways as legends, corridos, storytelling, and behavior. It is through culturally specific ways of teaching and learning that ancestors and elders share the knowledge of conquest, segregation, labor market stratification, patriarchy, homophobia, assimilation and resistance. This knowledge that is passed from one generation to the next—often by mothers and other female family members—can help us to survive in everyday life by providing an understanding of certain situations and explanations about why things happen under certain conditions.

—Dolores Delgado Bernal

## **Research Methodology**

This particular project will be a qualitative research study. This project was conducted by way of narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry according to Clandinin and Connelly is: "a way of understanding and inquiring into experience through, "collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, pg. 20). The philosophy which informs this research saw its inception in ancient texts such as the bible or in the ponderings of Ancient Greece (Savin-Baden, Howell Major, 2013, pg. 227). It manifested in the 21st century as the personal account became more prevalent in examining the qualitative implications of research. Scholars such as Dewey, Bruner and Geertz are generally associated with narrative research approaches as their philosophy lay in the validation of the humanity (Savin-Baden, Howell Major, 2013, pg. 227)

A major component in narrative inquiry is the emphasis on individual lived experience and voice. In this capacity, narrative inquiry is usually conducted in small groups or on a "person-to-person basis." In this respect, participants are guaranteed a space in which to be self-reflective and internalize implications of experiences (Savin-Baden, Howell Major, 2013, p.231). Subjectivity through research defines this approach wherein the researcher collects the stories and relays them in a comprehensive account which seeks to validate the testimonials of the participants. This approach emphasizes participant construction of meaning by way of internal exploration.

Narrative inquiry is a way of negating the "traditionally" marginalized in that it allows room for voice and validates lived experiences as an avenue of expertise. Trahar asserts that stories are not fixed, they are fluid and ever-progressing allowing for



transformative meaning in relaying the ideas. (Trahar, 2011, pg. 34) This research method explores the historical context and its manifestation in the present-day; how memories are embodied and reproduced intergenerationally. It explores the implications of systemic changes as well as addresses the context of ever-changing ideologies and beliefs in shaping the reality of the participant (Cowie, Moreland, OtreI-Cass, pg. 105)

Narratives are inherently subjective in perceiving knowledge and experience. They emphasize multiple realities and truth as a means of understanding the world rather than the fixed Truth and a quest for eternal knowledge (Trahar, 2011, pg. 132). Stories are representations of an experience and seek to examine the individual implications of such as informed by their system of beliefs and the ideologies by which their particularized society operates.

One challenge to the narrative inquiry approach lays in the interpretation of data in that the researcher must do their best to shape the study in a way that represents participant voice while simultaneously informing the theoretical implications of such findings. It is their obligation to protect the participant as much as they can and respect their wishes in the manner in which they present their findings. Researchers must be very cognizant of the implications of data interpretation and implement the best method in relaying the findings of the study (Savin-Baden, Howell Major, 2013, pg.241).

This narrative inquiry incorporates interviews, field observations, and coding. My purpose in exploring multiple methods is to engage a comprehensive understanding of the participant both based on personal perception and on including their own exploration of self. I completed my research in an ethnic studies Freshman Learning Community in a flagship university in the State of New Mexico, in the fall semester of 2018. My time was

spent in the course which met twice a week for an hour and twenty minutes. As someone who has worked within the community for two years, my positionality as "insider" allowed for better recognition with my participants. I was present in the class every Thursday between the Fall 2018 Semester began to ensure students are accustomed to my presence.

This study is narrative in that the methods employed, my presentation of both personal, secondary source and narrative data seek to present a detailed counternarrative through the lived experiences of various Nuevomexicana students and their navigation of our educational system through the pedagogies of the home they engaged in what may have otherwise been particularly marginalizing spaces. I ask specific questions to determine the participants' experiences and seek to share their experience in a capacity that demonstrates their resilience and strength in navigating challenging and sometimes painful systems and circumstances.

### **Site**

This research study was conducted in an introductory ethnic studies class at a major university in the state of New Mexico. The data collection occurred in the second half of the Fall 2018 Semester. This particular class contained 88 students, as it generally feeds into four other smaller classes. Each of the students in the class were in their first semester of their freshman year in college and were enrolled in the class as part of a program meant to provide a sense of community to incoming college students. This semester, the class was led by a Nuevomexicana poet, educator, organizer and artist as well as young male, first generation Mexican-American PhD scholar and organizer. Each of the instructors

As the study pertains to education, it was necessary to collect data from a student base. The study seeks to understand student relationships with identity formation and thus, requires a contextualized New Mexican experience. The study includes 3 participants who indicated interest through the SurveyMonkey link I distributed through email, and met the inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria for the study can be located in Appendix A.

### **Sampling Procedure**

I began the study by organizing a survey with specific questions that indicated the particularity of the identity of those with whom I engage in this study. The questionnaire allowed me to narrow my focus from 90 or so potential candidates<sup>3</sup>. I sought to work with primarily young Latina/mestiza students with multigenerational ties to New Mexico, searching exclusively for those who were born and raised in the state. Please find the recruitment survey questions in Appendix B.

I contacted the potential selected participants individually to schedule an informational session about the study to take place after the FLC class met. There, I informed them about the study and asked them to make the determination about whether they would participate. The students were asked to sign consent documents and choose a pseudonym I would refer to them as when I gathered data and engaged in the writing process. I have employed these chosen names throughout my study.

### **Data Collection**

I led a briefing session at the beginning of the study, explaining the requirements of participation and the aim of the study. Participating students were involved in field observations and individual interviews. During the info session, I indicated to students

that there may be a focus group at the end of the semester depending on student interest and availability. As the interviews majorly took place at the end of finals week for the students, there was not sufficient interest in focus group participation. In protecting my participants' identities, I asked each of them to choose their own pseudonyms to be used when transcribing field observations, and interview. Since there were three participants, pseudonyms were implemented at the beginning of data collection and remained through the data analysis, and writing process.

For the interviews, I asked questions which prompted an investigation of their schooling experiences and the ways in which their identity has both informed and been impacted by this. The questions and prompts can be located in Appendix C.

I use student responses to examine how they understand their educational experiences growing up in New Mexico. In this classroom, identity is a prevailing concept and many of their ideas likely shifted as they engaged more with the theoretical text presented. Interviews took place in a private location of student choosing, and in my graduate office in the Humanities Building. Interview audio recordings or notes were kept in my personal audio device and notebook securely on my person after the data collection. I transferred the information to secure, private residence as soon as it was feasible. I transcribed the data within a month of data collection and stored it on my secured laptop.

I did four field observations in which I "sat in" on at least one class a week and examined the students engaging with their coursework. I used a journal and laptop in my field observations. In protecting my participant's identities, I was sure to use pseudonyms and obscure the information regarding the studio. I employed an audio recorder to ensure

full accuracy in my representation of dialogue between the participants and those they are interacting with. I only use the participants' direct responses as data. I used my personal notebook to record data in field observations. All written notes taken were transcribed on my laptop within a month of data collection and stored on my secured laptop. Consent documents were kept in a locked file cabinet away from identifying data collected. I solely collected and interpreted all data.

To organize the study, I gathered participant identifiers such as name, phone number and email. Names and numbers of the participants were stored in my secured phone without direct indication of their participant status. The phone requires a six digit code or my personal thumbprint to unlock it. Information about the study and identifiers were deleted from my phone after the completion of my thesis project. The exception being, if students indicate they wished me to retain their contact information. In that case I erased all past conversations regarding the study from my cellular device.

I kept all data securely on my person until arrival at my private residence. Traveling from class to class, after data collection, I stored data collected securely in my office until I left campus and retrieved the data that was then securely relocated to my private residence. I transferred the data to my password secure laptop and left any paper data in a locked location within my home within weeks of the data collection.

All research information was entered in my password secured laptop. All data was stored in an additional password secured folder. A separate document with any identifiers and pseudonyms was locked in my personal residence away from consent documents and other data. I kept all paper records acquired from field notes locked inside my apartment, safe from the common area. I used chosen pseudonyms when transcribing data.

I have shredded all paper documents with participant information. For electronic records, I completely wiped them from my computer. Any audio records taken have been erased from both the recording device and the laptop used to complete the project. After transcribing and analyzing all data, I destroyed all audio recordings, notes and transcriptions. All data has been disidentified in the completion of my thesis project.

### **Data Analysis**

Storytelling has been articulated as a space for Chicana/Latina Liberation in that their structure serves to disrupt the dominant narrative, which serves as the locus of enunciation in understanding history. This “counternarrative” is also seen as a methodology of critical theory and is decolonial in practice. In seeking to understand the Nuevomexicana identity, I feel it is essential to use their narrative in conceptualizing such a recognition.

My research study is qualitative. I use several forms of data analysis to interpret data collected. First, I established descriptive codes based on my field notes, eventually developing larger categories. I then employed axial coding in attempt to rectify concepts fragmented in the initial coding process as my multiple methods approach may have oversight. Axial coding was used to determine categories of information and prevalent themes among the participants. (Savin-Baden, Howell Major, 2013, pg.241).

I transferred all audio recorded and note data from interviews to my laptop in the form of an interview transcript inside word documents and used a thematic analysis to determine the relevance to my research questions. This analysis requires particular attention to the language used by the participants and its significance sociopolitically. Through thematic analysis, researchers will generate specific codes based on the data and

will then establish particular themes. Thematic analysis researchers emphasize data collection and analysis are often simultaneous, as researchers observe certain ideas demonstrated in interactions with participants. In this way, though coding and establishing themes through transcribed data is a specific step-by-step process, analysis and collection may be intrinsically linked in a manner that deviates from other qualitative research methods. Rather than a linear process, it is often reflective and informed by researcher observation (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017).

This narrative inquiry incorporated interviews, and field observations. My purpose in exploring multiple methods is to engage a comprehensive understanding of the participant both based on personal perception and on including their own exploration of self.

### **Participants**

I focus my study on three young self-identified Nuevomexicana students enrolled in the criteria specified ethnic studies class in the Fall 2018 Semester. I interviewed and observed each of these students, who described having a history of at least three generations in New Mexico, with at least one side of parental lineage. The participants all expressed interest in the study through the survey link I distributed to the class and consented to the study after a briefing session with me. Though I initially anticipated having more participants, I feel the data gathered in the field observations and the interviews between all three participants was more than adequate to establish prevalent themes in a Nuevomexicana student identity.

Although each of the participants had very different lived experiences, some commonalities were growing up in the same or similar area in the state of New Mexico,

their light-skinned appearance, and monolingual English speaking with several displaying attributes of passive bilingualism. They each also had a home dynamic in which both of their parents were not present in a large part of their growing up. I also note that each of the women involved in this study were either self-elected or were guided to enroll in an ethnic studies course in their freshman year of college. This reality emphasizes at least an emergent critical consciousness already manifested in all of the participants, rather than exemplifying the realities of every Nuevomexicana student to set foot on the university campus. Each of the young women involved demonstrated incredible determination and spirit in the wake of their lived challenges as well as their status as minoritized students.

### **Vanessa Jaramillo**

Vanessa Jaramillo is a soft-spoken, self-driven young woman who intends to work in the mental and behavioral health field. Vanessa grew up in a major city in in New Mexico, where she was enrolled in mainly Advanced Placement Classrooms in her programs. In high school, she participated consistently in poetry writing and performance. She also participated in sports growing up and felt at liberty to pursue any of her choosing. This, she expressed was a tactic of her guardians to “keep her out of trouble”. Vanessa was raised by her mother’s sister and her husband. Her mother passed away when she was in adolescence. Though she lived outside of New Mexico for a few years, she identifies as New Mexican and considers the state her home as she’s spent the majority of her life there. She is self-described as self-efficient, sensitive and empathetic.

Vanessa expresses a strong sense of self-determination, as she worked diligently in both her junior and senior year of high school to pay for her own car, as well as receiving top grades in her AP classes. Currently, she continues to work while enrolled in



the university full time, supplementing all of the tuition her financial aid and scholarships don't account for to avoid taking on student loans. On first appearance of Vanessa, I struggled with the assumption that she was struggling with her schooling because she appeared reluctant to contribute in group conversations and was frequently late to class. However, upon interviewing her, I found that she receives top grades in her schooling and, like me, speaks only when she feels comfortable enough with her peers and the material to engage in a thoughtful discussion.

As a soft-spoken, self-driven student, I found myself reflected in many of Vanessa's insights. Her clear-cut trajectory to get in and out of college to join the mental health field is truly inspiring. Vanessa expressed finding difficulty as a Nuevomexicana student, not seeing herself or people of her ethnic group reflected in curriculum she engaged:

It sort of made me feel like my culture wasn't really valued, in a way. Enough to be talked about. Or like, their absence in our lectures and stuff kind of showed that people didn't really think that we contributed or did anything. Which was just really discouraging.

Vanessa's reflection on educational spaces is something many minoritized groups contend with, but in a state like New Mexico, is particularly dangerous in the narratives we receive. When such an astronomical number of students have struggled, there is no denial it has to do with a lack of curriculum that captures and makes relevant the experience of our students.

While many students are seeking "the college experience", Vanessa conveyed interest in navigating her collegiate career as expediently as possible, because her responsibility to her community and to herself are much more urgent a demand than feeling as if she is recreating the narrative of college as a juncture of experimentation, a

privilege only afforded to some. Though she discusses fear as something that has inhibited her in life, her aspirations and drive appear to be unwavering in the face of struggle.

### **Rose Mares**

Rose Mares is an incredibly thoughtful young woman. Rose grew up in what would be considered a suburb, or smaller more commercial city outside of a major city in New Mexico. This suburb, I will identify as Los Campos, is mostly subsidized by a major commercial industry in operation there. This suburb has a high rate of employment from this particular industry and receives significant financial backing in terms of school resources. The base teacher salary for this suburban area is \$9,000 more than that of the major New Mexico city adjacent to it. Rose identifies as Hispanic, and is of Latino/Nuevomexicano descent on her father's side while her mother is Scottish-born.

She participated in sports in school and described having a strong sense of self-esteem, regardless if any attention paid to her. She also emphasized struggling with math and science growing up, while subjects like English and the humanities were generally encouraged. Though she was very close with her father in her childhood, he passed away when she was very young and her mother eventually remarried. Her stepfather is a school principal in the suburb of Los Campos and she indicated she and her brother have always received a fairly quality education in that area. Rose has never allowed the stigma New Mexicans face of criminality and poverty to shake her pride in the state she calls home.

In my class observations, Rose was a natural leader. Though unimposing, she prompted discussion and was supportive of her peers and their ideas. In one discussion where students were required to choose a poem called “I wonder if Heaven Got a Ghetto”, from a book by two local poets and activists. Rose not only let her classmate follow along with her and helped him to articulate his thoughts, but she allowed me to also spend time with the book and the particular poem to better contextualize myself with class material. The discussion around this poem focused on the poet’s satirical commentary in attempting to demolish the master narrative, something the students noted in their intention. Rose’s generous and thoughtful nature demonstrates an ethic of care in her relationship with others and a rigor and attentiveness in the curriculum she engages. Another discussion concerning a film presented in class called *Sin Nombre* emphasized both Rose’s integrity as a self-elected discussion facilitator and her ability to engage her peers in a productive conversation regarding painful experiences.

**(R)** Yeah, that’s what concerned me a lot, ‘cause reading *Enrique’s Journey*, you’re reminded that some of the girls that area getting on this train are young, they’re like 7 or 8. They’re young and they’re still targets of like sexual violations and just, any sort of violation. It’s like why—who—what man would look at a 7 year old or 8 year old and think, “I’m gonna take advantage of that.”

\*Student responds\*

**(Rose)** Yeah. It’s—when any sort of rape is committed it’s a power trip. So, I mean in a sick sort of way, it makes sense but it doesn’t really make sense.

\*Other student responds\*

**(Rose)** Well yeah—

\*Another student responds\*\*

**(Rose)** I think that the idea for them— the parents—is that they’re gonna be more susceptible, but the parents hope is that they’re gonna be able to take them out of that when they’re on their feet in America. The fact of the matter is, it’s hard and it’ll take longer than obviously, they expect it to. I think that’s sort of the idea, when they leave, they’re going to—in a year or two, be able to provide a more sustainable life for their children. Either coming back, or bringing their kid to America. I think the idea is that they’re gonna be able to provide something more

and they're not just, leaving for selfish reasons and they're not thinking about their kids. It's for their kids.

The conversations explored in this ethnic studies course were oftentimes extremely difficult and full of severe topics. Rose's response to her classmates conveyed a particular generosity and empathetic tendencies. Her ability to navigate such a challenging topic thoughtfully, in a peer group of both men and women was demonstrative of her incredible resolve and tenacity as a student. Her guidance, though clear was not imposing, and allowed space for other students to contribute and flourish in their responses through her encouragement.

### **Marisa Gonzales**

The first word that comes to mind when you meet Marisa Gonzales is, "moxie". Though Marisa is petite in frame, her personality packs a wallop. Although Marisa was in her first semester in college and navigating the terrain of academia, Marisa is a *veterana* in her own right in the field of community organizing. I first met Marisa when she was a toddler, all smiles as she accompanied her mother, a community leader, to various events around the city. Over the years, I watched her consciousness blossom and her shy demeanor become more assertive as she came to understand the world she maneuvered. Marisa, unlike the majority of students in the class, had a concept of Chicanidad upon first entering the classroom. This was extremely beneficial in encouraging her success with the curriculum and her capability of urging growth in other students.

Marisa grew up in a major city of New Mexico with her mother and older brother, in her grandparents' house. She attended the same elementary and middle school as her mother. Raised by a young single mother, Marisa demonstrates a chicana feminist

consciousness in how she navigates the classroom. Her “down” disposition and inclusive nature renders her an instant homegirl to those she comes across. One of her biggest strengths is her ability to reach others. Unapologetic in her observations, she views the world with incredible awareness and a consistent hopeful determination. Marisa recognized how certain aspects of her identity, like her lighter skin, gave her an advantage many Chicana/os, such as her older brother who is darker complected, were unable to benefit from. Though Marisa was sometimes late or absent in the ethnic studies course, her ability to connect with other students, the curriculum and most significantly, the community, encouraged her success in the fall semester.

In the group dynamic, Marisa was a great facilitator. Her leadership style, though prevalent at times, was very laid back and often peppered with quiet discussions among particular peers. Her friendliness encouraged an easy discussion among the students, but when she did contribute to heavy conversations, her points were incredibly poignant and encouraged others to sit with their thoughts and inquire within themselves further. After reading the novel, *Enrique’s Journey*, the students visited a local museum which hosted an exhibit of photographs by Don Bartletti, the photojournalist accompanying the author. They were asked to discuss the significance of the exhibit among their groups and Marisa was the first to initiate the conversation. Her thoughts follow:

**(Marisa)** I think the world needs photojournalism to put us into a perspective of something that we’ll never directly be able to understand, [it] gives us a position of being able to feel empathetic and sympathetic, because that’s something that we’ve never had to experience. I think it’s kind of—like especially in today’s little climate, the rhetoric of immigrants is so awful that it’s very easy to fall into it. It’s something that you hear constantly. So, it gives you misconceptions of it, but this gives [gestures to images in Enrique’s Journey book] you—like people are risking their lives to get here and it’s not just because they’re coming here to get a pass from us, or to get their welfare checks from us. It’s because they wanna do

something better for their family and they're willing to go meet their—end their lives for that. Do whatever it takes.

\*Other students responds with thought\*

**(Marisa)** I think I would just mainly ask him [photojournalist] too, what was it like to not be able to intervene directly? How can you completely separate yourself from natural human instincts, to wanna help out this little kid? But you can't 'cause you're a journalist.

Marisa's articulation of her thoughts regarding Latin American refugees is indicative of her past engagement with curriculum and community learning regarding the U.S.' role in creating violent and economically unstable environments in many of these countries. She is critical of the mainstream narrative of the U.S. as land of opportunity and the refugee or undocumented immigrant as "freeloader" and rather insists the U.S. creates a dependency within tactics of war and resource usurping overseas. Her appeal to humanity regarding the photojournalist's bystanding in an effort to preserve photographic "authenticity" is a commentary on particular exploitations rendered to create a possible shift in narrative. Marisa's ability to always press further demonstrates a critical consciousness that continues to grow and develop as she engages different curriculum, realities and perspectives.

# CHAPTER 5: Findings and Analysis

Beneath the indelible imprint of historical displacement lies a conflicted sense of pride in our accomplishment and hard work despite how they reflect the strength of our cultural heritages and inner resources. More subtle but pivotal influences come from our families, friends, communities, and life events that have also helped us negotiate the markers of our achievement and validate our right to pursue our goals. Our genealogies of empowerment draw on these early lessons as the blueprints for a thriving process of self-created and self-defined freedom and independence.

—The Latina Feminist Group

### **Themes: Identity, Education and Positionality**

In my interviews with the participants, I identified three prominent categories of analysis: *Identity*, *positionality* and *education*, and several subcategories that fall within each. Although none of the ideas are monolithic, and can maneuver within more than one category, I have aligned particular subcategories with the theme I feel it best corresponds to. In examining intersectionality, we know our identities are complex and interwoven rather than linear and fragmented, for this purpose I identify placement within a subcategory based on how i feel it best informs both participant identity and the discussion. The themes established best speak to how the Nuevomexicana identity has manifested in each of the students and helps to examine the awakening of a Nuevomexicana consciousness through each.

#### **Identity**

In examining the identity of the participants, I have identified subcategories, “Nuevomexicanidad”, “First Generation Legacies”, and “A Gendered Reality”. These categories touch on what it means to navigate both the idea of belonging in a state like New Mexico, as well as how that informs particular experiences in educational settings. Each idea seeks to depict what a Nuevomexicana feels are particular strengths and barriers to their educational and aspirational attainment with the particularized experience of historical trauma, legacies of colonialism and ancestral wisdom they must maneuver. The courage with which these young women articulate their thoughts, is indicative of the incredible resilience cultivated through living such an identity. In “Nuevomexicanidad” participants articulated ideas of what it means to them to be New Mexican and how that has informed their identity. In “First Generation Legacies”, we explore the implications



of coming from a state where many of the students are from lower socioeconomic status and how that has challenged them in the pursuit of education, particularly as it has informed their collegiate experience. “A Gendered Reality”, reflects on how ideas of patriarchy as a result of colonization has informed women’s relationships with place and space, emphasizing how institutions such as the Catholic Church have informed realities and experiences within education. I share my own stories in informing my Nuevomexicana identity and seek to identify how *querencia* is articulated through these ideas of belonging and relationality.

### **Nuevomexicanidad**

A concept I want to draw upon, within the vein of *querencia* is the strong sense of *Nuevomexicanidad* each of the participants expressed. Though each of their lived experiences deviated, across the board they articulated being proud of their New Mexican identity. Though I use term New Mexican and Nuevomexicana interchangeably to refer to these participants, Nuevomexicanidad refers specifically to the consciousness derived from experiences growing up in such a place. For all three *Nuevomexicanas*, their shared identity lay in their ability to determine what New Mexico meant to them despite the national narrative and any negative messaging they received about their home state. Each of them indicated a sense of connection or relationality with others and the land, as well as being inundated with particular perspectives from people who do not reside here. This is indicative of a sense of *querencia* instilled within each of the participants particular to their historical and place-based connection to New Mexico despite narratives meant to disrupt their idea of home. When I spoke with Rose, she stated:

I definitely identify as New Mexican. I'm always very proud to say I'm from New Mexico, because my dad was from New Mexico and all of that side of the family is from New Mexico. My dad passed when I was nine, so there's this very strong connection between this Chicano/Chicana idea in upholding myself in that sort of life. I think I'm definitely more so proud of it despite, you know the negative things that we've been connotated with. From, you know, the education system not being the greatest and everything.

Within Rose's father's life, his sense of pride in his Chicano identity resonated with her and the significance of family and place. She explained her grandmother has lived in the same home in a major New Mexico city most of her life, and inherited the house after her grandfather passed. For Rose, the connection to her father's family held great significance in who she is and how she defines herself as a person. Connotations about our educational standing also played a central role in the way she felt demeaned by others' notions of the state. Through a pedagogy of the home that articulated strength in maintaining the same space despite adverse conditions, Rose was able to cultivate a sense of *querencia* through an emergence of a *Nuevomexicana* consciousness.

Vanessa expressed her pride in being New Mexican as intrinsically linked to culture and tradition which can be articulated as ancestral wisdom. This notion is reflected in the quote that follows, "I think there's so much tradition here and there is a lot of pride in being Hispanic or of, you know, a minority. So, I think that's something that really stands out about being New Mexican. It isn't even really about your ethnicity either, I think it's just, recognizing the culture and growing up around it". Vanessa recognizes the oppressed position as a central component of New Mexican identity, while simultaneously acknowledging our cultural pride. Though her analysis doesn't problematize the interracial hierarchies and conflict that stem from hundreds of years of settler colonialism, she addresses the way in which a state-oriented versus, nation-

oriented collectivity has driven much of our identity. This collectivity has manifested through a sense of *querencia*.

In Marisa's perspective, the New Mexican identity deviates from the rest of the nation as far as relationality and attachment to place. Her *querencia* is not deterred by others' negative perceptions of her hometown or state:

I'm super proud of being New Mexican. Everybody always tries to talk crap about Amaranta, [name of city she grew up in] especially, but I don't know. I think New Mexico and Amaranta is just so different than what you can find anywhere else. I know it's typical to say, but the culture here is really strong and like—you could really talk to anybody and they know the history of their family and they know that their family has been here for generations. They just know different things about their families. Yeah! It's just beautiful landscape and...I don't know, everything from the culture to the family that I have here, to the connections that I have here.

Marisa, like many New Mexicans, sees the attachment to place as interwoven with connection to people. In this conceptualization, the spatial and temporal are privileged as interdependent in the New Mexican identity. The systems of colonization and imperialism which have caused New Mexicans to band together to create a culture of resistance have led to an intergenerational determination of “staying put”, and a statewide embrace of the idea that New Mexicans can be critical of our homeland while remaining devoted while any outside critiques are unwelcome and many times unheeded. Though some New Mexicans are able to perceive their state with confidence and overlook national narratives of inferiority, the psychological implications of growing up in a state considered subordinated has led to flight for academia, career pursuit notions of an inescapable permanency. However, many New Mexicans who have lived elsewhere have consistently made the effort to return later in life.

## **First Generation Legacies**

Vanessa witnessed students who found no value in educational attainment, because this was not a component of ancestral wisdom they were capable of sharing with them. For Vanessa, her relatives had limited experience in the “traditional education” track. Though she indicated her uncle who raised her returned to complete a degree for his career trajectory later in life, most of her immediate family had not entered higher education, putting her at a navigational disadvantage with her peers who did have those particular experiential resources. This reality is not uncommon for many young Nuevomexicanas/os. In some cases, even though students do have family members who attended college at some point in their lives, they may be unwilling to discuss it and share their experiences with younger generations because self-pride is often frowned upon culturally and not instilled as a pedagogy of the home.

However, Vanessa was raised in a household that encouraged the pursuit of education as a means of liberation, or at least, in their perception, upward mobility. Vanessa recounts, “Students, not because of how they’re raised but because there’s not a lot of emphasis sometimes on education. I did see in my class sometimes, students didn’t really respect the education they were getting, because their parents didn’t really go to college, like they didn’t really have an example, so they didn’t see the point of being in school. So, I definitely, can see that...” Because New Mexico is the second most impoverished state in the nation, behind Mississippi, most families fall under the poverty bracket. Though there are many families who have resided in New Mexico for centuries, a vast amount of our students are first generation college students.

In my own experience, though one of my parents did graduate from a university bachelor's program, I was first in my immediate family to attempt to navigate graduate school. Even with the myriad mentors and resources surrounding me who have aided me in my pursuit and given me so much of their time and experience, I have often found myself clueless and frustrated with the process. I can only imagine how college students whose parents never even stepped foot on a college campus, must feel. Vanessa identified feeling frustration with the Capitalist nature of universities:

I dislike that everything is so expensive at [the university]. It's overpriced. Just to print something is ridiculously expensive. Or maybe I just don't know the resources yet, of where to go for free printing. \*both laugh\* I know it exists, I just don't know where. I also don't like that I'm not able to be, involved at all. Just because I have to work so much. Which is really a bummer, but maybe sometime throughout my academic career, I'll have those opportunities.

For Vanessa, being first generation is a huge component of her academic identity.

Though she has received the lottery scholarship, she has to work to pay the remainder of the tuition as well as rent and other bills. Many students take this for granted. The mainstream narrative of the college experience is, "college was the best four years of my life." Unfortunately, for many students of color, the reality is college is seldom a four year journey and the challenges around housing can be particularly stressful.

For most New Mexican students, higher education would not be a reality were it not for some form of financial assistance. Though comparatively, our instate tuition is significantly lower than other states', the reality of our poverty levels means a lack of accessibility of higher education for the majority of our students. Some students have found a way around this, and frequently complete the majority of their core curriculum in community college to allow for more time to determine their undergraduate majors, as

well as creating a more decisive plan when faced with more daunting tuition rates, at a major university. Vanessa addresses her experience with paying for her own collegiate experience in the following quote:

Just reflecting on sort of what I've done to get here...this also might kinda sound snotty, but I don't know... a lot of my friends already have their school paid for and the fact that I'm doing it myself, without anyone's help just gives me further incentive, and makes me feel like, "well, I mean I've gotten this far and I'm so determined to finish this and I have to finish it. You know, I'm not like other students who are just you know, here and experimenting and figuring out what they want. I already pretty much know what I want and I know how I can achieve it and now I'm just working towards it.

Because so many New Mexicans experience extreme poverty, this statistically correlates to an increase of violence as a product of a scarcity mindset and reality, as well as governmental neglect and policy violence. Unfortunately, this means that many of our students have grown in poverty, and have experienced some sort of trauma in either their own lives or in past generations. Vanessa perceives this drive as "snotty", because in a region where higher education is atypical for the majority of its residents, entering such an arena with confidence can often be interpreted as *sinvergüenza*, or lacking a humility by projecting an outward pride for accomplishments not easily available to the community. These notions are sometimes articulated within the home as deficit components of identity as they can be perceived as counter to the idea of the collective. This is further intensified by the role of the Catholic Church in shaping ideologies to expect women to occupy the private sphere primarily, and not engage in institutionalized education. Despite the challenges she faces, Vanessa has a clear strategy of how she will navigate both her undergraduate and graduate experience, due to the strong convictions and practices her family has introduced to her as pedagogies of the home. Hopefully, she

will be able to fulfill her wishes of being more involved as she learns how to balance academia and social endeavors, something we all are constantly struggling to master.

### **A Gendered Reality**

Vanessa had a particularly powerful analysis of how gender has informed *querencias*, particularly as attachment to land in New Mexico. In her lived experience, the external forces that led women to leave their physical attachment to New Mexico, were male figures in their lives:

My mom is the only woman I know who was brave enough to venture away from New Mexico. She moved with my dad to umm, Colorado, and they started a business there and stuff, but each time that something did happen she would inevitably have to come back to New Mexico. Just because she financially couldn't support herself, with three kids. So...I see that a lot. Also, with my auntie who raised me, she was the [only] other woman who ever got away from New Mexico. She moved all the way to Texas, but she also returned to New Mexico, because this is just her home. And I feel like...there's always driving forces, like male figures...My auntie, she had a bad relationship with her dad so that was one reason she left, and then my mom, she had four brothers \*laughs\* and she was the only girl. And, I mean I don't wanna put it all on genders but I feel like that is a pattern that I see.

From her perspective, this pattern is indicative of the kind of driving force required to create such an immediate separation from a physical space of belonging. In my own life, I know women who have moved across the country to escape domestic violence situations otherwise unaddressed in their family. This is significant in that for *Nuevomexicanas*, *querencia* is intrinsic as far as our place-based attachment to our origin from the colonial wound, but patriarchal violences still plague us within our own kinship ties. Vanessa reflects:

So, I think being a female and growing up in the environment that I did...I did see a lot of domestic violence and stuff like that, so that really made me interested in psychology and sociology and understanding human behavior. Just because I wanted to understand why the things happened that I saw that I shouldn't have

saw when I was younger...So, with that being said, I've always been interested in the oppressed person's position, I guess. And I mean, you kinda see that in psychology a lot with the mentally ill and stuff, and for some reason I just really relate to trying to understand them and help the people who aren't being protected.

Vanessa's interest in helping the oppressed person because their experience reflects her own, is mirrored in the sentiment of a culture of empathy statewide as a result of our histories. Rather than seeking an escape from her past experiences, Vanessa uses them as a catalyst to incite change in her own life and to create a trajectory where she seeks to help others mediate similar circumstances. This accountability to her struggling community is reflective of a strong sense of *querencia* as a result of trauma faced.

Much of this patriarchal violence comes from the role Catholicism played in our communities and its manifestation in how Nuevomexicanas/os have come to define our women's roles societally throughout the generations. In *Madame Ambassador*, Mari-Luci Jaramillo expresses the kind of oppressive customs she faced within her household, as the daughter of a devout Catholic man:

In rebellion against my father's strict rules and old-fashioned practices, I started chopping of my heavy braids. He couldn't change that, but I had to keep my fingernails clipped short and wasn't allowed to get away with letting my fingernails grow long like those of other girls, but I did get around the makeup. That was easy. I just put it on at the end of the block in the morning while walking to the junior high school and washed it off before I got home (Jaramillo, 2002, pg. 39).

In my own household, I was also forbidden from wearing makeup, painting my nails, or growing them long, piercing my ears and even sleeping over at other people's houses until I was nearly an adult. Adorning or altering my body of any sort was considered a defiance against God. Though my mother was not Catholic and considered herself



spiritual, rather than religious her complicity in my father's rules was reflective of patriarchal structures reproduced interculturally throughout the world. Despite quinceñera's being a tradition customary of many Mexicana/o and Chicana/o families, I was prohibited from having one as the "implications of marriage readiness" at so young an age was frowned upon. Though this experience of expected image may not be the same for all Nuevomexicanas, it has contributed to notions of performing our gender in particular spaces, particularly around family and in institutionalized educational settings.

## **Education**

The theme of education is meant to encompass particular pedagogical tools and models enacted by each of the participants as well as their specific experiences navigation the New Mexico Educational System, The two subcategories I identify as specific to the theme of education are: "Ancestral or Intergenerational Wisdom" and "Whitestreaming Curriculum and Other Educational Perspectives". These subcategories hold particularly poignant narratives about institutional education in New Mexico as well as seek to identify ideologies or pedagogies of the home each of the participants were introduced to in their cultivation of a Nuevomexicana identity. "Ancestral or Intergenerational Wisdom", explicitly identifies pedagogies of the home, or wisdoms emphasized in the families and communities of each of the participants. "Whitestreaming Curriculum and Other Educational Perspectives", speaks to the experience each of the participants had with the New Mexican education system and its tactics of marginalization toward mestizo, indigenous and other students of color in New Mexico. This subcategory emphasizes the participants' resilience in navigating such a system

manifest through notions of *querencia* or wisdoms engaged in spaces outside of formal educational institutions.

### **Ancestral or Intergenerational Wisdom**

One articulation of *querencia* is the art or necessity of storytelling as a means of cultural and spiritual preservation. Through stories and demonstration, we have learned to engage with realities lived intergenerationally. In my conversations with the participants, each of them presented particular ideas or, what Dolores Delgado-Bernal introduces as “pedagogies of the home”, as a means of maneuvering both their community and institutional educational experiences (Delgado-Bernal, 2006, pg.114). I examine some of these practices as an intergenerational communication and means of engaging knowledge and, as explored in Rendón’s *Sentipensante Pedagogy, an ancestral Wisdom*. In *Chicana/Latina Perspectives in Everyday Life*, Delgado-Bernal also uses the term ancestral wisdom to explore the notion of pedagogies of the home. She introduces:

Sara-Lawrence Lightfoot (1994) writes of the “ancestral wisdom” that is taught from one generation to the next generation, and calls it a “powerful piece of our legacy” that is “healthy” and “necessary for survival.” Likewise, Leslie Marmon Silko (1996) writes of how the Pueblo people have depended on the collective memory of many generations “to maintain and transmit an entire culture, a worldview complete with proven strategies for survival” (p.30). (Delgado-Bernal, 2006, pg. 115).

This articulation is key in the development of a pedagogy that can sustain an educational trajectory for mestiza Nuevomexicana students who both draw from their lived experience and intergenerational knowledge as well as necessarily navigate an educational system created to specifically deny their ability to maneuver it. For our family members who were unable to attain a certain level of institutionalized education,

“doing well” in school is an entreaty to make a better life for ourselves than they had, oftentimes disregarding or downplaying the significance of wisdom and information they have to teach us. This can be coupled with a repression or misunderstanding of the systems and circumstances that have manifested poverty.

In *Madame Ambassador: The Shoemaker’s Daughter*, Mari-Luci Jaramillo explains the prevailing thought of education as a means of upward mobility with no true internalization of what it meant to be a minoritized group navigating the system. She reflects on her mother’s convictions in the following quote:

Even though she had only a seventh-grade education, she constantly reminded my sister, my brother, and me that a formal education was the only thing that would get us out of the extreme poverty we lived in. She had blind faith in education. Her belief later became the solid base of my entire career and lifestyle. I was delighted that she was still well and saw me receive my Ph.D. on graduation night. I ended up wanting the same educational opportunity for everyone I met. I became a teacher solely because there were no other career options at the time in my small hometown, but my mother’s admonition that education breaks the poverty cycle was so embedded in me that I tried to learn everything I possibly could. Learning became my way of life.

For Mari-Luci Jaramillo, her mother demonstrated an unwavering belief in institutionalized education, as oftentimes rhetoric and observation of “success” in a Capitalistic society is an increase in monetary income. By following her mother’s wishes, Mari-Luci was able to find happiness and force herself to navigate to the curriculum she engaged, oftentimes feeling demeaned and condescended to by instructors and school administrators. This piece of knowledge bestowed to her by her mother became a central component of her identity, though her skillset passed to Mari-Luci had more to do with a

love for the Spanish language, different home economic skills and significant knowledge of yerbas, plant life and horticultural awareness. These skills had great influence in Mari-Luci's career trajectory, as her skill and devotion for the Spanish language was an integral part of her teaching experience and likewise her ability to connect with the people and government of Honduras. Her mother had, without realizing it, contributed to her identity and ability to maneuver the mainstream world through pedagogies of the home she introduced even in extreme poverty.

For each of the participants, their ancestral wisdom or pedagogies of the home surfaced in their educational experiences and in the development of their particular worldview. When asked if they'd share any knowledge they'd received in their homelives that allowed them to thrive inside of school, their answers varied significantly but definitely addressed aspects of survival. Marisa discussed the way in which her mother has taught her to be assertive as a woman of color. Though we are oftentimes discouraged from sharing our stories or thoughts, her mother encouraged her to make her voice heard, if she wanted to be recognized or have her needs met. Marisa explains:

I think my mom's taught me to—'cause anytime my mom walks into a room, you know she's there. She's loud, she's—if you know her she's a very obvious person. Hard to miss. So I'm not exactly a hundred percent like that, but, I think with her type of personality, I learned to, just use my voice. If there's something I'm confused about, then I should ask questions. If there's something that's not fair in a classroom, then I should speak out about it and just really be an advocate for myself, because another thing that she's always told me about that she said her dad used to say is, "closed mouths never get fed," and I just think that's like, yeah. How are people supposed to know that you're hungry if you're not speaking up? How are they supposed to know you want some beans and rice, if you ain't saying anything, you know?

This dicho passed down intergenerationally, has encouraged a sense of advocacy in the Gonzales family. Within the framework of *querencia* this idea of advocacy can mean

speaking up for yourself or speaking up on behalf of others. Though this is poignant coming from her grandfather (a man of color), its prevalence in the lives of the Gonzales women is even more significant in a world where women of color are consistently marginalized. Observing Marisa, she has definitely come to demonstrate the imploration that she must make herself heard, as she is very prone to share her thoughts on especially difficult subjects with her peers and instructors, even if she doesn't have a previously established relationship with them. Her cognizance of many social issues renders her an immediate expert of sorts, within any social justice curriculum she engages. Her expertise oftentimes proves beneficial in helping her peers to grasp particular concepts, as her easy and encouraging demeanor allows people to address difficult dialogues in a supportive energy.

In Rose's life, her mother's wisdom comes from a very particular place. It's not necessarily common of many New Mexican women's experience, as her mother immigrated to the United States from Europe. Her mother has helped Rose to engage in different cultures and accept different realities and worldviews, by providing opportunity for travel and encouraging humility. Rose reflects:

My mom always taught me that people are people and your views shouldn't be biased toward their skin color or the way that they act or even the way that they dress. I've always been taught, you don't know people's story, just like they don't know yours. So you shouldn't be quick to judge someone based off of what you see or perceive. I think that's been a giant learning tool, coming into college.

For Rose, her response appealed to more of a practice of colorblindness and an articulation of the Meritocracy Myth (McNamee, Miller, 1998). Though her mother's intention was for her to see everyone as capable and not pass judgement, the discouragement of attention to people's particularized lived experience is a means of silencing through an observational erasure and lack of material change. However, as Rose

has begun to engage curriculum that provides insight into the historical and legal circumstances many New Mexicans have endured and continue to, her narrative has begun to shift to allow her a more comprehensive analysis of New Mexico and the realities that have informed it:

Seeing all these people, especially in the Chicana/Chicano Studies class, have sort of opened my eyes to the backgrounds and everything that have been around me my whole life. It also opens up the idea that you can be whatever you want to be so long as you're not bringing any sort of negativity into the world you can grasp a deeper understanding of people by being more open and I think that has helped a lot, in growing up.

Though her father's family is New Mexican intergenerationally, messages she's received around "equality" and achievement ideology have provided her a limited understanding of how our state has manifested. Though she did emphasize her mother was careful and largely influential in introducing her to and having her engage in other cultures outside of her own, the achievement ideology is still somewhat entrenched in her thought process. This is further articulated when she states, "I think nationally we're looked upon as not great, but when people actually come here they see that it's not a bunch of cholos and gangbangers everywhere". Though Rose is coming to terms with the trauma many New Mexicans experience, and recognizing some of her privilege growing up in a suburb with a white European mother, her critical consciousness will grow significantly as she comes to understand while New Mexico, in reality does have gang violence, and there is a prevalence of cholos (who are the most recent counter-cultural Chicana/o icon since the pachuco), the existence of both do not necessarily condemn our state to inferior status.

Her engagement with the ethnic studies curriculum seems to be a pivotal moment in the development of a critical consciousness, and her concept of Nuevomexicanidad. Listening to the perspective of her peers, who have shared their experience with identity

and their narratives of struggle, has provided her a further glimpse into the world she has perhaps been sheltered from in her upbringing. However, a stronger critical consciousness will come with the realization that the counterculture of New Mexico rather than a negative rendering, creates a more resilient rejection of the mainstream. It will come with an acceptance of the cholo as valid.

When I spoke with Vanessa regarding what pedagogies of the home have influenced her, she spoke to the ethic of self-determination and hustle that has helped her to both remain in great academic standing and allowed her to attain resources outside of what her family was able to provide her. These resources have aided her in the pursuit of higher education as well as made her commute more navigable. She explains:

For sure like organization skills and stuff. I really struggled with that 'cause I always overwhelmed myself with things and I had to sort of teach myself, and my family too, they would set up restrictions and stuff for me. I was not allowed to do a lot of things because I chose to be so involved, academically. Also, I learned so much when I was almost done with high school, because I bought my first car, because I worked. I worked part time, when I was a junior and then I worked full time when I was a senior [in highschool]. I worked 30-40 hours 'cause I did doubles on the weekend.

Growing up, Vanessa's family prioritized her education and extracurricular interests over socializing. When they realized her ability to balance the two, they allowed her to work and save, so she could purchase a car while she still lived it at home and did not pay rent. Presently, she subsidizes what remains of her tuition after her scholarships and financial aid, as well as other bill payments. This type of support in lodging is the case in many Nuevomexicano/Latino families, where adult children are allowed to, or in some cases expected to, reside in their parents' home while they complete their education or until they can economically support themselves. This is reflective of notions of collectivity

instilled within Nuevomexicanidad, wherein families often work communally to alleviate the burdens of navigating a mainstream society.

Though many families of color do not have the same financial resources as many middle to upper class white Americans in terms of college funding or outright gifting means of transportation, the “American Tradition” of “on your own at eighteen” as far as home environment, doesn’t necessarily carry through, allowing parents to provide their children some sort of socioeconomic environment. In my own experience, I lived with my parents and younger siblings until I was twenty-two years old, had graduated with my bachelor’s degree and had enough income to pay my own rent, without financial assistance. Though this pattern can often be beneficial to students and children of minoritized cultures, I will also acknowledge it can create tensions between the young adults of color trying to navigate the dominant world with subliminal ideological messaging of “The American Dream”, and their parent whose own ideologies and lived realities are being both beneficially and detrimentally imposed on their children through a pedagogy of the home.

### **Whitestreaming Curriculum and Other Educational Perspectives**

Many Latina/o/Chicana/o New Mexicans, similar to other minoritized groups, feel they are not adequately represented in the curriculum they engage. Particular to a New Mexican experience, this would mean the privileging of particular space-based and ancestral wisdom based notions, rather than the regurgitating of mainstream historical accounts. One obvious observation, being the indoctrinated fabrication that Jamestown, Virginia was the beginning of “civilization” in what is now perceived as the United



States. Without glorifying colonization in the Southwestern United States, it is important for New Mexicans to note their presence well-before New England was established, as we are often depicted nationally as an afterthought. Further, the amount of Nuevomexicanos who are mestizo need to be more cognizant of their histories, or at least histories of indigenous groups precontact. Marisa, reflects on her problematic experiences in schooling in the following quote:

Obviously it's common and known that in schools, we aren't taught our actual histories. But even just since we're not taught about slavery and genocide and stuff like that, I think it's also—how do I say this? Yeah, I just think the education system could teach us a lot more about history from a long time ago and even a more recent history. I took a Chicano studies class at CNM and that was where—I kinda knew all the history of the Cesar Chavez movement and stuff like that but I didn't really understand everything behind it. But whenever I was taught about the Bracero Program and just how unfair it was and just how the language of the Bracero Program was made to think they're welcoming immigrants in and they're bringing them in with comfortability, but then using that to their disadvantage or whatever, is just a reminder to all of us that the system isn't really made for us. Things are still happening like that, like with DACA. People are trying to do the “right way”, of getting citizenship but that's being used against them now. And in schools, we don't talk about those kind of things and we don't talk about the injustices, even though the injustices happen to [what] a high percentage of the demographics in the school look like. In middle school, there was this group of students that were speaking Spanish to each other and it was a really small class, 'cause it was like “English Reading Helping Class” or whatever it's called, and there was this girl next to them that didn't speak Spanish and the teacher told them, “Oh, you can't be speaking Spanish to each other. You don't know how comfortable she feels with not knowing what you guys are saying.” And I just looked at the teacher and was like, “you can't tell those students not to speak their language. How can you tell them not to speak Spanish?” and, she got mad at me. She sent me to the principal's office but it's just repeated things like that. Kids just speaking their language, just being themselves and it's victimized and thought of as how can they make the white person more comfortable and how can they make this student more comfortable without thinking about how comfortable those students are.

Though Marisa's analysis comes from a critical consciousness cultivated a very young age, this type of awareness was common with all of my participants and throughout the ethnic studies class. Her cognizance of "the system not being made for us" articulates notions of the mainstream as a central component of how our education system functions. Though New Mexican schools, are majorly comprised of low-income, minoritized students of color, their histories are still not adequately reflected in the curriculum and pedagogical models. Although we do not necessarily know the race or ethnicity of the teacher in the narrative, it would not be surprising if this type of rhetoric came from a "Hispanic" educator with internalized dominance, as the national narrative on immigrants has toxically permeated throughout the United States and New Mexico's complicated history with governmental violence has created a particular susceptibility. Marisa was thankfully able to defend these students, in this circumstance, likely influenced by her upbringing in organizing circles and the ideology she was taught within her home. Her accountability to others is indicative of a strongly developed Nuevomexicana consciousness that privileges notions of *querencia* as a means of advocating for our communities and our physical place. However, most students would feel limited in their power to speak up when witnessing such an act and worse, may internalize such messages uttered by an authoritative figure they may respect.

Because Spanish language oppression was so prevalent in the 1930s-1960s, many New Mexicans, particularly those in more "urban" settings can no longer fluently speak the language of their past generations. Though many are passively bilingual and understand Spanish, they do not feel comfortable enough in their mastery to implement it.

In *Speaking Chicana: Voice, Power and Identity*, scholar Maria Dolores Gonzales writes about a study of bilingualism in the town of Cordova, New Mexico, asserting:

...The four monolingual English students I interviewed felt that they were often judged by other Chicanas/os as not being “authentic” because they did not speak Spanish. These women struggled in different ways with their language and were sometimes emotionally hurt by the way their lack of bilingualism was perceived by others, especially by other Chicanas and Chicanos. Anzaldua (1987) speaks to this struggle by saying, “because we internalize how our language has been used against us by the dominant culture, we use our language differences against each other” (p.58) (Galindo, Gonzales, 1999, pg. 120).

This feeling of inadequacy due to limited Spanish-language abilities, particularly around Chicanos who are native speakers or those whose families have more recently come to the United States, is extremely common in many central New Mexican cities.

“Inauthenticity” as Chicana/os based on language ability is something widely struggled with in the Nuevomexicana/o identity and something many are trying to reclaim in younger generations. Unfortunately, this push may have somewhat to do with the more recent lucrative potential of bilingualism.

A common theme among the participants was the lack of curriculum that critically represented the history of our state. The acknowledgement of students of color being further marginalized from a curriculum that does not represent them has become more commonplace in education rhetoric, as works such as Vine Deloria Jr’s *Red Earth, White Lies* and Howard Zinn’s *A People’s History of the United States* are being more widely circulated. As I explored in the theoretical framework component of this paper, because the New Mexican experience with institutionalized education is so particular, the blanket curricular model is not something that can easily be maneuvered for most students. For

Rose, a problematic component of this is an emphasis on standardized testing. She discusses:

New Mexico gets a bad rap, for sure, because our test scores aren't very high and I think that because of that is why we get a lot of, "you speak English so well". I think it speaks upon the other education systems because, if they don't realize that New Mexico is part of their country then it's sort of, you know, "where did you get your education?" \*She laughs\* At the same time, I think that you know test scores and everything, they say something, but I think that just says that we're not very good at taking tests. I think that's just because, New Mexico is—we're behind in that we're not pushing all of these tests and everything. So that, when we're forced to take tests, we're sort, thrown off our guard. I think that in turn gives us the lower scores. I think it's frustrating because it's just—I don't think that it's ever fair to judge us based off of test scores. Test scores don't do justice to people who are intellectual in different ways. I think that tests are just one way and there are other ways that we see intelligence.

Coming from a household with educators, Rose can witness the frustration in being forced to teach students to the test rather than emphasizing sustained learning.

Particularly as standardized tests frequently reflect the lived experience of middle to upper-class white students in the United States, their relevance to New Mexican students who are majorly in poverty and have completely different cultural backgrounds and physical environments, are slim to none.

To each of my participants, and many New Mexican students, pursuing higher education is perceived as both a privilege and a means of liberation. Part of this narrative comes from their status as young women in a nation who continues to marginalize women of color's voices, but elevate young girls in specific educational settings where their male counterparts are determined by educator to occupy a space of delinquency. In her book, *Hopeful Girls, Troubled Boys: Race and Gender Inequality in Urban Education*, Nancy López examines how young girls of color must bear witness to the

condemnation of young males of color to the School-to-Prison Pipeline in a particular act of violence through narrative. She describes how the prevalence of female teachers, however has meant the sentiment of education as liberation in certain capacities. Her assertion is reflected in the following quote:

In the aftermath of the women's movement, schools have been one social space where feminist ideologies have been circulated and practiced. Against the backdrop of demands for racial, gender, and sexual preference equality. A critical mass of women teachers have imparted a gender identity that is inextricably linked to feminist practices, namely pursuing an education as a means of achieving independence. Moreover, the presence of large numbers of female teachers in the state system provides a space for feminist ideologies to be embodied and enacted (López, 2011, pg. 110).

Though my initial prediction was these participants would feel socially marginalized in some capacity in educational settings, the reality was their perceived marginalization seemed to be contingent on their experience with particular educators or administrators. For Rose, growing up in a school district with a prevalence of white, women instructors in elementary and secondary education, gave her a feeling of strength and direction very early in her academic career. This is essential in that our earliest experiences in institutionalized education are oftentimes determinate of how we will perceive our experiences in secondary education. For young boys of color in particular, but young girls of color as well, the deficit view of education they face will have huge implications for their life trajectory, particularly when punishments such as suspension and expulsion for transgressions such as "disruptive behavior" lead them prematurely to juvenile detention centers. Rose explores the role of women educators in her lifetime in the following quote:

At least not educationally, I never experienced any sort of sexism. I've heard sexist comments but they've never come from authority figures or anything. It's

always been from peers and I tend to sort of brush those off and ignore them, but getting an education wasn't super difficult for me. I think it helps because while my last name is Mares, I don't look it. I think that because of the sort of lack of prejudice toward skin color that I don't have, I was able to sort of, not sneak by but some of the judgements that I know some of my friends who are of darker skin colors, have had to face, who are also females. I've never faced anything—any hardships with education, or anything like that, just because I'm a girl. I think, again with all of my teachers being women and they've all been—you know, powerful women—they've always composed themselves as such. I've never really had a hard time putting myself in their shoes as I've grown up, seeing myself as more than just a girl. I'm interested in many things and I have the ability to do a lot, so my gender has never inhibited my education or where I stand, personally.

Rose's positive relationships with women educators early in life meant a confidence in navigating the world as a Nuevomexicana. Further, as she examines, her light complexion and hair colors have privileged her in the eyes of white educators in a way that many of her peers were not guaranteed. This led to an experience void of perceived sexist conflict from both educators and the majority of other students. The care that Rose experienced within her education made her feel as if she could accomplish anything. However, she still faced a similar trajectory to many women of color in that she felt isolated and incapable in STEM spaces and was encouraged specifically in areas of writing and the humanities. These are spaces typically designated for women to occupy within the dominant narrative.

### **Positionality**

The theme of positionality, while vague in language, is meant to portray the status of New Mexicans based on self-imposed or national notions of where we are stratified socially, historically and spatially within a dominant narrative. The subcategories,

“On ‘Entrapment’ A Spatial or Place-Based Attachment”, “Through the Eyes of Oppression: Empathy and Consciousness Enacted”, and “Emphasizing 50th: Navigating a National Narrative” explore aspects specific to a New Mexican identity and how people have come to maneuver the world through these lived realities. Of all the themes, I believe positionality meanders through ideas of identity, education and positionality in identifying these particular aspects of a Nuevomexicana experience and how that informs the development of a Nuevomexicana consciousness. On “Entrapment”: A Spatial or Place-Based Attachment”, specifically engages the participants’ articulations of *querencia* through their spatial awareness of New Mexico and how it has informed both their identities and educational experiences. The subcategory “Through the Eyes of Oppression”: Empathy and Consciousness Enacted”, specifically examines New Mexico as an entity of the Global South and how that has established within each of the participants as well as ideologically many New Mexicans a sense of accountability to others who are suffering. This rendering of Nuevomexicanidad examines a collective manifestation of awareness or consciousness through circumstances of struggle. “Emphasizing 50<sup>th</sup>: A National Narrative”, briefly addresses the students’ internalization of statistics that have created deficit views of New Mexico and its status within the United States.

### **On “Entrapment”: A Spatial or Place-Based Attachment**

The physical space New Mexico occupies once belonged to many indigenous groups, some who have been violently eradicated. Since, the land once existed as part of New Spain, then Mexico and was then stolen in the U.S. Mexican War beginning in 1846 (Gomez, 2007). It is often conceptualized as occupied Aztlán, or the Chicano homeland.

However, this privileging of mestizo identity oftentimes overwrites the violence of settler/colonialism continuously enacted on indigenous groups. Now, the region occupies the Southwestern United States, bordering the nation of Mexico. Many Nuevomexicanos navigate the borderland idea of occupying such a space. In *Chicana/Latina Perspectives in Everyday Life*, Delgado-Bernal beautifully articulates the borderlands identity in the following quote:

“The term “borderlands” refers to the geographical, emotional, and psychological space occupied by mestizas, and it serves as a metaphor for the condition of living, between spaces, cultures, and languages (Elenes, 1997). A Chicana feminist epistemology acknowledges that Chicanas and other marginalized peoples often have a strength that comes from their borderland experiences (Delgado Bernal, 1998b). So another part of a mestiza consciousness is balancing between and within the different communities to which one belongs.” (Delgado Bernal, 2006, pg. 123).

For Nuevomexicanas, this multiplicitous identity has meant the maneuvering as a borderlands identity through both space and time, as our fixity in this location intergenerationally has manifest as prevalent within such a consciousness. Each of the students involved had an idea of land as attached to their notions of family, home and belonging. Though many New Mexicans have resided here all of their life, many still find beauty and excitement in the visual manifestation of our state. For Marisa, this appreciation for the physical beauty that is New Mexico is realized through her pedagogies of the home, as her mother’s relationship with the land largely informed how she takes in and takes up space:

Well, my mom is a strong reason why I have such strong pride in New Mexico. She’s always just talked about how much—how beautiful New Mexico is. We went up to La Jara for my cousin’s wedding and we were driving back and



usually we go in January for matanzas and that's the only time of year we go up there, but her wedding was in October, I wanna say. So, we were there at a different time of the year and just the color of the rocks was different and my mom was just so stoked about it. Every five minutes she'd just be like, "Wow! Look at the color of those rocks and look how throughout the year, it looks so different!" So, my mom is definitely a strong influence of the appreciation I have for the beauty of New Mexico.

The intergenerational pride found in such a small, yet significant moment, is a demonstration of an ancestral wisdom in the context of "knowing your roots", a lesson we are often confronted with as we navigate the world. This quote delves into the significance of family, traditional celebrations and customs, as well as the implications of seasonal shifts, something that has particular value when we examine how we sustain and celebrate throughout time.

When prompted about what connection they had to the land, each of the participants communicated the sentiment of finding it difficult to leave this place. Generally, this attachment to space directly corresponded with their intergenerational familial attachment. Being the 50th in the nation in poverty, many New Mexicans have limited income and resource in pursuing higher socioeconomic status. Oftentimes, New Mexicans grapple with the notion of "The Land of Entrapment", where family, land, resources, *querencia* and income contribute to feelings of in perpetuity.

In Vanessa's case, she indicated her attachment to New Mexico as something that she feels might be holding her back, though she has significant pride in where she's from and loves living here. Her feelings are articulated in the conversation that follows:

**(Vanessa)** I have a bad tendency of defining home as people, rather than *places*, I guess. Like, New Mexico *is* my home. But that's because everyone I love is here. Not—

**(Me)** But—why is that bad?

(Vanessa) Because. I feel like I would be much more braver if I was willing to find home within myself. \*laughs\* Rather than the people around me. \*laughs\*.

This idea of bravery comes from the borderlands identity occupied by many Nuevomexicanas, where we feel our responsibility and love for our families and communities are at odds with our internalization of liberal ideology regarding individuality and independence. Though many of us are interested in living elsewhere for the sake of perspective, rather than a condemnation of our origins, it often manifests in an internalization of feelings of betrayal or an abandoning of our people. She further explains:

My connection with the land is just that my mom is buried here and stuff. All my family is here, so it's always been hard for me to move somewhere. I've had opportunities to go to like, Michigan State. That's where I was headed off to after high school, but I made a last minute decision to stay here. Just because, I really do love New Mexico. I feel like... I was born here, raised here and I'm not ready to leave what I came from.

For Vanessa, her mother's burial site was a significant component of her place-based attachment. When thinking of reasons to stay, her first notion was, "who do I leave behind?" This concept is something many intergenerational New Mexicans grapple with. In my life, the majority of my family is in New Mexico, though we are not necessarily inhabiting the same city or part of the state, the focal point of this ancestral wisdom remains prevalent in our collective identity. I hold a similarity with Vanessa in terms of college-bound apprehension after receiving a significant merit-based scholarship to a liberal arts college in Vermont and deciding not to leave and to enroll at the University I currently attend, at the last minute. Though Nuevomexicanas certainly struggle with feelings of desertion when it comes to people and place, I believe it also has largely to do with trauma passed down intergenerationally when permanency and a statewide identity

development became one of the only strategies to resist erasure by the United States government, simultaneously speaking to our histories of eradication through colonization, as mestizo people.

Nuevomexicanidad for Rose speaks to her father's legacy and the place he was from. She holds significant pride in her Chicanidad, as it is a central component of her father's identity and something she has specifically sought out in her pursuit of higher education, as is evident by her enrollment in an ethnic studies course to better understand where she comes from. Losing her father at a young age meant a loss of opportunity to engage aspects of the New Mexican identity, however her reclamation of such in her young adulthood, demonstrates a pull to a history and worldview she hasn't necessarily yet drawn upon.

Marisa's examination of attachment to place is a bit more critical than that of her peers, as she touches on the lack of resources and opportunity many New Mexicans face, as one of the most impoverished states in the nation. Her reflection is indicative of her upbringing within social justice circles and an understanding of the population that resides here. She explains:

Just being part of a state that's underdeveloped and under-resourced, it's just kind of hard to get out of here, to be honest. You have everything that you need here, you have your family here and, I dunno...Española (referring to a city in Northern New Mexico) is the lowrider capital of the country, so "low and slow" is the motto for all of New Mexico. We just take it easy, so it's hard to be as fast-paced, I guess, as people who are from big states and big cities. So, it can make it harder for us to find a job, other places. Or even just here, because a lot of people are starting to come over here.

Marisa grew up in a single-parent household with a Nuevomexicana mother who is a mover and a shaker, and was made aware of the struggles many New Mexicans face as far as scarcity and opportunity. She expressed this feeling of "entrapment" when she

articulated ideas of struggling to thrive elsewhere as people who grow up outside of a major consumerist and industry-based region. Even in the biggest of cities in New Mexico, we do not experience the bustle and population density that many major cities hold. Both rural and urban in landscape, our major cities have an element of open space and connection to environment, most metropolises do not. Further, coming from a place like New Mexico does not hold the same weight as far as the ability to “climb the ladder of success” as many other states and is oftentimes frowned upon or not recognized as a state altogether.

When conceptualizing notions within the framework of *querencia* of *belonging* and *home*, in terms of place, Marisa’s reflection was that of many other New Mexicans, the urge to experience and observe life outside of the state to better inform our understanding of our state in the future. Marisa states:

Really New Mexico is my home. Eventually I do wanna leave and eventually I do wanna see different places for a little bit, but I think New Mexico is always gonna be somewhere where I come back to and somewhere where I think of as my home. Because, being Chicana and being Maranteña and being New Mexican is a very strong part of my identity. So, it’s always gonna be my home.

This sentiment is indicative of a strong sense of *querencia* within Marisa, whose people and place-based attachment to New Mexico is intrinsic to the way she perceives herself. Though she will determine when she’s ready to venture away from the physical space of her home, her family and community will be carried with her as a continuous reproduction of her Nuevomexicana identity.

## **Through the Eyes of Oppression: Empathy and Consciousness Enacted**

An idea that presented itself in my research was, since New Mexico is constructed as the national *other* or the Global South, we have a cultural inclination for cognizance of injustice, and appeal to human rights for marginalized people on occupied lands. Though this certainly can't be said of all New Mexicans, the recent election's political leanings indicated a lone dynamic of consciousness, in a sea of dogmatism. This empathy toward others is something particular to the experience of *querencia*, in that many feel proud to belong to this state because of a strong sense of community and accountability to one another. Rose reflects:

I think I still wear this sense of pride, because we are a very aware state. We're very aware of each other and we're aware of everything else going on. Even if people don't sort of give us that credit. We're compassionate, is definitely something that I think of. A New Mexican will give you the shirt off their back if they could and, they often do. Even if they really shouldn't. \*I laugh\* They really, they're very compassionate people. We get a bad rap sometimes, but I think when you come here and you experience the people that are from here, I think it's a wildly welcoming and warm experience. Definitely one that I think people don't give us all of the credit for.

Rose is speaking to a sense of relationality between both people and the land. Though statistics of crime may create a prevalent narrative of violence and hatred, it fails to recognize the implications of colonization and its present-day ramifications in the lives of New Mexicans. Since so many Nuevomexicanos have remained here for hundreds of years, the realization of imperialism both through the Spanish and United States governments have taken a significant toll on the economy, resource and position of the majority of our people. Vanessa discusses how our proximity to the U.S./Mexico border has influenced both our perception of immigration and struggle among peoples as well as our policy around it:

I think being in New Mexico there's a lotta, ethnically diverse people. I'm exposed to how immigration laws and stuff will affect people that I care about. So that has also really informed my education whereas I talk to my sister who lives in the Midwest now and she's like "yeah, I've heard about it." and I'm like, "well let's *talk* about it." and she's like, "well, I don't really know what's going on" and I'm like, "How do you not know what's going on?! It's being talked about in every class I'm taking." \*both laugh\*...So I think people are more up to date and concerned with these political issues and changes.

Being aware of the violence others face by their people and government and seeing that reflected in our interpersonal lives has instilled a strong sense of humility and consciousness within many New Mexicans. Though there are those individuals and groups who espouse anti-immigrant rhetoric, the fact that our largest and most-highly populated city was officially declared a "sanctuary city" on April 17, 2018, is indicative of this sense of responsibility to the safety of minoritized groups (United Press International, 2018).

When Vanessa was prompted about her thoughts on being New Mexican, her reflection had largely to do with the feeling of othering nationally. This experience is not uncharacteristic of a sentiment of ostracization many New Mexicans internalize due to our national statistics consistently being portrayed as the most undesirable of states. Vanessa reflects, "Being New Mexican really just means, being Hispanic of some sort. That's really, the way I think about it, because all of my family are of Hispanic descent and stuff. A lot of people don't really recognize that New Mexico is even a state. So we're already typically outcasted, I feel like". Though Vanessa's response lacks a critical awareness of the racialized violence that manifested from colonization, her perception of national sentiments of rejection, especially directly from the mouth of our current P.O.T.U.S., is not unfounded.

Being “Hispanic” aligns with the fabricated identity of “Spanish American” that many New Mexicans cling to as a result of the process of statehood under U.S. Imperialism that required a rebranding of identity as a means of survival. This identifier is so indoctrinated in the Nuevomexicano identity, that I have met many U.S. born, children of immigrants, who identify as “Hispanic”, even in cities that border Mexico. Instead of adopting the terminology, “Mexican”, “Mexican-American” or even “Chicano”, many children of immigrants appeal to their “Americanness” by adopting this census-driven and mainstream term.

### **Emphasizing 50th: Navigating a National Narrative**

When I began my study, I was extremely interested in what implications the rhetoric of “last” would create for New Mexican students trying to see themselves as capable. Each of my participants had, in one way or another, come across this messaging. Rose articulated, “So I think that it’s not doing a terrible job, I think statistically speaking [the New Mexican Education System] may not be doing a great job but overall, I’ve never had a bad experience with it. We may be 50th, but I feel well-equipped to sort of be able to go into the world with the education that I’ve received and handle it well”.

Despite the narrative that her educational experience is far below national standards and is not remotely comparable should she wish to venture elsewhere, Rose felt confident in the education she received and her ability to navigate higher education, based on her previous experience. This may be a reflection of the pedagogies of the home she engaged, that encouraged her to carry herself with tenacity and find strength in her circumstances. In Marisa’s case, her reflection was fairly unperturbed, “I mean—I guess,

I think our state is 49th in education, so that's one of them, but that's about the only one that I could think of, of how people talk about education". Though each of the young women were able to recount the statistic of New Mexico as 49th or 50th in education, as it is so widely circulated in our messaging, they did not seem to let this reality hinder their educational pursuit. Rather, it was something that instilled a sense of pride, because despite our educational system's shortcomings and the disservice many students have experienced, they were able to navigate their way to an enacted pursuit of higher-education.

### **Summary of Major Findings**

Within my findings, I sought to answer three research questions.

1. How do young Nuevomexicana college students describe the influence of New Mexican schools on their identity development?

Though some of the participants described having good performance in school and having positive relationships with certain educators (particularly women), most of them articulated ideas of curricular isolation or representation. With Rose, her stepfather's role in administration allowed her to see what frustrations educators face in having to implement national policy in our schools that are further marginalized by such practices. Being strong students seemed to reflect more of an internal drive as motivated by their families and communities and the need to make a difference and succeed to benefit the collective.

The participants explained feelings of invisibility or irrelevance when engaging a curriculum that belittled or obscured the histories of their ancestors and communities, however notions of *querencia* reinforced through learned pedagogies of the home allowed



for a successful maneuvering of such spaces, even when specifically marginalized. Vanessa explained much of her academic standing had largely to do with her ability to self-engage the curriculum and take on the role of educator in engaging with lessons not sufficiently explained to her. This was also true of Ambassador Mari Luci Jaramillo in her adolescence, and she was frequently called upon by educators to help other students learn because of her ability to engage the subject with limited instruction.

Some of the participants communicated the pursuit of higher education being a reflection of their educational potential. Though the narrative of Nuevomexicana students often reflects deficit views of young mothers, low-socioeconomic status and families with histories of violence and trauma, each of these students demonstrated an ability to use their experience as a locus of strength and wisdom cultivated through a historic and spatial collective.

2. What ancestral knowledge or resistance techniques have Nuevomexicanas used to navigate the school system in times of perceived marginalization?

The ancestral knowledge that presented itself had largely to do with pedagogies of the home enacted in the education system. In terms of the participant we saw themes of self-advocacy, hustle, aspirational endeavors as well as self-confidence and care. Though each of these traits may initially read as a benefit to the individuality, each of these ideas manifested through an accountability to the collective and the need to succeed to better the circumstances of their loved ones. Querencia, as established through a Nuevomexicana identity and consciousness manifested in ideas of relationality and responsibility to their state and particular communities within it. Though some of the participants struggled in their relationship with educators, their tenacity as students as

well as support system outside of the school (largely presenting itself as their families), helped them to find success within.

Though they have just begun their college journeys, learned behaviors throughout their lifetime and instilled within them as ancestral wisdom, have cultivated a sense of determination and a sense of resource in a state and education system significantly under-resourced. Each of the participants although, they may have struggled in particular instances, described having a successful first semester of their undergraduate careers.

3. How do young Nuevomexicana students perceive their relationship with institutionalized education?

The participants, though mostly successful in their educational experiences all indicated a need for a change within the New Mexican education system. This change, at the suggestion of each would look like a specific representation of their histories and narratives, particularly in helping students to see themselves as capable and powerful within such institutions. The elimination or mitigation of standardized testing in schools where the content has minimal or no relevance. Another suggestion was better resources for first generation students in elementary and secondary education to support them through their transition to higher education, as well as more programming for mental and behavioral health support and free and reduced lunches.

The advocacy these participants had for their peers was instrumental in articulating their notions of *querencia* and Nuevomexicana identity as accountable to New Mexican people. Though their imaginings of what a more supportive school system would look like for New Mexicans may be difficult in a state with such little federal

resource, hopefully Yazzie/Martinez v. The State of New Mexico will see more of these programs facilitated in public education. Then, a shift to a more culturally sustaining (Paris, 2012) or for the particularity of the New Mexican Education System, a Sentipensante Pedagogy can be introduced to further cultivate a Nuevomexicana consciousness in our emerging students and scholars.

I believe all three of these questions were addressed within the themes of Identity, Education and Positionality. Identity development through institutionalized education had largely to do with notions of care articulated in educational experiences prior to higher-ed. Further, they directly corresponded to the sort of values instilled within the participants in their homelife as well as being informed by their socioeconomic status and lived experience as far as how certain violences or struggles manifested within their identity. Enrolling in an ethnic studies course in their first semester of college demonstrates this particular group of participants is not necessarily representative of every Nuevomexicana students who makes it to a university campus, as such a choice requires at least a burgeoning critical consciousness.

# Chapter 6: Implications

Seldom have studies focused on women's language use. Since women have historically been the guardians of language and culture (Zentella 1987), it would seem appropriate that studies focus on women's linguistic behavior. Such studies would provide a better understanding of the mechanics and implications of language use and language choice when Chicanas' social networks are extended beyond the domains and across generations.

—Maria Dolores Gonzales

## **Implications**

The findings in this study illuminate what the realization of a Nuevomexicana consciousness looks like in a group of recently college-bound Nuevomexicana students. Through the lens of *querencia*, and from my personal lived experience I was able to identify particular themes within the New Mexican identity that I identify as crucial in understanding the particularized experience of Nuevomexicana students as they navigate an educational trajectory not necessarily created for them to function, and further succeed in. Through their ancestral wisdom and pedagogies of the home, these young students were able to identify particular practices and spaces that helped to ground and uplift them when they felt further marginalized within the system.

The stories they share are crucial in creating a counternarrative to the national portrayal of the New Mexican student as incapable and disposable in their educational trajectory. Though each of the participants have certainly faced hardships, their tenacious demeanors, articulated in completely distinctive capacities, are demonstrative of an intergenerational resiliency of New Mexican women. However, to create a pedagogical model of education that encouraged the academic success of the majority of our students would require a shift from standardization and an acknowledgement of the complex history of our state within the curriculum. This model would also place a particular emphasis on place-based learning and community as classroom, as it speaks to an ideology prevalent in a New Mexican identity.

## **Implications for Academic Literature**

While reviewing the Literature on New Mexico's education system, there did not appear to be particular documentation that investigated the present day education system

in New Mexico, since the outset of colonization. Further, most of the published literature on education appeared to trickle off early into the 20th century. After attending a presentation by a friend and peer in The Center for Southwest Research, regarding Fabiola Cabeza de Baca and New Mexican agricultural policy in the 20th Century, and discussing the findings with my mentor, it became apparent the answer regarding many women's experience within institutionalized education in New Mexico lay in home economics programs that influenced their educational trajectory (Olivas, 2018). Much of this information, however is archival and has yet to be brought to the forefront for sufficient analysis.

Though I was able to compile a list of texts that informed my investigation, the shortage of published literature that focuses on New Mexican experiences in education, in general. This is a major concern when we take into consideration the status of our educational rating nationally, as we need to illuminate for others the particularity of our history with institutionalized education. Retrospectively, a resource that may have been more beneficial to me was combing published dissertations and theses through the College of Education, at my university to determine whether any previous students brought any of this information, archival or otherwise, to the forefront.

More so, though there were certainly published works regarding New Mexican identity and works regarding Latina/Chicana experience in education, there didn't seem to be an expanse of literature linking the two. I hope this study can help to bridge an understanding of New Mexican students for educators who demonstrate an ethic of care while working with our students but do not necessarily comprehend the significance of our lived experiences both ancestrally and in the present-day. Ideally this will discourage

any deficit views of students and families who are struggling financially, emotionally or spiritually as a result of violences or oppressive realities faced intergenerationally or personally.

### **Implications for Practice and Policy**

Though this thesis project only addresses particular aspects of a New Mexican identity, I hope it is capable of informing other educators and community members whose goal is to *reach* New Mexican students, by creating a comprehensive understanding of what it means for them to grow up in the state of New Mexico and experience a system of education meant to eradicate their differences and further marginalize them in the capacity of economic stagnancy through the expectation of “failure. This would alternative to engaging pedagogical models that provide a cursory view of cultural values and fabricated histories, by many who have condemned our students based on their test scores, letter grades and oftentimes their reading levels. All without regarding the significance of oral storytelling in our histories and the significance of language oppression (on many levels) to a New Mexican identity.

To create a pedagogical model, or curriculum set based on the research would be a more comprehensive investigation of such a study, and would likely take implementation of various degrees of culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012) that engaged both values and standards of westernized education as well as the privileging of ancestral wisdom or pedagogies of the home. Such a curriculum would require significant trial and error and would need to be continuously reworked and reframed in commitment to praxis.

## **Limitations of the Study**

The biggest challenge in pursuing the study, was the time constraint of finishing all of my interviews and field notes with less than half of a semester, once I gained IRB approval. Though I initially anticipated having the full semester to collect data, I finished all field notes and interviews within the second 8 weeks of the semester, culminating my final interview the Monday after finals week. Since I have been in the particular ethnic studies classroom for the last two years, I feel that my knowledge of the curriculum proved useful in conducting such a study.

Another challenge was the fluidity of the concept, “New Mexican Identity”, I believe I mediated this by creating a well-designed survey to narrow down my sample size. Through inclusion criteria, the size of my sample went from a potential 88 participants to 3 who participated in the study. Working with college freshmen at a flagship university somewhat predetermines the socioeconomic status of the students I was working with. While some students attend on scholarship, the reality of them even attending the university means they are privileged in a way that most New Mexican students are not. This may have been limiting in reaching a particular constituency from whom I could learn profoundly. However, some of the themes prevalent in my findings demonstrated a reality of financial struggle and its implications for my participants in their educational experience. The final limitation I have identified is the students’ understanding of the concept “querencia”. I did not introduce the concept to them, as I did not wish to lead their explorations of identifying with place in New Mexico but also aimed to develop this concept as a central component of my analysis.



### **Directions for Future Research.**

I would like to acknowledge that though this study investigates a Nuevomexicana consciousness through the exploration of New Mexican identity emergent from settler colonialism, I understand that such an identity is not uniform. This study seeks to explore identities of Nuevomexicana/Latina/Chicanas, I recognize identities vary based on race, class, gender, sexuality, skin color, lived experience, intergenerational traumas, personal and collective ideologies, and is also largely informed by region. However, I believe that many Latino/a /Chicano/a Nuevomexicano/as hold many similar cultural values, traits and most significantly a *querencia* intergenerationally indoctrinated in us.

My hope is to pursue a PhD program in Educational Philosophy, focusing on Curriculum and Instruction where I expand this project within a doctoral dissertation. I first would like to present as an educator inside formal institutions both inside of and outside the state of New Mexico, where I can begin curriculum development for several years, before I undertake such a curriculum-heavy study. A more comprehensive realization of this project would be to pursue an intergenerational study of the women in New Mexico, starting with those who were first-generation Spanish speakers born (1930s-1950s), second generation (1950s-1980s), third and fourth generations (1980s-now). I believe such a scope of study would allow for me to determine how a Nuevomexicana consciousness has emerged and how such an identity deviates intergenerationally with the prevalence of particular systemic and institutional influences. Further, it would be significant to note how the shift from bilingual Spanish speakers in the age of a forced assimilation to the “Americano” identity, to the present-day majorly

monolingual English speakers or passive bilingual speakers, informs perception of Nuevomexicanidad. Particularly, how this shift in language has informed an experience with institutionalized education.

As the Catholic Church was the inaugural formal educational institution, I feel it is necessary to further address its role in shaping women's identity development and educational experience from colonization to the present-day. I have already identified trends of how its manifestation of the system of patriarchy is still largely influential in the lives of many Nuevomexicanas, but would like to also address how this faith can also be considered a pedagogy of the home or an ancestral wisdom in navigating what could be oppressive educational spaces.

This study speaks to the Nuevomexicana/Latina/Chicana/mestiza experience, in particular, and simultaneously how it is/was informed by the Nuevomexicano/Latino/Chicano/Mestizo experience. I am not speaking from an indigenous person's perspective postcolonization, and recognize that in the future could include more of a Critical Indigenous Studies analysis of such an identity. This study was conceptualized before I was introduced to Critical Indigenous Studies, which taught me to view everything from settler/colonialism as the first systemic violence with White Supremacy, Capitalism and Heteropatriarchy as its manifestations. A C.I.S. analysis would also privilege kinship, relationality, and emphasize the continued occupation of indigenous land by settler groups, something that has been conceptually contested by Nuevomexicanos that identify as mestizo. Though I do try to continuously introduce notions of relationality, I do not problematize place-based attachment within *querencia*

from a non-indigenous experience. This is something I, along with many other scholars, am trying to grapple with.

# CHAPTER 7:

# Conclusion

I feel like sometimes, because I'm not as involved here, I feel kind of like I *don't* belong here. Maybe this isn't the school for me, 'cause sometimes I feel like I'm not able to have that college experience that I *want*. But also, it's hard for me because I have to work again. Also there's times when I'm really understanding a concept in a class and I'm really like, "this is where I belong. This is the path for me and I'm going to graduate and become something."

—Vanessa Jaramillo

The purpose of this study is to better understand the Nuevomexicana identity as it has navigated educational institutions in the present day. Such a system is very much still entrenched in larger structures of colonialism and imperialism and necessarily marginalizes those constructed as the “other” as a result of its hegemony. As a Nuevomexicana scholar whose struggle with “traditional” institutions of education reproduced the same notions of inferiority and incompetency, particularly in privileged subjects such as math and science, I seek to examine the ways in which intergenerational resistance has allowed for the maneuvering of such a system. For my abuela this system meant an 8th grade education in order to care for her younger sisters as her mother grew ill. My tia found her way to Brown University where she obtained a degree in Applied Math and Biology, later receiving her Master’s Degree and Licensure as an Independent and Clinical Social Worker. Though it is my intention to continue the resistance with the eventual pursuit of a Doctoral Degree, my priority is the understanding of New Mexican education in the present day and its marginalization of young Nuevomexicanas in establishing a critical pedagogy that allows for the wholeness of being rather than the measure of “success” through Capitalistic gains. Through these wonderful thinkers and creators, I have begun to envision such a project and hope to contribute a compelling framework for current and future New Mexican educators.

**Appendices:**

**Appendix A: Inclusion Criteria**

**Appendix B: Recruitment Survey**

**Appendix C: Interview Questions and Prompts**

### **Appendix A: Inclusion Criteria**

- Must be enrolled in the “Introduction to Chicano Studies: Music, Media and Spoken Word in Politics” Freshman Learning Community course during Fall 2018 semester;
- Must have a minimum of one side of parental lineage with at least three generations in New Mexico;
- Must ethnically identify as Hispanic/Latina/Chicana/Nuevomexicana;
- Must be 18-22 years in age;
- Must identify their gender as woman, transgender woman, or gender nonconforming, and;
- Must self-identify with the gender pronouns she/her/hers or they/them/theirs

## **Appendix B: Recruitment Survey**

1. What is your age?
2. What are your gender pronouns?
3. How do you racially or ethnically identify? E.g. Black, Latina/o, Indigenous, Asian, Pacific Islander, Nuevomexicana/o, White, etc. Please indicate all that apply.
4. How long have you lived in New Mexico?
5. How many generations has your family lived in New Mexico?
6. Are you interested in participating in a study concerning identity development and education in New Mexico? By indicating "yes" you are not formally agreeing to participate, but stating interest so I can contact you regarding the study.
7. If you are interested in participating in the study, please provide contact information below: If you are not interested in participating, please indicate N/A in all fields. Thank you for your participation in the survey! I will be reaching out to interested individuals in the coming week.



## Appendix C: Interview Questions and Prompts

- 1) Tell me about your family's intergenerational history in New Mexico.
- 2) Tell me about your experiences in New Mexican schools.
  - b) How do they differ/relate to those of your parents?
- 3) What meaningful learning tools have you learned outside of school (i.e your home, community, family)?
  - b) What lessons have you learned in your home environment that have either helped you in school or demonstrated to you what your "formal" education is lacking?
- 4) Without giving names, what educators have influenced you most and why?
- 5) What does it mean to you to identify as New Mexican?
  - b) If you don't identify as New Mexican, do you have a particular reason for not doing so?
- 6) What is your perception of the New Mexican Education System?
- 7) What do you like or dislike about school?
- 8) How do you think the news or media both locally or nationally portray New Mexican education?
- 9) How does that differ or relate to your ideas about New Mexican education?
- 10) How does/has your gender identity informed your educational experience in New Mexico?
- 11) Please describe your connection with the land in New Mexico.
- 12) How have the women in your family described their relationship with the land and how has this changed/endured intergenerationally?
- 13) How do you define home?
- 14) How has land informed your education?

### Research Question:

What ancestral knowledge or resistance techniques have Nuevomexicanas used to navigate the school system in times of perceived marginalization?

### Follow up questions:

- 1) What have your relationships with educators been like?
  - b) How did that inform your educational experience thus far?
- 2) What have your relationships with administrators been like?
  - b) How did that inform your educational experience thus far?
- 3) What does the word "belonging" mean to you in terms of schooling?
  - b) How has that notion manifested in your experiences?
- 4) Did you feel "seen" in your previous schools?
  - b) What did that mean to you?
- 5) Do you think the curriculum in your educational experiences represented your history accurately?

- a) If so, how does that make you feel?
- b) If not, how does that make you feel?
- 6) What helped you to feel more grounded or successful in times where you found difficulty in school?

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