

INTRA-RACIAL AND ETHNIC OTHERING AMONG THE MEXICAN-ORIGIN  
POPULATION IN THE SOUTHWEST

by

Diana Labrie

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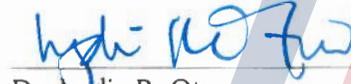
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## DEDICATIONS

To my parents—

William & Irma Aceves

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation observes Mexican Othering to demonstrate the influencing characteristics of intra-racial and ethnic tensions among the Mexican-origin population in the Southwestern U.S.-Mexico Border. While acknowledging the systematic sociopolitical and economic relations that participate in the formation of racial paradigms, I argue that Mexican intra-racial and ethnic tensions sustain and manifest towards the formation of the Other. I consider three main study themes and their respective texts: 1) phenotypic factors (such as skin color, physical appearance, indigeneity, and whiteness) in *Malintzin's Choices: An Indian Woman in the Conquest of Mexico* (2006) by Camilla Townsend, and *The Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo* (1972) by Oscar "Zeta" Acosta; 2) class-consciousness (such as language, education, mobility, and politics) in *Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez* (1982) by Richard Rodriguez; 3) national and regional ideologies (such as border politics, migration, Americanness, and Mexicanness) in *Macho!* (1973) by Victor Villaseñor, the ethnographic study of "Fight Words: Latina Girls, Gangs, and Language Attitudes" (1999) by Norma Mendoza-Denton, and YouTube video of "Ana Gaines Racist Mexicana" (2009) by Carlos Galindo. Furthermore, I observe that Mexican intra-racial and ethnic tensions invoke a search for belonging that can be traced to several epochs. These eras date from the 16<sup>th</sup> Century during the Spanish invasion of Mexico, the 20<sup>th</sup> Century during the Anglo American invasion of the Southwest, and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century of current interactions. I consider an interdisciplinary approach and recollect from important historical occurrences such as the Spanish-Indigenous contact and the arrival of Hernán Cortés (1519); the Mexican-American War (1846-1848); World War II (1939-1945); and the Chicano Movement (1960). This dissertation contributes to the broader conceptual framework in understanding the complex ways racial and ethnic attitudes

form and persist among the Mexican population. This study will provide further knowledge of differences to understand intragroup relations, political behaviors, and subjective processes. Additionally, it contributes to the literature on Othering and its formation by emphasizing the contextual transformative nature of social constructs.

## INTRODUCTION

While Mexican resistance has been historically present, full acceptance continues to be defied. The unrelenting answers to questions of: “What are you?” “Where are you from?” assist in the everlasting measures of racial and ethnic anxieties and tensions. The theme of racial and identity constructions make way of understanding how tensions form among groups. Race did not signify biological differences in people, but rather differences in cultures or affiliations. Race implied a group of people who possessed distinct languages, habits, and religion. This meant that two groups of people with no distinction in physical appearance could have different customs and speak differently. However, the application of race began to modify, and debates about the number of races surged and people were to be categorized by the color of their skin. Race classification was then organized by the grouping of people for the color of their skin and physical attributes. This order was then integrated in societal interactions for the purposes of inclusion and exclusion. Within time, people began to internalize race as a justification to allow colonialism and slavery towards those who were seen as belonging to an inferior category. As social constructs settled and according to Omi and Winant, racial or racists tendencies began to ground themselves on the contemporary paradigms of ethnicity, class and nation (*Racial Formation in the United States*). Race then became a normalized way of understanding, explaining and behaving in society. This understanding of race allows for the constructing and deconstructing of power relations and suppressions in interactive social contexts. It can be said that racialized identities are developed, understood and reproduced in socially constructed contexts; this refers to society in general, whether it is a person or a group of people. It is applied to intra-racial tendencies as the power relations no longer scale from race to race, but formed within.

The terms race and ethnicity are often interchanged, they can be distinguished in accordance with Mario Barrera's explanation in *Race and Class in the Southwest: A Theory of Racial Inequality* (1979). "Race" attributes to "physical characteristics," one of major importance is skin color and particular physical features (4). "Ethnic" entails cultural aspects such as "language, customs, or religion" and is used to classify a group of people who share the basis of a group identity (4). It is further understood as a product of process based on culture and descent. "Descent" implies heredity and a sense of belonging to a group, this suggests that "ethnicity was socially 'primordial,' if not biologically given, in character" (Omi and Michael 15). Since race and ethnicity are commonly used interchangeably, their meanings are subject to change and modifications in different social movements and settings.

Understanding identity labels is a complex matter that is greatly due to the countless generations that are prominent in the Southwestern United States.<sup>1</sup> Various degrees of nationalism exist due to continuous migration and historical territorial shifts. When Mexico lost a large part of its northern territory to the United States in war,<sup>2</sup> the former citizens of Mexico who remained in this area had the choice of becoming American citizens.<sup>3</sup> The acquisition of the Southwestern lands led to many queries about citizenship and national belonging. One delay in making the Southwestern Mexican territory part of the United States was due to "what was to become of the more than 115,000 Mexicans who lived in the conquered lands" (Gómez 17). The

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<sup>1</sup> In accordance with Martha Menchaca's use of the term "Southwest" in *Recovering History, Constructing Race* (2001), I also refer to the territories of New Mexico, Texas, Arizona, and California.

<sup>2</sup> Mexican-American War from 1846-1848 proceeded the annexation of the Republic of Texas from 1845.

<sup>3</sup> With the signing of The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848 the United States received the Rio Grande boundary which are now the states of California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, the Southwestern part of Wyoming and the western tip of Colorado. Article IX was revised "for the incorporation of Mexicans resident in the ceded territories as citizens of the United States and extended guarantees of liberty, protection of property and civil rights, and freedom of religion. The Mexican residents were given the opportunity to move to Mexico if they wished" (Lamb 58).

Mexicans that acclaimed their United States citizenship are considered to be the first Mexican Americans.

With the application of racial categories in the United States, identity labels began to further complicate the sense of belonging for Mexicans. Previously, Mexicans were categorized into one minority ethnic group because differences could not be distinguished between members of the group. Their identity was “racially constructed—by processes far more profound than mere state policy formation” (Omi and Winant 24). Consequently, regardless of differences in characteristics, Mexicans were clustered into one ethnic group. The objection here is that Mexicans view this as improper categorization, and that different ethnic groups should be considered to preserve their ethnic identity. For this reason, Mexican descent people “constantly mix classification systems in order to make sense of themselves and ‘others’” (Vila 85). To denote differences from Mexican immigrants, many Mexican Americans are likely to use nationality, and to distinguish from Anglos many use race and/or ethnicity. Mexican immigrants on the other hand, “have to confront the fact that they ‘are’ Mexicans in both senses of the term, as a nationality and as an ethnicity” (Vila 85). Many Mexicans who immigrate, do so with the intention to appropriate to American ways of living, however they are forced to apply an identity label that many times divides them from their true sense of identity. This may be due perhaps for the lack of understanding of such labels or for any negative connotations that are attached to them in the specific area.

Laura Gómez suggests in *Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race* (2007) that the Mexican integrated experience in the United States results in their formation of a racial group rather than simply an ethnic group. However, the United States does not recognize the Hispanic or Latino population as a race, even though it is the largest minority population.

The reason for this Gómez states, is due to the understanding that being American signifies being White or Black. One motive for the Mexican racial exclusion is due to the inability to distinguish between recent Mexican immigrants and generational United States citizens, even though the same is true of other groups. While the United States has constantly been undergoing Mexican immigration, Mexican Americans have long been citizens for many generations. For this reason, as Gómez claims, Mexican Americans are a racial group that “is rooted in their long history in this nation” (2). Evaluating the Mexican integration in America, analyzes their racial order and the “social process of racialization—or how groups come to be identified and to identify themselves in racial terms and learn their place as deserving or underserving in the racial hierarchy” (Gómez 2). Even though Mexican Americans were legally incorporated into the American society, they were still and continue to be considered second-class citizens, regardless of their citizenry contribution.

Further analysis suggests that the legal construction of race affected racial dynamics among Mexican Americans. One inconsistency was how the legal construction of Mexicans was racially White, while the social construction was non-white or better yet, “racially inferior” (Gómez 4). This discrepancy in racial categorizing is one of the factors that caused tension, especially among Mexican elites as they asserted their social position in the American racial order. Mexican elites residing in the United States denied any affiliation with those who were below their social class status, whether it be Native Americans, Blacks or their own ethnic group. This type of racial conflict is responsible for the development of racial hierarchies among Mexicans in the Southwest, where White Americans were above them and any other minority groups were below.

Juan Gómez Quiñones adds that Mexicans in the United States have been seen as “unhappy exceptions to the vulgar metaphor of ‘the melting pot’ . Public discourse against Mexican immigration raises questions concerning Mexican suitability for assimilation or the optimum possible rate of integration into mainstream society” (52). As communities and cultures constantly shift, so does the construction of identities. More commonly, “intra-cultural conflicts... arise from differences in regional dialects, customs, fashions, and other lifestyles” (Padilla 246). In this way, identity construction is a response and tends to intensify in some individuals of Mexican descent for the pressures of cultural assimilation. By assimilation, one common arena in which it can take place Omi and Michael argue is in the political realm. In this domain, a separate identity emerges where a noticeable cultural attempt in gaining acceptance must be endured to obtain an “upward mobility” on the social scale (19). Additionally, Omi and Michael add, that the foremost reason for assimilation is for political gain rather than traditional or cultural ties.

In this study, I apply Mexican to reference someone of Mexican descent who recently arrived to the United States and is not an American citizen, who culturally identifies predominantly with Mexico and/or whose dominant or primary language is Spanish. I use the term Mexican American to represent someone of Mexican descent of the second or consecutive generations in the U.S. This person may identify as Spanish, Spanish American, Hispanic, Chicana/o, Latino, Mexican or Mexican American; however, they may be further removed from the Spanish language and may not necessarily culturally identify with or have a direct connection with Mexico. While the difference between Mexican and Mexican American mostly implies generative arrival into the United States, I interchangeably use the term Mexican to generally speak of the people who are of Mexican descent, regardless of their generational arrival in the

U.S. I do so to speak of Mexicans as a group of people who to some degree are of Mexican descent and not to ignore generative differences. I deter from applying the term Latino<sup>4</sup> or Latin American to keep in theme with the identity labels used by the primary texts of this study.

I distinguish White (American), Anglo (American), European (American), Anglo Saxon, American, Spanish, and newcomers to specify someone of White European descent, whether an American citizen or not, someone who is not classified as a minority (Black, African American, Indian, Asian or Mexican). This also alludes to a minority who racially and ethnically identifies as so for being light-skinned or simply not intending to identify with their own racial or ethnic group. Moreover, when referencing indigenous people, I appropriate the corresponding label the supporting text use. For instance, when discussing the Spanish conquest in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the indigenous are mostly mentioned as Indians, indigenous, or native people. When referencing the United States, they are commonly termed as (American) Indian and Native American.

This study does not intend to enclose a Mexican identity to any particular ethnic group. It is acknowledged that Mexican people have distinct origins and backgrounds that vary outside the defined domain. The Mexican national identity encompasses various prehistorical ethnic and racial groups that participate in the formation of a multiethnic nationalism. To ignore such diversity would be to disservice and participate in their exclusion. This study simply embraces the identity labels contested by the authors, as are described above. Interest rests upon the categorizations the authors experience based on their phenotypic appearance, and how they challenge and embrace such labels.

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<sup>4</sup> In *U.S. Latino Issues* (2017), Rodolfo F Acuña describes the term Latino to describe different nationalities that allow the inclusion and mixture of ethnicities. It is considered a controversial term, for supporters believe applying the term lessens a nationalistic identity that normally promotes division. Meanwhile others contest the term, and suggest that it generalizes national identities. In this way, the term is dependent per individual perspective.

Chapter 1 focuses on the establishing of hierarchal categorizations situated around the Spanish conquest of 1519. I position the conquest with motivations based on racial hierarchical statuses in relation to superior racial categorizations. I reference Camilla Townsend's *Malintzin's Choices: An Indian Woman in the Conquest of Mexico* (2006) to argue that while Malintzin presented facilitating abilities of communication between the Spanish and indigenous people, gained privilege above others, and birthed Cortés's child, she and her offspring were not fully accepted as equal and were deemed as racially inferior. The system of blood purity by the Spanish society was verified and maintained by the classification of phenotypic appearances, language abilities, and social status. Even though Malintzin proved to possess accepting social qualifications, her indigenous identity bound her to the peripheral of complete Spanish societal acceptability and later, rejection by her own people, thus identifying her role with characteristics of the Other. The next section denotes the arrival of Anglo Americans followed by referencing the U.S.-Mexican War. The inclusion of this period permits understanding on how racial categorizations were socially restructured, and further complicated societal interactions. Next, I discuss the socioeconomic impact of World War II and the Chicano Movement to provide insight on the political affairs that continued to form. The psychological effects of phenotypic categorizations, social structures of these three periods, and the interactions among the racial and ethnic groups are examined using Lacan's theoretical concepts of the Other, and observed in the autobiography of Oscar "Zeta" Acosta's *The Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo* (1972).

Chapter 2 centralizes on the phenotypic hierarchal categorizations of intra-racial and ethnic tensions established in the previous chapter, and implements the theme of class-consciousness to acknowledge the establishment of capitalism and false consciousness. I discuss the concepts of language, education, mobility, and political positions and draw on the theoretical

deliberations of consciousness, power, and knowledge. I examine Richard Rodriguez's autobiography, *Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez* (1982) to argue that appropriating dominant principles compromises his identity towards the formation of the Other. I argue that even though Rodriguez appropriated the dominant language, obtained an education that provided upward social mobility, in addition to nonconformities in his political affiliations, he remained at the margins of belonging in the dominant group and among his own ethnic group.

Chapter 3 applies the phenotypic hierarchal categorizations from the previous chapters and highlights national and regional ideologies in theme with intra-racial and ethnic tensions to focus on border politics, migration, Americanness, and Mexicanness. I analyze the novel *Macho!* (1973) by Victor Villaseñor to argue that the characters who decide to migrate experience exploitation, followed by the development of false consciousness and formation of the Other. I elaborate on border politics, the inferences on migration, and the longing for Americanness in relation to identity formation. I discuss the U.S.-Mexico border crossings in concurrence with the Bracero Program and the Chicano Movement to delineate in-group tensions in relation to migration. The next subdivision includes the study of "Fight Words: Latina Girls, Gangs, and Language Attitudes" by Norma Mendoza-Denton (1999) to define how the regional labels of *Norteñas* and *Sureñas* are respective of the national labels of Americanness and Mexicanness and outlines the development of tensions between the affiliated groups. I argue that the disunion among the *Norteñas* and *Sureñas* renders them susceptible to a capitalist system. The *Norteñas* appropriate characteristics of false consciousness while the *Sureñas* become subject to a lower working class system under the institutional system. Consequently, both groups are susceptible to otherness. The last subdivision focuses on national ideologies of legal versus illegal migration, depicted in the YouTube video titled "Ana Gaines Racist

Mexicana,” conducted by Carlos Galindo (2009). This video details political and social manifestations on nationality, in addition to verbal affronts that project intra-racial and ethnic tensions. As the protagonist Ana appropriates dominant political affiliation, Carlos alludes that her physical appearance of an indigenous person will deny her complete access. I argue that the formation of the Other and false consciousness is observed in both protagonists.

The major texts for this study are primarily written by men, a closer look at this detail permits a brief supplementary analysis of gender differences in the Chicana/o literary canon. Formerly, the literature only circulated male contributors, which further kindled the Chicano Movement as it was centralized around male heroes. Even though Chicana/o literature emerged from multilayered social and political struggles that affronted both men and women, not all participants were credited in the involvement. Chicanas had been writing since before the Chicano Movement, though their writings and own experience were of undistinguishable inclusion in the Chicano narrative. For this reason, many Chicana scholars have written and rewritten, analyzed and reanalyzed a multitude of works—they have dedicated studies and research to include their narratives to demonstrate how the Chicana voice has ever coexisted.<sup>5</sup> Henceforth, the disregarding of the female voice further participated in the already established masculine dominion. In the event of the female inclusion, their roles were primarily portrayed as the: sexual, seductive, mothering, disloyal, and submissive. At which point Chicanas began to

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<sup>5</sup> Some references are: 1) Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands: The New Mestiza = La Frontera*. Spinsters/Aunt Lute, San Francisco, 1987. Print. 2) Rebolledo, Tey Diana, and Eliana S. Rivero. *Infinite Divisions: An Anthology of Chicana Literature*. Tucson: U of Arizona, 1993. Print. 3) Blackwell, Maylei. *Chicana Power!: Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement*. 1st ed. Austin: U of Texas, 2011. Print. 4) Del Castillo, Adelaida R., ed. *Between Borders: Essays on Mexicana/Chicana History*. Encino, Ca.: Floricanto Press, 1990. Print. 5) Gaspar De Alba, Herrera-Sobek, Martínez, Herrera-Sobek, María, and Martínez, Demetria. *Three times a Woman: Chicana Poetry*. Tempe, Ariz.: Bilingual Review/Press, 1989. Print. 6) Gómez, Alma, Cherríe Moraga and Mariana Romo-Carmona, eds. *Cuentos: Stories by Latinas*. New York: Kitchen Table Press, 1983. Print. 7) Herrera-Sobek, María, ed. *Beyond Stereotypes; The Critical Analysis of Chicana Literature*. Binghamton: Bilingual Press, 1985. Print. 8) Pratt, Annis. *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981. Print. 9) Ruiz, Vicki. *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry, 1930-1950*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987. Print. 10) Sánchez, Rosaura, and Rosa Martínez Cruz. *Essays of La Mujer*. Los Angeles: Chicano Studies Center Publications, 1977. Print.

take an autonomous approach towards these misrepresentations. For this reason, Chicana literature has been analyzed through the lens of a poststructuralist perspective since gendered power-relations partook in numerous societal roles. This study does not intend to ignore the imperative role of any specific gender; instead, it aims at recollecting the historical organizational political and societal contestations imposed on both men and women that activated particular comportments towards the severance of the racialized group as one.

Furthermore, even though this study references historical occurrences that include the Spanish and American invasion, it will be limited to racial and ethnic interactions and differences that motivated intra-racial ethnic tensions; consequently, other related events and literature will be omitted allowing leeway for further research. Only the mentioned political encounters are included to denote the emergences that are prominent to this study. Additionally, while a portion of this study is devoted to exploring on racial tensions that began in the conquest of Mexico, the objective of this inclusion is to enlighten on how these conflicts have evolved in the United States, for this reason, Mexican literature it not included.

## **2. Review of the Literature**

While the subject of race and ethnicity for Mexican Americans has been determinedly studied for many years, this review names only a selection of those texts that are more closely related to Mexican Othering. Nevertheless, many studies have either focused only on the Spanish conquest in the Americas, or the Anglo American conquest in the Southwest. Few studies have trajectoryally focused on the topic of othering beginning from the Spanish conquest to the Anglo American conquest.

As people came into contact by means of conquest, the topic of (re)construction of racial and ethnic categorizations emerged as a topic of study. Lille Norstad argues in her dissertation

*Nineteenth-Century Travel Writing and the Nuclearization of the American Southwest: A Discourse Analytic Approach to W. W. H. Davis's El Gringo New Mexico and Her People* (2011), that Davis's writing of *El Gringo* (1982), was principally completed to strategically represent the subjugated Other(s) in a marketable position, as did most colonialist who saw the natives as inferior people. This critique from Norstad, takes historical testimonies from a White American perspective and applies a discourse analysis approach to reiterate how Mexicans were "innocently" marginalized. Norstad's study brings forth the capitalist approach colonists took when asserting ownership over native people and their land. Norstad centralizes her dissertation argument around the term "dispensable" to show how racialized constructions are rhetorically reproduced to rationalize nuclear colonization. She argues that as the U.S. justified their invasion, they marginalized occupants, ceased their land privileges, and imposed a new language. This, Norstad claims, was interconnected to the principal motives of ensuring territorial authority that drove Manifest Destiny in the U.S. Meanwhile, the author W.W. H Davis of *El Gringo* wrote as a veteran of the Mexican-American War to propose a journal of his travel narratives in New Mexico. He recorded his experiences for better understanding of the enduring racial and ethnic clashes between Indians and Whites, New Mexicans and Texans, the Spanish-speaking population and the influx of newcomers to the United States. Davis romanticized the new land as many other colonizers have done when detailing their foreign encounters.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> For more works on romanticizing colonialism and identity in the Southwest see: 1) Tinnemeyer, Andrea, and MyiLibrary. *Identity Politics of the Captivity Narrative After 1848*. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 2006. Print. 2) Pérez, Vincent. *Remembering the Hacienda: History and Memory in the Mexican American Southwest*. 1st ed. College Station: Texas A&M UP, 2006. Print. 3) Mireles, Raleigh, Limón, Cotera, Kreneck, Raleigh, Eve, Limón, José Eduardo, Cotera, María Eugenia, and Kreneck, Thomas H. *Caballero: A Historical Novel*. 1st ed. College Station: Texas A&M UP, 1996. Print. 4) Vallejo, Mariano Guadalupe, and Bancroft Library. *Historical and Personal Memoirs Relating to Alta California a Political History of the Country from 1769-1849: Customs of the Californians: Biographical Notes concerning Notable Individuals: Typescript* (1875). Print. 5) Carrillo, Leo. *The California I Love*. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J, 1961. Print.

In his dissertation *1848 and the Expansion of the American Literary Imagination* (1999), Jesse Alemán examines the significant literary productions of the 1848 Mexican American War. He discusses the questions of identity, race, and nationality as topics of contradiction for both the American colonists and Mexican American writers. The end of the war and shifting of territories manifested a time of reconstruction for the nation. Alemán argues that even though the end of the war was an outcome of victory for Americans, the literature does not offer a nationalist realization. Similarly, Mexican Americans also engaged in conflicting positions as they protected their cultural identity while seeking White privilege. One reference used by Alemán and relevant to this study is María Amparo Ruiz de Burton's *Who would have Thought it?* (1872). Alemán uses her as a contradictory example to show that while she romanticized the loss of land in Baja California from Anglo colonizers, she belonged to a regime that supported the invasion of Mexico City and rejected Native Americans and indigenous people. Ruiz de Burton's narrative was concerned with proclaiming White nationalism as a way to maintain political privilege and a superior political position.<sup>7</sup> Even though Ruiz de Burton is historically considered the first Mexican-American female author to write in English, Alemán and others have critiqued her canonical contribution to Mexican-American/Chicana/o literature as she displays racism and classism towards Mexicans and Native Americans.

In the 1840s, a historical term of Manifest Destiny was eloquently adopted to mask an invasion that would expand Anglo American civilization. The plan was to aggrandize American territory for the sake of economic opportunity. The imperialist rationale suggested that since the

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<sup>7</sup> For more works relative to Ruiz de Burton position see: 1) Raab, Josef. "The Imagined Inter-American Community of María Amparo Ruiz De Burton." *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 53.1 (2008): 77-95. Web. 2) Aranda, José F. "Contradictory Impulses: María Amparo Ruiz De Burton, Resistance Theory, and the Politics of Chicano/a Studies." *American Literature* 70.3 (1998): 551-79. Web. 3) Szeghi, Tereza M. "The Vanishing Mexicana/o: (Dis)Locating the Native in Ruiz De Burton's "Who Would Have Thought It?" and "The Squatter and the Don"." *Aztlan: A Journal of Chicano Studies* 36.2 (2011): 89-120. Web. 4) Jacobs, Margaret D. "Mixed-Bloods, Mestizas, and Pintos: Race, Gender, and Claims to Whiteness in Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona* and María Amparo Ruiz De Burton's *Who Would Have Thought It?*." *Western American Literature* 36.3 (2001): 212-32. Web.

American heritage was most racially favorable, its destiny must be for the nation to expand. How this pioneer idealism affected race in the Southwestern people has been determinately studied.<sup>8</sup> As mentioned, Laura E. Gómez's text of *Manifest Destinies* deliberates on racial attitudes that were prominent in the formation of identity for Mexican Americans in the nineteenth century. Gómez focuses on the issue of "whiteness" originating from 1848 during the territorial shifts after the U.S.-Mexico War. Gómez first uses historical occurrences to initiate the origin of Mexican Americans via colonialism, then details on laws that stimulated xenophobic discrimination towards Mexicans; and finally argues how Mexicans should be identified as a racial group.

In *Recovering History, Constructing Race the Indian, Black, and White Roots of Mexican Americans* (2001), Martha Menchaca proposes a historical analysis of the Mexican American experience in Mexico and the United States. Menchaca's timeframe ranges from 1570 to 1898 with the prehistoric racial discriminations established with the Spanish conquest that further developed with the arrival of the U.S. government in 1848. Menchaca focuses on race relations to demonstrate that racial hierarchical statuses are formed by depending on one superior racial group while rejecting those whose appearance is superficially different. In this way, social categorizations are maintained and people remain marginalized. In order to reveal these findings, Menchaca uses contemporary U.S. race relations and auto/ethnographic interpretations of Mexican American indigenism. She is concerned with identifying the indigenous group conquered by both Spain and Mexico in order to understand the political process of racial

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<sup>8</sup> For more works on Manifest Destiny and race see: 1) Horsman, Reginald, and Inc ebrary. *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1981. 2) Haines, David W., and Mortland, Carol A. 1945- (Carol Anne). *Manifest Destinies: Americanizing Immigrants and Internationalizing Americans*. Praeger, Westport, Conn; London;, 2001. 3) Baigell, Matthew. "Territory, Race, Religion: Images of Manifest Destiny." *Smithsonian Studies in American Art*, vol. 4, no. 3-4, 1990, pp. 2. 3) Morrison, Michael A., 1948. *Slavery and the American West: The Eclipse of Manifest Destiny and the Coming of the Civil War*. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill; London; 1997.

categorizations. She adds that individuals, who imbue and ascribe these racial roles, reproduce and maintain the legal system. This allows the process of racialization under the legal systems of Spain and the U.S. to arrange socioeconomic White privileges and the ordering of other individuals to be deemed as unfit. For this reason, Menchaca is interested in examining how prejudicial racial legislations laws secure the subordination of people of color or second-class citizens.

Jaime J. Rodríguez's *The Literatures of the U.S.-Mexican War: Narrative, Time, and Identity* (2010) is related to this dissertation as it views conflicts and relationships along the U.S.-Mexico Border that were embedded since before the U.S.-Mexico War. Rodríguez demonstrates through literature how the wars fundamental anxieties shape contemporary tensions and exchanges in Anglo Americans, Mexican and Mexican Americans. He expresses how historical awareness constitutes current fears and their understanding of their own identity. I follow this concept and apply it further in history upon the arrival of the Spanish conquerors.<sup>9</sup>

A more recent work by Lee Bebout titled *Whiteness on the Border: Mapping the U.S. Racial Imagination in Brown and White* (2017) details on how ideologies of racial hierarchy are sustained on U.S. nationalism. The Mexican Other is an imaginary formation built on racialized ideologies since the early nineteenth century with the arrival of Anglo Americans. The image of

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<sup>9</sup> Other contributors to this topic are: 1) Cisneros, Josue David, and Mary Elizabeth. Watson. *The Border Crossed Us: Rhetorics of Borders, Citizenship, and Latina/o Identity*. 2013. Web. 2) Pagán, Eduardo Obregón, NetLibrary, Inc, and Ebrary, Inc. *Murder at the Sleepy Lagoon Zoot Suits, Race, and Riot in Wartime L.A.* Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina, 2003. Print. 3) Rivas-Rodriguez, Maggie. *Mexican Americans & World War II*. University of Texas Press, Austin, 2005. 4) Rivera, John-Michael, and Ebrary, Inc. *The Emergence of Mexican America Recovering Stories of Mexican Peoplehood in U.S. Culture*. New York: New York UP, 2006. Print. 5) Ruiz, Ramón Eduardo. *The Mexican War--was It Manifest Destiny?* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963. Print. American Problem Studies. Print. 6) Calderón-Zaks, Michael. "Debated Whiteness amid World Events: Mexican and Mexican American Subjectivity and the U.S.' Relationship with the Americas, 1924–1936." *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 27.2 (2011): 325-59. Web. 7) Benton-Cohen, Katherine. *Borderline Americans Racial Division and Labor War in the Arizona Borderlands*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 2009. Web. 8) Menchaca, Martha., NetLibrary, Inc, and Ebrary, Inc. *Recovering History, Constructing Race the Indian, Black, and White Roots of Mexican Americans*. 1st ed. Austin: U of Texas, 2001. Print. 9) Levinson, Irving W. *Wars within War : Mexican Guerrillas, Domestic Elites, and the United States of America, 1846-1848*. 2005. Web.

the Mexican Other solidifies as the lawless, exotic, or non-industrious in order to reinforce ideas of whiteness, Americanness, and anti-immigrant policies. Bebout focuses on answers to the questions of: “How has whiteness been forged against a Mexican Other embodied in representations of Mexico, Mexicans and Chicanas/os? How has the Mexican American positioning within the U.S. racial order and dominant imagination enabled and limited the United States to fashion the nation-state as a racial state?” (18). Bebout claims that people of Mexican descent are a “prosthetic imaginary” that are fabricated by U.S. whiteness against a Mexican Other. Mexicans are compared to and shaped by Americanness. This leads to the implication that Americans are White and Mexicans are brown. Furthermore, it indicates that being White and American is adjoined and for this reason, a nationalistic plea for whiteness is articulated. Finally, Bebout states that not enough scholarly work has been done to fully place the Mexican Other. Many works have studied specific historical occurrences and depicted an identity over the course of time.

U.S. immigration policies not only affect the labor market, they also influence internal social practices. As immigrants arrive to the U.S., they are differentiated by class, spatially within the city, and racially. Immigrants have demographic effects that change social relations and posture questions of race and ethnicity more blatantly. David G. Gutiérrez in *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (1995) discusses the ways in which the continuous influx of Mexican immigration transforms the political, social and cultural life in the Southwestern U.S. States. He explores communal tensions that rise among Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants. Additionally, he clarifies how Mexican Americans position themselves in an advanced state that consequently separates

them from Mexican immigrants. This is mainly due to tensions that arise for having to choose identity labels and their placement on political, social and cultural views.

Another study by Marissa K. López *Chicano Nations: The Hemispheric Origins of Mexican American Literature* (2011), follows Mary P. Brady's *Extinct Lands, Temporal Geographies: Chicana Literature and the Urgency of Space* (2002), and Raúl Villa's *Barrio-Logos: Space and Place in Urban Chicano Literature and Culture* (2000) by connecting historical overviews to address attention to space, place and identity concerns with distresses of geographical displacement. These studies situate the point of analysis with the Spanish arrival. As a fresh approach to Mexican identity labels, López provides a multidisciplinary study that expresses tensions derived on the forefront of race, as Chicanas/os understand themselves and their relations of national power, promise, threat, exclusion and inclusion. She argues that these critical questions began forming in the global and postcolonial times (around the end of the nineteenth century) rather than the more contemporary and accepted time of the mid nineteenth century. López focuses on originating Chicana/o literature and does so with the invasion of the Spanish empire. She delivers an optimistic approach of inclusivity by understanding the origins of Chicana/o literature since 1834 to the present. She argues that the literature intends to be an emerging transnational scholarly genre that focuses on space, race, and nation.

It is undeniable that visual images and representations of any particular racial or ethnic group will have an effect on societal interactions. Stereotypes and preconceptions displayed in American productions perpetuate particular constructions of people and thus participate in the formation of racial and ethnic identity formations. In *Greasers and Gringos: Latinos, Law, and the American Imagination* (2003), Steven Bender provides an interdisciplinary approach to analyzing how negative stereotypes by mass media lead to negative portrayals of Latinos.

Mexicans in particular are depicted as lazy, drunks, dirty, and outlaws. The media predisposes them to parochial treatment from the American legal system. These portrayals are then internalized by Mexicans and manifested among other disparaged groups and between themselves. Similarly, in *Tex[t]-Mex: Seductive Hallucinations of the "Mexican" in America* (2007) William Nericcio examines media representations of Mexicans, Mexican Americans, Latinas/os, and Hispanics. His work dates back at least 100 years, and he uses a wide range of sources (films, television, advertising, comic books, toys, literature). Nericcio's motive is to show how Hollywood, Corporate America and academia have warily marked their image and participated in creating "seductive hallucinations" of Hispanics. Nericcio aims to expose this historical trajectory of how Americans have perceived Mexicans.

The studies selected provide a spectrum of understanding how historical colonization began an institutionalized racial and ethnic ordering system that presently persists. This material offers extensive evidence on how the developments of racial and ethnic categorizations have subjugated Mexicans in many facets. This dissertation contributes to these studies as it unravels further contexts in which Mexicans are subjected to othering that is internalized and released by means of intra-racial and ethnic tensions and anxieties. This study exposes how historical hierarchical classifications are still prominent today and Mexicans continue to experience marginalization. Acknowledging historical evocations permits a foundational interpretation that helps characterize an understanding of particular traits.

### **3. Theoretical Discussion**

#### **3.1 Poststructuralism and Marxism**

This study evaluates from a poststructuralism and Marxism perspective, to draw on their respective understandings of power, value, resistance, and social conflict. First,

poststructuralism is a way of thinking, based on a compilation of theorists. It is characterized as responding philosophically to scientific productions, it is considered as part of contemporary cultural history, and referred to as a movement of thought. Additionally, it serves as interdisciplinary for serving as influential in the political economy, social relations, and colonial interactions. Through a poststructuralist lens, there is concern on how power dynamics affect both the colonial and colonized group, thus relying on totality for complete critical approaches. Nonetheless, it asserts resistance towards complete totality, and undermines totalitarian assumptions. Among the most recognized poststructuralists are Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, and Julia Kristeva.

Michael Peters argues in “Post-Structuralism and Marxism: Education as Knowledge Capitalism” that poststructuralism provides crucial proprieties for reinterpretation in relation to Marxism. While Marxists apply a “macro-view of socio-historical change” to the socio structure determined by the economy, poststructuralism adds theoretical detailing to the social and political institutions by applying the economic (120). As a Marxist perspective tends to emphasize single or collective political agency, poststructuralism questions the intents. An interpretation of Marx’s theory of labor can be paired with Foucault’s theory of power to provide insight on how these forms of power structures influence each other.

### **3.2 Discourses on Race**

Foucault allows a historical understanding on a system of produced theorized knowledge on race. As a poststructuralist, Foucault emphasizes the reevaluation of “the nature of the subject of theory and the theoretical subject,” basing the reevaluation on redefining “the position of the theoretical subject and its relation to politics” (Poster 3, 16). Interpretations are generated on the theoretical subject that questions what “represents the real, unmasking domination in the

real, without himself/herself introducing new forms of domination” (Poster 4). Poststructuralism disfavors superiority in a hierarchal relation, it exposes the affair and the terms of the intended dependency. Viewing racial tensions from a poststructuralist lens provides a useful way to reanalyze concepts that need to be reworked in order to shed light on racialized features.

By the nineteenth century, Foucault observed development in racial divisions within races and not just between races. In his public lecture of *Abnormal* at the Collège de France, he examined the role of psychiatry to show how and why labels of abnormal versus normal further entitled those in power as they systemized relationships of institutionalization from the incarceration system, the medical system, and the familial to ultimately perform a racist conduct. Biological theories further developed to imply that some people were “sub-specimens of a race,” thus unveiling the fabrication of an internal racism, or in other words, “a racism against the abnormal” (Taylor 751, 748). When examining people with authority and power, Foucault refers to psychiatrists, for they were self-righteous practitioners who warranted what could pass as a normal form of social progression and control social norms. If an abnormal condition was thought to be hereditary, the person was then considered an indefinite explanation for the “abnormal” and considered a danger to society. This inherited danger could influence the environment and personal physical traits; therefore, the monitoring of marriages, the management of population and the mixing of races was regulated. Foucault speculates this societal control as a new form of racism or racism against the “abnormal”:

With this notion of degeneration and these analyses of heredity, you can see how psychiatry could plug into, or rather give rise to, a racism that was very different in this period from what could be called traditional, historical racism, from “ethnic racism.” The racism that psychiatry gave birth to in this period is racism

against the abnormal, against individuals who, as carriers of a condition, a stigmata, or any defect whatsoever...It is a racism, therefore, whose function is not so much the prejudice or defense of one group against another as the detection of all those within a group who may be the carriers of a danger to it. It is an internal racism that permits the screening of every individual within a given society. (316-17)

This new form of racism, Foucault claims, formulated in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century towards the beginning of the twentieth century and is appropriated by people of authority. As noted, the concept of internal racism can be translated as people rejecting their own race, or among members of the same classified group. Any undesirable traits, for instance, cognitive or physical could be a potential threat to the future of that race. In this way, race sustains a central position in the racial scheme to objectify people that are outside of the normal societal racial boundaries. It divides society to denote—us and them, oppressor and oppressed, thus leading to a theorization of race. Foucault discerns that he is historicizing biological racist discourse. In doing so, he also finds “historical discourses of political resistance to sovereign power,” calling it “race war” (Taylor 751). Race war can be traced to when royal power was praised and it fortified unremittingly the reciting of hereditary power of lineage and greatness. The racial war is no longer a cultural division, but a “biological group” of “misfits, many of whom are simply poor, [and] are now deemed a sub-race.” (Taylor 752). In this way, race is warfare against those regarded as abnormal and is justified by exclusion by the reshaping of language, by concealing it with differences of class and other social constructs. Racism is a hierarchal biological discourse in which society now needs to defend itself from the abnormal.

To examine racism under a Marxist interpretation, an understanding of capitalism must be considered. Racial ideologies create gaps among the working class and exhaust motives to revolutionize, thus benefiting the ruling class. In this way, racism participates as a form of oppression, stemming from discrimination towards individuals to position them as inferior. A Marx understanding of capitalism explains that racism is simply another method of a capitalist production. Marx connects enslavement, slave trade, expropriations of indigenous populations, and European conquest with capitalism and the social relations that produced racism. The conditions of social order justify domination and subordination. In this way, racial oppression is another functioning feature that is rooted in the capitalist system. The discrepancies of income, profession and educational opportunities are examined through material conditions of the social life. In this manner, capitalist are concerned with how social relations are embedded in the material conditions of capitalist societies by implementing exploitation, oppression, and domination. To better understand modern racism, European colonialism, imperialism, economic and political agendas between the ruling elites of European empires must be considered. In this way, recognizing the forms of oppression that are ingrained in the capitalist system provides insight towards the fundamental political stratagems that capitalism reinforces.

The American philosopher Tommie Shelby in “Ideology, Racism, and Critical Social Theory” explains that racial oppression is formed through racist expressions and is evidenced in images, symbols, and ideas to form ideologies. Dominant groups govern the maintaining and legitimatization of racial ideologies. Individuals, who belong to the oppressed group without resisting, reinforce these ideologies. Thus ideologies formed by “social consciousness are generally held with a false consciousness” (172). Since ideologies are socially constructed and subjective to altering interpretations, they are prone to an understanding as false consciousness.

Racial ideology can be understood to “characterize the specific theories encompassing racial attitudes...thus [it] allows for an explicit connection between individual beliefs and dominant societal racial beliefs” (Neville 29). This differs from racial identity, which “centers on the development of a personal racial self-concept or personal social identity and sense of self” (Neville 29). Marx’s clarifications of racial ideologies are understood as social relations, where individuals are subjected to unequal relations formed by hierarchal interrelated structures. This can be observed by capitalist modes of production and reproduction.

Ideology refers to a system of ideas through which individuals recognize. An ideology system under these conditions implies that the dominant class is supported. Karl Mannheim joins in by formulating the sociology of knowledge. This understanding offers a theoretical description of the relationship between systems of knowledge and social conditions to show how they develop. Mannheim further states that the social position the bourgeoisie and the proletariat obtain, are influenced by knowledge they possess, thus participating in systemic distortions of social reality. Georg Lukács (1971) contributed to the concepts of alienation and class-consciousness to argue that ideology is a representation of class-consciousness of the bourgeoisie. He further states that this system inhibits the proletariat from reaching consciousness from its underprivileged position. On the other hand, Antonio Gramsci (1972) contests to this more traditional view on ideology to state that the proletariat possess the ability to influence the conditions of their consciousness. This implies that a more defined struggle exists between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in their representation of social reality.

Stuart Hall was a Jamaican-born British-English scholar whose first academic instruction was at an Anglicized colonial system of Jamaica. He locates his social, cultural and political views within the national and historical context of the United Kingdom, as he lived and worked

there the majority of his life. Hall's experience as a migrant and attention to racial concerns underlined distinct ways of understanding critical viewpoints in England. Through the discovery of recognizing himself as a black intellectual, he also became aware of being different, a colonized subject, marginalized and displaced. With the presence of being an Other and not belonging, he sensed dislocation from both his place of birth and settlement. To be recognized as a black scholar, came as an awakening of "becoming black" (Alexander 10). For Hall, being black had "been an unstable identity," just as it was "psychically, culturally, and politically" (Alexander 11). It was an identity as a black man that he had to learn. His struggles as a raced identity spoke uncertainty as to how to locate his work on race. Hall has been criticized as a theorist of race that embodies his black identity as an intellectual that is confined to being a black person in Britain. While on the other hand, his blackness transcends to multiple analects. He is best understood as "occupying a space (rather than a position) between these two characterizations—'both/and' rather than 'either/or'" (Alexander 11). Hall's disconnect with both a British and Caribbean identity molded a diasporic identity, in which the feelings of being lost and displaced became definite. Hall interprets race relationships as interactions among a group of people and not simply between individuals. The way in which people relate on an individual level, is a production from the groups joint racial beliefs. In this way, social acceptance and conventions are formed and applied, thus becoming integrated with the cultural, economic, and political constructions of the formation of race. Hall believes that understanding and recognizing the constructions of social formations is inseparable to understanding history. Congruently, as people of color inquired about their "national subjecthood" in Britain's post-war affairs, they spurred feelings of "crisis and anxiety" (Carby 651). The black awareness headlined "powerful cultural hegemonies of whiteness in forms of cultural production and representation"

in spite of the estranged black culture (Keith 545). Black people were “external to the history of the nation... citizens who were located within discourses of outsidersness, colonialism, subject peoples, empire and migration, but never within discourses of belonging” (Carby 651).

In reference to Hall’s black awareness,<sup>10</sup> he claims that Jamaicans only became consciously black during the 1960s and early 1970s. Being black became historically important since their voice, narrative and history had been omitted. As race awareness rises, class-consciousness became its “interdependent,” and in this way class is viewed as “lived through race[,] and race [as]... lived through class,”—meaning that they are not exactly the same, but by being liberated of capitalism, it rids the question of race (Alexander 220). While the working class people were automatically second-classed, the detestation towards race “was visceral and it had to do with things like that ‘otherness’” (Alexander 221). Hall refers to race not only as a question of skin-color, but rather: “as a line of difference inscribed by nature: these are other than us; they don’t belong to ‘us’; they don’t come out of ourselves. It is a massive historical denial” (Alexander 221). Racism settles in the “core of... subconscious roots... which is the legacy of colonization” (Alexander 221). According to Hall, black people were thought of as dirty, however, race remains in the unconscious because it is difficult to expose true opinions about race. In order to expose racism, people have to recognize it and identify it so that a political movement can take place. While multiculturalism is propaganda for anti-racism, tragedies such as September 11 change the acceptance of cultural differences. The risk of suffering future disasters is now symptomatic on the rooting back towards assimilation. In this way, assimilation becomes how multiculturalism is dealt with. This might entail being told, “‘only some of you can belong,’ but ‘if you’re here, you must look and behave like us.’ You

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<sup>10</sup> This awareness is also known as double consciousness, a term by W. E. B. Du Bois to describe someone who views themselves through the eyes of a white dominant society. This also refers to someone reconciling with their heritage after having been raised in a dominant society.

must, in other words, liquidate all those differences that meant anything to you—erase them and become like us” (Alexander 29). Hall explains that in this way, race alone is no longer what only divides, but simply being different is now the negotiating factor.

### **3.3 Otherness, Alienation, and Belonging**

Racialization is the process of imbuing ethnic or racial connotations on individuals or groups of people. Racialization of others creates an “establishment of the other as other” and “is promoted by the initial drive to establish self-identity by identifying with the other” (Goldberg 60). Another way of understanding race formation is by considering that it works as a discursive commentary. This can be specific to time and place and allows the discourses to be theorized, in addition to their emergence and transformation over time. Commonly, the awareness of race creates spaces in which people can unite as a single race. While this may allow unity, it also leads to racializing of others who are not part of the same race. For this reason, racial differences, identification, inclusion and exclusion are intricately connected.

Othering implies the identification of dissimilarities by a person or group who identifies them as such. Groups are likely to devalue and differentiate themselves from others to form their own set of values. To denote differences in a person or people, is to allow division among groups—one that is valued, and one that is devalued and inclined to discrimination. Dominant groups are in positions to impose ideologies and categorizations. For people who are stigmatized as inferior, the formation of the Other takes shape in ways of marginalization and alienation. Social constructions further form and maintain oppositions between belonging and the Other.

Features of social divisions operate on the labeling of categorizations based on particular attributes, capacities, or needs of the population. While the fabrication of social structure traditionally focuses on class relations and economic structure, it is important to consider how

self-identification fundamentally relates to power relations and social formations. Different identity labels and ethnic groups are constructed through common experiences. While it may be a celebratory difference, it may not be completely accepted. To challenge any established racial and/or ethnic belief would be to challenge constructed ideologies, and thus be part of a strategy of contestation.

The constructions of othering and belonging are based on the notion of accepting and sharing similarities, while excluding and rejecting the differences. Self-identification is linked to how these similarities construct. Joy L. Johnson explains, “othering is a process that identifies those that are thought to be different from oneself or the mainstream and it can reinforce and reproduce position of domination and subordination” (253). Othering and belonging are a social fabrication that relate to race and ethnicity, in addition to a literal restriction. Since social contexts are contingent on subjectivity, it is argued that belonging and othering are “achieved through performance and validated in social interactions” (Neiterman 775). In this way, othering comprises a demeanor that prompts prejudice, inequality, and marginality based on group identities. Belonging comprises a person’s choice of identification, which is filtered through identity stratum and hierarchal systems within the social context. Also within the social context, individuals apply strategies to navigate experiences of being othered. In this way, otherness constructs an us versus them hierarchal discourse that negotiates identity. The them/Other exists by the disapproval from the us/self, and both exist relative to each other. The Other maintains this position as long as they are subject to categories and ideologies of the dominant group. This inferior position terminates when the Other is no longer oppressed. Yet, abolishing this position depends on political, social, and economic change from those who administer its power.

As colonization had supervened, otherness became a geographical concern in addition to binary oppositions. An interest on socio-discursive constructs came forth as a way of questioning differences. These constructs were more effectively imposed through cultural integration such as religion and language. In this way, the construction of otherness became appropriated on the premise of establishing hierarchal civilizations that depended on comparisons to justify dominance. In *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Said discusses the Orient to characterize the traits of the Other. Orientalism is embedded in power structures, hierarchy, culture, and imperialism known as “colonial discourse” (Said 3). It is a systemic power in which the “European culture was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively” (Said 3). In this way, it is a structure that manages to produce power relations in various forms of cultural and political connotations. This power Said claims is a European establishment, where the Orient is the Other, versus the Occident. The colonial empires conquered the Orient and demarked them as alien through a manufactured system of knowledge and power. Jean-François Staszak observes that Europe puts a standard in place where the White man is opposed to the man of color, and uses skin color to identify and “distinguish [from the] White Men, the ‘superior’ phase of humanity, from inferior races” (4).

Migration in the context of trade, has contributed to the formation of the Other and the Self. However, the intermixing of the population challenges any binary othering, in addition to any distinguishing characteristics of the Self from the Other. Furthermore, delimiting access to particular living communities or spaces, confines the Other to “poverty and exclusion [and] compounds their effects—creates favorable conditions for the development of visible misery and

a specific culture” (Staszak 5). This serves as a rationalization for the reprobation and exclusion from the dominant group.

In politics, the prospect of the Other undertakes the pretext of a collective nation or people. Colonizers defined themselves as elect people over the natives, thus rejecting the alien or intruder. Julia Kristeva relates this phenomenon of us versus them as a xenophobic condition. Where the self denies the Other even though the Other exists within the self—ultimately resulting in the denial of Other. Otherness is also the political exclusion of a person who does not conform. Elites and political opportunists propagate social gaps to advance their own agenda and maintain power. The othered person is then excluded socially, professionally, and/or politically, thus denoting alienation. The characteristic of the Other is the condition of difference and alienation as a social identity, in addition to the identity of the self. Pierre Bourdieu states that groups and individuals sustain social policies since they are a product of that particular society. In this way, they precast a conformed way of social outlook, thus contributing in the maintenance of the status quo. This ineradicable internalization explains the reproduction of Othering strata, and illustrates why dominated individuals secure a subjugated position.

In *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, Kristeva explains subjective horror, or approaching abjection as the mental and physical experience or breakdown between the differences of the self and Other. Abjection is the opposition of the self, a state of rejection that prevents understanding of the actual existence. Emmanuel Lévinas argues that the Self is nonexistent without the Other, for the self is defined when exposed to the Other. The presence of the Other, formulates the I and vice versa, in this way, each presence is essential in order to make distinctions. Lévinas states that the self cannot be or have a concept of itself without the Other. In ethics, the identity of the Other has a right to exist and forms the foundation of the self,

for the Other brings meaning to the self. Jacques Derrida participates in ethics to elaborate on inclusion and exclusion, “the paradox of the stranger...as either invader-alien or welcome-other” (Kearney 69). To denote the Other as a stranger, is to exclude them as “barbarous, savage, precultural and prejudicial” (Kearney 69). For this reason, permission to enter suspends ethical discrimination.

Alienation and alterity are understood as otherness, insinuating a condition of being the Other. Alienation may be the result of alterity, while otherness results in rejection or isolation. These terms are commonly applied to a marginalized individual or group who negotiate their subjectivity and interrogate the self. However, when the alienated or othered subject refuses to conform to hegemonic social constructs, it rejects a subaltern status and participates in a subjective mode. This mode places subjectivity in superiority and in conformity to form a complacent dialogue between the self and Other. In this way, otherness is unavoidable as it proclaims the state of being and negating conditioning to represent existence, the self and the Other.

In *Alienation and Alterity: Otherness in Modern and Contemporary Francophone Contexts* (2009), Helen Vassallo states that while alienation, alterity and otherness are understood as problematic, they allow reflection from the position of the othered subject. The alienated or othered subject is then able to contest dominant constructs, thus, changing its delimiting understanding as a subaltern figure to one of locating subjectivity in differences. As individuals render sameness, a restoration proceeds of the individual subject as different or as Other. In this way, the individual negotiates otherness within the body of the subject and difference from the norm. This is interpreted through appearances, as an individual may appear to socially belong, while in isolation they find themselves marginalized.

Jacques Lacan's work implies both psychiatric and philosophical references. His work has been influential and significant in poststructuralism. Lacan's terms for the complexity of the psyche are divided into three: the real, the imaginary order, and the symbolic order. The real is the state of nature in which we come into contact with language during the infant phase. This state is described as full or complete and lost with the introduction of language, as it cannot be described with language. The imaginary order (little other) is associated with the mirror stage to imply the nature in which the subject creates fantasies of the self and the object of desire. This order influences throughout the adult life. The symbolic order (big Other) relates to alterity and otherness. This order details the sociolinguistic communication, intersubjective relations, awareness of ideologies, and acceptance of the law.

This self-acknowledgement leads to a relationship that transpires and creates a coexisting dialect labeled as Master-Slave. This means that, "in order for the Master to be a subject he must be recognized by the Slave as such; in turn, the Slave knows he is a Slave because is recognized by the Master as one. The Master is thus free to pursue his life in the firm knowledge that his identity is affirmed by the recognition of the Slave." (Homer 23). The function of this propinquity is an enigma because while the Master depends on the Slave to declare his identity, the Slave does not. The Slave is free by depending on his work to proclaim his identity and not on having a Master. This reciprocating relationship is a constant struggle for recognition of the Other, while at the same time the Other also requires recognition of themselves. Once there is a conscious recognition, no longer are they the Other or otherness. This is further understood by Hegel's view that alienation proceeds from surrendering to oneself to someone. This means that all means of productivity are accomplished by self-interest and pride. It is observable in relationships between subjects and rules, slaves and masters.

A further keen understanding of a Master-Slave relationship is the understanding of alienation. This determinant is produced because the reciprocal relationship of Master-Slave is largely contentious. Lacan explains two constructions for alienation, first is the mirror phase<sup>11</sup> and the formation of the ego, and second, language and the constitution of the subject. In the mirror phase, the image of oneself is fundamental on the grounds that without a master, the self would not reach the level of perceiving themselves as being complete or a whole being. Simultaneously however, “the image is alienating in the sense that it becomes confused with the self. The image actually comes to take the place of the self. Therefore, the sense of a unified self is acquired at the price of this self being an-other, that is, our mirror image” (Homer 25). One exists when there is recognition by “an-other,” this means that our image is approved under the scrutiny of the other, thus, the other becomes the adherent of our being. For Lacan, alienation is the “lack of being” and lies in an-other, this means that the subject is not “alienated *from* something or from itself but rather alienation is constitutive of the subject—the subject is alienated *in* its very being” (Homer 26). Ultimately, alienation defines the development by which the subject first identifies with the signifier<sup>12</sup> then determined by the signifier.

Heretofore, Lacan’s little other has been discussed to infer the “imaginary<sup>13</sup> others,” who are treated as reflections of ourselves in order to feel as complete whole beings. This differs from the big Other in that it signifies the “absolute otherness that we cannot assimilate to our subjectivity”, thus making it a symbolic order (Homer 70). The Other is the symbolic order, an

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<sup>11</sup> According to Lacan, at this phase the child recognizes itself and its surroundings, breaking the order of the symbolic.

<sup>12</sup> Homer explains that the Signifier is “essentially the subject of speech and language” (71). Signifier is a factor of language that interferes in the cogitative development to predispose the subject in the discourse. However, the signifier does not refer to the signified, for there is a bar that separates them that leads to another bar. In other words, each signifier leads to another signifier, and so on. In this way, there are endless forms of interpretation, it is more of a process.

<sup>13</sup> According to Lacan, the imaginary order is pre-Oedipal and the infant cannot distinguish itself different or separate from the mother and perceives the world as images.

unconscious desire, and such desires emanate into the Other “through language—through discourse” which is learned through others, “it is the discourse of the Other”, in this way the subject comes into being through others and in connection with the Other (Homer 70). Lacan explains desire as “something that is lacking in the subject and the Other—the symbolic order,” and through the Other is how the subject acquires its place in the symbolic and social order (Homer 72). Like this, the Other convenes upon the subject its symbolic order, and it is by the desire of the Other that the subject’s desire is found. Like the subject, the Other also lacks separation, and it involves the overlapping of two lacks, which are the lack in the subject and the Other. In order to determine the point where the subject is lacking, one must ask: “what am I in the Other’s desire? and can this differentiate itself from the desire of the Other” (Homer 73). The Lacan subject is recognized through the process of alienation and the separation of desire. Although, the subject is not constant, it transpires through an ongoing process of “subjectification—alienation and separation” (Homer 74). Being a subject means taking a place relative to the desire of the Other.

Relatedly, the relationship of the Master-Slave emulates that of a domination and subordination structure of colonialism along the racial lines. This relationship is rooted and sustained to mostly serve the interests of the dominant group. It is important as an “ethnic and/or racial group is subjected to a systematic structural discrimination within a single society” (Barrera 193). In such case, internal colonialism arises from colonialism for sharing fundamental characteristics such as ethnic or racial subordination. In this way, internal colonialism parallels a structure of social relations constructed by domination and exploitation amid culturally distinct groups.

Hegel's concept of alienation is understood as an inherent process of human nature, led by separation, then a return to the true state. For Hegel, alienation is possible because objectification involves unconsciousness during its development. Karl Marx disagrees with this concept, and understands the alien state in relation to the economy, for "man in class society not only alienates his 'essential being' but also the products of his spiritual and economic activity" (Churchich 13). Marx postulates that the underlying aspect of alienation and dehumanization is produced from land ownership, division of labor, and exploitation. Rejecting the idea, that alienation is influenced by mind or spirit as self-sufficient, Marx suggests that human development is fulfilled in material affairs and social practices. In this way, Marx distinguishes from Hegel to emphasize ideas of alienation as real, and not as a state of consciousness. In his theory of alienation, Marx argues that the material in man's life, which is stated by their social relations, explains their history and real alienation. In this way, Marx alters the meaning of alienation into the theory of exploitation. The alienated individual from the self is the result from belonging to a systematic society.

Agreeing with Marx is Louis Althusser who believes historical problems cannot be solved with metaphysical concepts of alienation. It is believed that materialist dialectics will not change how society functions, in fact, Marx and Friedrich Engels sustain that progress is obtained when in control of the physical nature. Additionally, Marx and Engels agree that "lust for political power is essentially an instrument of the lust for wealth and that such social evils as war, conquest, enslavement, alienation, dehumanization, and generally domination of man over his fellow human beings originate in the lust for accumulation and wealth" (Churchich 22). In this way, Marx denotes that greed is a social produced phenomenon created by a desire for wealth, and not a natural one. To produce progress from this system, Marx and Engels agree that

material forces should be applied, instead of psychological powers. While Hegel perceived religion as central to human nature and intelligence, Marx and Engels stress that there is no significance in spiritual or emotional value.

Marx emphasizes that the nineteenth century was manifested by a capitalist interest, where man suits as an acquirer and consumer of materials. Utilitarian concepts view man as self-indulgent and a consumer, in this way; political economists entertain this knowledge to maintain their wealth. This system remains fixed; otherwise, there would be no motive for the accrual of capital. Marx disagrees that the concept of capitalist accumulation solely forms alienation. Instead, he claims that greed, exploitation, and alienation will diminish once man recognizes this system and chooses to pursue liberty from it. Therefore, the only way to change the alienated social and capitalist structure would be to form revolutionary action. In this way, the economy functions to explain the formation of an alienated ideology.

Marx further argues that alienation is complex when considering the lives of social agents in capitalism. For Marx, alienation is a social phenomenon, which constructs an alienated false consciousness. False consciousness is a term associated with Marx, to which Engel applied. It explained that ideology is a process in which one considers to be aware, yet the real driving motives remain unidentified, otherwise, it would not be an ideological process. In this way, an imaged or false force appears to be the motive factor. Engels describes false consciousness as a misinterpretation of motives. This is understood in relation to the bourgeoisie who continue to progress while the workers do not resist, thus forming the concept false consciousness among the proletariat. Marx explains that workers in general do not appropriately perceive their interests, most “have absorbed commercial values and chase after consumer goods. Their desires have been organized by a system which depends on their docility...they suffer from false

consciousness” (Meyerson 7). In the mist of repression, individuals develop false needs from social interests, inhibiting their ability to recognize the operating system. The products of their human labor are embodied in an external material form, and become the objectification of labor. In this process of the product becoming independent from its producer, self-objectification of human labor forms alienation and false consciousness. This is due to the producers failing to recognize their own creative power by the products produced from their labor.

Currency is the essential symbol that associates human labor with products of human labor. As soon as money was introduced to the equation, social values, social status, and political power took its form of value. This led towards the calculation of human labor in terms of monetary value. Whereas before the master-slave system operated, now alienation is manifested in money. Alienation manifests as products become independent of their producers in the market, and generate an alien power from its producers to dominate them. Christopher Pines clarifies this in *Ideology and False Consciousness* (1993) to state “alienation was intended to describe a practical-social form of the reification, mystification and domination of human labor by its own products” (123). False consciousness is produced in this context because individuals do not identify their human productivity in the product of their labor. In this way, for Marx, alienation is more objective and a social phenomenon.

Jean-Paul Sartre combined a Hegelian-Marxist interaction with an existentialist viewpoint to integrate individual responsibility into relationships. Existentialism centers on the idea that humans first exist, and then each person spends their life making choices based on their experiences, beliefs, and outlooks. It is concerned with an individual finding the self, and their purpose by way of free will, choice, and responsibility. Existentialism provided a moral responsibility to a Marxist outlook. In *Being and Nothingness* (1956), a study of

phenomenological ontology,<sup>14</sup> Sartre describes a being of in-itself (solid, passive, inert, facticity), being for-itself (consciousness, fluid, internal negation, transcendence),<sup>15</sup> and for-others (visibility, experience of being looked-at, gaze). Sebastian Gardner explains this as “the possibility of consciousness of Others from *within* the first person perspective” (126). Gardner suggests that Sartre had a high standard of adequacy for acknowledging Others. The existence of the Other is grounded on the idea of shame, where its form is “*of oneself before the Other, and it involves consciousness of myself as an object given to the consciousness of the Other, who thereby mediates my relation to myself*” (Gardner 127). It is the concept of self, discovered through the shame for the Other, and representative of an everyday being among Others. The issue of alienation develops with an experience of shame, as recognized with an encounter with the Other. The presence of the Other transforms the transcendence subjectivity to a position of objectivity. The being for-others is a different reflection, instead there is a “*reflexive consciousness of myself through the Other*” (128). The consciousness of Others is produced by existence, which is independent from one’s own consciousness. The Other is a subject, a being for-itself, with the capacity of shaping own individual situations. This implies that the Other can orient a situation and identity with their presence and existence. In this way, the Other disrupts an individual’s lived experiences and the structure of the self. To become aware of the Other in this way implies consciousness, a gaze of the Other that confers a new self and form.

Both autobiographies and testimonies of the Other provide a broader range for interpreting marginalization among the same ethnic group as they enable the voice of those

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<sup>14</sup> Phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness from a first-person point of view—it is intentional in nature, for it is an experience or consciousness guided towards an object. It is the appearance of objects as an individual views them through their own experiences. Ontology is the study of the nature of being, existence, or reality.

<sup>15</sup> Facticity is based on observable facts such as our experiences, capabilities, and attributes. Transcendence is based on ideals, inspirations, and aspirations.

absent from the literary canon. For those at the margins of society, this genre serves as a tool in raising awareness to promote social and political change. Subsequent generations have formed awareness towards previous injustices and for this reason; the literature encompasses conflicts that irrefutably empower their personal experience and voice. Autobiographies and testimonies manifest conflicts of identity, nationalism, cultural and social concerns, and clashes among a society in a particular space and time. Many encounters come forth, such as the appropriation of Mexican territories in the nineteenth century and the displacement of residents from the territorial shifts that provoked challenges of equality for former and new citizens. These occurrences produced discriminatory tensions in relation to national identity and shaped the multitude of narratives that refuted American nationality. Americanization was rejected as it implied replacing ones native language, traditions and culture—the elements that comprise identity. Consequently, the autobiographies and testimonies of the 1900s characterize the reconstruction of identity and cultural pertinence with an intention of restoring communal and social function. Genaro Padilla argues: “Chicanos have been silenced not only by the grave, but by political transformation, social dispossession, cultural rupture and linguistic alienation” (Padilla 286). Autobiographies and testimonies contest the imposed confines to auto-represent, express and include a personal narrative. In this way, these narratives “are expressed through a network of cultural codes involving...the rewriting of borders, and the challenging of the boundaries created by mainstream cultures” (Velasco 313). Authors selectively dialogue personal encounters and archived memories in their narratives by means of a particular time and place. Additionally, authors see themselves as “occupying a space, a borderland, between two cultures and several decisions are required about language, culture, identity, assimilation, and so forth” (Guajardo 111). For authors, the simple dilemma of belonging or not belonging deems as

the leading force in these conflicts. Particularly, they are aware of “unique construction of the Mexican psyche: one that is comprised of a contradictory past and of an uneasy history,” relating to identifications of Spanish, Mexican, Indian, and/or American (Guajardo 111). For minorities, the autobiography genre allows for development in the “search for identity and sanction,” as it dialogued with “the acquisition of an outlook, the story of a calling, the autobiography of a poet or artist, the autobiography of childhood, the search for truth, and of course, the autobiographical novel” (Guajardo 119). They are an important literary genre as they implicitly analyze imposed ideologies, in addition to serving as a self-critique. In this way, it is a historical process that can be interrogated, interpreted, and studied. To further broaden the autobiographical and testimony genre, I include an ethnographic study and a YouTube excerpt, which work analogously with the autobiographies and testimonies to expose the intra-racial, social and political Mexican experience.

When autobiographies, testimonies and even ethnographic studies are written, questions of hierarchical relationships arise. In “Internal Colonialism in the Testimonial Process,” Kimberle S. Lopez argues that as the author interprets personal accounts of the subject, “the notion that if a marginal individual becomes sufficiently enfranchised to tell his or her own story, he or she is no longer considered subaltern” (22). To be marginalized suggests silence, thus the marginalized subject can no longer represent the marginalized society. This suggests that a marginalized subject cannot be the author of their marginalized experience without being excluded from their marginalized population. In this way, negotiations of the self and Other result to negotiate perspectives by the author and the marginalized individual. When the author is the subject, the author may be also held accountable for expressing dissimilarities from the marginalized population in which they willingly or unwillingly belong. The representation of a

marginalized individual warrants the “need to distinguish the self from that same subaltern,” the tension that forms between these “conflicting impulses of desire to be Other and desire to assert the self in contrast to the Other points to the persistence of internal colonialism” (22). This takes into consideration Gayatri Spivak’s question of whether a subaltern can speak, and calls into question the examination of oral accounts. In the case of ethnography—the gathering of two individuals from different standpoints, who interact in a process that results in oral to written format—in the end, privileges the author and continues to marginalize the subaltern. In such way, the “erudite author [is] in a position of relative power who appropriates the life story of a marginal individual, [by] using the same voice of this Other to promote the author’s own social and literary agenda” (Lopez 22). To counteract this argument, Maylei Blackwell contests in *Chicana Power* (2011) that “the subaltern can and does speak, in multiple, sometimes contradictory registers” (41). Emphasizing that the subaltern “is made intelligible in part because he is mediated by two notions of representation” (Blackwell 41). The question lies on how distinct or similar the authors expose themselves from the Other, as the responses provided may depend on who is asking.

### **3.4 Class and False Consciousness**

Class-consciousness is a concept related with Karl Marx and the interpretation of working class people. It involves individual workers who become aware of the inequalities from capitalism, and prompts diverse groups of classes to develop. Eventually different groups of classes form, each becoming singular with similar interests. This implies that the working class (proletariat) is aware that the higher class (bourgeois) created the particular labor and living conditions. The division of classes produces as long as people are aware of their standing in their respective classes. The proletariat class stands on the contingency of sharing a mutual

interest in changing their condition. In this way, the working class unremittingly attempts to better themselves and their work, meanwhile, the bourgeois class gains profit from their labor and position. Obtaining equality is possible when having an understanding of how capitalism works. This explains the subjective and objective correlation—where the subjective denotes how people feel about their class situation, and the objective specifies the historical facts and development of how capitalism operates.

False consciousness as discussed previously denotes that lower class individuals, despite their disadvantaged position and self-interests in rejecting inequalities, will nonetheless endure higher class ideologies. This implies that lower class individuals maintain an obscure understanding of their own subordination, exploitation, and domination. The maintenance of this system is reflective of the internalized belief system constructed by the dominant societal class. This belief system upholds the interests of the dominant class to only validate and reproduce socioeconomic and political measures that produce inequalities and materialistic dispossessions for the lower class. Thus, false consciousness identifies a person who has a discrete way of understanding their class positionality. It indicates the manifestation of tensions between the historical connotations of the working class to disrupt capitalism. This implies that the proletariat is incapable of identifying their inequality and exploitation due to the regularization of the prevailing social classes. Based on an objective understanding, economic relations shape social order, and an individual's social class is determined by their place in the system. Subjectively, an individual's personal interests frame how they position their societal role, and how it is socially interpreted. Marx affirms that the dominant class emphasizes systematic misrepresentations of consciousness in order to prevent a revolution of their power.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The identity formation of the Mexican Other in the Southwest has been contextualized around binary differentiations such as, American/Mexican, us/them, English/Spanish, White/Brown, legal/illegal, and colonizer/colonized. The term Mexican has been involved with national and regional tensions that involve “transformations of identities, ideologies, territorial holdings, and politics” (Aranda 49). The Mexican Other embodies a crisis of identity, of belonging or not belonging, and a fear of rejection and alienation. The construction of the Mexican Other implies inferiority and this rhetoric is maintained with fear of the unknown. The Mexican Other is identified as physically appearing different with stereotypical narratives that imply degenerate. Physical appearance identifies the Mexican as unfamiliar, underlying differences in the body, in addition to speaking with an accent. In *Postethnic Narrative Criticism* (1969), Frederick L Aldama states that power is exercised towards the racial Other to not belong by way of internalizing racial structures through cultural and social realms. The societal construct creates the Other for exploitative and oppressive systems under capitalism. In this way, the Mexican Other is narrated with conditions of poverty and oppression. Recent dispositions of the Mexican Other are that of murders, rapists, and drug dealers. These characteristics will remain prevalent as long as there is need for opposition.

## CHAPTER I.

ESTABLISHING HIERARCHY: EXAMINING PHENOTYPIC CATEGORIZATIONS  
AMONG SPANISH, ANGLO AMERICAN, AND MEXICAN GROUPS**1.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the first study theme of phenotypic factors, such as skin color, physical appearance, indigeneity, and whiteness. I revisit historical Southwestern conquests and social movements to allow for a broadened understanding of early social encounters that present challenges in racial and ethnic labeling. I contextualize the Spanish arrival of 1519 in Mexico as a focal point to display the strategies used on foregrounding racial and ethnic hierarchy among the indigenous people by referencing Camilla Townsend's *Malintzin's Choices: An Indian Woman in the Conquest of Mexico* (2006). I consider the societal orderings that took form in enslavement and expropriation of indigenous people and argue that Malintzin<sup>16</sup> is a representation of the Other. This position assists in understanding the perceived betrayal of the indigenous towards her and its repercussions, in addition to pinpointing the origin of an identity formation that is fundamental to the Southwest.

I proceed forward to the next period to denote the same patterns of 1519 with the arrival of Anglo settlers in the Southwestern regions. Anglo settlers came with proprietorship intentions that lead to the U.S.-Mexico War (1846-1848) and the annexation of Mexican territories. The U.S.-Mexico War is acknowledged for its significant involvement in affecting racial and ethnic constructs in the Southwest. In order to secure and further gain ownership, I argue that Anglos used strategies that involved making new laws, new tax systems, in addition to marrying native elites. Like the Spanish, Anglo settlers had their own hierarchal racial classifications that further

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<sup>16</sup> Townsend explains that Malintzin was the name given to her by other indigenous people. The Spanish newcomers renamed her as Marina, and she is also known as Malinche today.

complicated relations among the existing Spanish and Mexican ethnic groups of the area. From there forth, World War II (1939-1945) continued to disrupt the racial and ethnic complications, principally in areas of; labor struggles, social and political contestations, identity and cultural dilemmas, and linguistic complexities. These manifestations stimulated organizations and activism like the Chicano Movement (1960).

The inclusion of the Chicano Movement is referenced in the primary texts and is part of an era in this study for its significant contributions to identity formation in the Southwest. I centralize the Chicano Movement in accordance to the respective timeframes of the literature during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The authors of the primary texts reference the movement with a connotation of limitation. This endorses an investigative approach on the unfavorable or hesitant affiliation with the movement to argue that it participates in the dividing complexities of identity. Furthermore, a primary text is provided for the Spanish conquest and not for the U.S.-Mexico War. The primary reason is to establish a more developed emphasis on how the formation of the Mexican Other shaped during the colonization period.

In the proceeding section, I analyze Oscar “Zeta” Acosta’s *The Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo* (1972) to argue how phenotypic social order affects the psyche. I apply Jacques Lacan’s psychological theoretical concepts that are projected onto the construction of the Other. As part of his identity crisis, Acosta cycles through the real, the imaginary order and the symbolic order through the course of his life. The process of Spanish language loss and English language appropriation, then attempting to reclaim his native language, withdraws him to a state of incompleteness and confusion. The nature of his physical appearance, with attributes of an indigenous person, stimulates self-rejection due to social interactions throughout the course of his life. As Acosta fails to develop a positive image, this creates otherness that is manifested

through alienation and self-neglect. To show this psychiatric development in Acosta, I isolate his interactions with the different racial and ethnic groups significant to this study.

## **1.2 Spanish Arrival 1519, *Malintzin's Choices*, and the Indigenous Contact**

The timeframe of 1519 in *Malintzin's Choices: An Indian Woman in the Conquest of Mexico* by Camilla Townsend is a point of reference in this study as its incidences have been unremittingly studied in the Mexican American and Chicano Studies. The year 1519 marks the encounter of the Spanish regime in the Americas under the leadership of Hernán Cortés. A time in which the Spanish expedition exercised violations such as kidnapping people for translation purposes, enforced slavery, exhorted violence, sexual swindling, mandated religion, and established a racialized hierarchy in Mexico. The succession of this indigenous and Spanish battle over governing power and authority provides root of racialized tensions in a racial violence environment. Before the Spanish arrival, the indigenous did not view or refer to themselves as Indians but as people with varying ethnic groups. However, since the time Cristóbal Colón arrived, the Spanish insisted on calling the people Indians, and hectored them to become their servants. Cortés like most Spanish conquerors came with intents to discover riches, govern new land, and convert people towards Christianity. In doing so, arrangements and exchanges were made with the locals to gain that access, and among them was Malintzin. Acceding with claims that Malintzin was a conduit that merged distinct races and ethnicities with her language abilities, her skills gained her privileges above others. Malintzin is an example of someone who used her abilities to survive as a captured woman and operate among the Spanish. While her abilities of speaking multiple languages gained her a respectable position that allowed her to participate in Spanish ways of living, she and her offspring were

never fully accepted by the Spanish nor her own people. For the Spanish viewed her as an inferior Indian, and her own as a traitor.

As Cortés prospered in the conquest of new people and land, he did so by reporting with news of a victorious and amiable quest while vaguely mentioning any assistance. Many times it was implied that upon “his own heroic capableness...he could simply speak to the Indians himself” (Townsend 57). The resources the Spanish attained provided them empowerment, as they were able to travel and maintain connections with their home and distinct lands. Accessibility delivered them more weaponry, men, and supplies; this “ability to share information with each other across time and space” was perplexing for the indigenous for the Spanish knew who and what to seek before having been to Mexico (Townsend 119). In this way, Moctezuma was put in a tough position for having to explain this phenomenon in relation to their governing and religious beliefs. This plot further allowed the Spanish to be perceived, or to distinguish themselves as divine beings. This gave way for the Spanish to warrant their religious beliefs and hold dominion over “barbarians, in desperate need of Spain’s humanizing influence” (Townsend 127). Therefore, in the name of their divine god, Cortés and his army baptized people, assigned them new names, justified their actions to claim this as different from what the indigenous had previously done. Later with the arrival of more Spanish, the necessity of translators became more demanding. More indigenous became bilingual, but the Spaniards still preferred their own kind to accrue such skills, as the Spanish language was gradually becoming the language of power.

In all actuality, the Spanish needed help from the locals if they wanted to be prosperous in the new territory. Had the Spanish not allied with Indians, they would have not been able to win against the Mexica Empire. Nevertheless, the indigenous that were taken in “had to be

liminal people, figures who had lived in both arenas and understood something about both worlds, in order to be truly effective. They had to be one of ‘us people here,’ and yet not” (Townsend 58). Meaning that the captured had to serve for the Spanish command’s best interest, even though they would never really be accepted as an equal, like Malintzin. For this reason, the Spanish preferred captured children whom they raised. They were easier to train for Spanish advances, while still maintaining them at an inferior position. After all, the indigenous captives were at the mercy of the Spanish and treated as dispensable people for if they rebelled, they were replaced. The loyalty and faithfulness to Spain granted the indigenous privileges and European commodities (Menchaca 2001). Only those indigenous who were intimately unfamiliar with the Spanish were left impressed for how they possessed such resources and knowledge. Those with internal information like Malintzin “knew that the Spanish certainly did *not* possess superior intelligence,” and instead assumed command over the situation (Townsend 51). Malintzin observed that even though she traveled with the Spanish and later was expecting Cortés’s child, the indigenous men and women still served them. She witnessed how easily captives could be discarded, and so she chose to cooperate and this advanced her position and permitted her superior access. This allowed her to ascend from her previous status of being disowned or traded, and that of most other indigenous people. Similarly, other indigenous people in being surrendered by the Spanish took advantage of their position to advance in any existing conflicts or situations they were previously in.

The classification of Indian people became pronounced, more so after the arrival of African slaves. The captivity and ownership of Indians and later African slaves became “status symbols for their owners” (Townsend 173). Observably, the objective in these quests was not to create trade relations with the indigenous, but to become proprietors of the land and gain control

over its resources and its people. Any valuable resources acquired during the expedition were to be used for trade in Spain. Initially, those who participated in expeditions were “investors in the enterprise, not paid soldiers,” whose intent was to tactically dominate the land (Díaz del Castillo xiv). The strategical battles with motives to rule put forth new standards in racial categorizations that now included Indians and Blacks. Consequently, the status Malintzin attained was contingent of demanding circumstances as she was later discredited from doña to “the Indian woman, Marina, ’...given to the Spanish as a servant, for she had ‘lowly status, and was not a noble’” (Townsend 180). Marrying for advantage was custom between the Spanish, the higher the social status, the less likely an indigenous woman would be considered. An indigenous woman would have to possess laudable resources to marry a Spanish man and enter the Spanish regime with legal rights through marriage. Therefore, matrimony with Malintzin or any other indigenous person would only impair ones social status and honor. In this way, the impurity of blood, or rather, the blood of darker people, became known as the blood of “enemies and of commoners” (Townsend 196). Malintzin’s children and any others of mixed Spanish and Indian blood were treated as “second-class citizens, [and] eventually, all Indians would be defined as a racial Other” thus encompassing the first people in the Americas to experience intra-racial tensions (Townsend 173, 196). While Malintzin came to be historically known as a central figure during Cortés’s quest, her creditability was denied by the Spanish for being an Indian, then later by her own people for being a traitor to her own. Malintzin’s liminal position allowed her to be resourceful to both the indigenous and the Spanish; however, this position also condemned her, as she no longer belonged to either group.

As Spanish and Indian blood mixed, it became more challenging to identity blood purity. Instead of examining records, Spanish officials referred to the public to avow for a

person's reputation, and their "physical appearance, language abilities, clothing...tributary status...genealogical, sociocultural, and physical characteristics" (Martínez 104). These factors furthered constructed blood lineage categorizations, and modified its meanings among Mexican indigenous people. Just as Spanish blood purity established superiority, Indian blood purity was acknowledged as deserving the same recognition within the Spanish law. While this inclusion formed camaraderie, it also constructed elitism of blood purity categorizations and race. This amity was simply a spectacle to reframe indigenous past, present and future traditions to Spanish religious customs. Since blood purity and lineage was important to both the indigenous and Spanish, this constructed social exclusivity in Mexico that "left a deep imprint on indigenous and mestizo notions of political legitimation, history, and blood" (Martínez 122). The outcome of this arrangement affected Spanish patrician contexts to the point of them too reconstructing historical accounts for noble and political validity.

When the Spanish settlers arrived in the Americas, they were already comprised of an extensive racial mixture. Among those who had arrived were single men who turned to the native women for sexual encounters and partnership, which further expanded and complicated racial ordering. As this racial classification became more multifaceted, the assertion of being Spanish was more intently proclaimed. The main reason for this forthright claim was to form a superior ethnic disparity of racial entitlement. For this reason, the Spanish "instituted a racial order called the *casta* system...that was used to deny and prescribe legal rights to individuals and assign them social prestige" (Menchaca 62). Those from Spain were *españoles*, those from Iberia were *peninsulares*, those born in the New World were *criollos*, followed by the *mestizos* and others of mixed blood, only the full indigenous were considered as Indian (Menchaca 62). The classifications of division based on lineage allowed socioeconomic privileges to Spaniards.

Spanish instructions, developments, and procedures were formalized to verify blood lineage and this transcended to the Americas. The societal structuring on the purity of blood extended from Spain to confirm that only those with approved lineage status and religious edict may avenue the benefits of power, wealth and honor. However, the certification process was faulty in that it relied on unsubstantiated genealogical information and determined its validity based on social conduct and opinion. In this way, the system served as a pretext towards the organization of social inclusion and exclusion that shaped societal exchanges administered overseas.

For the Spanish, the importance of blood lineage stemmed from various factors, principally one that dealt with religion. The three main religious communities in Spain during the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were Christian, Jewish, and Muslim. In order to corroborate their religious identity as a dominant society, new terms were introduced such as race, caste, and lineage to implement order and belonging. Religion of course has been argued to be simply a guise to carry out “social factors...socioeconomic advancement...to secure public and ecclesiastical appointments, and integration into patrician oligarchies—or to sheer racism” (Martínez 28). This was evident as legal arrangements forbid any person who was a newly proclaimed Christian and did not ancestrally inherit Christianity to participate in positions of governing or ruling. Studied from this angle, it can be affirmed that the urgency for social control, the safeguarding of nobility, the conservation of class differences did not surface simply with religion. Within this context, blood lineage was a rhetorical demeanor to proselytize belief systems into discerning social inclusion and exclusion as a cultural and biological bequeathal. In this way, the religious assembling in Spain was the structural blueprint that pioneered in American colonies. Even though it was believed that people originated biblically, it was alleged

that certain human groups derived from distinct superior ancestors, and accordingly were of a more prestigious lineage that executed distinctive qualities.

María Elena Martínez explains in *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico* (2008) that by the sixteenth century the importance of purity generated “a Spanish society obsessed with genealogy,” derived from “descent and religion—‘blood’ and faith,” to be established as “the two foundations of that ideology” (1). Since racial mixing is inevitable, it became challenging for Spaniards to structure racial ideologies in the Americas, that is why, identifying with Spanish ancestry progressively became a way of proclaiming racial advantage and privilege. Martínez studies why more than one category of racial mixing was created by considering religious affiliation in relation to racial purity. Conducive to her book title, Martínez determines that race is not just a result of class, it also involves the “economic, political, and ideological structures; social conditions; and systems of signification,” which all pose the term of genealogy (3). It has been declared that these factors should not be considered in isolation, for having an overall understanding will better elucidate cultural-historical roots and societal relations. Furthermore, these factors are significant in that they characterize “social practices, notions of self, and concepts of communal belonging” (Martínez 6). Within this framework, Martínez contributes in “the process of historicizing race” within the colonial context (3).

In virtue of racial mixing, the Spanish “pure” blood diluted and concurrently the demands of equality, similar to whiteness rights, rose from the admixed groups. With promises of upward mobility to persuade settlement along the frontier, alterity became less tolerant and people of color began to have landownership entitlement. This upward mobility in rights to ownership selectively raised social status and allowed inclusion for people of color, thus

indoctrinating the awareness of how racial titles are favorably manipulated in social contexts. In this way there was always an incentive to ascend in the racial scale, by means of marriage, communal mobilization or education. And so, a motive of othering the inferior racial ethnic groups, whether it is culturally, linguistically or ethnically, was to façade any blood relation to legitimate their manufactured identify to employ superiority.

The hesitancy to study race in relation to phenotypic differences derives from it being associated or competing with cultural or religious characteristics. In the nineteenth century racial complexities emerged and had been examined as a biological phenomenon. In this way, racial hegemonic discourses were not examined as the derivative of affecting social structures across “time, space and culture” (Martínez 11). Arguably, Martínez states that race cannot only be dependent on “biological notions of difference but rather...intertwined with culture and/or class. To elevate ‘race as biology’ to an ideal type is to set up a false dichotomy—to ignore that racial discourses have proven to be remarkably flexible, invoking nature or biology more at one point, culture more at another” (11). Race then, is a variable that relies on social constructions throughout particular historical manifestations of a particular time to denote distinct forms of racism.

The insinuation that European ancestry exhibited racial relations has been studied. Foucault for example, has claimed that European racial matters stem from an internal war that resulted in classism. The common challenging factor in analyzing European ancestry is how to interpret nobility and lineage in relation to race. Early class categorizations that allotted peasantry and other people who were perceived as “lower order of humanity and associated them with animals, dirt, and excrement,” were indications of “early modern racialization” (Martínez 12). Those who disassociate blood and lineage with race are ones who vaguely term the

determinants of race and racism. Yet the bases of race and racism are marked by the “social tensions that produced them, the terms people used to express them, and the ways in which they were reproduced or rearticulated over time and across geocultural contexts” (Martínez 12). In early modern periods, race and racism were simply veiled with religious and humanistic likeness beliefs.

### **1.3 Anglo Arrival, Manifest Destiny, and the Outcome of the U.S.-Mexico War 1846-1848**

The Southwest was conquered by the Spanish then the Anglo American, Laura Gómez has termed this as “double colonization” (47). In both invasions, a racial scheme was rooted that venerated white supremacy. The Spanish denounced the natives of the Southwest as “savage others,” claiming that they were “uncivilized, unintelligent,” to a degree that justified their conquest (Gómez 50). The ingrained “us” and “them” racial paradigm exists due to binaries such as: “civilized/savage [or other], Christian/heathen, pure/impure, honorable/shameful, European/indigenous” (Gómez 50). This unequal dichotomy was further entangled when sexual encounters began. This generated an intricate hierarchy of racial disparity among Spanish, Mexican, Indian and Black people, where the Spanish were on top, Mexican/Indian/Spanish in the middle, and any combination among Indians and Blacks placed them at the bottom. The formation of this hierarchy followed the external conventional racial labeling based on phenotype, such as skin color, facial features and the like. Thence, the preeminence of a white-skinned complex belonged to the highest racial hierarchy, as established since the arrival of the Spaniards and continued with the coming of the Anglo Americans. Martha Menchaca adds that Anglo Americans credited Spaniards “for the infrastructure they had built and depicted the Indians as noble savages whose complex societies had been disturbed by the arrival of the European” (17). The Indians and mestizos remained under the classification of uncultured, of

lower class people, and nothing like the “glorious Spaniards” (Menchaca 17). The classification of Spaniards as White is of significance when considering the Mexican racial history in the Southwest, as many Spaniards remained shielded from racial discrimination.

As Anglos arrived, they projected the Southwest to be a prosperous democracy of a certain political and economic interest. In *La Calle: Spatial Conflicts and Urban Renewal in a Southwest City* (2010), Lydia R. Otero explains that Anglos “had access to national networks that allowed them both to create and to manipulate a new local regime” (14). This allowed the sanctioning of new economic and political arrangements to take place in the area. Anglos then, perceived themselves as creators of this new disposition in history as they were “divinely chosen to populate the North American continent and to bring the blessings” (Barrera 12). In this way, they justified their intrusion in the Southwest and labeled it as an expression of principle to be known as Manifest Destiny. Introducing this intentional concept gave way to an entreaty whose effort was to manipulatively secure support. From there forth, the Southwest had been adjoined in terms of Manifest Destiny, an American seized area with a determination to regularize and secure “rich trade and safe transportation routes...It was in short, a conquest of merchants who worried little about extending the glories of free government to their captive customers” (Barrera 15). Laura Gómez sees this as a plan that depended on racism to vindicate a war of hostility towards Mexico. The war became an instrument for establishing social differences and status. It worked to bring White ethnics together, including White foreigners. Interests in political, social and power advancements are what underhandedly riveted principles linked with Manifest Destiny. The once marginalized Whites were advantageously incorporated into a racialized national state. This promoted an inclusive White America that led towards a racial hierarchy that disparaged Mexico and its citizens. If the Irish, German or any other White ethnic groups were

ever formerly marginalized, the politics of Manifest Destiny increased White America's numbers, while promoting unity in a war that was essentially anti-democratic.

Gómez speaks of Mexican Americans as having formed their own racial group and the racial process involved in Manifest Destiny exhibited this construction. Some Mexicans were “deemed not white enough—or too Indian and/or too black” to become American citizens (Gómez 141). While phenotypical preconditions were not legally formalized, people who were not white in appearance evinced exclusion. As revealed, whiteness standardized and emboldened disunity among Mexicans and other non-white groups. Those in pursuit of egalitarianism and white acceptance meant “distinguishing themselves from blacks, but also from Indians, the Chinese, and the Japanese, depending on the region,” thus leading to an “evolving national racial order” (142). The American racial affair is more of an “us versus them” inference, such as denoting race in “white-over-black” terms for “the subordination by whites of other non-white groups” (143).

Since about 1528, the Spanish had started exploring the Southwestern lands and began establishing settlements and missions. The Spanish presence was prominent in an isolated area where Pueblo Indians, nomadic Indians and Mexicans resided. Not including Anglo Americans, by the end of the U.S.-Mexico War, an undeniable “trinity” had established that consisted “of three intricately interwoven, interpenetrated, thoroughly fused” groups of Spanish, Mexican and Indian people (McWilliams 34). The Spanish preserved their identity label as a motive to claim a superior heritage with all attributes related, one involving culture—such as food, music and tradition. The claim of a Spanish lineage “attempted to whiten...[any] Mexican influences” (Otero 67). Essentially, Mexicans were those who could not claim to be Spanish, according to the hierarchical social system established by the Spanish. However, to “unravel any single

strand from this pattern and label it ‘Spanish’ is, therefore, to do a serious injustice to the Mexicans and Indians through whom...Spanish cultural influences survived” (McWilliams 34). The Spanish label extended its complacency to further distinguish early-established Mexicans in the Southwest from the recently arrived. Even though the Spanish label was encroached by Euro-Americans, eventually Mexican elites began using this label to reference themselves as well. This label later became standardized to represent various generations and Mexican Americans of all classes. Initially the use of the Spanish label was recognized as a result of racial ideologies from White Americans towards Mexicans; however, Mexicans who rejected and refused associations with Mexico also adopted this standpoint. The adaptation of this label allowed the people to be viewed as “cultured,” for they “openly embraced not their own Mexican culture,” but rather the dominant one (Otero 23). Likewise, people in the Southwestern states who intended to disassociate themselves with Mexico or the Mexican label, referred to themselves with respective demonym territorial identities, such as New Mexican, Texan, Arizonan and Californian. Consequently, demonyms were used as a way to disaffiliate with others and to appropriate accountability for territories and their personal “success in the borderlands” (McWilliams 37). Those who chose to identify and declare themselves as Mexican did not use demonyms.

Laura E Gómez further explains how the Spanish racial hierarchy was enrooted among the Mexican and indigenous group:

“those individuals who had emigrated from Spain or who had two parents of Spanish descent [were on top]. Below them was a much larger group of Indian/Spanish mestizos, many of whom had become settlers in order to gain the advantages of upward racial mobility. Most Mexican elites were mestizos, but all

Spaniards (in the top group) were elite as well. The third group—known as *genízaros*—consisted of Indians who had forcibly or voluntarily left their communities to join Spanish settlements and who had acculturated to Spanish norms to varying degrees. Below *genízaros* were Pueblo Indians, who had independent communities but who regularly interacted with mestizo settlements. At the bottom of the racial hierarchy were other Indians—the Apaches, Comanches, Navajos, Utes, and others—who resisted Spanish domination to the extent that they operated outside the colonial society.” (Gómez 54)

By the end of the U.S.-Mexico War and late into the nineteenth century, the racial hierarchy in the Southwest consisted of four ethnic categories: “white Euro-American at the top; Mexican Americans below them; then Pueblo Indians; and other Indians at the very bottom” (Gómez 82). The position of Mexican elites was complex because as mentioned before, they had suffered double colonization first from the Spanish, then the Anglo Americans. Even though Mexican elites encompassed early Spanish settlers and mestizos who ascended in the racial hierarchy, the American colonization interfered with their racial placement and shifted their superior position of a conqueror, to an inferior position of conquered. This shifting in racial position changed the racial dynamic among Mexican elites and Indians and allowed Indians to benefit from the Anglo American “invasion because it disrupted Mexican elites’ authority” (Gómez 83). Americans acknowledged that in order to effectively transition the Southwestern states to statehood, some Mexicans had to become citizens. Those chosen were primarily Mexican elites, who also held important roles in law and government. Their wealth and class status permitted them access in dominant discourses, and spared them from “anti-Mexican sentiments,” subsequently, “many of their descendants intermarried with Anglos...[and] embraced Anglo culture” to be accepted as

“white” (Otero 44). However, Mexican elites soon recognized that this “co-operation (strategy) by the Americans” still placed them as “second-class” citizens, thus ultimately provoking tensions among them (Gómez 83).

As observed, racial categories and differences are socially constructed and not inherent as believed. People, institutions and social processes give meaning to this construction. Races thereupon, are invented categories to uphold white privilege. The idea of “becoming white” is direct and occurs within a matter of time. In relation to Mexicans and other minority groups, the process of whiteness is not as direct. For many Mexicans, their entry to White America was their claim to Spanish blood. Taken into consideration that the Spaniards conquered the Southwestern United States, generational Spaniards that resided in the Southwest gratified themselves the privilege to proclaim whiteness. After the Spanish conquest, came the Mexican-American War, and what remained was a large population mixed with Spanish and Mexican descent. The magnitude of its population allowed delegation of the racial sociopolitical scheme by being flexible and inclusive under those white privileged conditions. This hierarchical mentality to belong to White America from Mexican Americans and generational Spaniards is what planted the divide among themselves and other racial and ethnic groups who they believed were inferior to them.

The well-off European migrants were successful in assimilating in earlier European American immigrations because their lighter skin color or whiteness expanded their social construction during the twentieth century (Ngai 1999), and the darker skinned Mexicans experienced severe cases of discrimination (Massey 1992). In general, various studies have indicated that darker skinned Mexican are categorized as poor, live in affluent suburban neighborhoods, experience discrimination, and receive lower earnings in comparison to lighter

Mexicans and White Anglos.<sup>17</sup> In this way, European immigrants easily incorporated as their racial and cultural background conformed more to the White American majority and it became obvious through selective attainment of the advantages to being considered and labeled as White (Huntington 2004, Massey 1992).

American settlers were uncertain of where Mexicans belonged in the racial hierarchy. The American attitude towards Mexicans identified them as a “mongrel” race for being racially mixed and therefore racially inferior (Gómez 83). Initially, Americans implemented whiteness to those who were not Black or Indian. Since Mexicans were culturally similar to Indians and commonly similar to Blacks in skin color, this disrupted the fabricated racial ordering. Nonetheless, this uncertainty of racial placement incited a negotiating space for Mexicans to belong to the privileged regime. In this way Mexicans were able to claim “off-white[ness]” and deviate from the previous “inferior ‘mongrel’ race” (Gómez 59). The ambiguity of the Mexican racial labeling was undoubtedly based on how Mexicans independently claimed their belonging in the racial categorization. This was possible for being able to declare an indigenous or a Spanish ancestry.

While racial indefiniteness is what allowed Mexicans to benefit in the racial hierarchy, this exact vagueness is what approved their exclusion. Their mixed race was seen as problematic and inferior to White Americans. Mexicans were described as “a second blending of blood and a new union of races; the Spaniard, Moor, and the aboriginal were united in one and made a new race, the Mexicans” (Davis 215). The prominent swarming of dark “aboriginal blood” is inferior to the “pure Castilian, who is as light and fair,” comparable to the White American race (Davis 216). Only the wealthy could “pride themselves upon not having Indian blood in their

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<sup>17</sup> This data was gathered by Massey, and Denton. "Racial Identity and the Spatial Assimilation of Mexicans in the United States." *Social Science Research* 21.3 (1992): 235-60. Web.

veins,” yet the majority of the population are an “intermixture between the peasantry and the native tribes of Indians...,[with] no present hope of the people improving in color,” thus further deriding those Mexicans who try to act or appear as White (Davis 216).

Even though Mexican elites were able to more effectively transition into the American racial social order and elevate their standing among their own ethnicity, Americans still bunched them together as a single Mexican group. This meant that despite of any social, economic or lingual advancement, Mexicans were seen as socially and racially inferior to and by Americans. The amalgamating of all Mexicans by Americans caused conflicts among Mexican ethnic groups by creating a “racialized identity” among them. A goal Americans had for incorporating Mexican elites was to “co-opt” them via a “psychological inducement” by “allowing them to claim white status” (Gómez 86). Americans integrated Mexicans into their regime to prevent them from creating a coalition with Pueblo Indians, for they knew that this pact could conceivably be more powerful in number and affiliation. It was also understood “that being cordial” provided them a “smooth transfer of power and the acquisition of property” (Otero 42). Henceforth, establishing strategical relationships in order advance and gain meant appropriating the Mexican culture, food, and customs, in addition to intermarriage. Beneficiary for Americans, the inclusion of Mexican elites could change the perspective on White colonialism, thus offering relief of transitioning from “colonial subjects to colonial objects” (Gómez 86). As Mexicans descend from a mixed lineage, they were able to toggle an identity of whiteness, as well as being targets of inferiority by Americans. In this way, it is plausible to understand why Mexicans adamantly claimed European Spanish as their ancestry as these conditional circumstances of belonging imbued anxieties and tensions among their own ethnic group.

The ethnic paradigm ensued as a perspicuous contestation to the rampant racial views during the 1920s and 1930s. The existing biological prototype evolved during racial slavery to explain racial hierarchy as a natural order of the human race. White Americans were considered the superior race, “white skin was the norm while other skin colors were exotic mutations which had to be explained” (Omi 14). Then, race was linked with distinguishing inherited characteristics such as: “intelligence, temperament and sexuality (among other traits) were deemed to be racial in character” (Omi 14). Any interracial mixing was seen as wrongful and against biological creations. These suppositions are in accordance with Darwinism and a eugenic way of categorizing race.

From the 1940s and 1970s, Mexican Americans were strategically encouraged to espouse a White racial identity and in doing so, created new racial divisions (Rodriguez 2000). Thereafter, people of Mexican descent were documented as belonging to other races, particularly to the White. This construction of identity labeling caused tensions among Mexicans and Mexican Americans as they were divided in choosing an official racial identity. It was contradictory in establishing a racial identity due to the racial diversities that existed among the group itself. Similarly, Americans and Mexican Americans with similar views used an ethnic and racial classification system to degrade Mexicans and their descendants (Donnan 1999). As stated earlier, Mexican Americans mixed classification systems to make sense of themselves (Harding 2004), and used nationality to disassociate themselves from Mexican nationals or differentiate themselves from Americans. Meanwhile, Mexican immigrants were forced to accept their nationality and ethnicity as being Mexican (Vila 2000).

Laura Gómez’s viewpoint on racialization states that: “the power of racism is ideological,” it allows an understanding of how subaltern groups indisputably propagate racism

by exploiting each other (113). Mexicans incessantly contested their placement in the racial hierarchy while estranging affiliations with their native neighbors when advocating for “pro-slavery [towards Indians and Blacks] and scientific racism to enact draconian black and slave codes,” to pretentiously belong to the American White order (Gómez 114). Mexicans participated in racist ideologies by reciting whiteness and distancing themselves from other ethnic groups of color. To further exercise their participation as White, Mexicans had to portray themselves as White, “especially with respect to non-white groups. Mexican American elites, in particular, acted in ways that shored up their whiteness, at the expense of every non-white group below them in the racial hierarchy,” in this way inciting “the reproduction of racial subordination” (Gómez 115). This conduct by Mexicans disrupted the established racial order and reinstated the white hegemony order in the Southwest.

Wanting to sanctimoniously belong to White America led to consequences for Mexicans. Soon enough, Americans slowly attained legal prepotency of their landownership across the Southwest and the political system, thus leaving Mexicans in oblivion. The racial and ethnic disunions between Mexicans and other subordinate groups in the region only strengthened the American command. Those that expropriated the land from Mexicans were Americans who “had the financial resources and the political clout to reconcentrate the land in their own hands” (Barrera 23). The same type of capitalist mentality who commenced the Mexican American War inordinately usurped this gain.

Despite the fact that Americans self-interestedly included Mexicans in their regime, they did so disapprovingly by insulting them in literature, newspapers and politically. Mexicans then were propelled to entitle their European heritage regardless of evidencing delineating indigenous ancestries. In spite of Pueblo Indians sharing similarities such as culture, language and

colonization with Mexicans, their non-white lineage negated their approbation. Consequently, for Mexicans, as they concerned themselves with belonging, Americans slowly confiscated their lands, while Pueblo Indians gained community land grants. Likewise, Americans and Mexicans also executed attitudes of rejection towards African Americans. The relentless urgency of inclusion by Mexicans caused similar renunciation towards African Americans for they were also seen as a group belonging at the bottommost of the racial order. For Mexicans, their wavering belonging on the racial order incurred apprehensions and this formed their attitudes concerning unjust policies, laws, social orders and violations of human rights towards other ethnic and racial groups who they perceived to be below them. Manifestly, Mexicans agreed to harsh rulings to safely secure their racial hierarchy and keep all other ethnic and racial groups below them. Mexican elites especially, protected their “white” relatives for any violations on miscegenation verdicts. Attestations from Blacks against Whites were not validated during the times Mexican Americans overruled as empowered citizens. By being in position of power, Mexicans maintained disunion between Blacks and other non-Mexican ethnic groups and intensified their claim as White citizens and all others as non-white.

Similarly, the war against Indian slavery also affected the racial dynamics of Mexican Americans. Americans supported the extrication of Indian slavery, and since many Mexican elites held Indians as slaves, this was a way for Americans to further establish amity with Indians and challenge the Mexican dominion. For Mexicans, the proprietorship of Indian slaves “marked them as both economically and racially privileged” (Gómez 109). Indian existence in Mexican households implied economical wealth and status, Gómez relates this to a past White power under Spanish governing. The disagreement of Indian slavery between Americans and Mexicans epitomized a battling of power, “between colonizer and native and between dominant

(Euro-American) and subordinate (Mexican) racial groups” (Gómez 112). Mexicans refused to renounce to their superior status and fought to uphold Indian slavery to ensure their already exiguous position in the racial order and white privilege.

#### **1.4 The Impact of World War II and the Chicano Movement 1960**

The Spanish and Mexicans underwent conquest from Anglos, followed by a position of inferiority, to watching Americans appropriate the Spanish and Mexican culture as their own. The celebrations of cultural events were only guises to the superbity many Anglos reputed towards the Spanish and Mexican people. As culture and tradition was welcomed, it was inconsistent with how racial indifferences “had already become deeply embedded in the vocabulary of the region” (Vargas 22). The Spanish and Mexican cultures were commonly grouped together by Anglos, and fundamentally, both denoted inferiority. As Anglo Americans settled the Southwest, they disregarded others rights, for their motives were to expand their own interests, a similar ordering the Spanish had established before their arrival. Prior battles between the Spanish and indigenous were left inexplicit, and instead combined as “a shared ‘cultural’ trait,” whose Spanish names and language suggested comradery among the people before the Anglo conquest (Vargas 7). This strategical stance allowed history to be romanticized and nostalgically viewed towards an imperialist racial marginalization. Consequently, the newly conquered Spanish and Mexican groups were scarce in numbers to effectively regulate in the Anglo presence. As time went on, the loss of land and displacement the Spanish and Mexican experienced, in addition to the constant influx of incoming Mexican migrants, pressed for exclusivity in identity labels once again. This ingrained sentiment of despise towards Mexicans is what ignited an awareness of American rights, and the urgency to reappropriate written and told history.

In *Chicana Power!* (2001), Maylei Blackwell observes that the U.S. economy and its demand for low-wage labor have prominently framed immigration policies. The Great Depression (1929-1939) was a decade of “economic hardship for the United States,” and individuals of Mexican descent “became a popular scapegoat” (Gonzales 139). Yet, by this time, many considered the U.S. their home and were indeed citizens. Many joined labor movements to combat “the desperate conditions of the working masses,” however, in the end they were defeated and were later deported to Mexico or repatriated. Subsequently, World War II (1939-1945) provided an opportunity for Mexicans to enter the armed forces and be appropriated into the American mainstream. The joining in combat projected the betterment of a socioeconomic status. As most were “trapped in the barrios of larger cities, poorly educated and lacking job skills,” many “saw the military as the easiest and most immediate way of improving their position” (Gonzales 164). This was a time when social differences were temporarily neutralized. Upon returning from war, rights for Mexican Americans were obtained and there was an “increased access to higher education provided by the G.I. Bill” that replaced “the gains of the civil rights movement” (Blackwell 45). However, privileges were only provided to those who went to war, the political activists that had been battling injustices “grew impatient waiting for the benefits of political integration and gradual change” (Blackwell 46). Therefore, under these analogous conditions, the Chicano generation was compelled to continue challenging the “racial and economic hostility” (Blackwell 46).

The criticality to be treated as Americans, more so from middle class citizens, further augmented the differences in the Mexican population. Following the war, the American economy significantly grew, creating job opportunities that were once not attainable to all people. This was consequential for the “decades of discrimination and institutional racism meant

that most Chicanos were ill-prepared for an economy where higher skills were required” (Vargas 18). Yet, even though Mexicans were employed and worked for lower wages, Anglo Americans “were often reluctant to employ them,” for they were considered “backward, poor, and uneducated,” and this had “become widely accepted as facts” (Otero 72).

Later in the 1960s, civil rights movements, city uprisings, and objections over war propelled political campaigns that continued to ignite the Mexican American identity and began to take a political turn. Mexican Americans became more aware of their own rights and contributions, and yielded college education possibilities. In this time, the term Chicano arose, empowering a sense of self and group identity. To be Chicano was to take pride in the Mexican heritage and legitimize belonging in American history. In understanding Chicano historical experience, it is important to note it was “built upon cultural and culture-conflict models focusing on race and nationality as the basis for social relations and, ultimately, for historical explanation” (Vargas 2). Nonetheless, “Chicano history rests upon the assumption that today’s Chicanos share certain characteristics with those of the past... [thus] distinguish[ing] them[selves] from other minorities” (Vargas 7). Therefore, how Spanish and Mexican retorted to White American invasion, depended on their “status, resources, and ability (or time) to respond to the seemingly unavoidable confrontation with American domination and its consequences” (Vargas 16). In this way, class tensions and social integration evidenced ones origin and that was what distinguished the history of the different groups. The racialization that the Spanish and Mexicans experienced from the Anglos created a Mexican nationalistic unity, however, the differences in class sustained. As the economic progress advanced, the demand for cheap labor also increased. Nevertheless, even though the Spanish and Mexican groups underwent the same subjection from the Anglos, the social hierarchies still withheld among the

community. This factor distinguished the immigrants from the Spanish and Mexican population that previously resided in the area. The constant arrival of Mexican immigrants affected the attitude of Spanish-speaking communities as it deepened the anti-Mexican disposition.

The retelling of history began to take shape as Chicano activist-scholars arranged to ratify their account against an Anglo culture. Menchaca explains that an academic reclamation came forth with the creation of oral texts by Mexican American college students of the working class. The intent was to narrate an indigenous origin and challenge the degrading interpretations of colored people as racially inferior. They further opposed the “racial aesthetics of the period,” that valued whiteness “as the standard of beauty [that] viewed all Black and Brown phenotypes as markers of abnormality” (Menchaca 19). Henceforth, a civil rights organization took place and the inclusion of Mexican American indigenous roots was addressed in order to delineate ties to Mexico and the U.S. Southwest and insert an appropriated historical presence in the Americas. The movement aligned with the Civil Rights Movement to oppose racial discriminations that were specific to their community, such as “poverty level, the farm workers’ struggle against unfair wages and working conditions, and observed inequalities (e.g., police brutality, limited access to higher education, school segregation)” (Menchaca 20). This organization expressed consciousness on the discriminating issues that shaped the Mexican American experience. The ties to Aztlán in Mexico permitted not only an indigenous relation, but also established appropriation in the Southwest. This allowed an adequate placement of belonging for the community while defying the rhetoric of foreignness. However, this discourse was received as a risky conduct that reproduced a similar rhetoric to that of the Anglos. Most of the Chicano authors were male, and/or people with privileged publishing accessibility. It was contested that Mexican Americans were not exclusively recent immigrants and that their participation was

important in the shaping of the nation. Vargas argues that this Chicano attitude resembled that of “exclusionary, hierarchical, and dehumanizing ideologies that Anglo Americans had used so effectively for so long to suppress minority peoples” (25). People such as Mexican immigrants and other recent generations to the U.S. were unsuitable to the Chicana/o discourse as their daily struggles were seen as unrelated. Yet, Mexican immigrants were continuously an impacting aspect of the disparities among Chicanas/os and Mexican Americans. The generational comparison and “different ways of ‘seeing’ self and society in the Chicano experience” changes with place and time and is challenged per individual experience. Vargas argues that the disregard to immigrants, “suggests a persistent flaw in Chicano scholarship: the tendency to underestimate the importance of continuing immigration, including the complexities of Chicano-*mexicano* relations in the formation of Chicano communities,” in addition to, “an aversion for understanding the Chicano-*mexicano* dimensions of Mexican immigration” (19). The dissimilarities among members in the Chicana/o community reveal the various ways people of Mexican descent have reacted towards their circumstances throughout time. In addition, it provides insight on how those distinctions immobilize unity when tracing historical ties. For this reason, it is important to address how dominant politics of expansion have subjected the ways in which Mexicans are positioned, in addition to how Mexicans place and behavior towards one another.

A notable differentiating factor in the literature of this study is language choice. When English began to appropriate as the dominant language of the nation, Mexicans of all generations faced challenges of adapting it as their own. Actually, the process of Americanization was highly measured by the integration of this dominant language, and its use. As many Mexican-descent people continued to face discrimination, many decided to abandon Spanish use

altogether. However, complete renunciation of the language was impossible as its maintenance prevailed. The toggling of two languages became an identification factor, and soon bilingualism was recognized as a profitable skill—yet, many continued to struggle managing both languages. The term *pocho* came about during the 1920s to describe, “a culturally Americanized Mexican residing in the United States” (Tenenbaum 276). In Spanish, the term is defined as describing discoloration or fading. The term was applied to Mexicans who were undergoing a whiteness process and “who adopted North American values, traditions, and language at the expense of [their] Mexican heritage” (Tenenbaum 276). In this way, the term was used pejoratively to describe the lack of fluency of Spanish and the process of assimilation. Gradually, *pocho* came to describe a Mexican “residing in the United States,” and was later replaced by the forthcoming term *Chicano* of the 1960s. *Pocho* and *Chicano* came to be used analogously by Mexican natives to denote “Mexicans north of the border, whose Mexicanness was suspect. It was not an affectionate [term]. To be *pocho* was only slightly less worse” than being labeled as White American (Madrid-Barela 52). For this reason, the terms *pocho* and *Chicano* further “complicated matter[s] with cultural, linguistic, class, social, regional, geographical, temporal and national implications” (Madrid-Barela 52). As the authors of the primary texts use this term disparagingly, it shows how its use delineated inclusion and exclusion among the people.

In reference to Mexican categorizations, Barrera observes, “[those] who reside permanently in the United States” have a synonymous identity label of Mexican American” (4). The label of Mexican is “used to refer to persons in the southwest...from Mexico who are in the United States temporarily or on an irregular status” (Barrera 4). Persistently, “many writers have used ‘Mexican’ to refer to both groups,” and this unsettles members who desire disassociation with the Mexican identity label (Barrera 4). The use of “*Chicana/o*” has also been

used synonymously with Mexican American, referring to persons of Mexican origin who reside in the United States.

Interestingly, after World War II the United States established a Cuban Refugee Program (1961) that assisted Cubans in finding employment, housing, learning English—the basic needs of adapting to the American society. This entry provided Cubans the essential necessities to appropriate themselves into the American culture, but more importantly, this allowed them to more easily claim whiteness. The initial level of inclusion permitted them and future generations to better establish themselves economically, socially and racially. Similarly, those Hispanics that pragmatically claim White as their race, were those with “significantly higher incomes, were twice as likely to consider themselves Republicans, and were considerably less likely to believe that Hispanics experience significant discrimination in the United States” (Gómez 158).

Henceforth, racial claims associate with the person’s level of American inclusion and income, while on the other hand, if excluded, then a racial status of “some other race” or as Gómez asserts, an “off-white” status was declared (Gómez 158). Contrarily, in the Southwest, it was found that Texans were more likely to identify as White while still choosing “to speak Spanish, marry other Mexicans, and live in Mexican neighborhoods” (Gómez 159). In this case, Texans chose to claim White as a defensive tactic for more than likely undergoing racial discrimination. Claiming White was more about to claiming rights and equality than a racial stance. In both cases, the claim to whiteness defended a political position.

## **2. White Allure: Recognizing the Cause and Effect of White-Skinned Privilege in Oscar “Zeta” Acosta’s *The Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo***

*The Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo* (1972) details the life of Oscar “Zeta” Acosta, a lawyer, writer, and Chicano activist who associates with the political left. Acosta’s

autobiography provides insight on his grappling between accepting and rejecting his culture and identity. He was born in El Paso, Texas from Mexican immigrant parents, raised in Sacramento, California, and studied at Modesto Junior College and San Francisco State University. He became a lawyer who primarily helped Mexican people with immigration concerns in San Francisco, California. Acosta writes his autobiography as a “wild psychedelic hallucinatory tale,” where he exposes a life linked with drugs and alcohol (Guajardo 2). Acosta and his literature is studied as belonging in the Chicano literary cannon for encasing anxieties of identity, ethnicity, and class issues among the Anglo American culture. While Acosta’s latter work claims to have resolved these anxieties, a closer analysis discloses contradictions to this declaration as he exhibits the outcome of someone who intermediately clashes between two cultures. These dilemmas interject into self-acceptance, and validate claims of autobiographical work that manifest such topic as he assimilates, and then dis-assimilates while in search for a cultural belonging.

Aldama describes Acosta’s mode of writing as “magicorealism”<sup>18</sup> in order “to open readers’ eyes to the multiply-layered reality their subjects inhabit,” it “identifies a new contemporary pan-subaltern textual mode that does away with any linguistic lean toward binary oppositionality” (Aldama 199). It is a way to “reveal the cultural, economic, political, biological, sexual, and racial polyphonies at work in the world” (Aldama 200). As a category of a magicorealist autobiography, it serves as a “radical re-territorializing of a complexly figured subaltern/mestizo subject” (Aldama 201). Similarly, Acosta’s narrative is not in chronological order, to be read as such, the chapters would be in the following order: “6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12. Chapters 6, 7, 9, 11, and 13 all deal with Acosta’s past; the other chapters relate the present occurrences of his life” (Guajardo 28). This way of changing the organization of the

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<sup>18</sup> A genre in which the realistic narrative is joined with imaginary or surreal elements.

chapters is what critics have deemed as undependable in validity, for it calculatingly challenges readers and its reality. As an autobiographical narrative, Acosta recounts his story with embellishment, compromising the truth behind the fiction. While this is a common practice for autobiographical authors for fear of exposure, for Acosta, it leaves room for interpretation and ambiguity.

## **2.1 Alienation and Self-Rejection**

Regardless of the level of education reached and assimilation acquired, the consequences of not belonging with the majority group are detrimental for Acosta. This awareness surfaced with interactions and differences that became apparent—especially in respect to physical appearance. This disconnect with both cultures led him to create a new identity in which he referred to himself as “brown buffalo.” The embracing of this new identity serves to create a place for him within the minority culture. A place in which he hopes to etch a belonging for himself as he unremittingly stresses discordance from both the minority and majority groups.

As minorities tend to favor the cultural norms of the dominant group, they reject approval for their own. A phase in this process occurs when the person recognizes and rejects their physical characteristics. Acosta’s autobiography begins with him standing undressed in front of the mirror, expressing how he has “always been a fat kid...[with] an enormous chest of two large hunks of brown tit,...[and] large peasant hands,” whose place of belonging is sitting on a commode as his throne, and stares at himself in the mirror for answers (Acosta 11). As he repulses and discards his own body, his acceptance of auto-rejection deepens. Acosta’s body masters him as a slave, for the color of its skin cannot be changed. Additionally, his mother strongly contributes to his self-criticism—he states, “my mother had me convinced I was obese, ugly as a pig and without any redeeming qualities whatsoever” (Acosta 82). The cyclical

relationship of rejection is instigated as Acosta overindulges in his consumption of food, drugs, and alcohol—whilst his body reciprocates the rejection by excretion and pain. Acosta's relationship with his body is by nature inseparable, nevertheless toxic to one another as the self and other (body) refute. In this way, Acosta fulfills the process of alienation according to Lacan, starting with the mirror phase by consciously acknowledging himself and his body, secondly, as the subject through language, as will be seen later. However, for Acosta, the alienation process occurs as a form of rejection, not accepting one's reflection or mirror image as the self. The identification process is damaged as Acosta cannot see himself as complete or whole, thus, unification with the image and self is nonexistent. Thereupon, Acosta's ego, self-esteem, and confidence are distorted, as he is unable to accept the formation of his image, since the ego is the result of the image. Acosta surrenders to the desires society prefers by rejecting his image, jeopardizing his own image and identity. In this way, Acosta's mirror image emphasizes his alienated condition that ultimately exhibits a vicious cycle of estrangement, and the image he sees is what he attempts to depart from, thus kindling his search for identity. This search for identity is further evidenced in the espousing of the various masks.

The weight of physical discomfort and pain increases as Acosta begins to feel helpless at work. For a year, he has been a Legal Aid lawyer, battling cases for people beneath the poverty level—finding loopholes in the legal system to safeguard or alleviate others. He has dedicated himself to helping those in distress, however, he now finds himself bounded by the accumulation of problems he is unable to resolve. The effects of this disquietude are detrimental to his physical and mental health. His desire of belonging to a dominant society has brought forth an onset of contradictory responses, such as “feelings of anger and willful detachment from whites, then feelings of confused [when he] resolve[s] the conflict by acting as American as possible”

(Padilla 243). This spurs rejection and self-deluding to one's self-image and hostility towards the self for not being American enough. Garza mentions, "with the strong influence of American culture, the pressure to accumulate into mainstream society makes it easy to reject other underrepresented cultures in order to comply with the U.S. dominant society" (75).

Additionally, he attempts to divert his health condition by claiming to suffer from ulcers. Issues he experienced from a younger age are presently intensified as his body and mind battle for stability. In order to free himself, he begins a journey of self-indulgence. This indulgence is not only a longing search of his cultural belonging, but one of alcohol, drugs and sexual unplanned encounters with various women. These encounters and the experiences he takes from them set the tone of "despair, loneliness, self-disgust as well as self-pity [and self-destruction]" (Padilla 244). He lives through rejection and alienation from the White American society in addition to his own of Mexican descent. He internalizes tensions from both social groups as he journeys along in search of his belonging among them.

## **2.2 Indigenous Rejection**

Mexico has long grappled with an identity crisis because of colonization and discrimination. Superficially, an indigenous cultural heritage is celebrated, yet deeply the Spanish kinship is revered. This reality is increasingly problematic as Mexicans migrate to the U.S. Further complicating matters, Spanish surnames are dominant in the Southwest, and in order to make distinctions, many will claim Spanish heritage, and/or that they did not migrate from Mexico to denote superiority. Meanwhile, on the northern Mexican side of the border, indigenous traits are highly rejected. For Mexicans establish dominion amongst each other by positioning prestige on skin color and phenotypical characteristics. Pablo Vila identifies this as a "regional hegemonic discourse," that is known to exist along the border among Mexicans. This

discourse claims that those who are from Northern Mexico tend to be lighter-skinned as they believe to be pure and “untouched by *mestizaje*,”<sup>19</sup> while those from the South and Central regions are “Indian” or in other words dark-skinned lower class people.

As Acosta crosses the border into Mexico with intent to understand his heritage, he experiences susceptibility to this phenotypical discrimination when he enters a topless bar and a woman with “red hair and peach skin” asks him in Spanish to buy her a drink. He immediately thought “what kind of jackshit is this?...They get American girls to fake Spanish so well they speak it better than I do” (Acosta 189). He then asks what she wants to drink in English and she replies “*como?*” his response was “you can’t bullshit me. I know you’re from the States,” she turns over to someone and asks them, “*oye, que dice este indio...no me digas que no es Mexicano*” (Acosta 189). Acosta was stunned that the light-skinned woman was not in fact American; for he had presumed she was not Mexican because of her appearance—for he imagined Mexicans to be dark-skinned like him. Under these circumstances of phenotypical discrimination, Acosta finds himself rejected by Mexicans and even accused of “impersonating a *mexicano*” (Acosta 187). Acosta claims, “I was a nigger faking it as a Mexican” for seeming to look like one, but not being able to speak the language” (Acosta 187). While Acosta crossed the border in quest for relation with his Mexican identity, and confirmed approval towards “beautiful women...brown women with black hair...eyes of black almonds,” his choice of propinquity ended up being the Anglo-looking fair-skinned woman of Mexico (Acosta 188). In this context, the “other” is the racialized individual, the one who attributes indigenous phenotypes, which are

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<sup>19</sup> Guillermo Bonfil Batalla in *México Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization*, translated by Philip Adams Dennis (1996), addresses this concern of representing Mexico as unified mestizo nation. As communities appropriate a mestizo identity in preference of an Indian one, *mestizaje* then translates “as ethnocide or ‘de-Indianization,’” and is fulfilled when the population no longer considers an Indian identification (Levi 544). Bonfil Batalla argues that Mexico has no legislative definition of Indians. Instead, an imaginary symbolic Mexico stems from dominant ideologies of material accumulation and consumerism that relies on the subjugation of Indian civilization.

clearly oppositional to those who reside in northern Mexico who tend to attribute “white” features (Vila 26). Many of those who reside in northern Mexico disassociate with people who display indigenous characteristics and identify or rather identify as “white” individuals who lack an Indian heritage. To be referenced as Indian, meant belonging to the lowest social group, for they are “without the supposedly ennobling effects of mixture with Spanish blood” (Gujardo 41). There is intent to insult with the word Indian, and surely, Acosta had already internalized a negative association with it—for his mother attached it with misbehavior and undesirable social comportment. Acosta expected Mexico to be a place of welcoming people who resembled him; instead, he was immediately challenged with labels he had indestructibly combated.

Acosta also discloses his understanding on how many light-skinned Northerners are proud for belonging to a higher Mexican class of “whites” and for lacking “Indian blood” (Acosta 26). A person is considered of white privilege if they are lighter in color, tall, and speak without any accent that exhibits the probability of being categorized with a regional label. This phenomenon has been present among Mexican nationals since the arrival of Spanish colonists, Creole elites and Porfirians who rejected Indians and all others who would bear such resemblance (Massey 1992). Attaining traits of whiteness and pureness is what people presume allows them to more easily assimilate and acculturate, or simply be accepted by American society. To them, dark skin signifies Indian and this suggests inferiority. As a dark-skinned individual in search of his identity and indigenous heritage, Acosta is misjudged, first for resembling an indigenous Mexican who may be rejecting his native language by not speaking Spanish, and secondly, for seeking identification in indigenous roots which was deemed as socially inferior. Light-skinned Mexicans prefer to separate themselves from such associations,

for the color of the skin behaves as an identity marker that continuously contributes to tensions among the people.

### **2.3 Anglo American Rejection**

Choosing to participate in the Anglo American society does not only allow for privilege over a minority cultural group, it also connotes a change in cultural beliefs. In general, the Anglo American culture suggests “individuality, freedom, independence, competition, ambition, assertiveness, success, materialism, responsibility, logic, the scientific method, and self-reliance. Even aggression may be more highly prized than in some Latin American/Native American cultures” (Guajardo 12). These characteristics are not the only positions that modify distinctions among groups. Jack Forbes in *Aztecas Del Norte: The Chicanos of Aztlan* (1973) explains how Anglo conquest percolated racist ideologies among people of Mexican descent:

(1) The European conquest of Mexico implanted the notion of Caucasian superiority; (2) Anglo-American color prejudice reinforced the above tendency and caused lighter-skinned Mexicans,...to deny any non-Caucasian ancestry; (3) Mexican-Americans have often sought to avoid being associated with blacks (as “colored” people), to avoid having to submit to discriminatory practices aimed at the latter; (4) similarly, being “white” has served to protect Mexicans from being lumped together with tribal Americans and thus subject to discriminatory practices aimed at the latter; (5) many Anglo-Americans, not wishing to “offend” the more sensitive Mexican-Americans, have aided in fostering the Spanish and white myths. (151)

As continuously noted throughout his narrative, Acosta exposes the physical rejections that come forth in his personal encounters. Such rejections include race, sexual encounters, gender, skin

color, cleanliness, whiteness, and body odor. Early on, his character “enters into that field of neo-colonial power [of] ethno-sexual abnormalities...causing him at an early age to feel cut off from his body, home, and community” (Aldama 206). Self-rejection deepened for Acosta as his body became a center point of ridicule at school when Jane, the blond-haired, pig-tailed Anglo girl who he was obsessed with, made the comment that “he stinks” (Acosta 94). Acosta recalls “the room filled with laughter” and continues describing that moment of infirmity: “I am done for. My heart sags from the overpowering weight of the fatness of my belly. I *am* the nigger, after all. My mother was right. I am nothing but an Indian with sweating body and faltering tits that sag at the sight of a young girl’s blue eyes” (Acosta 94). Acosta’s negative perception of himself in the mirror echoes how he believes others view him. He interprets his image as how others seemingly view him, providing us insight on his awareness of being different and the inferior position Indians and Blacks possess. His attempts of assimilating and proving his worth do not cease, even though they fail to provide him acceptability with Anglo Americans. The contradictory “feelings of anger and willful detachment from white, then feelings of confused self-image, hostility toward the self for not being American enough, and a self-indulging effort to resolve the conflict by acting as American as possible,” are effects related to internal tensions of rejection. Garza mentions, “with the strong influence of American culture, the pressure to accumulate into mainstream society makes it easy to reject other underrepresented cultures in order to comply with the U.S. dominant society” (75). As mentioned, this also means a rejection of the same ethnic group, thereby causing intra-racial tensions.

Aldama states that like many other Chicana/o bildungsroman narratives, most of them confess that it is at the school setting that they are excluded and treated as the “Other” and “made to feel dirty, degenerate, and racially out of place” (Aldama 206). For Acosta, this disaffection

towards himself creates an obsession for whiteness and Americanness, ultimately rejecting all others who appear like him. Yet this becomes riling for him as he slowly comprehends that he will never have access to whiteness, therefore, never fulfilling his desires of being with a White woman either. Acosta self-inflicts shame and objectifies his body as he internalizes negative discourses that reference his body and those like it (i.e. “brown flesh” Aldama 207). After having internalized rejection, if a women of another race and class showed interest in him, he could not accept why a women would want him to “stick a dirty dick into a classy broad,” for it had been repeatedly uttered to him that he was “obese, ugly as a pig and without any redeeming qualities whatsoever” (Acosta 99, 82). When it came to women of his own ethnicity, growing up he had no interest in them, not only because they estranged themselves, but because they were “square and homely,” and they never “aroused the beast” in him (Acosta 112, 113). Acosta sought attention in what was approved as acceptable by others, and rejected what he denied in himself. For this reason, he pursued Anglo women and never dated Mexican women—leading to the root of his insecurity and rejection on how women perceive him. In this way, Acosta’s sexual or romantic quests represent the condition of his self-worth, where he seeks the attention of someone he praises, as a way to recompense his own insufficiencies. His obsession develops into him becoming what he is not; to become whatever is desired, to prove that he is worthy.

#### **2.4 Chicano Identity Rejection**

As Acosta journeys along the border he comments, “I decide to go to El Paso, the place of my birth, to see if I could find the object of my quest” (Acosta 184). Acosta reflects on his past attempts in belonging and states,

“my single mistake has been to seek an identity with any one person or nation or with any part of history...what I see now,...what is clear to me after this sojourn

is that I am neither a Mexican nor an American...I am a Chicano by ancestry and a Brown Buffalo by choice...one sonofabitch tells me I'm not a Mexican and the other one says I'm not an American. I got no roots anywhere" (Acosta 199, 196).

From the development of his search for acceptance and identity, Acosta concludes that he is unable to belong to neither nationality, as is the case with other Mexican Americans.

Acosta leads the reader to believe that he fully accepts his cultural identity as he participates in the Chicano Movement; however, his affiliation is short-lived. Guajardo claims that Acosta's affiliation with the Chicano Movement was simply a product of his era during the 1960s. In his short life, Acosta participated in many impressive undertakings, "he was a first-string football player, soloist on the clarinet, and student body president. He played with the 573<sup>rd</sup> Air Force Band, preached as a Baptist missionary in Panama, became a Lawyer then a leader in the Chicano Movement, and ran for sheriff of Los Angeles County...he also defended several high profile cases" (Guajardo 33). While these accomplishments are impressive, his sudden disappearance leaves behind ambiguity on interpreting the outcome of the struggles he confronted. Since scholars have categorized Acosta as a Chicano activist, his approach to dealing with identity conflicts and the various masks he facades remain disregarded by most. His autobiography is viewed from a typical Mexican American/Chicano standpoint, of someone who struggles with identity due to his background, and the ways people of Mexican descent execute an awareness for themselves in the U.S. However, Guajardo, like Genaro Padilla argue that Acosta's search is individual, rather than communal, that his given label as a Chicano is constrained as he constantly battles with his Mexican identity and praises the superior culture. Moving from El Paso, Texas to Riverbank, California, Acosta became familiar with the different degrees of Mexicanness per region. In Riverbank, Acosta and his brother were not considered

*real* Mexicans by the *Pochos*, and were identified as such by their unassimilated attire, and inability to speak English. Acosta claims that the California Mexicans mostly spoke English, acted like “gringos,” and ridiculed him because his pants were short (Acosta 77). While residing in California, Acosta was received as an incoming, recent and/or first generation Mexican. Mexicans disliked Acosta because he did not speak English or dress acceptably. He expected rejection from Anglo Americans, however, he became aware that even within a community of Mexicans discrimination existed.

As second and subsequent generation Mexican Americans assimilate in the U.S. American culture, many struggle in the toggling of more than one culture, identity, and language. Some people feel ties to all, while others feel they cannot fully become accustomed with any. Acosta seemingly befits in the Chicana/o canon, for at the time of the Chicano rights movement when a great amount of work detailed social protest, he made an effort to belong by taking part in the resistance. However, a closer analysis of his work affords hesitations as he claims to have found his place in the canon, then later in subsequent work reclaims his languishing search for belonging. The Chicano Movement during the 60s and 70s was exclusive to particular principalities in relation to “identity, language, class, politics, and so forth” (Guajardo 4). Guajardo further supports statements that evidence identity crisis occurring among minorities as a latent phase until a defining moment occurs, fomenting a belonging for an ethnic identity. At some point, stability should be reached, yet Acosta instead internalizes outward denunciations.

The identity anxieties that burden Acosta, correlatively surfaced during the time of the Chicano Movement. Aldama explains that commonly a Chicana/o autobiography functions as a source to exploit a subaltern subject, and to be recognized as such, the subject has to convince the audience of their subaltern reality or experience. Acosta reveals his internal dilemma of what

entitles belonging in an American dominant society by stating: “I still wanted to find out just who in the hell I really was...I had personally stopped speaking Spanish in front of Americans” (184, 186). Acosta contemplated that rejecting his cultural identity and language would provide him acceptance in the American culture. Acosta observes that “the process through which he reintegrated the disparate parts of his cultural sources, realigned himself with his people’s historical experience, and came at last to understand some truth about the reality of life for Chicanos in North America” (Padilla 242). Yet, by the calling of attention to his external appearance, he is reminded that in the end, he does not phenotypically belong: “next time I suggest you have some I.D. on you. You don’t *look* like an American” (195). This reality suggests rejection, because in spite of Acosta culturally adapting to the American culture, this revelation exposes how his appearance is ultimately the final verdict on his actual belonging. Being disapproved by Americans settled a new identity consciousness in Acosta as “[he] internalized the radical realist U.S. mainstream culture and also [broke] free of such circumscribing narratives to come into a more complicated, multi-layered self” (Aldama 202). Acosta’s new consciousness recognizes his function as a proactive Chicano, while still rejecting his Mexican heritage. His self-rejection is reflective of being the recipient of rejection that is confined to a place of not belonging.

If during the time of Acosta’s identity crisis, the Chicana/o community declared unity as a mestizo culture, then his fitting was outside the domain of this belonging. Indigenous characteristics encompass the Chicana/o identity; however, Acosta rejected this trait. Even though he was a person of Mexican descent with a dark phenotypical appearance, he intentionally chose an American association. He attempted to disassociate from his Mexican heritage and identity by not speaking Spanish, in addition to seeking relationships outside of this

domain. Acosta's conflicting identity belonging provided him a sense of insecurity, uncertainty and perplexity as he chose one identity group and rejected the other. The Chicana/o community is built on acceptance of biculturalism, in addition to acknowledging an awareness to infuse that identity. As Chicanas/os can identify to many backgrounds, it poses inclusion for people without a permanent origin, which is what evidently allows Acosta acceptance in this community.

However, the people from Riverbank whom Acosta deemed as Chicanos rejected him for he was unfit in their community. In this community he was the "fat, dark Mexican—a Brown Buffalo—and [his] enemies called [him] a nigger" (Acosta 86). Acosta exclaims that perhaps if Black people lived in the community, *they* would have been called "niggers," but instead, he was considered the lowermost rank for his class and phenotypical appearance (Acosta 86). This statements provides insight of his familiarity with phenotypical classifications—where Black people are positioned at the bottommost level of rank. The comparison to this rank allows Acosta perspective on how low the Chicanos in his neighborhood placed him.

Marx denotes the idea of social unity as a feign association and not a realistic circumstance since ultimately there is no elimination of social alienation. Since the unity itself does not change institutionalizations of society, no effects on disunity are realized. Even so, alienation persists as individuals propose to value the common goods of the community above any personal goods, yet institutionally they serve to be competitive. Marx further states that since the state operates under a bourgeois system, there is minimal interest in elevating any social association, hereinto; the conditions of the people are the product of the bourgeois led state and remain unchanged. In this way, social agents in capitalism are inclined to endure a misconstruction of unity for the lack of agreement among the social class divisions, thus enabling social alienation.

## 2.5 Intra-ethnic Mexican Rejection

People of Mexican descent in the U.S. have several degrees of association with the lineage: “some trace their heritage in the southwest since before the Anglo-American migration, since before the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo,...[some] became *de facto* U.S. citizens in 1848 without ever immigrating,...[some] become so assimilated that they neither speak Spanish nor reflect any Mexican cultural norms,... some have come looking for economic opportunity and consider the U.S. something of a promised land” (Guajardo 13). These spectrums or degrees of Mexican association directly affect how individuals identify themselves, in addition to correlating to matters of race and class.

Acosta shares that he was raised in a Spanish-speaking household and did not know English upon entering school. The American kids and other Mexicans did not accept him, and this resulted into daily physical fights with both groups. While Acosta was an outcast among Mexicans, he also got in physical fights with people of other ethnicities for being viewed as Mexican. Acosta also grew up developing a sense for class and race distinctions as he witnessed community divisions within his region. The Mexicans in town were labeled as “greasers, spics and niggers...who lived on the West Side, across from the tracks, and had brown skin [where all the other Mexican lived],” where only “Mexicans, Okies and Americans” resided (Acosta 78). Lydia Otero explains that the necessity to separate living spaces or communities from the poor and ethnic neighborhoods symbolized prosperity, and “also reflected Anglo middle- and working-class families’ aspirations to maintain their own separate spaces away from people of color” (54). People considered the color of skin to be the “fastest and surest way of determining exactly who one is...it was simply a means of classification” (Acosta 86). He claims that White people never roamed the streets of his neighborhood. These experiences and observations led to

Acosta developing a deeper urge to disassociate with this ancestry. This is acknowledged when he mentions, “I hate for people to assume I’m an authority of Mexicans. Just because I’m a brown buffalo doesn’t mean I’m the son of Moctezuma, does it” (Acosta 101). Ultimately Acosta sets himself apart from his Mexican self, he manipulates and reconstructs his identity in order to better adapt in the dominant society that he so desires belonging to, yet still cannot obtain.

At the age of seven he stopped speaking Spanish because he was attending an “*American school*” where boys learn “*English*” and was warned that in order to continue his studies, he must only speak in English (Acosta 187). His abandonment of Spanish only became unfavorable following his search for belonging in Mexico. There the residents contemplated, “*pues, parece mexicano, pero quien sabe,*” and Acosta’s identity was once again challenged (Acosta 191). Consequently, by oppressing his Mexican ancestry and language, it denied him access to communication and that further positioned him in indeterminate state of self-identification. During Acosta’s search for closeness with his Mexican ancestry, he was reprimanded to “go home and learn to speak [his] father’s language” (Acosta 194). In the end, he concludes that both Spanish and English were languages of conquerors, thus reassuring him the need of appropriating a new identity, one that he calls “the Brown Buffalo people,” for those unfitting like him who belong to a liminal space. Guajardo quotes Alan Riding’s work of *Distant Neighbors: A Portrait of the Mexicans* (1986) to emphasize how Mexicans have deeply internalized between being conquered and conquering. In doing so, indigenous racial dispositions and distinctions are made, in addition to people speaking Spanish, performing the adopted religion, and identifying their origin in Spain. According to Guajardo, Mexico is preoccupied “with notions of heritage, lineage, and genealogy,” stressing fixation on

characteristics of skin color and physiognomy that enforce hierarchal measures (12). In this way, “different kinds of Mexicans,” develop for incompletely belonging to neither the American nor the Mexican society (Vila 63). While this should be favorably embraced, tensions arise and those reasons are attributable to rejections from fellow Mexicans.

## 2.6 Conclusion

Malintzin as a controversial figure in the Spanish conquest allows speculative observation. She is acknowledged for her imperative role of translation between the Spaniards and indigenous, while representing those who allied themselves with newcomers and organized against their own people. Malintzin’s communicative ability promoted her accessibility in the dominant society, yet was still measured as an exchangeable possession. Malintzin is typified as one of the figures that participated in the effectiveness of the conquest, while convicting her as an adversary among Mexicans. The disapproval of Malintzin oversees her abilities of lingual mediation, of overthrowing the ascribed hegemonic societal roles, in addition to the objectification and betrayal she undergoes from the rejection of both the indigenous and the Europeans. In this way, her portrayal of both a progressive and adverse image identifies her as characterizing the Other. In *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (1991), Octavio Paz articulates a Mexican identity to argue that it orients between the rejection of both the indigenous and a European colonial past, which further complicates an internal conflict of identity. Paz contends that the descendants of the indigenous and European, known as mestizos, further obscures the Mexican identity as Others, for they are “not defined except as the sons of a mother as vague and indeterminate as themselves” (75). This characterizes a distorted figure that embodies solitude and division.

Acosta's *The Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo* characterizes the production of the Other as he postulates dissimilarity among diverse groups, and exposes characteristics of alienation and rejection. The seeking of contentedness in temporary involvements such as participating in the Chicano Movement, traveling to Mexico for familiarity, or assimilating to Anglo American culture, resulted in disenfranchisement from all social identities. He denies association with common experiences and rejects belonging to any racial identity group by attempting to create a new one. He is frequently mistaken for other lineages, such as "American Indian, Spanish, Filipino, Hawaiian, Samoan and Arabian," and he adapts them, as they help him escape defining himself (Acosta 68). He never fully accepted a Mexican, Indian, Chicano, or American identity, he simply toggled with masks that seemed appropriate based on what was acceptable or approved. In this way, he was simply experimenting while actively avoiding his own self-realization. Conclusively, Acosta learns that he cannot change any one factor and become accepted, he is rejected in his totality as a person, "his ethnicity, skin color, class, and religion" (Acosta 50). Changing his name, his affiliations, and his masks cannot change his physical appearance. His autobiography is full of incongruities from beginning to end, representing those that writhe with identity labels, and revealing the effects of rejection and alienation. With each mask he chose, he sought belonging—whether it was to impress an Anglo American girl, to be a successful lawyer, a Chicano Movement activist, or a religious leader. This supports the conclusion that he was probing for a belonging in order to fulfill his personal advancement. Yet, what he discovers is that no matter how educated, how well he speaks English, how assimilate or not he is with different ethnic groups, the one factor that remains resolute—his skin color and physical appearance—is what ultimately disapproves him acceptance and render him otherness.

## CHAPTER II.

DECLASSED SKIN COLOR: ASSESSING CLASS, LANGUAGE, EDUCATION, AND  
POLITICS IN RICHARD RODRIGUEZ'S *HUNGER OF MEMORY***1. Introduction**

Through an understanding of theoretical deliberations on consciousness, power, and knowledge, and keeping in theme with the phenotypic hierarchical categorizations, this chapter highlights the power mechanics that structure social class, economic standing, and political positions. To emphasize the second study theme of class-consciousness and related factors of language, education, mobility, and politics, I evaluate the autobiography of Richard Rodriguez *Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez* (1982). I argue that as Rodriguez implements these social factors in accordance with dominant principles, it results in intra-racial and ethnic tensions that lead towards the formation of the Other. Even though education, assimilation, and social mobility ease institutionalized inequality for Rodriguez, he is divided among people of Mexican descent. The association of class-consciousness and racial awareness in the production of cultural and political relations is negotiated in his professional identity as he searches for belonging. The literary text provides elements that exemplify self and social alienation, individual struggle, and self-awareness in accordance with the characteristics that form the figure of the Other

Marx's theory of power relations as a resource that relies on material foundations is observed among Rodriguez and his family. As first-generation immigrants, Rodriguez's family develops an awareness of class-consciousness, and has adopted and internalized expectations of dominant ideologies in relation to racial categorizations. The family's intent to socially and culturally integrate prevents them from perceiving the actual nature of their social or economic

situation. This depicts them susceptible to the systematic interpretations of false consciousness. His family and the public criticize Rodriguez, whose physical appearance features indigenous traits, thus triggering the formation of unstable relational dynamics. This chapter details class as associated with skin color, immigration towards assimilation in the dominant mainstream, language adaptation as a representation of assimilation, education as the resource towards gaining access in the dominant sphere, and political disaffiliation among same group repertoires.

Similar to Stuart Hall's experiences, Richard Rodriguez discloses his educational trajectory of becoming an American in his autobiography. Rodriguez was raised in a Spanish-speaking home by Mexican immigrant parents and was in conflict with his identity, ethnicity and class. Rodriguez, as a "journalist, essayist, autobiographer, public intellectual, and television commentator," is accused of associating with the conservative party (Guajardo 1). He lived in San Francisco Bay area and attended "prestigious institutions: parochial schools, Stanford, Columbia, Berkeley, Union Theological Seminary, and the Warburg Institute in London," and zealously dedicated time to assimilating to the Anglo American culture (Guajardo 2).

Paul Guajardo, as a Chicano scholar who specializes in autobiography, intensely researched work on and from Rodriguez. Guajardo reports in *Chicano Controversy: Oscar Acosta and Richard Rodriguez* (1961), that later in life, Rodriguez worked as "an editor with the Pacific News Service, a contributing editor for *Harpers* and for *U.S. News and World Report*, and a weekly contributor to the *Los Angeles Times Opinion* section—[and] is one of the most visible Mexican-American intellectuals and writers... he is best known for his television essays and less so for his books and journalism" (70). However, scholars best know Rodriguez for *Hunger of Memory*, which was written as separate essays during the time he was a graduate student. Guajardo observes that Rodriguez wrote the book during his twenties, a time he claims

when people wrestle with concepts of identity, worry about pleasing others, about one's value, and position. Nonetheless, minority scholars "have been unanimously critical, if not scornful, of Rodriguez and his views on affirmative action, bilingual education, and cultural diversity" (Guajardo 70). In this way, Rodriguez's work is analyzed under the scope of criticism for his political affiliation. Guajardo identifies Rodriguez as the "whipping boy of many Chicano critics who have been unified in their negative appraisals of his work" (71). Nevertheless, Rodriguez's work has provided him acceptance in American mainstreams articles, journals, and magazines. The reason for this, says Guajardo, could be that American mainstreamers are generally unfamiliar with the cultural dynamics, therefore, exhibit a friendlier approach in their reviews.

Rodriguez begins his narrative stating, "I have taken Caliban's advice. I have stolen their books" (1). Evidently, Caliban is a figure in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1564-1616), who is an iniquitous island native, whose appearance is deformed and becomes enslaved by the new arrivals. Ellie Hernandez explains in *Postnationalism in Chicana/o Literature and Culture* (2009) that Rodriguez uses this character to "situate himself within the discourse of otherness" (150). Caliban epitomizes "the colonial condition of having to master the dominant language; an ambivalent relationship to the dominant language constitutes Caliban's role and his relationships of power that converge on the act of speech as power. In this sense, Caliban experiences the shameful act of speaking the dominant language, but Rodriguez, like Caliban, masters the language of those who subjugate him" (Hernandez 150). Hernandez further comments that as Rodriguez loses his private language, he becomes a defeated person, and disconnectedly does not acknowledge that by adopting the dominant language it overpowers his position. Yet Guajardo considers that ultimately, Rodriguez does not master any one language, instead "he remains isolated, aloof, and alienated from both cultures" (80). The Spanish language at home acclaimed

a belonging to the private and intimate life, “there was no sense of ‘otherness’ or inferiority (Guajardo 83). Yet, Rodriguez suffered a “pain of public alienation... [and] public separateness,” that further distinguished the public and private domains (Rodriguez 16). As soon as English became imminent for Rodriguez, there was a shift in feeling alienated from public to private domain. In this way, Spanish became a memory and representation of how much his life had changed.

Further warnings of estrangement manifested, for Rodriguez’s parents were unsuspecting of the particularities when choosing to live in a White community, but slowly they were made aware. Some neighbors snarled, “keep your brats away from my sidewalk,” and Rodriguez began noticing that he and his family members were the people who lived in the house “with the noisy dog...who raised pigeons and chickens,” they stood apart and “were the foreigners on the block” who did not belong (Rodriguez 11). Further inferences of not publically belonging surfaced especially when trying to communicate. Rodriguez began to distinguish languages—where English was for the “*gringos...los americanos*,” they were “the high sound of the American voices,” who “belonged in the public society” (Rodriguez 12). Meanwhile, Rodriguez and his family were quieted and softened—knowing that they “spoke English poorly” and could not “form complete thoughts” (Rodriguez 13). Rodriguez attempts to claim that he unnecessarily worried as a child about being embarrassed for the language barrier; yet, reverts to acknowledging as an adult, that it was a primary root to his insecurities and lack of initial progression.

## **2. Class and Skin Color**

Around the time of the U.S.-Mexico War, Anglo Americans were conscious of the liability to include Mexican elites even though they could control the region without their

cooperation. Many Mexican elites held high positions in the political spheres and this made Anglo Americans skeptical in providing statehood to the Southwestern territories. Mexican elites' however, used their political position as an avowal of their loyalty towards Anglo Americans. This political standing is one cause that led to the dividing of Mexican elites from other Mexicans and other minority ethnic groups such as Pueblo Indians of the region. As the war was ending, there were conflicts on the negotiations about how much land to take from Mexico because there were concerns about incorporating "too many Mexicans" (Gómez 42). The American goal was to get the most land from Mexico with the least amount of Mexicans. Eventually, Congress granted "white" citizenship to Mexicans, however, they remained regarded as second-class citizens, racially inferior to White Americans.

Mexicans in general were thought of incompetent of self-governing by White Americans simply for belonging to an inferior racial class. As some self-appropriated Mexican Americans and Mexican elites (Laura Gómez labels these Mexicans as the "progressive view") regarded themselves to a superior racial status (for having a Spanish background as conquerors of Indians), both groups—the "progressive" Mexicans and White Americans, were essentially discriminatory towards those they judged of an inferior class (52). Both purposively deduced White as superior and Mexicans as inferior. The conflict between "progressive" Mexicans and White Americans lies when Mexicans are not granted full citizenship with all rights ended. Ultimately, White Americans judged Mexicans as inferior for being a mixed group, regardless of their higher social class, education level, lighter skin color or any other factor Mexicans thought would raise their position as equals. Since their mixed blood was befouled with other inferior groups, naturally they possessed lower class qualities, such as drudgery attributes.

Rodriguez shares the common concerns many Mexicans maneuver, “self-identity, ethnic-identity, and class,” however, he claims to have accomplished a breakthrough with his education, as it advanced him to a middle class status (Guajardo 3). Yet, the incessant battle no education can bypass is his skin color—the primary component that differentiates him as an Other. For “many minorities—and those who do not meet the rigidly narrow definition of personal beauty found on the popularity of hair-dyes, colored contact lenses, cosmetic surgery... it seems, want to look different. Perhaps in *dyeing* their roots, they are in some way *denying* their roots” (Guajardo 73). Since Rodriguez was not raised in poverty, it takes experiences to learn how the color of his skin remains the determinate differing factor between races and social class. Slowly Rodriguez acknowledges that his dark skin “with severe Indian features” identifies him as an ethnic man, and “apart from mainstream America” (Rodriguez 1, Guajardo 82). He supposes that because of his noticeable “indelible color,” “White America” identifies him as “unchanged by social mobility” (Rodriguez 3). In this way, Rodriguez claims to be a “victim of two cultures” (4). Even though Rodriguez’s autobiography claims to tell his life as a “middle-class man,” it tells the life of a man who wrestles with becoming a middle-class man (Rodriguez 6).

In the private realm, Rodriguez’s mother emphasized the importance on skin pigmentation with anger, remorse, and frustrated scornful remarks stating, “you look like a *negrito*” (121). She worried that her son would suffer discrimination knowing that looks are important in the U.S. since that is what “*los gringos*” judge first (Rodriguez 121). His mother further warned that if he neglected to be careful with getting darker from the sun, he would soon “end up looking like *los pobres* who work in the fields, [like] *los braceros*”<sup>20</sup> (Rodriguez 121).

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<sup>20</sup> Richard Rodriguez describes *los braceros* as “those men who work with their *brazos*, their arms; Mexican nationals who were licensed to work for American farmers in the 1950s. They worked very hard for very little money, my father would tell me. And what money they earned they sent back to Mexico to support their families,

To Rodriguez, those dark men who resembled him appeared “powerful, powerless men. [With] fascinating darkness [like his],” but “feared” for what they represented (122). His mother deep-rooted skin-color preoccupation and constantly monitored his time spent outside for fear that Rodriguez would “end up looking just like them” (122). Even though Rodriguez does not grasp the political entailment of these comments at the time, he does gradually notice the differences in treatment within his family. Rodriguez observes that his family “suggests Mexico’s confused colonial past” for their differences in appearance (Rodriguez 122). His father has a white complexion (like a French man), his mother has an olive complexion (like an Italian or Portuguese), his older brother whose skin never darkens resembles his mothers, his younger sister is exotically pale (like an Eastern), and his older sister has a dark complexion (like a Polynesian) with “less harshly defined” facial features than himself (122). In comparison with his family, Rodriguez distinguishes that he is “the only one in the family whose face is severely cut to the line of ancient Indian ancestors,” he continues, “my face is mournfully long, in the classical Indian manner; my profile suggests one of those beak-nosed Mayan sculptures—the eaglelike face upturned, open-mouthed, against the deserted, primitive sky” (123). The differences in physical appearance were so noticeable that he was bestowed the nickname of *negrito* at home. Rodriguez expresses envy towards his brother for having skin that did not darken—skin like the *gringos*. Additionally, his brother came home with blonde girlfriends that Rodriguez perceived as glamorous, and unattainable to him.

Law Professor Kevin R. Johnson at U.C. Davis law school writes an autobiography titled, *How did You Get to be Mexican?: A White/Brown Man's Search for Identity* (1999), observing that the denial of dominant access relates to physical appearance. Fundamentally, Johnson

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my mother would add. *Los pobres*—the poor, the pitiful, the powerless ones. But paradoxically also powerful men. They were the men with brown-muscled arms I stared at in awe...” (121).

states, “dark-skinned or indigenous-looking Latinos have a socially constructed ‘race’ imposed on them” (Johnson 158). In the same way, lighter-skinned people and those with Anglo surnames have different experiences and choices. Since skin color cannot easily be changed, changing their last name is the next best option. Johnson’s skin color is olive-colored, his eyes are brown, and his hair is dark brown. Growing up with family members and in a community that replicated anti-Mexican sentiments complicated his identity formation. Even though people in his surroundings denied their Mexican ancestry, he found that by physical appearance, upbringing, and intimate memories, they all contributed to an incomplete assimilation process. At a time, he contemplated adding his wife’s surname Salazar to his name to cease the disquieting question of “How did you get to be Mexican” (Johnson 126). In the end, he acknowledged that complete assimilate is impossible, especially when the cost is denying ones family ancestry, accepting self-hatred, and discrediting what is right and true.

The obsession with whiteness in Rodriguez’s family was not only among immediate members. When women of the family gathered, they boasted about the pleasures of having light-skinned children. Even though the men of the family were dark-skinned from working outdoors, the women refrained from becoming dark-skinned and remarked about their fears of “having a dark-skinned son or daughter” (Rodriguez 124). To such worryment, the women exchanged remedies such as taking large doses of castor oil during pregnancy, regular egg white mixtures, and treatments with lemon juice concentrate. An aunt whose child was dark-skinned was referred to as “*mi feito*” (Rodriguez 125). Within the most intimate domain of his private life, Rodriguez becomes cognizant of the disapproval his family has towards darker-skinned people. This awareness internalizes a burden, and activates a negotiation to his belonging in the private sphere. Yet, the greatest conviction that resonated in Rodriguez was “the connection

between dark skin and poverty,” as he so often heard the “relegation of dark people to menial labor” (Rodriguez 126). Rodriguez considered these people to be “the great victims of racism” for they “were poor and forced to do menial work” (Rodriguez 126). This insolent way of speaking about dark skin became representative “of a life of oppressive labor and poverty” (Rodriguez 127). In this way, Rodriguez noticed—he took inventory of the dark people and their occupations—he observed that the garbage man was black, the house cleaner was Mexican, and the gardener was Mexican. Slowly, he was led to believe that because of skin color he was condemned to suffer the injustices of rejection and discrimination. His family provided him examples of how a dark-skinned person had slim chances of economically prospering for being dark. Consequently, it became part of Rodriguez’s conviction, to prevent this from becoming his reality.

As may be expected, even though Rodriguez’s family disfavors dark skin and appeals for lighter skin, they contradictorily convict “white” Mexican Americans who use their skin to promote themselves as Spanish. Rodriguez and his family were proud to call themselves Mexicans, who according to Guajardo, derives simply from a place of envy towards the white-skinned people. Rodriguez describes how his family would speak “scornfully of pale—white skin,” and described “a *gringo*’s skin [to resemble] *masa*—baker’s dough,” further adding that “they need to get sun because they look like *los muertos*” (Rodriguez 125). In such manner, it appeared as though his family members were proud to be Mexicans as they embraced their ancestry, when admittedly they privately adverted to depreciate dark skin. Rodriguez’s parents persistently claimed to differentiate themselves as belonging to a superior middle-class. Henceforth, his parent’s familiarity with the racial hierarchy was apparent, especially for how they spoke about Black people, referring to them as remnant beings that Americans mistreated

the most. With additional claims of “*pobres negros*”—who were equally just as susceptible to discrimination as dark Mexicans for “what chances could [they] have,” since they were just as expendable to Anglo Americans, claiming that there is “no life for [them] here” (Rodriguez 127). For this reason, Rodriguez’s parents echoed their fears of denudation in the Anglo American domain. In attempts to maintain their hierarchal positionality among their own people, they demarked class distinctions with those with no education, no citizenship, and dark skin for being most predisposed to inequality.

The more it became evident to Rodriguez that his skin color was a perturbing feature, the more he became insecure about his appearance. Rodriguez states, “my complexion is dark. (My skin is brown. More exactly, terra-cotta in sunlight, tawny in shade. I do not redden in sunlight. Instead, my skin becomes progressively dark; the sun sings the flesh)” (121). He began to see himself as unattractive with a repulsive body that perhaps he could change. At around eleven or twelve years of age, Rodriguez locked himself in the bathroom, looked in the mirror and began hearing the decrying commentary from his family. He soaped his arms, used a razor, and determinedly put the blade on his flesh with intent to shave off the brown. After failing, disappointedly, he consents to having his dark skin, which settles as “trapped. Deep in the cells of [his] skin” (Rodriguez 134). However, he remains self-conscious and continues to assess himself as “ugly,” and by the age of thirteen, he “grew divorced from [his] body” (Rodriguez 134, 135). As messages from family in the private domain rendered as disorient, the messages from the outside were indubitably clear. As an adolescent, others would casually vociferate affronts to Rodriguez of “hey, greaser! Hey, Pancho...I pee on dirty Mexicans” (Rodriguez 125). Later as an adult, his public awareness deepened when people believed the complexion of his skin to be by choice. These comments came when visiting European countries and the wealthy

guests that lodged for leisure at his hotel would ask if “[he had] been skiing... [or] in the Swiss Alps...[or on] a Caribbean vacation” (Rodriguez 121). Eventually, he denied his body the pleasure of excitement and became content with only imagining it. He privately observed the *braceros*, the construction workers, the janitors, the gardeners that resembled him and coveted their unrestrained life of freely working outside, without the fear of veiling from the sun. The color of his skin socially dispositioned him as a laborer worker; therefore, even though he distinguished himself different from the dark-skinned laborers, the comments made in the both domains ingrained an innermost sense of self-rejection for inescapably labeling him as the same for the color of his skin.

The freedom from labor, Marx would denote as a resourceful form of power. This power however is limited, and concentrated among certain groups of people, mainly the ruling class who unconsciously become instruments in the economic processes. Rodriguez’s perception that the workers are free is a form of false consciousness. Rodriguez is conscious about the workers undesirable working conditions from the remarks of his family. However, his experiences of private and public rejection lure him into internalizing a form of false consciousness. In this way, the emotional grievances Rodriguez entails for his skin color, subject him to a misleading reality. As Rodriguez assumes that their labor provides the workers freedom, it ensures the implemented ideologies of guaranteeing subordination. In this context, the power of this perceived freedom is actually repressive and translates in the loss of freedom. For the workers are obscured from the truth of their condition. Rodriguez’s family is conscious of these material conditions; however, the family associates the workers circumstances to their skin color. Rodriguez acknowledges that he cannot escape the color of his skin, for this reason he privately desires their masked freedom instead.

### 3. Immigration and Assimilation

The idea of Americanization or an American way of life conditions priorities and normalizes ideologies. According to Marx, material possessions determine life, thus providing consciousness on culture. In this way, material productions explain social conditions that become ideas then ideologies. The ruling class holds the power in distributing ideologies onto the working class, thus, shaping the way in which consciousness assembles. This construction is understood by knowledge serving as a resource to power, that is formed by the interests of those in power. The American way of life, under Marx's understanding, is powered on a false promise that is manipulated for the maintenance of the higher class. Determining how the ideologies shape in the context of the American way of life suggests an awareness of the social order among racial and ethnic groups.

As income wages of Mexicans increase and occupational dissimilarities from Anglos decrease, the more likely they are to choose a White identity (Massey 1992). Studies have indicated that second generation Mexican Americans are completing higher levels of employment due to their education (Waldinger 2004). Even though statistically their levels of attainment may be lower in comparison to Whites, it implies that second generation Mexicans do not always fulfill the predicted downward assimilation. Equally, it is found that second generation Mexican Americans extended the process of racialization that delays continual advancement in professional attainment for their subsequent generations (Telles 2008). This more positive view is known as neoclassical assimilation. This assimilation theory is explained by Eric Fong in *Immigration and the City* (2017) to state that with education, immigrants and their successive generations will “successfully assimilate into mainstream society and experience upward mobility relative to their parents,” however, this theory varies depending on the ethnic

group (Fong 84). On another note, if the group repudiates the mainstream society, it “often translates into less investment in education” (Fong 84). Since race is an undeniable factor in the discussion of migration, it is simply incorporated among other factors as a shifting contributor (Alba 2003). An example of this incorporated shift is the application of hyphenated identities to be seen as more racially inclusive and multicultural. Kevin R. Johnson adds to the discussion of race relations claiming that as a son of a Mexican American mother and Anglo American father, he has always classified himself as Mexican American. However, because of the contrast between his appearance and his name, this has deeply grounded the complexity of race relations and accountability throughout his life. Johnson experienced continuous “racial rumblings,” and was regularly reminded that he would not have a respectable profession if he were not Mexican American (2). While Johnson has professionally assimilated into American mainstream, he argues that complete assimilation is far from accessible. As the U.S. and especially the Southwestern Border States are in constant disagreements on issues of immigration and citizenship, immigrants and people of all Mexican ancestry are at risk of scrutiny.

Additionally, it is reported, “children of immigrants are more likely to identify as white than their immigrant parents” (Gómez 160). This again may be due to education raising their economic standpoint and altering their political views. When considering time reference, Mexican Americans of the third and greater generations in the late twentieth century were living during a time of extreme rejection towards foreign minority groups and policies such as anti-immigrant, anti-minority, and Proposition 187 imbued the Southwest. This upheaval triggered Mexicans to respond by either embracing their Mexican heritage, or espousing American assimilation. In some cases, this rebuttal of Mexican rejection seeped into their interest towards an American education.

Rodriguez's parents both migrated to the U.S. with an optimistic view of opportunistically prospering. Rodriguez perceives his parents as coping well in America, "they were nobody's victims," he says (Rodriguez 10). His family's residential area was predominantly white and even though they accidentally settled there; observably they were "many blocks from the Mexican south side of town" (10). This implied that Rodriguez and his family were in a better economical standing than other Mexicans since they were able to deviate from the syndicated community. Nevertheless, his father was a menial worker, took employment in a factory, did cannery work, and worked at a warehouse. Before arriving to the U.S., his father had dreams of living in Australia; however, he fell in love with Rodriguez's mother and stayed in America. After marriage and before having children, his parents would primp up; attend polo matches and the Opera House every week. Then one day, his father's life became one of only work, and he no longer attended events or dressed exceptionally. Those jobs enervated his father—"they made me an old man before my time," he remarks (Rodriguez 130). By the time Rodriguez and his siblings were born, his parents could no longer "try to fit themselves, like paper-doll figures, behind trappings so foreign to their actual lives," for their bodies had become exhausted from the "hard life-time of working" (Rodriguez 130, 131). In the same way, his mother had shortened her hair, "her shoulders were thick from carrying children. Her fingers were swollen red, toughened by housecleaning" (Rodriguez 131). Yet his parents continued longing for belonging in their community and aligning with the American way of life. Knowing the intricacies of race and class, his parents objected that their children take on side jobs for neighbors or acquaintances—particularly if the jobs were "do[ing] light housework in the afternoons... [or] mowing their lawns" (Rodriguez 128). Worried, his mother altercationed "why did they ask *you*," and reminded them that they were not "maids" and that they should never take

jobs that required a uniform (Rodriguez 128). However, they were all forced to relinquish, for they were in need of the money. In this way, the relationship between economic progress and immigration tends to increase cultural and racial tensions because it enforces ideologies of Americanization of Mexicans with the hopes of making them more “efficient and productive workers” (García 69). As it may be obvious, it is not mentioned that Americanization is expected in order for people to function better as equal citizens, but as workers belonging to an inferior class who are expected to remain on the bottom of the social scale. Mexicans were paid in low wages and since it was anticipated that they rarely become someone of a supervisor position, it was assumed that they lacked ambition and ability. Being that Mexicans were generally viewed as an inferior class and race, it is not surprising that they were also considered culturally disadvantaged.

Notably, having chosen a more desirable residential area did not clear Rodriguez and his family from differentiation. For Rodriguez, not linguistically assimilating meant still pertaining to the “ghetto” (Rodriguez 14). In his community, Rodriguez observed that speaking Spanish, the language that was foreign to the public implied speaking the language of the “Mexican past [that] sounded in counterpoint to the English of public society,” additionally realizing that it was a “ghetto Spanish” that his family spoke (Rodriguez 11, 14). Spanish was the familial language, the one spoken at home, while English was the American language, which was spoken poorly by his family. Since young, Rodriguez began distinguishing these differences by the spoken sounds. For Rodriguez, when *gringos* spoke English it was “exotic polysyllabic sounds...high sound...booming with confidence” (Rodriguez 12). Whereas his parent’s English was “hesitant, accented, not always grammatical English,” with “their high-whining vowels and guttural consonants; their sentences that got stuck with ‘eh’ and ‘ah’ sounds; the confused syntax; [and]

the hesitant rhythm of sounds” (Rodriguez 11,13). Assimilation in this way refers to the individuality of certain groups in relation to the rest of society, as well to the succeeding changes that make these differences disappear with time. Milton Gordon suggests that the distance between an immigrant group and the dominant zone or a “mainstream” space is appropriated when using terms such as “cultural,” “structural,” “attitude-receptional,” and “behavioral-receptional” (Gordon 72). These terms are respectively alternated or supplemented to discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping. Additionally, these repertoires are commonly grouped together for sharing interrelated characteristics, such as sociocultural change and structural integration. For Rodriguez’s parents, having verbal difficulties was not an urgent matter to integration as they limitedly managed to communicate—as a matter of fact, once the children learned enough English words, they were sent to run the errands that required its use. Eventually, Rodriguez detached himself of the comfort from the Spanish sounds and his parents—for they separated him from the world he desired belonging to. Mindedly, even though the Spanish language sounds signified safety and family, English was symbolic of having an outside public identity.

Rodriguez’s educational advancement provided him opportunities that distinguished him from other Mexicans, especially Mexican immigrants. Some advantages he acknowledges are being able to advocate for himself, as he could now “act as a public person—able to defend [his] interests, to unionize, to petition, to speak up—to challenge and demand” (Rodriguez 148). Rodriguez scrutinized the defining details of people who never did “real work,” he inspected the condition of their hands, having soft hands identified a labor-free person (Rodriguez 137). As his own hands were soft—they symbolized the distinction between him and *los pobres*, *los braceros*, and Mexican laborers. Another equally noted determinant was the person’s alliance

with the sun. While the labor worker does not have the freedom to choose the degree of exposure to the sun, they do exercise the freedom to “violate the taboo of the sun” (Rodriguez 135). As their skin became and maintained its dark color, the workers remained contradistinguished. However, by keeping their employment as a laborer and positionality in the workforce, the sun became a collaborator whose intensity was an unimportant factor. Marx argues that labor workers seem free; however, they are forced to work, and are actually bound by employers. The labor is generated by the economy; therefore, employers maintain their position of power as long as the mode of production or economy does not change.

Once Rodriguez began college at Stanford, he took notice to the many students who were “accustomed to leisured life in the sun” as they “lay spread out, sunbathing... reading... play[ing] tennis or [riding] horses or sail[ing]... [and] dressed in tank-tops and shorts... strapless dresses... [all with] physical confidence” (Rodriguez 140). Still a prey to the sun, Rodriguez remained cognizant of his own skin color, stayed out of the sun and avoided mirrors. This kept him from recognizing himself too much as he witnessed the “Mexican-American janitors and gardeners working on campus” (Rodriguez 140). According to Lacan, Rodriguez’s encounter with his mirror image should have matched with how he perceived himself. The early development of the mirror stage is a representation of the self; however, like the infant who does not correspond to his experiences, Rodriguez cannot associate the mirror image as himself. His experiences and new ideologies have shaped his new social identity, therefore rendering him as a complex self-image. Lacan labels this as exemplary function to explain how the mirror image misaligns with the experience of the subject. In this way, the gap between Rodriguez’s image and his actual self will continue to disrupt his experiences and existence. Furthermore, in his younger years, Rodriguez was anxious about his skin color, though, as he ascended in his studies, he

circumvented the topic of his physical features that continued to “single him out as *other*” (Gujardo 90). Constantly “he attempts to convince himself that he is not different, that he is assimilated, that he accepts himself fully” (Gujardo 90). In this way, his education serves him as a voucher that could bypass the acceptance and rejection of his body, thinking that he could mask its skin color and appear different from the Mexican laborers.

After deciding that the first generation of Mexicans articulated many inferior attributes, school officials laid focus and took pride in Americanizing the proceeding generations instead. Rodriguez was subject to this in school as his teachers persistently made him stand up in front of the classroom to speak English, leaving emotions of feeling “dazed, diffident, [and] afraid” (Rodriguez 19). It was a strategy used to breakthrough from being silent, to having a classroom voice. Rodriguez saw this as transitioning from being a disadvantaged child and belonging in the private, to finally belonging in the public. The schools focus was to acculturate and Americanize the children in American institutions. Unfortunately, this caused a formation of “inter-generational cultural tensions among the Mexican population and between Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants” (García 77). Rodriguez agrees with the system of Americanization because it predates prosperity and secures what is rightfully his—being an American citizen. For Rodriguez, there is no attainment in detainment, because as soon as he and his siblings became confident in being an American, even his parents were liberated from the private sphere. Soon after, the word *gringo* took a different tone, whereas before it was “charged with the old bitterness or distrust...the word simply became a name for those Americans not of Hispanic descent” (Rodriguez 22). In this way, Rodriguez recognizes himself and others like him, as being American, and even though there is loss involved, it is still a preferred condition than the confinement of a private unprogressive life.

This process of Americanization is ongoing because of the continuous flow of Mexicans into the U.S. Sonia Nieto states her support in “Black, White, and Us: The Meaning of Brown v. Board of Education for Latinos,” to state that Americanization was a method used to preserve the political and economic subordination in the Mexican American communities. It was not unusual to encounter schools that were integrated by social class. Some difficulties migrants dealt with involved: language inadequacies, general unacquaintedness with customs, expectations from the new country, limited economic opportunities, poor housing conditions, discrimination, and the stresses of acculturation. It is believed that adaptive strategies by new immigrants reflect their experiences and are determinants of the pace of how well they assimilate and be successful. In *Hunger of Memory*, these difficult factors in assimilating began with the arrival of Rodriguez’s parents as immigrants, who came with optimistic views of advancing, to facing the harsh reality of having to adapt on their economical standing. This astringent adaptation collectively transcended to Rodriguez and his siblings in their trajectory towards assimilation. Conversely, when assimilating too quickly, it leads to consequences, for it will result in an “acute maladjustment” for attempting to rapidly acclaim a new identity. Most commonly students will still be marginalized in the academic mainstreams in addition to being in conflict with their family’s social identity (Valenzuela 93). An additional recognizable form of assimilation is the linear pattern, which indicates that cultural integration is normalized in subsequent immigrant generations, which lead to a mollified assimilation. Linear assimilation is understood as social mobility that is subject to diverse immigrant groups that arrived in the early periods of the twentieth century. However, as observed through history, it can be acclaimed that this linear assimilation was not consistent. This inconsistency in immigrant groups shifted when the social class of the immigrant group was factored in as they incorporated in the mainstream

(Greenman 2008). Other factors taken into consideration are those associated with skin color, ethnicity and minority status (Zhou 1997). In this way, Mexican assimilation invokes a greater awareness of racial and cultural differences and is intensified as people are reminded of their racial inferiority by the dominant Anglo race. The argument states that as Mexicans become more assimilated, educated, and gain different perspectives of the American racialized order, they simultaneously become more aware of their nonwhite status (Stokes-Brown 2012). This treatment leads to resource mobilization and antagonism with American society (Massey 1992).

Alternatively, even when acculturation occurs, the Mexicans belonging to the first generation continued practicing their familial traditions. These included their language, folklore, food, superstitions, songs and religion, expressing their national and rural origins. One way that the incoming immigrants are able to endure their beliefs of improvement in the new country is by “visiting their villages of origin and displaying their wealth conspicuously (showing off new trucks, good clothes, and spending money...)” (Trueba 255). Those that have assimilated without jeopardizing a loss of language or identity can serve as role models within the minority communities. In this way, they exemplify someone who has fully acculturated, attained higher education and achieved economic success, while still maintaining true to their identity. This reasoning relates to “the assimilation forces that are countered with resistance against symbolic domination of the superordinate group,” thereby imposing a self-consciousness of identity and affirmation (Gonzalez 132).

#### **4. Language Appropriation**

Language is a crucial factor in the process of identification as it intertwines with culture and social group solidarity. Rodriguez expresses his challenges with learning English as a frustrating experience that ultimately resulted in the abandonment of Spanish to pursue the total

immersion towards a monolingual English education. He reasoned the abdication of Spanish in order to enter the “public society,” the society he deemed as legitimately functional and progressive (Rodriguez 27). As soon as he mastered the English language, Rodriguez exhibited a transformation in identity “from the private person of the home-centered Mexican culture to the public assimilated man of the Anglo society” (Saldívar 27). The personal adaptations made in his private life, such as abandoning his native language, changing his name from Ricardo to Richard, and disowning his family, were representative of his journey towards Americanization in the public domain. Rodriguez’s insistency in advancing academically and abscond from his private identity, was a way to change his public life and conceal his private life. This life was one of struggle, where his Mexican immigrant parents spoke the language that for him represented the uneducated, and one of daily interaction among those whose focus was placed on monetary survival. In this way, for Rodriguez, Spanish was the clandestine language, while English was the language of progress and success, the one that would embrace him in the public sphere. Rodriguez’s, affiliative masks interchanged from the private and public sphere, encompassing multi-layered relationships, and through language he was able to regenerate himself.

It is found that as Mexicans move upward in social mobility, they disassociate more with their ethnic communities. Among Mexican immigrants, the level of adaptation of English abilities measures the degree of acculturation in U.S. society, however among Mexican Americans; it indicates a degree of isolation from their ethnicity. Mexican Americans who speak English are more likely to have greater knowledge of their own disadvantaged status and therefore, have developed a consciousness of racialization. The likelihood of sharing a neighborhood with Anglos rises as education increases, when married to a non-Mexican, and as

English language ability improves (Massey 1992). In this way, spatial integration is said to be linked to class mobility and language for the reasons that English ability measures intra-racial acculturation (Alba 1997). Relatedly, Kevin R. Johnson shares that he does not speak Spanish because his mother, who speaks Spanish herself, wanted her children to properly assimilate. She viewed speaking Spanish as an educational disablement. His maternal grandmother and mother were “two of the most ardent Mexican American assimilationists you would ever want to meet” (Johnson 9). To fulfill assimilation, both married Anglo American men and claimed to be Spanish, not Mexican. Johnson explains that claiming a Spanish heritage was common among those with an anti-Mexican outlook. Claiming a Spanish ancestry permitted them access to claiming White. In this way, both women were familiar with the racial hierarchies that existed in southern California, and their response was to “convince people that they were not Mexicans” (Johnson 56). Furthering their efforts to claiming White and Spanish origins, the women spoke an Anglicization of their Spanish surnames. Assimilation also entailed the appropriation of the dominant society’s racial attitudes. This meant that subsequent generations should also marry White. They did not accept Mexicans, and especially immigrants, who they referred to as wetbacks. However, he claims, they never succeeded, and they “suffered immensely in the effort,” for all of those family members they pressed to assimilate, and who obtained higher education and university titles—no one has ever been completely accepted in American mainstream (Johnson 9). Additionally, the Anglo Americans in the family would continuously chastise these women, making comments such as, “get off it. You’re a Mexican like the rest of them,” thus never completely allowing their access (Johnson 57). Shared perhaps with a sarcastic tone, Johnson’s grandmother was killed by a car on her way to the store, to which now family members state that she was run over “by some Mexican wetbacks” (Johnson 58).

Johnson is convinced that the pain and suffering and psychological traumas of depression that his mother endured were jointly related to her “assimilation experience and her efforts to be ‘white’” (Johnson 61). The lifelong pressures she lived instilled a permanent contradiction—“the Mexican American one she was born into and the white one she strived to join” (Johnson 61). Even though his mother’s outcome is extreme, internal conflicts still arise when the dominant culture places pressures of assimilation that come with limitations on that admittance.

Rodriguez began disassociating with his family for their Spanish language use—the culture that brought him shame and embarrassment, and gradually approached an association with the English language and with “*gringos*,” those who “belonged in the public society,” with “Americans voices” (Rodriguez 12). The appropriation of English and abandoning of Spanish came with consequences; Rodriguez labels himself a “victim to a disabling confusion” (Rodriguez 28). Spanish became a language he verbally understood, but could not pronounce—creating a disability of guilt for he acknowledged the loss of his gain. He was continuously reminded of this loss when being around Spanish-speaking friends and relatives. With the abandoning of Spanish, Rodriguez began to lose confidence in his abilities and responded to Spanish questions with English, and was told, “we want you to speak to us in Spanish” (Rodriguez 28). Aversely Rodriguez was unable to respond, so then he was called a “*pocho...mi pochito*,” in a sometimes playful, teasing and diminutive way. However, Rodriguez learned that sometimes *pocho* was used in a mockingly and offensive way, to identify the “Mexican-American who, in becoming an American, forgets his native society” (Rodriguez 29). In Rodriguez’s case, *pocho* was a label given by Mexicans who accusingly shook their head at the disgrace towards those with the inability to speak the language, or rather “*su propio idioma*,” the language of their ancestors (Rodriguez 29). In this way, both groups reject each other and

distance infiltrates the association with the groups. For Rodriguez, people who use language as the source for close association are those who are vulnerable to the merchant or the politician, since language is a factor of profitable source to gain ground. For the merchant or politician, language is means by which negotiations can be made at a familial or trusting level. Likewise, if people condemn each other for language inadequacies, it serves as an approach to isolate some, and integrate others. For Rodriguez, other Mexicans were responsible for intimately isolating him, rejecting him, and for criticizing his inability to linguistically appropriate.

Rodriguez was raised in a middle-to-upper class neighborhood and attended a Roman Catholic school. His education and language learning experience differed from most second generation Mexicans. In the learning environment, Rodriguez believes that not knowing English was the factor that set him apart—not exclusively the fact that he was a colored minority. Rodriguez perceived himself as socially disadvantaged due to his parents' social and educational position, not for a lack in his own capabilities. Rodriguez recalls that his schoolteachers conducted an inclusive and persuasive approach in his academic excelling, and he later came to appreciate and admire them much more than his own parents. During the time that Rodriguez had difficulties with accessing English at school, he describes himself as “unsmiling, ever watchful, [and] his teachers noted [his] silence,” and his disinclined behavior was soon connected with his retrogression with English (Rodriguez 19). Shortly, three nuns came to speak with his parents about integrating English in the home to facilitate the English learning development. Since his parents revered the American way for their family, subsequently, without regard after the nuns exit, they fulfilled the request and instructed their children to speak to them in English. Once his family agreed to put effort in engaging one another in English, a shift began to take place. Slowly his parents abandoned Spanish in the presence of their

children, and it became the surreptitious language in the private. Not only was there a shift in the familial demeanor at home, but with the parents, who were more reticent in adopting English. Rodriguez and his siblings were at a loss of words for they could no longer address their parents in the intimate language.

Social function comprises language and culture—and is consequently susceptible to hegemonic ideologies. Such ideologies are secured when a superior group creates a consensus to convince the inferior group to accept specific norms as a replacement to their own ideology. Hegemonic principles need to be supported by the inferior group, for this reason, any impositions will be offered as an elevation of their betterment by the superior group. Policy changes that involve the enforcement of the English language for example, adjust the structure of communities, social networks and identity dynamics. These types of policies reveal the outlooks of superior groups who are willing to execute changes without considering how the consequences affect individuals, their communities, and social networks as a whole. Speech communities have belief systems about their language, social identity and network—any imposed repressions will affect the maintenance and transmission of their social function. As the superior group towards bilingualism and multinationalism intensifies negative objections and attitudes, individuals will be affected not only by observable language separateness, but also by intra-ethnic conflicts. For communities in the Southwest, a standard language belief is coupled with a monolingual ideology, thus excluding large communities of minority groups. Consequently, people of minority groups are compelled to choose, thereby affecting their day-to-day interactions, community, social networks to ultimately reinforce intra-ethnic complications.

Moreover, not deviating from ones cultural ties is linked with beliefs of having cultural deficiencies. In the educational system, the lack of success is allotted to those who exhibit

“cultural deficiencies... language handicap... dependency and a lack of success orientation [that] lead[s] directly to problems” (Barrera 177). Many times these deficiencies can be self-proclaimed, but are mostly inculcated by a system, in this degree, to the educational system for assuming that those members, who appertain to a lower social economic scale, bear the label of “cultural[ly] disadvantage[d],” thence instantly terming them as insufficient (Barrera 177). In this way, economic deprivation is merged with incompetence and inability, thus producing an inferior and insecure complex. This product of an inferiority complex worsens in school performance as feelings of inadequacy develop. Additionally, this notion of language incompetence and deficiencies, is further elaborated by Richard Valencia who labels it as “deficit thinking,” which was developed on the ideology that victims are blamed rather than holding the oppressor as culpable (Valencia 81). Unfortunately, this population is a minority because “it occupies some form of subordinate power position in relation to another population within the same country or society” (Ogbu 162). This mindset is based on the idea that those students belonging to the low socioeconomic status fail in school because they have internal deficits that hinder their learning process, thus blaming the victim instead of the ways in which the schools and the political economy operate.

Even though Rodriguez’s family had agreed to adopt English in the private domain to academically advance, not all members succeeded. When once Rodriguez suffered the labels of “cultural deficiencies” in the American domain, the same signs of linguistic subsidiary developed and were evident in his father. His father’s role shifted significantly when English was introduced, he became “reconciled to the new quiet... retired into silence... [and] spoke very little” (Rodriguez 24). After being bantered for his English pronunciation while saying grace at the dinner table, he forfeited his position and had his wife speak thereafter—in all

occasions. After a while, the family became “accustomed to his silence,” so much so that “they would speak routinely of his shyness” (Rodriguez 24). However, Rodriguez observed that he was not shy or voiceless when speaking in Spanish. It was evident that his father had not adopted English as his own language. The integration of English among the family produced a loss in the private domain. Rodriguez’s deficiency with English in the public had not affected the intimacy of his family in the private. However, when English became attained in the public and transferred in the private, intimacy suffered, in addition to any relationship with whoever chose to not adopt the language. Managing English was the determining factor towards inducting an inclusive American identity, which was ultimately the goal. Furthermore, as Rodriguez became more comfortable in his English language abilities, the more independent he grew from his family. He no longer projected anxiety in the linguistic differences inside and outside the home, he did however, remain conscious of his parents accents when he was with them in public.

English language adaptation commonly creates distances among older Mexican generations (De Genova 2005). This shows that intra-racial social distance increases among generations even as Mexicans continue to immigrate (Macias 2004). However, the continued immigration also contributes to the racialization of the identities formed of successive generations. Equally, those members of later generations may also racialize those new incomers as not being able to relate to their lower social status, ethnicity, language, and/or class, consequently allocating intra-racial tensions. In those cases where successive Mexican generations do succeed in educational and occupational attainment, an upward socioeconomic mobility is also present. U.S. born Mexicans tend to prosper as they become educated and acquire language proficiency, henceforth doing as well as White Americans (Waldinger 2004).

This allows for inclusion in the White dominant society and allows for comparability in native born Mexican Americans and Whites when taking education and wage structure into account (Fry 2006).

Equally important is the aftereffect of an inferior complex and the likelihood of internalizing rejection whilst seeking acceptance. Rejection leads the urge to belong, in this case, to a normalized setting. Such “normal” setting is determined by the success the ethnic group has on “becoming incorporated into majority society (a goal whose desirability is unquestioned) is the value or ‘norms’ which the group brings to bear on the general social circumstances it faces” (Omi 21). The acceptability of the group is not calculated by any differences in status, but “internal to the group” (Omi 21). Omi gives an example of this internal judgement to say that if a Chicano were to fall short in school; it cannot be due to deficient education, but instead to Chicano values. The defense to this statement is that “Jews and Japanese Americans did well in inferior schools, so why can’t other groups?” (Omi 21). The progress of this judgment is correlated to non-white minorities as they are bundled into a pool of marginal chagrin-labeled people. The clustering of ethnic groups depreciates the right to diversely identify oneself when considering differences in national origin, language, and/or cultural differences. On the premise of these combined characteristics, a systemization takes part in defining the limitations and advancements of a racialized ethnic group. When differences are noted, hierarchal tendencies arise, and one group is deemed more privileged over the other. Those who belong to the lower order are more likely to internalize an inferiority complex. While other former minority groups are accepted, Mexicans continue to be at an indeterminate state of acceptance and are still unsure about their racial identity. Gómez attests that recently “there has been a growing rejection of White status among Mexican Americans, even as some of them

continue to embrace whiteness as a route to social equality in the United States” (150).

Mexicans encompass both White and non-white statuses and their preferred claim is circumstantial on the characteristics of ethnicity.

Relatedly, it is historically reported that Anglos and Mexicans were segregated in workplaces. Anglos either had elite positions, or were laborers who were purposely segregated from Mexican workers. Being segregated kept people from verbally interacting, such as not having to actively learn one another’s language. This environment vindicated the cultural and lingual distancing:

“Language thus became a significant barrier to inter-racial social interaction. Indeed, the newer Euro-American immigrants’ refusal to learn Spanish became an important symbol of their resistance to acculturating and accommodating to the region’s Mexican majority. This can be seen as both a product and a cause of anti-Mexican racism on the part of Euro-Americans, for it meant that Euro-Americans’ deep-seated prejudices were likely to go unchallenged by social interactions or friendships that crossed racial lines. The persistence of language barriers conspired to cement racial divisions that continued well into the twentieth century in many communities.” (Gómez 85)

As Mexicans are associated to an inferior social class for their physical attributes and their economic status, predictably so is their spoken language. Being that Spanish is the language spoken in Mexico and the cultural indicator for many communities in the U.S., its use is “part of a local hegemonic discourse invoking both national and ethnic classifications systems” that undeniably creates conflicts in establishing an identity (Vila 83). Language is “a marker of displacement and reclamation, a marker of self-identity and self-empowerment. It is also a way

of manifesting history with every word. The presence of Spanish is a presence through history of discrimination and exploitation. Every Spanish word represents a refusal to capitulate to English ethnocentricity” (Pérez-Torres 227). Experiences that the Mexican community faces, creates a complex setting in which they must redefine themselves in the United States, thus leading to the rejection of their own family, language and culture. Another influence that hinders their advancement is the educators and adults perspective on the students attire, falsely agreeing that “the way youth dress, talk, and generally deport themselves ‘proves’ that they do not care about school” (Valenzuela 61). Consequently, this perception causes an emotional withdrawal from the school system, therefore, leading to students withdrawing from school. As student’s position in the mainstream does not improve, this will politicize them into intentionally conveying a negative attitude as a form of resistance, not only towards education, but also towards attitudes of the schooling system itself. Unfortunately, an educators commitment to these preconceptions “is equivalent to cultural genocide”, and students are expected to culturally disparage and to “de-identif[y]” (Valenzuela, 94).

Moreover, even though border communities experience a high population of Spanish speakers, not necessarily does this confirm that the language is surviving. Though there is evidence that the language maintenance is influenced by the migration of arriving Spanish speaker, more commonly it is found that by the third generation a partial or complete shift towards English has occurred (Silva-Corvalán 1997); (Gonzalez 2011). Therefore, without the constant arrival of Spanish speakers, the language would be more in jeopardy of a complete shift to English. This transition of languages is commoved by policies that are organized with the purpose to ‘Americanize’ the country, and this signifies a change of the mother tongue to the dominant language with the intentions to maintain English (Wright 2007); (Duff 2008). Policies

such as Bilingual Education Act (BEA) of 1994, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) of 2001, and Limited English Proficient (LEP) of 2002, are examples of impositions towards the linguistic shift towards English, without taking into consideration the significance or the importance they have in the long run (Wright 2007; Wiley 2004; Merino, 1993). In fact, the idea of assimilating to the dominant group and its language consists of denigration or an alternation in the dynamics of a person's identity, their community and their social networks.

### **5. Education and Mobility**

While Mexicans are the fastest growing ethnic group of the United States, they are considered the most poorly educated. Gándara states in *The Latino Education Crisis: The Consequences of Failed Social Policies* (2009) that for more than three decades no progress has been made in moving “students successfully through college,” suggesting “that what we have been doing to close achievement gaps is not working” (Gándara 24). This leads to some of the early gaps of why Mexicans are more likely to belong to the poorest class of citizens. In comparison with all other developed nations of the world, unfortunately, the United States provides the weakest safety net for low-income people. Trueba claims, “that there is a close correlation between family poverty and children's educational levels, and between educational and economic development in a country” (Trueba 254).

Mexicans within the economic, political and cultural geography have a worsened standpoint and the state no longer invests in solving social problems. On the contrary, it punishes those who are on the bottom of its economic policies. Along these lines, punishment, incarceration, and surveillance represent the face of the new state. While this is damaging for the present and future of today's Mexican youth, it is even more detrimental when the youth belongs to a minority group that already has these presumptions applied to them. Unfortunately, being

that an alternative solution has not been established, this leads to the acceptance to neoliberalism. Assessor evaluates that the goals of neoliberalism in the U.S. are to “control schools through tests, establish extensive charters and at least some vouchers, and replace long-term, often unionized, teachers with a steady parade of short-timers, particularly in urban, low-income areas” (Assessor 73). In this way, neoliberalism is “the essence of capitalism [and] is turning human labor power into the work that makes capital accumulation possible” (Assessor 68). Assessor investigated that in the United States, tests now have a similar function to currency via their means of control and for being a sort of measuring tool. Further complicating matters, teacher-student relations also affect the politics of education. The mainly Anglo American teachers see “students as not sufficiently *caring about school*, while students see teachers as not sufficiently *caring for them*,” in this way, contributing to the impediments in education (Valenzuela 61). These factors mentioned and the unfamiliarity with the politics of employment, organization of schools, the demands of society, all reflect the challenges incoming migrants experience in relation to their living conditions or better stated, from one country to another.

Therefore, as long as the Southwest continues to have an immigrant presence, varies aspects will be affected, and one evidently, is education. It is reported that first generation Mexican immigrants generally have a lower completed level of education (Telles 2008). While not all immigrants who migrate to the United States come with scarce education and wealth, a large percentage from Mexico do (Telles 2008). Presently, second and successive generations surpass in education in comparison to Mexican Americans of earlier and much older generations (such as third and greater generations of the twentieth century). In order to cope with outside distresses, working class networks are organized and applied accordingly. In this way, it has been argued that a sense of autonomy and control of their surroundings becomes more evident.

Similarly, the intricate dynamic of parent's way of interacting with their children allows emotion, language, ideology and relational development in the household. The Mexican community is more effortlessly able to ease into adulthood due to the familial resources that are available to them being that the family ties work as a corporation, thus guaranteeing close family ties involving rituals and language enrichment.

Enrique Trueba further supports this claim by stating, "if children manage to retain a strong cultural self-identity and maintain a sense of belonging to their sociocultural community, they seem to achieve well in school" (Trueba 260). Additionally, "immigrant children's learning ability and social skills deteriorate the longer they are exposed to the alienating environment of American society, which undermines their overall school achievement and adaptation" (Trueba 260). It is understood that social networking allows a safety net. The main reason deals with living in settings in which they are able to manage and retain their home language, culture and networks in order to survive any distresses they may experience in American discourses. The social networks, in addition to the family, can facilitate these transitions by monitoring the schooling system and defending their language and/or culture by creating networks on both sides of the border, thus reinforcing their children's Mexican identity and the ability to live in a "binational and bicultural world" (Trueba 260). It has been suggested that more investigation needs to be dedicated to the strategies that are applied when an immigrant adapts in a binational and bicultural manner.

While the formation of community provides resources for survival, it further participated in isolating the Mexican community, a tactic that was already intentionally under way. Mexican segregation was proceeding in many forms throughout the area. With regional population shifts occurring, Mexicans were gradually forced out with use of pressure and discrimination. The

intent was to extract them to “shrinking urban barrios and isolated rural colonias,” and progressively they would “disappear from the landscape, thereby fulfilling the prophecies of those proponents of Manifest Destiny” (Vargas 21). In this way, the indigenous people of the west would relocate and eventually “‘fade away’ before the advance of American civilization,” and be “America’s ‘forgotten people’” (Vargas 21). Residential segregation of Mexicans was established on the west coast at the turn of the century and became an extensive segregation during the 1920s and 1930s (Valencia 2002). During this time, Mexicans were not allowed in public spaces. For this reason, Mexicans were more likely to attend hypersegregated schools than other ethnic group. However, this type of segregation caused a lack of access to belonging to the mainstream U.S. culture. Not having access to outside sources inhibits an understanding of cultural social norms, standards, and/or expectations of the broader society. This means that Mexicans were less likely to associate with people who plan to or attend college, thus a reason why any aspirations or knowledge about attending college do not develop. This inaccessibility continues to trap Mexicans in underprivileged or underdeveloped schools, with poor facilities and less-qualified teachers in comparison to mainstream students. Additionally, An Assesor mentions in “Testing, Privatization, and the Future of Public Schooling,” that one must consider how the long-standing social inequalities of race and class are used by capital in order to organize attacks on others, thereby deriving the attention from the doings of capital itself. Segregation was just one element of a profound disempowerment that involves race, ethnicity and language, which remain to this day. Consequently, schools segregated students “based on [their] surnames and ethnicity,” and in the case of Mexican Americans, even when they assimilated linguistically and mastered the English language they continued to remain segregated (Nieto 23). As seen, language was used as an excuse, rather than a true factor for segregating

Mexican children in the educational system. Students were segregated by race, ethnicity and poverty above all others.

Upon becoming conscious of the differences in his opposing domains, Rodriguez began to feel embarrassed of his parents and the private life he shared with them. He also became apprehensive of public people who exposed resemblance of the private life he came to shame and evade. Once “Hispanic students” infiltrated his campus, he “needed to laugh at the clownish display” as they walked around “wearing serapes” (Rodriguez 171). Rodriguez repeatedly mentions the necessity of having to abolish cultural markers and ties in order to progress, especially in the educational setting. As protests further pressed the demands of inclusion, faculty made notable efforts to help nonwhite students in need.

While researching for his dissertation, Rodriguez comes across Richard Hoggart’s *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), who describes “the scholarship boy” as:

a student who moves “between environments, his home and the classroom, which are at cultural extremes, opposed. With this family, the boy has the intense pleasure of intimacy, the family’s consolation in feeling public alienation. Lavish emotions texture home life. *Then*, at school, the instruction bids him to trust lonely reason primarily. Immediate needs set the pace of his parents’ lives. From his mother and father the boy learns to trust spontaneity and nonrational ways of knowing. *Then*, at school, there is mental calm. Teachers emphasize the value of a reflectiveness that opens a space between thinking and immediate action. Years of schooling must pass before the boy will be able to sketch the cultural differences in his day as abstractly as this. But he senses those differences early.

Perhaps as early as the night he brings home an assignment from school and finds the house too noisy for study. (Rodriguez 48)

Rodriguez embraces this description as a reflection of his own experiences in the classroom and academic setting in comparison to his home. In the classroom setting, Rodriguez has to prepare before speaking aloud because as a middle-class man, he comes home and witnesses a conflicting dialogue, one that “his teachers discourage” for academic advancement (Rodriguez 50). Rodriguez claims that most middle-class students are not expected to produce much change from a simple classroom experience because the change is demanding, and with it comes a burden or a “special anxiety [of]...good student, troubled son” and distance becomes inevitable in each setting. Eventually, only one wins. As a scholarship boy, he chooses education and “permits himself embarrassment at [the] lack of education” his parents attain (Rodriguez 52).

Correspondingly, Patricia Gándara states that in the case of underprivileged children, schools offer what parents cannot. She believes that the gaps to success lead to proper schooling, which included those that are not hypersegregated schools. One reason why Mexicans may prefer to attend hypersegregated schools is due to the racial segregations they experience in other public schools. An extensive and growing racial segregation in the United States lacks funds and is intertwined with racial isolation. Even though Rodriguez was not underprivileged, he was referred as such. He attests to the claim of finding a source outside of the home as he sought educational progression and measured its attainment by his achievements and losses. Gradually he acknowledges his loss in the relationship with his Mexican middle-class uneducated family, to later esteem and admire his schoolteachers. This acknowledgment convinces him to be a necessary step towards “becoming the assimilated middle-class American” man (Guajardo 86). Rodriguez asserts, “it is education that has altered by life. Carried me far,” where the changes in

his life as a student were “of losses, [and] of gain” (Rodriguez 4). Rodriguez comments that proper education necessitates a change in the old self. Unfortunately, the working-class people are not appropriately equipped to make such changes, so when school and home clash, the student will either reject school or reject home. Ideally, a balance is more suitable, however, “gradually, necessarily, the balance is lost,” and the student demands more time spent studying to become academically successful, thus seeing his family as images of an old self (Rodriguez 51). Other lost relationships were observed as Rodriguez admits not relating to other minorities. He believes his “superior education distinguishes him from other minority students and even poor white students” (Guajardo 86). Further claiming that even though he is perceived as socially disadvantaged by mainstream America, he emphasizes that Mexican Americans are not all equal, for some are more privileged than others.

To rebut political connotations that disadvantage Mexicans, Henry Giroux mentions that public time is a way in which neoliberalism can be challenged. In this way, there is a will to separate the economic from the social, and the politics from power. It also challenges neoliberalism and its failure to address human needs and social interests. Public time denotes the importance of practices that provide the apparatuses for a culture that questions the ways in which teachers and students engage. In order to assert a role as social agents, students must examine their own actions, face the consequences and take control of their future. Along these lines, Mexicans are able to prevent practices that silence or humiliate them. Additionally, Assessor proposes that in order to oppose such views, activists must “reject the view that the purpose of schools is to feed the economy, to win...fight privatization...expose the forces behind test-punish-privatize...reject testing and test-based ‘accountability’...reject all the multiple variants of union-and teacher-bashing...reject the claim that schools can solve the problems of

poverty... [and] challenge but reach out to ‘tea partiers’” (74). Assessor realizes that these may be reactionary ideologies, but emphasizes that the tricking down of economics and power need to change. These are proposals of how a positive solution can be socially beneficial to the education of a marginalized group. A contemporary perspective in the advocacy of change is the development of litigation, advocacy of organization, individual activists, political demonstrations and legislation (Valencia 92).

Rodriguez holds civil rights activists and academics culpable for not focusing their protests on the reformation of primary and secondary education. While academics recognized the need to admit more nonwhite students into universities, they failed to acknowledge “(the truth) that higher education is out of reach of minorities—poorly schooled, disadvantaged Americans,” for acknowledging

“the truth about their schools, [meant that] academics would have had to acknowledge their own position of privilege. And that would have been difficult. The middle-class academy does not deeply impress on students or teachers a sense of social advantage. The campus has become a place for ‘making it’ rather than a place for those who, relatively speaking, ‘have it made’ ... Many supported affirmative actions, assuming that only access kept minority Americans out of college... Many dropped out...suffer[ing] severe mental collapse. None of the professors who had welcomed them to graduate school were around when it came time to take them to the infirmary or to the airport. And the university officials who so diligently took note of those students in their self-serving totals of entering minority students finally took no note of them when they left.”

(Rodriguez 165, 166)

The struggles of the 1960s in relation to education were constructed on a collective standpoint. A Marxism perspective disagrees on reactionary protests for not promoting permanent change, however, these protests were “posited between ‘groupness’ and the capacity to protest closely mirrors discussions within Marxist circles” since the “concentration enable[d] proletarian organization” (Barker 4). However, Rodriguez argued from an outlook of class politics and not identity politics since he did not intimately identify with the group. Rodriguez publically shrouded away from “politics centered on the assertion of subjugated identities and differences based on race ethnicity,” and instead centered on “class-based interest politics” (Barker 5).

As Mexicans obtained entryway for other Mexicans in academic settings, it became their primary obstacle as to how to remain an academic, and this was the true disregarded disablement. Rodriguez witnessed the humiliation Mexicans suffered for not being competent enough. Expectedly, many with inadequate academic preparation abandoned their studies, and blamed themselves for not finishing. Educators further disfavored students by awarding an unearned grade to simply move the student forward towards “meaningless graduation,” henceforth, while many completed their primary and secondary schooling, most were still measured as culturally disadvantaged for their educational deficiencies (Rodriguez 167). Additionally, activist’s propaganda convinced students that they affiliated with the poor, when in fact “any academic who works with the socially disadvantaged is able to be of benefit to them only because he is culturally different from them” (Rodriguez 170). Rodriguez claims to differ from these circumstances, as he was amply educated and prepared for higher education, and was not praised with consolation. However, others discarded viewing him as belonging in academia for his fixed skin color, and many supposed that he was also a minority unchanged by education.

The educational setting was not the only place this overcompensation of representation took place. Vargas observes that once White Americans took possession of Mexican populated spaces, newcomers constructed “what Carey McWilliams aptly called ‘The Spanish fantasy heritage’” (Vargas 22). This was done in order to recreate the functionality of the space in absence of the previous residents, “historians and history buffs, artists, travel and fiction writers, amateur ethnographers, and eventually, local chambers of commerce” came to participate in this restoration (Vargas 22). The romantic reconstructed space was founded on hope—with remembrances of “Spanish grandees, beautiful señoritas, and gentle Catholic friars [who] oversaw an abundant pastoral empire worked by contended mission Indians” (Vargas 22). The intent of reproducing the space came with the same demand that brought forth the ethnic classes offered on campuses, it provided alleviation from an underlying exclusion for the people, yet they remained excluded. In this way, a “benign history of the not-so-distant past” was founded, and it allowed White Americans to gain cultural grounds through their perspective and for their amusement. In both cases, an overstated skewed representation of Mexicans is exhibited. For Rodriguez, the unnecessary public display of cultural ties foments a falsified depiction and representation of people like him—a Mexican becoming an American and an outsider to his own culture. However, since his appearance does not allow escaping the stereotypes, he depicts the cultural fabrications as degrading. Meanwhile, as White American spectators accumulate cultural representations of ethnic people, they reconstruct those embellished exemplifications with the potential of being fueled for mockery, divertissement, and/or as an avocation. Connectedly, the aimless inclusion of nonwhite students in campuses was a hasty remedy to produce numerical value that ultimately resulted in abortive outcomes, just as White Americans intended Mexicans to abandon the region.

The differences in the performances of the minority schools cannot be attributed to cultural, linguistic or genetic differences. For this reason, a closer look at history and sociocultural adaptations of minorities should be considered. Ogbu suggests a reevaluation of our “own responses to their history of incorporation into U.S. society and their subsequent treatment or mistreatment by White Americans...[and] how their responses to that history and treatment affect their perceptions of and responses to schooling” (156). In this way, educators are able to search for ways to help students see that they can be successful in school, in addition to maintaining their identity. In such way, educators can build bonds and deliver a message to others that assists students’ confidence towards an intellectual ability to succeed, and that as educators; they do not share the racist stereotypes that are prominent towards minorities.

Ricardo Stanton-Salazar expresses that school personnel should treat students in a caring manner. This will enable and create a space of closeness and students will be able to identify and conform to the established order. This will not tamper with their identity; it will only allow them to integrate themselves more easily and motivate them into making the necessary efforts to meet the academic demands. Stanton-Salazar emphasizes that the youth should be embedded in the diverse social organizations to continue to empower their success and development. The practice of individualization should be renounced, while applying a more reflective understanding of the “socioeconomic, linguistic, sociocultural, and structural barriers that obstruct the mobility” of Hispanic youth (Valenzuela 109). In this way, students are nurtured in their network and recognized in their household and communities. This will enable them the capacity to negotiate between sociocultural atmospheres, have outside relations, and attain resiliency.

Another accompanying topic that affects socially disadvantaged people appertains to health. Rodriguez believes that in order to improve social change for disadvantaged students; parents need to accommodate them by obtaining employment, stable housing, providing three meals a day, and by living in a secure community. In his opinion, the civil rights activists in the sixties should have protested towards the demand on such fundamentals, for it is in the early stages of education that a proper foundation should be established. Gándara aligns with Rodriguez to further emphasize how proper medical attention is also essential. She states that when students are not properly treated for any medical necessity, they are susceptible to learning impediments in their learning environment. Like Rodriguez, she further believes that dysfunctional housing conditions and the neglect of children increases the changes of health problems, thus affecting their learning capacities. In another study, Richard Valencia found that lack of knowledge in English, excessive school transfers, and poor nutrition were contributing factors” to deficit learning skills in the classroom (Valencia 84). Similarly, Mexican students have been presumed to not educationally succeed for the social inferences imposed on them, and are not expected to hold privileged and promising positions. The Mexican adolescent is,

“demonized by the popular media and derided by politicians looking for quick-fix solutions to crime, joblessness, and poverty. In a society deeply troubled by their presence, youth prompt a public rhetoric of fear, control, and surveillance, which translates into social policies that shrink democratic public spheres, highjack civic culture, and militarize public space.” (Giroux 219)

This means that teachers are more likely to wrongly accuse students of malicious acts instead of focusing on their education. In this way, public schools resemble reformatories more than an educational setting. This is disadvantageous for the students as they are unable to defend

themselves being that they have fewer rights than any other group and many institutions do not consider their protection.

According to Guajardo, bicultural people should find stability in their anxieties of identity; yet, Rodriguez he was too preoccupied with the stereotypes and sought worthiness in conforming to worldview recognition—costing him a yearning for his losses. Rodriguez's autobiography exposes the life as a second generation Mexican American who encounters contrasting racial, national, lexical, educational, and adaptable ideologies. He was warned that by exposing himself with such controversial outlooks, he would succumb to a lonely course. While it has been argued that he resolves these issues later in life, in his following book *Days of Obligation: An Argument with My Mexican Father* (1992), written ten years later, he addresses the same concerns of complexion and identity. Rodriguez describes the ending of his autobiography with: "I am actually describing the man I have become—the man in the present" (Rodriguez 190). This statement provides insight that though he may appear to have become comfortable with publically voicing his antagonistic views; he still suffers the consequences of not belonging. For Rodriguez, he and his siblings were the source his parents needed to gain access in Americanization as they became artificially more comfortable in public. However, they bared minor recognition of the upfront battles that were fought for that minimal entree. Once access in the public was permitted, his parents displayed unauthentic personas with people other than family; for they continued to believe that the private and public should not be mixed. Yet as the family matured with children and everyone spoke mostly English intimately, his parents slowly curtailed behind. Rodriguez observed their interaction and considered how much he no longer had an intimate connection. In this way, Rodriguez questioned how embarrassed

his parents might have been of him for exposing such intimate confessions—such as becoming the Other in public and in private.

## **6. Chicano Movement Disaffiliation**

Rodriguez further discloses the alienation he suffered from the conventional stereotypes towards Mexicans who choose education and upward mobility, and this pummeled his political acceptability. Rodriguez grants the success of his achievement and testifies: “*A primary reason for my success in the classroom was that I couldn’t forget that schooling was changing me and separating me from the life I enjoyed before becoming a student*” (Rodriguez 47). Rodriguez associated success with the repressing of his private self—the self he grew to shame. Through education, Rodriguez accredited being less of a minority and expected less discrimination. He believed that with education he could reform himself. Rodriguez perceived education as a process associated with assimilation, which is why he chose to alienate himself from his family, who to him represented the socially disadvantaged. Rodriguez affirms that those who are at a socially disadvantaged disposition are surely the “uneducated and poor [who] will remain most vulnerable to racism” (Rodriguez 161).

Nonetheless, Rodriguez had been bound to the label “minority student” or “nonwhite” during his schooling in Columbia and Berkeley (Rodriguez 153). Knowing he was different, Rodriguez sought out to level his outward differences with education. In doing so, he became less preoccupied with how he perceived himself. In this way, as he became more comfortable with the attainment of his education, his appearance became less important. However, once the protests of the 1960s aroused, by default Rodriguez “became a principal beneficiary of the academy’s response” for being a minority, and/or a nonwhite student (Rodriguez 153). This was due to the accusations focusing on the nonrepresentation of colored minorities in universities and

colleges. At first, Rodriguez contended against it and hoped it would abate, though, the label adhered to him and he later self-interestedly applied it. The label provided him benefits as protestors argued he belonged “to a racial group ‘under-represented’ in American institutional life” (Rodriguez 153). Rodriguez viewed the errors in the protests, as affirmative actions remained directed towards “institutions of higher education,” and the “freedom was only theoretical” (Rodriguez 154). Additionally, further expanding his educational advantages was having a “Spanish surname” and having to specify his race as a minority. Rodriguez claims that undeservingly he became a recipient of the benefits—as he did not view himself as a victim, or a socially and economically oppressed person. Rodriguez judged the protests as not contesting the overall errors in the educational system. He considered these protests as social movements that entailed the complications of ordinary people, thus not addressing the concerns that capitalized dominant structures. This difference of outlook from Rodriguez “weaken[ed] any analytical and political ability to join...and arrive[d] at some conception of a universal alternative to that social system which [was] the source of their difficulties” (Barker 7). Nonetheless, as explained, his hesitancy in joining stemmed from the conflicting foundations of identification.

Soon, Rodriguez was recognized as a “Hispanic-American, a ‘Latino,’ a Mexican-American, a ‘Chicano,’” thus becoming a “highly rewarded minority student” (Rodriguez 156). Rodriguez was chosen to advocate the now incorporated minorities—permitting him opportunities to “travel to foreign countries with contingents of ‘minority group scholars,’” and was “handed special forms for minority student applications” (Rodriguez 156). He testifies that the word minority did in fact describe him, however, the word was used as “a synonym for socially disadvantaged Americans” to reference “entire races and nationalities of Americans, those numerically underrepresented in institutional life” (Rodriguez 156). Rodriguez did not

relate with this description, and did not see himself as less than the White students, nor as an equal to the truly disadvantaged nonwhite students that arrived to college with lacking educational backgrounds. In his opinion, he was only a disadvantaged person when he did not speak English, and when he was restricted to the private domain—his early and continued education is what set him free from the limitations of a private and regressive life. Under these circumstances, he observed regression in the uneducated, while suffering complete loss for intimacy.

This sentiment of being misrepresented was further deepened as faculty members contemplated his aggregation to the minority community. Rodriguez discloses that he was told he “would be able to work among ‘[his] people’...that, though [he] was unrepresentative of lower-class Hispanics, [he] would serve as a role model for others of [his] race...that [he] would be a valued counselor to incoming minority students” (Rodriguez 158). People assumed by his appearance that “because of [his] race, [he] retained a special capacity for communicating with nonwhite students” (Rodriguez 158). After publically declaring this disaffiliation with socially disadvantaged minorities, his recognition grew with the politically conservative group. Meanwhile, activists were outraged and exclaimed that Rodriguez was denying his inexorable race. Rodriguez argues that there is error in overlooking class when evaluating social oppression. He further elaborates, “those whose lives are shaped by poverty and poor education (cultural minorities) are least able to defend themselves against social oppression,” and in actuality, middle-class people initiated affirmative action protests (Rodriguez 160). This means that the campus protestors were not those living as or among the disadvantaged, but those who primarily lived an urban lifestyle. In *Major Problems in Mexican American History*, Vargas states that based on Chicano historiography, the focus on change had been on the “industrial,

blue-collar labor,” and in doing so, “neglected rural and semiurban Chicano communities” (9). Eventually, as protests increasingly propagated, it became more and more difficult to distinguish the truly disadvantaged since many forms of oppression became contested.

Just like “all blacks were not equally black,” “all Mexican-Americans certainly are not equally Mexican-Americans” (Rodriguez 161). As affirmative action pushed academic barriers, Rodriguez continuously benefited from others less privileged conditions. The reason was because “many Hispanics were absent from higher education,” and no fundamental social changes to early education were applied (Rodriguez 162). Underrepresentation of minorities in courses began to upsurge; many students felt lost and were unable to consociate. Yet as more nonwhite students arrived to campuses, many assumed a belonging and formed alliances of the disadvantaged. With this alliance came *Chicanos*, Rodriguez describes this as a Spanish word, “a term lower-class Mexican-Americans had long used to name themselves. It was a private word, slangish, even affectionately vulgar, and, when spoken by a stranger, insulting, because it glibly assumed familiarity...animated by pride and political purpose” (Rodriguez 170). In this way, nonwhite students formed a union of others like themselves. Later, protestors claimed that Rodriguez was a beneficiary of affirmative actions because he was a Chicano. Rodriguez explains, “my relationship to many of the self-proclaimed Chicano students was not an easy one. I felt threatened by them. I was made nervous by their insistence that they still were allied to their parents’ culture... [they] were foolish to think themselves unchanged by their schooling” (Rodriguez 171). He further disunites with Chicanos by declaring, “Aztec ruins hold no special interest for me. I do not search Mexican graveyards for ties to unnamable ancestors” (Rodriguez 3). Rodriguez distanced himself from Chicanos and *La Raza* because he considered himself as belonging to a former time. He describes his arrival as singular, “submissive, willing

to mimic [his] teachers, willing to reform [himself] in order to become ‘educated’...accept[ing] the fact that education exacted a great price for its equally great benefits”...meanwhile Chicanos came in a group and “were proud, claiming that they didn’t need to change by becoming students” (Rodriguez 172). Rodriguez’s perspective as a student is noted to delineate a Foucauldian approach—as a more micro-scale form of resistance and obedience was valued. Still, America chose Rodriguez as the voice of an expert to represent Hispanic America as he was invited to speak at college campuses and other public events. Rodriguez declares he did a disservice to those who felt belonging with the Chicano community and those who truly remained foreign to the opportunities of higher education for speaking as a representative and for accepting minority scholarships. Standing against affirmative action and bilingual programs left Rodriguez standing as “notorious” and a “dupe, an ass, the fool—Tom Brown, the brown Uncle Tom” among the Chicana/o people (Rodriguez 3). As a result, he was regarded as an adversary to the cause.

As Rodriguez dismissed association with the Chicano Movement, veritably, he did not participate in activism for minorities. He declined teaching Chicano studies, and in doing so, received criticism from Chicano scholars. Rodriguez is arbitrated for whether he chose to assimilate willfully or submissively to Anglo American ideologies. As a man who lacks accordance with his social class, the Chicana/o community exiled him to a place of disaffiliation. Rodriguez’s unwillingness to participate in the Chicana/o community renders him in position of false consciousness. While false consciousness details that a person is unaware of their socioeconomic class, Rodriguez’s conscious choice of maintaining independence and remaining silent, counteracts with the struggles and interests of his group. In this way, he conforms to the nature of socioeconomic political orders that rule against him. Furthermore, Helen Neville

studies that color blindness relates to false consciousness for sharing false beliefs that are opposing to the individuals personal or social interests. Maintaining false beliefs preserves a disadvantaged position of the self or the group. In this way, false consciousness is an adopted way of accepting the ideologies of the dominant society and enables justification of oppression. This understanding differs from the Marxist explanation based on material conditions, for this reason Neville adopts the descriptive term of psychological false consciousness (PFC), while still acknowledging the influence of dominant societal racial ideologies. In *False Consciousness* (1991), Denise Meyerson claims that colonized individuals “do themselves a disservice when they identify with their colonizers, donning a ‘white mask’ and internalizing the colonial values, attitudes, and aspirations” (8).

Guajardo challenges this criticism towards Rodriguez by stating, “do all Chicanos and Chicanas belong the same one [social class]...can one so easily choose to be any public self one desires...are there limitations to one’s choice” (75). Guajardo argues that whether Rodriguez alleges to have assimilated or adopted a public or private self, the inclination does not confirm the assertion. In agreement with Guajardo stands Foucault to state that the concept of power is exercised through the individual’s right to collectively consent. Conspicuously, the Chicana/o community deserts Rodriguez for his political stance, since he does not support their advocacies; hence, he is unfit to belong.

In “Chicano Autobiography: Culture, Ideology and the Self,” Lauro Flores proposes that the approach in Chicano autobiography is to circumvent the correlations between “culture, ideology and individual/group identity and consciousness” (83). Further stating that there is no such particular attribute to “*the* Chicano problem,” and that each individual should be considered as a single case (83). However, the position many scholars have taken is the communal versus

the individual. Subsequently, the Chicana/o community who have been “hostile to Rodriguez [have] ironically been indirectly instrumental in [his] notoriety” (Guajardo 80). Most are unable to discard the opposing views of someone who does not conform to the ideologies imposed towards the working class Mexican American culture and experience. Guajardo adds that this view from the Chicana/o community creates standardization to imply that “what is good for one is good for all” and those who “aspire to anything else is a sell out” (Guajardo 81). To identify someone who is grappling with identity concerns and desires to progress their social status as a renegade, disregards the positionality of all others in the same degree.

## **7. Conclusion**

Rodriguez judged the Chicano Movement as a reactionary cause that did not undertake the true transgressions in the educational system. He regarded its organization as incompetent and unable to fashion an affective change. Instead of joining the cause, he occupied himself towards an individualistic progression. As he acclaimed belonging to a higher class, he intimately disengaged with what he deemed as inferior interests. For these reasons, he was unable to recognize the individuals of the movement as dealing with similar class struggles and arising from an inner development towards the shaping of a historical development.

Rodriguez offers the reader insight on the controversies and contradictions of cultures with an apprehensive past. His awareness of having an indigenous appearance and being “el indio,” in addition to his pigmentation, first become obvious by way of immediate family members (Guajardo 111). When differences in appearance are center staged, preferences and privileges are established, and those who are measured as less cultivate an inferior complex. His belonging dilemma is further complicated when encountering Chicanos, who in his opinion are too prideful and their views “manifest negative nationalistic overtones” (Guajardo 112). For not

knowing how to harmonize with his Mexican identity and people, and choosing to embrace the dominant culture and their ideologies, intra-racial tensions unveiled. Guajardo quotes historian Ralph Ginzburg by stating that “the projection of self-hatred caused by guilt or feelings of inadequacy lies at the root of race hatred” (Guajardo 113). Rodriguez’s state of inadequacy stemmed in an intimate space, and after rejecting this domain, he projected emotions of guilt towards that space. He witnessed the results of that unattended intimate space by the outcome of relationship he shared with his parents. To compensate for this loss, he developed “a defense or means of emotional and psychological self-preservation” and conformed to a distinct identity of isolation (Guajardo 111). Indeed, Rodriguez was bound to consolidate his position through cultural practices of acculturation, which ultimately affected his total belonging.

The comprehensiveness of Rodriguez’s educational trajectory provides perceptivity on the “great anxiety and solipsistic concerns that sometimes result” as ethnic groups merge (Guajardo 111). Rodriguez’s autobiography provides testimony to the degree in which class, skin color, assimilation, migration, language, and education and its policies are managed. The pressures of belonging are influenced by the culture of both the familiar and unfamiliar. In Rodriguez’s case, his stressing agenda of belonging in the dominant culture led him to assimilate “in opposition to [his] own cultural indoctrination,” which in turn inflicted a sense of loss (Guajardo 111). While not all cases of otherness are exactly alike, they do share commonality for being rooted in feelings of inadequacy in the dominant society. Rodriguez attempts to alleviate his diffident identity by intellectually acculturating to the majority and disassociating with the minority, however, he learns that his appearance and ethnicity forbids him complete access. His attempts in relating to figures such as a Caliban and the scholarship boy, provides acceptance of his actual life. Guajardo postulates that the best approach in understanding

Rodriguez and his identity dilemmas is by overlooking his political stance. Or else, in practicing the imposed established limitations, it infers that there is a “monolithic Mexican-American culture” (Guajardo 116). Already Rodriguez’s individual account denounces him “on the periphery, to be something of an outcast” among his family, the Mexican American community, and by default among Anglo Americans (Guajardo 120). Consequently, he will continue to be marginalized not only by default in the Anglo American realm, but also among his own people. Therefore, by including his oppositional rhetoric, it provides understanding in the undeniably changes that manifest in intimate relational spaces when differences become noted. To include the antagonistic views of Rodriguez, acknowledges those Other voices that represent the multiplicity of the Mexican community.

## CHAPTER III.

### DEFINING BORDERS: EXPLOITATION, ETHNIC DISUNION, AND LEGAL VS. ILLEGAL AFFAIRS

#### 1.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 applies the phenotypic hierarchal categorizations from the previous chapters and highlights national and regional ideologies in theme with intra-racial and ethnic tensions to focus on border politics, migration, Americanness, and Mexicanness. I consider the socio-cultural economic and political interactions to interpret the ways in which relations are affected along the border. I analyze the novel *Macho!* (1973) by Victor Villaseñor, centered during the early to mid -60s to detail the process of migration and exploitation in the Southwestern U.S. region. I also discuss migration in concurrence with the Bracero Program and the Chicano Movement to delineate intra-ethnic tensions. I observe that as the protagonists migrate for need and longing towards ideologies of Americanness they are exposed to exploitation. I argue that the course of their journey depicts characterizations of false consciousness, intra-racial and ethnic tensions among Anglo Americans, Mexican immigrants, Mexican Americans and Chicanas/os, and the formation of the Other.

The next subdivision includes the ethnographic study of “Fight Words: Latina Girls, Gangs, and Language Attitudes” by Norma Mendoza-Denton (1999) to define how the regional labels of *Norteñas* and *Sureñas* are respective of the national labels of Americanness and Mexicanness. I outline the development of tensions between the affiliated groups and argue that the disunion among the *Norteñas* and *Sureñas* renders them both susceptible to marginalization. While the *Norteñas* appropriate characteristics of class-consciousness and the

*Sureñas* false-consciousness, both are subject to false consciousness and institutionally remain in a lower working class system.

The last subdivision focuses on national and regional ideologies of legal versus illegal migration, depicted in the YouTube video titled “Ana Gaines Racist Mexicana (2009),” filmed and conducted by Carlos E. Galindo. This video details political and social manifestations on nationality, in addition to verbal affronts that project intra-racial and ethnic tensions. I argue that Ana’s participation in the dominant nationalistic ideologies contributes to the perseverance of intra-racial and ethnic tensions. As Carlos contests her dominant affiliation with a racial discourse, Ana counteracts with maintaining exclusion in supporting legal nationalistic paradigms. Thus, I argue that both protagonists contribute in othering and characterize false consciousness.

## **1.2 David Harvey and Border Politics**

In David Harvey’s latest book, *The Ways of the World* (2016), he begins with startling recent statistics from China. From the years 2011 to 2013, China expended more cement than the United States used from 1900 to 1999. Harvey considers the context of this situation to better understand what environmental, economic, and social consequences generate. Due to the decline in consumer demands of Chinese products in the United States from 2001 to 2007, the Chinese suffered an economic crisis in 2008 and left many unemployed. The “‘dot-com’ stock market bubble in 2001” affected the United States, and many lost or were at risk of losing their homes (Harvey 1). The United States responded to this crisis by lowering interest rates so that capital could be quickly moved into the property market. As homes were manufactured in the U.S., China lost employers in the industrial regions. Around 3 million people were unemployed in China, therefore, in order to prevent a surplus of human capital, and “face the threat of

massive social unrest,” the Chinese Communist Party conjured “27 million jobs in a year” (Harvey 1). This was done by investing in physical infrastructures that would better integrate and unite the isolated industrial zones, producing unavoidable urbanization. This is a familiar tactic that proposed to upsurge work “for surpluses of capital and labour and thereby assure social stability” (Harvey 2). In this way, it explained the over consumption of cement and how China was able to overcome the recession. Not only was China able to alleviate their situation, their demand in external materials positively affected the economy of the providing countries. In this way, China was able to acclaim credit for restoring global capitalism. China reached this solution in a debt-financed manner, allowing investors and consumers to lend flexibly, nonetheless, causing their debt to closely double. Initially this debt was of minor concern since they had the power and money to recover it, however, their conjecture was miscalculated, leaving them with a “surplus capital in the face of overaccumulation...and rapidly escalating indebtedness” (Harvey 3). To attempt recovery once again, China proposed to “build a single city to house 130 million people... [with] high-speed transport and communications networks,” in addition to “looking beyond their borders” by rebuilding “the so-called ‘Silk Road’” (Harvey 3). Harvey postulates that this type of developmental planning that has accumulated “an increasing mass of surplus capital over the last thirty years” leads to failure, and once it arrives, it exposes the reckless ordering at play (Harvey 5). However, this is the result of accommodating the capital of growth.

In connection with this occurrence in China, the second section of this chapter will begin with a discussion of border politics, and then proceed to keep in theme with David Harvey’s interpretation of the ways in which culture and the political economy shape one another. It will show how World War II, economic demands, and political activities shaped the Southwestern

communities, the agricultural environments, and the social and political relationships of the people. Such demands created a surplus of available workers in Mexico pleading for work in the U.S. This produced a large population of restless unemployed people who were committed to find alternative solutions. This reaction by the Mexican immigrants steered U.S. residents, and the government to partake on a political stance, which would change both country's relational development.

In *Border Politics: Social Movements, Collective Identities, and Globalization* (2015), Nancy Naples theorizes the political struggles of the border and calls for new perspectives on the awareness for movement. Several questions she presents are:

“What role do social boundaries and territorial border play in giving rise to struggles, and how do they shape their ongoing development? How does activism challenge, transcend, and produce borders and boundaries? How are borders and boundaries interpreted by movement participants as sources of articulated demands and grievances or targets of actions? How are borders and boundaries implicated in the production of oppositional identities or in the ways in which struggles mobilize preexisting identities? How do material as well as symbolic borders foment or disrupt potential forms of solidarities? (358)

Engaging in these questions Naples believes requires a “comparative approach that brings into view...historical context of mobilizations” (358). The border operates dependently on historical ramifications, identity and social movements in a “place-specific” space (358). In this way, a redefined frame of reference is produced for the understanding of border politics. In order to avoid a complete binate perspective on the border, Naples argues that both an internal and external position should be considered. She exemplifies an internal process to refer to

“interactions and constructions generated by social movement participants... [such as] identity and consciousness negotiation and formation” (359). An external process “refers to factors in the social, political, and economic environment that shape movement dynamics” (359). With the coalition of both, it explains the ways in which social movements are rooted at the base of conflicts and imbued by converging with structures of power.

James Leiker in *Racial Borders: Black Soldiers along the Rio Grande* (1962) defines the border as having a binary meaning, which serves “as a separation of polities and as an indicator of racial and national identity” (8). This produces distinctions among residents and foreigners, where differences in language dominate national identity. A characteristic of nationalism derives from outlining the accounts of the marginalized people. As nationalism is enforced on the population, it produces supremacy among the different groups of people by the formulation of new racial and ethnic identities—thus formulating an “us” versus “them” outlook. Defining perimeters authorizes people to become either allies or enemies of the governing of the nation.

The border and borderlands are in many ways a response to the political presence in the specific locations. Identities are displaced and as people migrate, so will their identity. Migrating conceptualizes the interaction between people, thereby decreasing the spatial gaps, and erodes spatial boundaries to implement social, political and cultural identity as an amalgamation. Yet, people are unable to fuse with one another as they would in other normalized spaces due to the political segregations that are enforced against undocumented migrants. In this way, migrants live amongst social structures that attempt to disempower and alienate them by leaving them on the margins of economic progression. Border studies “emphasizes borders as unique zones of cultural convergence, a region of more extensive ethnic mixing and migration than the relatively homogeneous national heartlands” (Leiker 7). For this

reason, the border is a barrier that encompasses a political boundary, a physical separation, and a cultural differentiator. The border implies guarded limitations, in addition to executing a racialized national system with class categories. When the concept of the border is applied to racial studies, it brings forth racial consciousness, in this way; racial differences become a produced process of racialization. The border is further shaped as a concept where groups are separated based on ethnicity, physical appearance, and individuals self-identify through likeness and disapprove of others with dissimilar traits.

Borders are a representational space where nationality is continuously questioned, and intertwined with how people move through the border space. By virtue of the border in a particular space and time, a person's need for belonging is manifested through the desired space. The crossing of the border prompts a shift of division that occurs between the self, the Other, into otherness. The border then divides and unites; it is a binary perimeter that delineates "the safe from the unsafe, the legal from the illegal, the rich from the poor" (Davies 148). It is a space that warns of the proximity of the Other. There is "tension [in] trying to maintain a separate identity, [by] controlling the land and the image" (Davies 161). The immigrant in the desired territory is a vagrant figure that embodies tension in the landscape. In this way, the self and the Other are contested in relation to the space they share. This shared space with the Other, connotes the possibility of becoming the Other. The border functions "as a locus of both encounter and exclusion between immigrant and [native]," and serves as a boundary that distinguishes the disadvantaged Other (Davies 146). It is a site that challenges the self in accordance with the propinquity with the Other. It is a place of conflict and death of the racialized Other, but also a grappling between the self and Other. To cross the border is to suggest movement from the self to the Other, thus embodying the subjectivity of the Other. In

this way, the borders are not only political boundaries, but also natural limitations that many times are obstructed landscapes. Jakub Kazecki states that,

“these liminal spaces...as ‘natural’ borders...[act in] dividing continents and preventing, or slowing down, the natural flows of migration. They test the human ability to survive, but successfully overcoming the challenges they pose fills the traveler with the joy of being alive—it opens up the possibility for telling a story and creates a space for metaphors of crossing borders between life and death, good and evil, or reality and dream. (13)

As immigrants move to new spaces, they are faced with new cultural geography that “conceives of culture as an ontological entity possessing causative power, as something that really exists, in a manner markedly similar to the ‘superorganic’ understanding of culture proffered by ‘old’ cultural geography” (Wylie 101). In this fashion, the new space exalts the idea that landscape is a form of active human labor, functioning as a production or reproduction aesthetic, thereby continuing to enforce particular beliefs, attitudes, practices and performances to ultimately exclude the immigrant. Likewise, as power is imposed upon the marginal, it is “exercised to constrain, limit, forbid, detain and so on” (Wylie 111). The new space is an expression of the dominant and hegemonic that essentially expresses the “subject-object epistemological model,” implying that humanistic geographies of space are complicit within the ideologies of the social and economic undertakings (Wylie 59).

To territorialize or deterritorialize a space is to consolidate it by the construction of another territory, and in this way it “deterritorialize[s] the enemy by shattering his territory from within; [the] deterritorializ[ing] [of] oneself [is done] by renouncing, by going elsewhere... another justice, another movement, another space-time” (Deleuze 353). As migrants desire “for

association and belonging,” they are susceptible to the intricately bound elements of territory and personal identity (Davies 147). The natives hold the position of othering migrants and to what degree of inclusion they will establish affiliation. On the surface, this facet of de-/re-territorialization pertains to migrants in that they are burdened to move to another country for possible unsustainable living conditions executed by the people and/or the government, then afflicted again by the people and/or government upon their arrival into the host country. In this sense, their living spaces are twice reconstructed causing agonies of displacement and exclusion.

## **2. Mexican Divergence: Migrant Encounters in Victor Villaseñor’s *Macho!***

### **2.1. Mexican Rural Customs and Traditions**

*Macho!* (1973) by Victor Villaseñor is a fictional novel of a main protagonist Roberto García, an indigenous Mexican who wished to cross the U.S.-Mexico Border for temporary camp work to financially support his family. Specifically, this novel is of a “boy-to-man narrative, [it] is a *muchacho-to-macho* Bildungsroman” (Serrato 94). In his home of Michoacán, Mexico, Roberto learns of the fieldwork in California. His need for money leads him on the migratory journey towards the border and the U.S. Set in the early mid-60s, during the time of the Bracero Program (1942-1964) and the Chicano Movement around 1962 during the activism of César Chávez, Roberto narrates and shares the agonizing migratory journey of an illegal immigrant. The author Victor Villaseñor, is a son of Mexican immigrants, who attempts to point to a different response to the Chicano Movement from a Mexican perspective. To show how the people “south of the border grew so desperate for work in the United States that they fell easy prey” to “the demand for cheaper Mexican workers by American agribusinesses” (Magill 297). The starving concerns for the Mexican workers were so urgent, that political ideologies were irrelevant. Alleviating their personal situation overruled any legal or illegal status affairs in the

U.S. Rather than interpreting any positivity in activism, Villaseñor's novel allows observation for opposition between White Americans, Mexicans, Mexican Americans and Chicanas/os. Additionally, Villaseñor interacts with the novel by inserting a "prefatory sociopolitical comment on the times immediately preceding (and including) the turbulent American milieu of the late 1960's," in addition to historical context that delivers relative information involving the events in the respective chapter (Magill 298). The inclusion of this novel is to represent the social-racial realities of resisting and criticizing the subservience of Mexican and Mexican Americans. It shows the gradual progression on how tensions develop among the group. Additionally, it pays attention to how Mexican immigration affected the Chicana/o community. This section will contribute in the understanding on intergroup relationships among Mexican immigrants, Mexican Americans, and Chicanas/os.

The main character Roberto, lives in house made of sticks with his parents and seven younger siblings. The family once lived well and their home was "the envy of all the poor people of the *pueblo*" for the father was recognized for being a hard worker (Villaseñor 5). The *pueblo* was of old customs, where "the young were to respect their elder no matter what" (Villaseñor 6). After a short time of hard working, Roberto was promoted to supervisor with older men under his authority, for he was portrayed as an obedient son, raised in the mountains—a land where

"no one is too very rich and no one is too very poor, because the land is so hard that each must work his own...For [when] mountain people...leave this area to go north to the United States, they are blind, out of place, and that is why so many get lost or killed and never return." (Villaseñor 59)

In isolated communities, it is easier to maintain traditional roles such as “the man, as father and husband, [who] could continue to demand that unquestionable obedience” (Gonzales 169). Along with practicing old customs, the village people were also god-fearing people. They believed that if one did not live humbly or made significant gains, surely one had “sold his soul to *el diablo*” (Villaseñor 27). Once Roberto decided to cross the border to help support his family, his mother prayed, and said that she rather live poor, for being rich meant Roberto would have to “sell his soul again and again to acquire such” (Villaseñor 44). Since Roberto was a seventeen-year-old young man, other men found it difficult to celebrate his attainments that even after his promotion, rumors started that he had sold his soul to the devil. Providing this information on early living conditions and cultural values, allows perspective on the principles of this rural community in Mexico. This consideration permits insight on cultural conflicts that arise.

Nonetheless, the living conditions in the town degenerated for the people; Villaseñor narrates this struggle in Michoacán that started with

“strange clouds...Man-made. Invisible. Down the valley from the experimental grounds. And now there was famine. Not just hunger. These man-made clouds did not enrich. They killed—bugs and birds and water; and now, children die and fathers couch much, get drunk, and mothers pray, and a few, but very few, try harder than ever before...to survive.” (Villaseñor 4)

Manuel G. Gonzales in *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States* (1999) observes that around this time, the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) had greatly affected the country. In an attempt to gain control of Mexico City, rebellion and power struggles manifested among the people. During that time “between 1.5 and 2 million men, women, and children lost their lives

during the Revolution” (Gonzales 119). Some of the mass destruction that resulted was looting and burning everywhere, which represented the strange clouds. The “strife-torn states, which included Guanajuato, Michoacán, and Jalisco, were also among the most heavily populated in Mexico, and the destruction of their crops left the population on the verge of starvation” (Gonzales 119). As farmworkers lost their arable lands, their needs became desperate. In the face of this loss of lives and land, many fled the country to escape the intense time of violence. In this way, the unfavorable circumstances the revolution propelled motivated people to migrate north.

## **2.2 Indigenous, *Norteños*, and White Dominance**

Three main characters journey to cross the border into the U.S. One is Roberto, an indigenous man, who in his town is perceived with qualities of maturity, strength, intelligence, obedience, and honor. Later, Villaseñor portrays him as an innocent peasant Indian, who is naïve to other customs, traditions and cultures. Roberto is “the peasant—remote, conservative, somewhat archaic in his ways of dressing and speaking, fond of expressing himself in traditional modes and formulas” (Paz 66). The character Pedro who is from the same town, acts as Roberto’s archenemy, he is also indigenous but depicted as an acculturated Mexican for his numerous trips to the U.S. Mejia states that, once having lived in urban areas; many indigenous will abandon their traditional ways and adopt a more Westernized way of life, and thus start the process of “de-indianization” (“Mestizaje and Self-Hatred”). Mejia asserts that “denying and, in many instances, obliterating indigenous identity is the function of mestizaje... [it] is an ethnic identity, one that is worn, like a mask, to hide the true indigenous face” (Mejia, “Mestizaje and Self-Hatred”). Pedro rejects his indigeneity to link himself with a higher socio-economic group. Throughout the novel, Pedro repetitively derides Roberto as “he saw much of his old Indian past

in the boy, and he didn't like it" (Villaseñor 33). The indigenous people, who "remain the poorest and most subjugated group in Mexico," have desperately moved from the countryside to urban areas to escape dearth, without knowing the effects it will have on their identity (Mejia, "Mestizaje and Self-Hatred"). For Pedro, ten years after having traveled to the U.S. and returned to Mexico, he no longer identified as Indian, "and he didn't like reminders. It hurt." (Villaseñor 33). Roberto was the embodiment of his previous self that he now chose to reject. To deny an indigenous ancestry was common for they were perceived as "pagans, cannibals, and sodomites...lazy, disposed to vices, devious, and backward...poor, uneducated, and in a distinctly inferior socioeconomic class" (Meyer and Sherman 211). Pedro's dark-skin banned him from completely belonging to the higher social status, and kept him captive to the stigmatization of "ugliness, backwardness, and poverty" (Mejia "Mestizaje and Self-Hatred"). Pedro had developed what Mejia proclaims as self-hate, a generated resentment towards his ancestry, the people who were dark-skinned, and categorized as uncivilized and colonized.

The third main character is Juan Aguilar, who goes by Aguilar and is from the mountains in the State of Jalisco. Villaseñor portrays Aguilar as "tall, big-boned, and half white (or light-skinned), with a heavy beard that needed shaving every day," handsome, strong and respected (Villaseñor 34). For fifteen years, Aguilar had journeyed to the U.S. and Mexico. Known in the town as the *norteño*, he had returned to Mexico with guns and garments, like "his *tejana*... fringed suede jacket...Levi's...[and] khaki [shirt]" that marked wealth, success, and power (Villaseñor 35). Aguilar's "whiteness" rewarded him both physically and culturally—with his confidence and strong presence, soon he became the epitome of the town. Aguilar sought out Roberto and was determined to recruit him into travelling north with him. Aguilar stressed the earning of thousands of dollars and finally convinced Roberto to go when mentioning that with

the money he would be able to buy his mother a house and have cows for food and business. With the hype of Aguilar's strong presence and pervasiveness, Roberto began to approve of him and slowly denounce his own father Tomás. In this way, Aguilar assumes the role in eradicating the Other; he customarily referred to Pedro and Roberto as *indios* for any behavior he deemed as uncivilized or inappropriate. Deliberately he alluded to their inferiority by making comments such as "an Indian is always an Indian-without-reason...no more of these soft, humble Indian handshakes...no more humble Indian peasant" (Villaseñor 34, 39, 45). In this way, Aguilar assumes the role of white superiority among the indigenous men, and because no one contested him, he sustained his position. In this way of minimizing, Aguilar believed to be preparing Roberto for his migration "to go up north" and be made "*un norteco*" (Villaseñor 43, 45). Being a *norteco* meant making American dollars "the gods of this earth," and learning the "*gringo* language," but most importantly, it meant having the means to survive (Villaseñor 37, 45). Even though Roberto's family disagreed with him making the trip, the freedom and power it assured them was enough hopefulness for him to take the trip. The convincing of obtaining freedom and power on a material basis, determined better living conditions for the men. However, according to Marx, the capitalist system works in converting man's principles to blindly desire this need.

Aguilar was known as el *norteco*—a man who migrated north to the U.S. and returned with money to parade. Migrant workers would travel to California, pick fruit, and in one week earned what took a year in their town. However, many men who attempted to go to the U.S. never return, indeed, "only one in fifteen [came] back," and those who did return, called themselves lucky (Villaseñor 29). The trips north cost the men their youth, health and many times their life. The *nortecos* are familiar with the legal and illegal entanglements, for each trip they take with them a young stronger innocent man "of good heart whom they can control and

use to their advantage” (Villaseñor 29). According to Marx, depending on the social relationship between a worker and an owner, different tactics and practices are used within the structure of social divisions. Marx states that fundamentally, social relationships of all degrees are the purport to social structure and outcome. Relationships among people are to serve and to produce; Marx defines this as a subject-object association. In this way, Pedro understood why Aguilar chose Roberto, for “this Indian boy was well-fed, well nourished. And he had a wide frame and a powerful neck and a solid bossness about him like the boy of old. Like the Indians from Pedro’s own village before the roads came in and brought the tourists” (Villaseñor 33). For Marx, the subject is the social person as they function in relation with others. The object is the product, produced by nature or people. The two intertwine, as they cannot exist without one another. What the subject produces can lead towards an effective beneficial production, yet consequently, this production can also be what indefinitely binds them. As the subject benefits from the fruits of their product, if consumed by it, a transition occurs from subject to object, where the subject becomes a commodity, such that can be produced and consumed. The self-relation of subject-object “is one of otherness and alienation, self-realization and loss of self” (Lefebvre 9). Aguilar’s character represents a white dominate role who is superior among the indigenous men and exploits them in the U.S. Tomás warned Roberto to not trust *nortehños*, for it is rumored that once the young men make them money, they abandon them, kill them, take their wages and blame it on the *gringos*. Blaming Anglo Americans derails attention towards the actual circumstances of a false promise. In this way, Aguilar safeguards his superior position and participates in maintaining the tensions with Anglo Americans.

Roberto’s character exemplifies the noble savage, a term dominantly used by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, however, traced to ancient Greece and first used

in plays by John Dryden. Noble savage is a notion of an uncivilized person who suggests the inherent goodness of someone who is not yet exposed to the undignified influences of civilization. In *The Noble Savage: Allegory of Freedom* (1990), Stelio Cro asserts that this term applied by Rousseau further developed with the early Spanish conquest of America. Supporting Rousseau's philosophy, Cro states that the European attempt in converting people morally and religiously was to hopefully

“resurrect through him primitive man, his own mysterious ancestor, without realizing that, when and if the operation should be successful, he would attempt to denaturalize the noble savage and to transform him into a citizen, without asking if this is what the noble savage needs or wants.” (Cro 87)

Michael Clifford in *Political Genealogy after Foucault: Savage Identities* (1957) applies Foucauldian concepts into contemporary political identities. As a genealogical and archeological perspective that analyzes discourse, power, and subjectivity, Clifford produces a methodology for cultural and political analysis called political genealogy. Clifford studies the start of modern political identity to state that American identity is a hybrid of the Native American savage and the civilized European. He further elaborates on the term to postulate that the word noble characterizes reasoning and a sovereign individual, and savage is the frontier that exceeds our limits. The concept of the frontier is questionable when studied from a limiting standpoint, since generally the frontier represents the limits. Clifford further analyzes the three main Foucault concepts mentioned above, for discourse; he asks, “How are we constituted as subjects of our own knowledge” (9). For power he asks, “How are we constituted as subjects who exercise or submit to power relations” (10). For ethics he asks, “How are we constituted as moral subjects of our own actions” (10). As Roberto, Aguilar, and Pedro continued their migration headed

north, more instances of indigenous rebuttal ensue. The protuberant disproof of Roberto is present throughout the novel as Villaseñor depicts him as naïve, yet aggressive. In his village, Roberto was a supervisor; however, in the city streets he found himself becoming silent, he said “nothing and just kept listening and looking and taking everything in. For truly, he was beginning to agree with them: he was very stupid and naïve” (Villaseñor 69). Gradually, Roberto became less confident in his abilities and his own knowledge and more susceptible to Aguilar—the figure that represents power.

The closer Roberto got to the U.S.-Mexico Border, the more obvious intercultural conflicts became. In one instance, a man “saw that he was dark and wide-faced. [That] he was an Indian, stubborn, and wouldn’t believe him unless he showed kindness,” so he changed his demeanor towards him (Villaseñor 81). Later, the men encounter the fourth main character named Luis, from the northern part of Mexico, the State of Sinaloa. Luis was not violent, he did not carry a weapon, he knew how to drive a tractor, how to change a tire, he spoke English, and had more experience in illegal migration than Aguilar. Luis portrays the character more familiar with American culture, legality, and is more socially equipped when speaking to both Mexicans and Anglo Americans. After being caught by Border Patrol when attempting to cross the first time, Luis says to the men, “*amigos*,” “save your strength. We’re caught,” for he knew there would be another opportunity to cross (Villaseñor 107). Though his advice was not warranted, for as soon as the men were detained, Aguilar managed to take the agent’s gun and put it to his face. Luis pleaded with him saying,

“use your head. We can’t make it. They radioed for help, and all they’ll do is track us down. So give him back his gun. At present, we are not criminals. We

are just *alambres*. Wetbacks. Honorable workmen. Nothing more. But if you keep his gun...oh, *amigo mío!* we are in trouble.” (Villaseñor 109)

In another instance, shortly after Roberto had bitten off part of Pedro’s face and cried out vengeance, Luis laughed feverishly and reproached, “here we are...dying in the sun, and this boy brings family feuds from old Mexico. You must be from Jalisco or Michoacán. Where else are people so full of ridiculous pride” (Villaseñor 110). From this situation, Clifford’s questioning of ethics is observed as Roberto begins to lose sight of the self-controlled and steady character that Villaseñor first portrayed. Furthermore, recognizably Luis had established a respectable reputation with Anglo American farmers for he knew how to speak to them, worked hard, and therefore was never denied work. Luis introduces the formation of false consciousness for undiscerning the true nature of his social and economic situation, and appropriating derogatory labels and rendering them as true.

### **2.3 World War II, the Bracero Program, and Americanness**

World War II participated in reforming the life of the Mexican community—from Mexican immigrants, Mexican Americans, and subsequent generations. Ranging from immigrants entering the U.S., to Mexican Americans determined to be equally accepted into American society, in addition to subsequent generations at conflict in new ethnic communities. Along the U.S.-Mexico Border and other parts of the U.S., during the years of World War II, a substantial amount of Mexican descent people moved into urban areas. This was the most substantial movement of farmworkers into the city from Mexican communities. While this movement provided families with greater employment opportunities and strengthened integration, it also affected relational dynamics. The pressures of an urban lifestyle and Americanization demands, changed the traditional family ties. As household members interacted

with the dominant society, it “call[ed] into question many of their tradition beliefs and relationships” (Gonzales 169). Thus, inevitable changes in expectations begin to fuse, such as demands for authority and/or freedom. Additionally, the identity constructions that formed along the U.S.-Mexico Border generated concerns among the private and communal spaces, traditional and non-traditional roles, and questions of national identity. There tends to exist heighten binaries in relation to the topics mentioned above such as: north and south, rich and poor, beginning and ending, civilization and barbarism, powerful and weak, legal and illegal etc. These opposing matters suggest inequalities that appropriate to the discussion of borders and border identities.

The war not only altered the life of Anglo Americans, Mexicans of varies generations in the U.S. and Mexico were greatly impacted as well. The aftermath of the war propelled the battle of acceptance and belonging among the Mexican communities. As many Mexican Americans had served in the military and fought during the war, many came home to face injustices and inequality, even though Mexican Americans and/or Chicanas/os were the nation’s second largest ethnic group. With this, a shift in the economy succeeded and a “great demand for cheap, unskilled labor” was met “by unprecedented migration from Mexico (Vargas 7). Mexican labor became of significant importance in the economic development and thus altered the characteristics of the Mexican communities in the Southwest. In the introduction of *Mexican Immigrants and Mexican Americans: An Evolving Relation* (1986) Harley Browning and Rodolfo De la Garza, state that an endless amount of research has resulted in these areas, and has placed their historical origins of study on the “tradition of U.S. ‘minority’ studies” (Browning 2). Much of the work “centered on the nature of prejudice, the forms of discrimination, and the patterns of domination and subordination” (Browning 3).

Before the inception of the U.S. Border Patrol Agency (1924), “American social and political institutions had not yet effectively penetrated the entire Southwest, and the Mexican people in the area continued to live much as they had when the region was under Mexican control” (Browning 3). Additionally, the U.S. government did not have the resources to control the border and many Mexican immigrants had already become an economic value in the agricultural and mining development. In order to not distress or trouble the immigrant workers with taxes and legalities, the Immigration Acts of 1903 and 1907 commenced. After the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), less in-group differences were considered among people of Mexican descent. The contestation of the border space obliged residents to align themselves to a national side. Even after American citizenship, many Mexicans were still treated as “foreigners” and “experienced economic and social subjugation” (Browning 5). Since people of Mexican descent were excluded from aspects and privileges of American society, groups began to form to “articulate a self-conscious sense of Americanness,” and they distinguished themselves from Mexican immigrants (Browning 5). Amid the process of Americanization, many cooperatively opposed Mexican immigrants of any degree. Therefore, World War II provided opportunities for Mexican Americans to serve and work in occupations that were once denied to them—thus increasing their sense of Americanness and broadening the gap among Mexican immigrants. With this change among Mexican Americans, an even greater gap followed as the Mexican society turned to criticize them for not maintaining their culture, language, tradition, and identity. Many Mexican Americans were labeled as “pochos,” “pretentious, ignorant Mexicans who represented the worst of two worlds” (Browning 6). Such labels were applied to distinguish Mexicans, since the people in the Southwestern U.S. were all “Mexican,” regardless of citizenship.

As urbanization grew and developed in the U.S., the abandoned rural areas were in demand of workers. In *Consuming Mexican Labor: From the Bracero Program to NAFTA* (2011), Ronald Mize discusses that in order to relieve this necessity, the U.S. fabricated “new streams to every region of the continent” by employing “temporary workers—or Braceros— [who] were often herded more like cattle than people through migration, recruitment, processing, transportation, housing, boarding, and work” (3). The program was so successful that there was a surplus of workers who were exploited by agribusiness, totaling the employment of 2 million Braceros. The program was designed to ease wartime trials for the U.S., but it also relieved “unemployment in populous central Mexico, possibly even in urban areas with high unemployment” (Mize 9). Politically, the program was ideal since it recruited cheap, efficient, and reliable labor when needed, without inconveniencing the local neighborhoods and developments. Additionally, “unlike local laborers, braceros were unlikely to go on strike,” they did not miss work after festivities and they stayed in their designated area (Gonzales 177). However, not all were pleased with the program for racial and economic reasons. Economically, there were complaints that many labor workers would remain in the U.S. illegally and amass with industrialized subdivisions—an area adjudicated as undesigned to them—then negatively affect wages and dislodge U.S. citizens. In this way, external exchanges affected the rural and urban environments in the U.S., and social relationships among the Mexican communities experienced intimate and group disintegration. Furthermore, this section provides understanding from the Braceros perspective and their migration experience to consider the conditions communities from the U.S. and Mexico faced when massive migration was underplay.

In *Macho!*, before claiming to be a *norteño* one had to first be a *bracero*. Upon recruiting Roberto, Aguilar knew he had picked the right boy, for Roberto had good work ethics, he “stood

solid,” was young and not lazy, he was one that “can produce” (Villaseñor 37). Aguilar states, “you are going to be *un bracero*! And when you return, you will be un *norteno*! Like me! With money to burn” (Villaseñor 39). In this way, one had to earn the right to be called a *norteno*, and respect was further granted if one returned alive and with money to parade. Though Aguilar agreed that Roberto’s qualities were respectable, he warned Roberto that he would not survive for there are “innumerable crooks who live off the innocence of you-know-nothing *braceros*” (Villaseñor 37). Braceros were Mexican nationals recruited to work in the western United States on a temporary basis with a guaranteed wage as part of a U.S. government-sponsored project during and after the war, it was to alleviate “the enormous manpower shortage created by the war” (Gonzales 173). The Bracero Program was a “major consequence of World War II. The war made the U.S. the primary source in the world market, thereafter; the Southwest with its vast amount of land and agricultural fields needed workers. Additionally, workers were needed in the countryside because “traditional sources of farm labor were abandoning the countryside for the cities...The creation of defense industries served as a catalyst for the transformation of the Southwest into an urban society” (Gonzales 174). The program was extensive, it “employed approximately 4.8 million Mexican nations during its twenty-two years in existence” (Gonzales 175). The greatest incentive for Mexican nationals was to make money. So many wanted to join the program that soon there were more volunteers than were needed, and the process became more rigorous. As the Mexican men grew impatient, many decided to cross illegally.

In the camps set up for legalization of labor to the U.S., thousands of Mexican men lined up. Many waiting were so hungry and dehydrated that they,

“began suffocating each other and passing out by the hundreds ... and the fallen one was trampled as they moved on, exhausted and sweaty, like starving dogs

trying to get contracted into the land of plenty... they all seemed dead. Like they had no faces. No expressions. Just dark and tired masks of desperate want... men all over, bunched together like hungry chickens in a cage...preferring death if they couldn't get work in the US of A." (Villaseñor 65, 67, 68, 99)

Some men were so physically drained from waiting in the sun without proper food and water, that when their turn finally came to move forward with the process, they were not contracted because they were too weak to pass the physical exam, and so became "physically unfit to be laborers" (Villaseñor 70). As men traveled to the camps to wait for work, Mexican farmers were now in need of workers. One Mexican farmer drove along the lines in search for prospects, when all refused he exclaimed, "you'll all stay here, preferring to starve with the dream of *gringo* money! Sure. I know! And I'll lose my crop this year again. Sure. Sure. These son-of-a-bitch bastard *americanos* have ruined you men! Made you crazy" (Villaseñor 83). This mindset of not concerning themselves for their health and wellbeing, continued once they finally entered the U.S. Many braceros suffered abuses from farm owners, as the food was of poor quality, "wages were low, housing often inadequate, and race discrimination [was] severe" (Gonzales 176). For the Mexican laborers, the main objective was to earn "dollars, the gods of the earth," no matter the cost (Villaseñor 37). As the probabilities of approval to work with the Bracero Program became scarce, men became impatient and found illegal ways to enter. Roberto and his group intended to cross without having much resource, they were in need of it—crossing meant having an opportunity to alleviate their circumstance. Once the program was terminated, illegal entry continued, and because "the traffic was illicit," and "clients were virtually powerless, the business of smuggling tended to attract an unusually large number of unsavory and unscrupulous individuals" (Gonzales 180). Aguilar knew that he was not qualified for approval since he had

developed a lingering cough from his previous works in the U.S., for this reason, he advocated for crossing illegally. This neglect of self-care, disagrees with Foucault's concepts of bio-power and disciplinary power. The men who risk their life and well-being for a chance in joining the power force is contrary to disciplinary power—where the individual subjects discipline themselves to maintain self-care. Nonetheless, the bio-power of the force equally disregards the population by ignoring the management of risks. This suggests that the workers are not active participants in the process of their production. Instead, they are worked through ideologies of individuality, subjecting them to alienation towards themselves and others in similar conditions. In this way, migration characterized the complex relationship of the government, the labor market, and the relentless need to protect national symbolic boundaries. This relationship is actualized by discriminatory practices and restrictions on migrant workers. Historical migration is concerned on the dependency of foreign workers and carried out by racialized ideologies of desirable and undesirable immigrants. Immigration, its politics and policies participate in the negotiations of how individuals shape, cope with, and experience the othering and belonging process.

## **2.4 The Chicano Movement**

In addition to contracting braceros, many native-born and locals also worked as farm laborers. The locals and native-born workers became distressed for they were also suffering the depressing wages. Conflictive relations arose in the racial and ethnic scopes—tensions among the Mexican community deepened towards the program and towards “recent Mexican immigration in general” (Gonzales 177). The political concerns that were once focused on territories, shifted to working-class concerns. Since Mexican Americans of the working class were more abruptly affected, they tended to be more in opposition to the program than the

“middle class, educated and skilled individuals whose jobs were secure” (Gonzales 178). However, it is observed that middle class Mexican Americans were the main participants in protesting against the program. Gonzales claims that as protests developed, ethnic distinctions arose more than class, those “who felt a strong sense of Mexican nationalism were more likely to identify with the braceros and accept them, especially if they themselves were recent immigrants” (178). Meanwhile, Mexican Americans “with weak sentimental ties to the Old Country were likely to reject the guest worker program” (Gonzales 178).

When Mexican immigrants come to reside in the U.S., they experience a new structure of identity shifts. The importance of region now becomes challenged as the meaning of identity is both an ethnic and nationality concern. Due to the constant pressures of classifications, Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans both experience identity obstructions in identifying themselves. Mexican Americans “use nationality to detach themselves from Mexican nationals and to open a gap ‘inside’ the Mexican ethnic category. The continuous influx of Mexicans accounts for the constant revival of identity formations and contributes to intra-racial tensions. Some of these tensions are thought to embellish for lack of acculturation, assimilated Mexicans view the incoming immigrants as belonging to an excluded group for choosing to preserve cultural beliefs, identities and being reluctant towards social and economic integration (Huntington 2004). On the other hand, while second generation Mexicans have confirmed progress, they remain low in educational accomplishments among U.S.-born Mexicans in comparison to other U.S. citizens (Telles 2008). Following generations evidence the same trends as they inherit the same racial and social status as their parents, and for becoming discouraged to socially mobilize and/or assimilate (Telles 2008). As a group, Mexicans are targeted and continue to experience racial prejudice and discrimination regardless of acculturation. To

racialize a group is to enforce their social status to a position that is lower than the white dominant group. Therefore, racialization entails “designating people by race, thus implying their position in a social hierarchy” (Telles 15). This has been done to Mexicans even though some of them belong to succeeding acculturated generations.

Both rural and urban communities were affected by the commodity production. Many communities temporarily formed by the industries of the area. In this way, communities evolved depending on the demand for the local labor, and in accordance with the pattern of the economic activity. César Chávez dedicated himself to undertaking the concerns in the rural agricultural and Mexican communities, demanding integration and rights. However, for the characters portrayed by Villaseñor, Chávez was a part of a “*pocho* union,” “a goddamn Mexican born in the United States,” who together with Congress were stopping the Bracero Program” and closing the border of opportunity (Villaseñor 99). Yet, migration did not cease, as many Mexicans were smuggled north, and many times paid for by a labor contractor. In this way, “the war of cheap labor continued all through the 1970s and ‘80s and into more recent times,” for “even the Border Patrol looked the other way, for the *rancheros* were strong and the Border Patrol did what the growers wished” (Villaseñor 111, 123). For Roberto and Aguilar, who were less considered with U.S. politics, their motives focused on finding the camp that paid the most money—Aguilar claimed, “we are illegal, so we’re free,” and they have come a long way with a hungry family back home, “so, well, I’ve got to get all I can” (Villaseñor 123, 125). The men do not recognize the misrepresentation in their powerlessness freedom. Instead, the workers remain as the subordinate class, exploited by the capitalist society. Meanwhile, Luis, who was beginning to develop class-consciousness, quickly controverted Aguilar’s statements, informing Aguilar that times were changing and that “the Chávez union is as strong as the *rancheros* now, and the

Border Patrol doesn't look the other way anymore" (Villaseñor 123). Further explaining to Aguilar that Chávez and people like him,

"simply wish to protect their own way of life...we from Mexico come up here and work a few months and make...oh, maybe one thousand dollars and then get caught by la *migra* on purpose and are then flown back to Mexico free of cost, and that thousand dollars is big money back in a small village in Mexico. But here, for these *pochos*, a few thousand dollars for a year's work is very bad. Everything costs so much. So Chávez is trying to get us all put out so he can bargain for higher wages." (Villaseñor 124)

The opposition towards Chávez argued that he was hurting Mexican immigrant's advancement. The protestors were accused as "just lazy, no-good troublemakers" and for being interested in their own advancement (Villaseñor 142). Vargas states, "one must take into consideration the structures of power, authority, and economic necessity that forced many Mexican workers to avoid explicit confrontations with their employers" (Vargas 16). Countering this argument detailed that the laborers should not only join for themselves, but for their future generations, and that all workers deserve compensations, and that united it can be overcome. This justification encouraged Roberto to want to join, however, Aguilar quickly grabbed him and said, "don't be a fool! We're illegal. You'll be deported," and his eyes blinked and he remembered everything he risked to get there (Villaseñor 145). The protests prevented a full day's work, and the laborers quickly became frustrated acknowledging that the *huelga* only hampered their earnings. They also recognized that illegals were not considered, and for this reason, it should not be forgotten that their families in Mexico were still hungry. Repeatedly Roberto, Aguilar, and Luis were reminded that "they have it made," because they are free and "can pick up and leave anytime"

(Villaseñor 153). With this statement, Villaseñor asserts his position on the exclusivity of the protests, further noting that the men were afraid to run into Chávez and the protestors for fear that they would be handed over to Border Patrol Agents. Villaseñor portrays the protests as an individualistic struggle that is inconsiderate of Mexican immigrants. While on the other hand, this situation provides understanding on the development of intra-racial tensions that stem from false-consciousness. The consciousness of the exploited group is dominated by ideologies that justify their freedom and independence that perpetuates their exploitation.

Villaseñor further addresses this matter and inserts a commentary from a Mexican American police captain, to demonstrate intra-ethnic tensions towards Mexican immigrants and Chávez. The captain states,

“‘these people,’ meaning the unsuccessful *Chicanos* in the U.S., ‘are low-class people, and that’s the whole problem in a nutshell. Hell, the Europeans who came here had to have money, ambition, and a little old-fashioned smarts to come across the ocean. These people who come across from Mexico are broke, illiterate; they’re the lowest and most backward of all Mexicans. They just give me and you a bad image to all the Americans. And Chávez, hell, I’ve known him since way back, and I say he was all right years back when he tried to work within the framework of our great society, but now it’s all gone to his head. He’s a puppet for foreign forces, a news-media gimmick, and...you know, low-class...hell, no one cares about migrating people: here today, there tomorrow. And there is no dignity in laboring under the sun in the dust and wind. Fieldworkers have always been the lowest and will always be the lowest. I say César Chávez is a fool, impractical and ignorant, to try to improve the conditions

for the Mexican in the fields. I say to hell with the Factories of the Field. Let them remain awful! Encourage the Mexican to get educated and get the hell out of the fields. That would be the humane position for Chávez to take, but no, he just wants to stir up trouble.” (Villaseñor 171, 179)

This commentary reveals the favored European immigrant and their superior status that persevered in the region. Furthermore, throughout the novel, only two characters agree with Chávez, Luis—who is more aware of the circumstances and Gloria, a potential romantic interest for Roberto, however, because she is “Americanized and outspoken,” she clashes with his “traditional values of hard work and stoicism,” and their relationship never develops (Magill 295). Gloria refers to Chávez as “the great César Chávez,” for his works made it possible for her to obtain a scholarship and assist college (Villaseñor 181). Luis states, “Chávez is a good man, the best, but we just happen to be on the other side” (Villaseñor 184). These commentaries provide perspective on the varying ways in which Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and Chicanas/os disagree. For many Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans, Chávez was an antagonist, for he “isn’t so good. A real worker doesn’t need him” (Villaseñor 182). His efforts in stopping the Bracero Program prevented many Mexicans from earning money for their families. Villaseñor depicts Chávez as being ‘his own god,’ for he was truly not concerned of the future of all Mexicans, just those like him (Villaseñor 207). This suggests that Villaseñor implies false consciousness towards Chávez.

Vargas argues further that “the seemingly ‘passivity’ of Mexican workers reflected a pervasive and often effective system of repression, compelling Mexican workers to indirect forms of protestation, e.g., leaving their jobs, returning to Mexico or moving elsewhere...and other forms of resistance” (Vargas 16). Vargas states that a historical interpretation should be

paid to the Mexican immigrant who arrived with the Bracero Program, overcame Operation Wetback<sup>21</sup>, and who continued to reside in the U.S. thereafter. He further adds that to represent a history of heroes only, does a disservice to the daily struggles of the working Mexican men and women who endure “their dignity in a world that had taken a great deal, including, at times, their sense of self. The outcome of those struggles, it seems, represent the basis of the Chicano past and present” (Vargas 20). It is within this historical context that the relationship between Mexican immigrants, Mexican Americans, and Chicana/o communities are influenced. David Gutiérrez reports in *Walls and Mirrors* (1995) that a scarce amount of information is known on how Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans “reacted to the steady influx of immigrants into their communities” (Gutiérrez 2). One reason he believes is due to Anglo Americans not recognizing the significant differences between U.S. Mexican residents and recent Mexican immigrants, which henceforth, participate in the social, cultural, and political characteristics that divide them. In this way, these differences in perception indicate that populations of Mexican descent should be viewed and studied differently.

## 2.5 Conclusion

*Macho!* ends with Roberto expressing his political position as he “cursed the damn Chávez” (Villaseñor 183). He returned home after finding out his father had been killed. Upon arriving to Mexico, he was even more aware of the scarcity of resources and infrastructure. Additionally, because he had gone north and returned with health and money, he was now a

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<sup>21</sup> “By the early 1950s, anti-immigration fears were exacerbated by the xenophobia accompanying the Cold War. The result was a massive campaign waged by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to deport undocumented Mexican. Labeled ‘Operation Wetback,’ the program was initiated on 17 June 1954, and lasted for several months. Conducted as a military operation by the Border Patrol, and often employing the intimidation tactics of the thirties, it focused on the Southwest, but eventually it was extended nationally. Over one million people (1,075,168) were apprehended and returned to Mexico in 1954. Operation Wetback was hailed as a huge success, and it is true that in the late 1950s, apprehensions declined noticeably. However, by the early 1960s, illegal entries were on the rise once again. Once the Bracero Program was terminated, this immigration exploded” (Gonzales 180).

*norteño*, and a “big bad stranger” to the locals, even though he was in his hometown (Villaseñor 206). Yet, the ending leaves the reader to believe that Roberto settles his frustrations with the underdevelopment of his town, and that perhaps he could stay and take it upon himself to change it. Magill observes that Villaseñor does not wish to portray Roberto’s character as an American success story, but rather, a perspective on “the immediacy of life itself, [that]... ultimately transcends political boundaries” (Magill 297). For Roberto, whose concern was survival, ideological concerns were incomprehensible to him. In this way, *Macho!* reaffirms some of the demarcations that disallow unity among Mexican immigrants, Mexican Americans, Chicanas/os. It attests that people live and fight for rights according to their own milieu. Alternatively, if Roberto had not returned to Mexico and opted to reside in the U.S., his succeeding generations run the likelihood of developing his own disapproving standpoint on Chávez. In this case, the Other is initiated as an immigrant, for they are the first to receive rejection, consequently, this sentiment of rejection is passed along to the subsequent generation. This supports Vargas’ argument that further development on historical interpretations and its outcomes from this perspective needs an author.

### **3. Fighting Words: Ethnic Disunion among Mexicans**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The ethnographic study of “Fight Words: Latina Girls, Gangs, and Language Attitudes” by Norma Mendoza-Denton (1999) is included to show how regional ideologies of Americanness and Mexicanness frame intra-racial and ethnic tensions situated in urban settings. The author of this study, who is of Mexican descent, was able to fully participate with the participants. The work ranged from ethnographic fieldwork to volunteering in teaching, tutoring, providing rides, babysitting, chaperoning, and godmothering. This acceptability among the

participants provided Mendoza-Denton exclusivity in capturing in depth attitudes of the members of the community. This study evidences the cultural, political, educational, and lingual conflicts existing between recent Mexican immigrants and U.S.-born of Mexican descent.

As Mexican immigrants settled into urban ethnic communities and encountered earlier-settled Mexican residents, the result was divergence, creating an “us” versus “them” repertoire among the people. “Us” were the former residents; “them” were the recently arrived. While the premise of Mendoza-Denton’s study focuses on differences in language identification, the geography of the residents and the political connotations are important to the cause of their dissimilarities. The location of the high school is located in what used to be a wealthy suburban area. However, in the late 1980s, the demography changed with the arrival of Mexican immigrants, thus changing the ethnic dynamics of the school and community. The majority of the residents from this area are of Mexican or Latin American descent. With the impact of immigrating populations, the existing cultures and languages faced new challenges.

### **3.2 Identity and Culture**

The dichotomy of *Norteña* versus *Sureña* is more of a distinction around ideologies with attributes that form developmental alliances and accentuate their individual and social identity. The application of the identity labels *Norteñas* and *Sureñas*, contextualize how the formation of Americanness and Mexicanness respectively form. The U.S.-born identify as *Norteñas*, and the more recent immigrant girls identify as *Sureñas*. Even though the *Norteñas* and *Sureñas* share the same ethnicity, they disagree over the politics of identity in their community.

*Norteñas* perceive *Sureñas* “as poor, unsophisticated newcomers,” with characteristics that awaken memories of shame and embarrassment (Mendoza-Denton 44). Meanwhile, *Sureñas* perceive *Norteñas* as “overly Americanized and hopelessly losing sight of what it means

to be authentic, even to the degree that they no longer speak good Spanish” (Mendoza-Denton 44). To make differences clear: *Norteñas* wear the color red, speak English, listen to Motown oldies, wear feather hair, and use deep red lipstick; *Sureñas* wear the color blue, speak Spanish, listen to *banda* music, wear vertical ponytails, and use brown lipstick—to symbolically represent their approved group affiliation. Such differences among the groups entail belonging—by making the fundamental decision of maintaining “Mexicanness” or becoming an assimilated Mexican. Julio Cammarota observes in *Sueños Americanos: Barrio Youth Negotiating Social and Cultural Identities* (2008) that “people create their own cultural forms and activities to interpret and respond to their positions...in the social order” (11). This social phenomenon provides understanding on the conditions of their experiences and the confidence to self-identify and appropriate in their respective groups.

### **3.3 Language and Education**

For this study, language serves as a primary factor in determining inclusion or exclusion. How the girls identified linguistically, was directly related to their peer-group identification. In this way, their linguistic acquisition aligned or divided the group together with national, ethnic, and class associations. This duality in a single community is common, Mendoza-Denton supports this claim with Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands: The New Mestiza = La Frontera* (1987), where Anzaldúa states,

“because we internalize how our language has been used against us by the dominant culture, we use our language differences against each other...To be close to another Chicana is like looking in the mirror. We are afraid of what we’ll see there...Chicanas feel uncomfortable talking in Spanish to Latinas, afraid of their censure. Their language was not outlawed in their countries.” (Anzaldúa 80)

Even though the girls reside in the same city, live in the same neighborhood, and attend the same school, a distinct culture progresses among them. The *Norteñas*, who Mendoza-Denton identifies as Chicanas, share a common culture in the U.S. For example, their language is “composed of Chicano Spanish and Chicano English and their variants—differ from both the Mexican and the American standard varieties” (Mendoza-Denton 40).

The *Sureñas* are able to speak English, yet choose Spanish as their dominant identifying language among their group members to prevent Americanization and assimilation. They prefer to display their fast Spanish-speaking language skills as Mexican pride and darker skin is “considered normative and symbolic” by the group (Mendoza-Denton 53). The *Norteñas* also demonstrate their language abilities by emphasizing their bilingual skills and bicultural identity. Most of them are U.S. born or were young immigrants; therefore, English is their dominant language.

In his chapter of “Revolutionary and Counter-Revolutionary Theory in Geography and the Problem of Ghetto Formation,” in *The Ways of the World* (2016) David Harvey examines geographical theories to explain the ghetto formation and its maintenance. Harvey discusses Thomas Kuhn’s revolution in the geographic paradigm as it relates to natural sciences. First, he clarifies that in the branches of sciences, a particular paradigm is applied to “a set of concepts, categories, relationships and methods,” generally within a specific point in time (Harvey 10). As irregularities surge, the existing paradigm is found to be insufficient for resolution. However, instead of considering why the paradigm was inadequate, a new paradigm is designed; consequently, no clarification is given as to why the initial crisis produced. Harvey agrees with J.D. Bernal’s historical involvement in science, to proclaim that science in the West is interested in preserving the middle-class group, and for this reason, there is a discreet way in which

variants are manipulated and controlled. Harvey further clarifies that the intents that motivate the formation of a paradigm in the social sciences are designed “to manipulate and control human activity and social phenomena in the interest of man” (Harvey 14). History has shown that the answer to such concerns is “concentrated within a few key groupings in society” (Harvey 14). The configurations of scientific revolutions were designed to clarify the course of knowledge production in the natural sciences. However, Harvey argues that the paradigms social science applies cannot be isolated from the existing social manifestations and relationships in society. Harvey further explains that,

“A revolutionary theory upon which a new paradigm is based will gain general acceptance only if the nature of the social relationships embodied in the theory is actualized in the real world. A counter-revolutionary theory is one in which is deliberately proposed to deal with a revolutionary theory in such a manner that the threatened social changes which general acceptance of the revolutionary theory would generate are, either by co-optation or subversion, prevented from being realised.” (Harvey 15)

In the study, the educational system was made to accommodate immigrant populations, thus affecting how students learned, and how teachers educated. To provide a solution, the California Education Code developed a criterion that accordingly placed students depending on their language abilities. The intent of the survey was to find out whether another language was spoken at home. If English was spoken at home, students were Fluent English Proficient (FEP), if any other language was spoken, Limited English Proficient (LEP) was determined. The FEP students were considered mainstream students who were “following the high school core curriculum” and had “the opportunity to take college preparatory courses” (Mendoza-Denton

47). For the case of the study, if a *Norteña* happened to be categorized as LEP because they answered “yes” to another language being spoken at home, then she would have to face the challenges in academically readmitting herself into the educational mainstream. Since LEP students do not meet the course prerequisites for college admittance, many are unable to move forward academically, thus predetermining them to social measuring standards. In many cases, students are deemed to “not succeeding in school, have high dropout rates, and are placed in low-level classes because of low grades, low overall test scores, or behavioral issues” (Mendoza-Denton 48). Regrettably, both *Norteñas* and *Sureñas* endanger their educational opportunities, whether by choosing a particular social affiliation or for systematic classifications.

Knowledge in this way serves as power that is maintained by the political and professional interests of the hierarchal class. By masking the systematic manipulation, the economic means of production remains controlled, thus ensuring stability in social order. In a socioeconomic political society, class divisions are formed in order to restrict “job opportunities to the low-wage service industry, and [this] diminishes quality educational opportunities” (Cammarota 10). In order to maintain these divisions, class distinctions are defined, thus establishing the appropriate order between owner and laborer. Since the mainstream institution classifies both the *Norteñas* and *Sureñas* as belonging to the same minority group, they are both set apart from the white dominant group, and this equally lessens opportunities for both groups. As *Norteñas* are pressured to deny lingual cultural association in order to academically advance in the dominant educational mainstream, the potential formation of false consciousness ensues. For fear of seeming to appear too foreign or Mexican and perceived to fail, self-rejection and an individualistic outlook develops. In this way, *Norteñas* self-interests distort their class socioeconomic concerns and deepens their disaffiliation with *Sureñas*.

### 3.4 Conclusion

The complex intra-tensions relating to identity, language, and education are formulated within the context of the institution and the community. With the application of a fixed testing system, the recipients were interlocked as a “minority intragroup” to expose concerns of “linguistic resistance” and identity conflicts among the ethnic group (Mendoza-Denton 54). The systemized tests were designed to withhold LEP minority students, not to lessen the gap or equalize them into the dominant mainstream. This was evident as the institution focused their attention and efforts on the “rich, white kids” of the school (Mendoza-Denton 50). To avoid impediments in education progression, *Norteñas* rejected their native language and the cultural affiliations it implied. However, their phenotypic appearance profiled them of still jeopardizing their chances of regression and being classified as inadequately prepared. Instructors at the school were inconsiderate in distinguishing linguistic abilities, cultural, or political backgrounds. Likewise, to remain faithful to their ancestry and cultural relationships, *Sureñas* embraced their Spanish language, which threatened their educational advancement and reinforced their marginalization. As long as there is no change in the community and the educational system, the relational dynamics of both group of girls, will persist and the Mexican population as a whole, will remain at the lowermost scale. These findings support Harvey’s argument in that there is no true foundation in approaching the “deteriorated social conditions” (Harvey 31). He further states that a new paradigm that is “self-conscious and aware” of social geography is necessary (Harvey 32). In order to socially change, a process of self-reflection and consideration of the dominated Other is crucial, otherwise a counter-revolutionary regime is produced.

## 4. Exposed Disaffiliation: Mexican Exclusivity in “Ana Gaines Racist Mexicana”

### 4.1 Introduction

Subsequent is an approximate 2-minute transcribed dialogue obtained from a 5:39 minute YouTube video that represents a social ramification related to intra-racial and ethnic complexities. The recording took place after a Maricopa County Board of Supervisor's Meeting as the protagonists Carlos E. Galindo<sup>22</sup> and Ana Gaines<sup>23</sup> were walking outside along the street. Maricopa County is located in the south central part of Arizona and its major cities are Phoenix, Glendale, Scottsdale, Mesa and Chandler. The Maricopa County Board of Supervisors consists of members who exhibit authority per the county as laws are appointed to the Arizona state.

The protagonist Carlos is filming the interaction as he walks behind Ana. Carlos is a national radio talk show host in English and Spanish on radio stations in Arizona. He is a political analyst and contributes to various sources. His profile with *Daily Kos* states he is a Mexican immigrant who worked the fields in California with his family. Ana is a woman that *Sonoran News* describes as representing American Citizens United. In addition, *CNN* reports that Gaines came to the U.S. from Mexico on a working visa during the Vietnam War, where later she met her husband and now obtains citizenship through marriage. Ana supports SB 1070 laws and supports the fortifying of the border. A woman accompanying Ana whom I have named Linda appears mostly in the periphery, yet contributes significantly, as she participates in remarks towards Carlos. The women attempt to appear uninterested by walking away from Carlos, yet do not hesitate to stop and interact and respond to his questioning.

In relation to the audience, Carlos has intended this video for an audience whose likelihood is against anti-immigrant laws being that he refers to Ana and Linda as a "racist klan (sic)" additionally, at the beginning of the video he directs the audience to "watch her as she shoots her mouth off then assaults me!!!" The interlocutor's (Carlos) strategy is to overflow Ana

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<sup>22</sup> This source is cited under the name Activistausa.

<sup>23</sup> There is a discrepancy in the spelling of her first name. Most sources use Anna; however, I will keep in agreement with the YouTube source and use Ana.

with questions relating to her contradicting position and political views, hence the YouTube title, “Ana Gaines Racist Mexicana,” signifying to the audience that she disapproves of her own people for displaying intra-ethnic oppositional viewpoints (Merino 1993).

Below is the entire transcription of 88 lines, the proceedings detail a more thorough analysis of the excerpt content.

Timestamps: 0:14-02:20

Subjects: Carlos, Ana, Linda

1. Carlos: Ana your, your ancestors were immigrants
2. Ana: [I]
3. Carlos: [you’re] an immigrant
4. Ana: I am an [immigrant]
5. Linda: [oh crap]
6. Ana: le::gal
7. Carlos: [so this country]
8. Ana: [le::gal, le::gal] not illegal (pointing finger at Carlos)
9. Carlos: [this country], this country was built on immigrants
10. Ana: [le::gal]
11. Carlos: [why is it] that you’re so [opposed to immigrants contributing
12. Ana: [not illegal]
13. Ana: [not the legals]
14. Linda: [XX legally]
15. Ana: I’m opposed to the illegals[
16. Carlos: ]this country turned the blind eye:: to the labor]

17. Ana: [illegal migrants]
18. Linda: [XX]
19. Carlos: let me ask you [let me] ask you something, this country--
20. Ana: [illegal migrants]
21. Linda: [XX like the cartel]
22. Carlos: sure
23. Carlos: let's be --
24. Ana: [those people left their family]
25. Carlos: [Ana, let's be respectful, let's be respectful]
26. Ana: [those people] left their family they had
27. Carlos: ok, I'm listening to you now, listen to me (Ana turns her back to walk away)
28. Carlos: an, answer one ques[tion] for me
29. Linda: [take] your kids and go back to Mexico
30. Carlos: let me ask you something
31. Carlos: (camera restarts) go, there goes the clan of racist right?
32. Carlos: (camera restarts) [X] (Ana is walking in front of camera)
33. Ana: [X]
34. Carlos: Ana it doesn't matter, it's all about the [right] thing to do, and if you talk that way about people that doesn't say much about you, does it Ana
35. Ana: [you're a fat ass]
36. Linda: you come [across] that border--
37. Ana: [!!]

38. Carlos: eres [una ri-]
39. Linda: [you XX]
40. Carlos: eres una racista sin vergüenza [Ana]
41. Ana: [tu madre] tu madre (Ana turns to Carlos and points)
42. Carlos: por qué eres una racista
43. Ana: tu madre es (Ana turns to Carlos and points)
44. Carlos: porque tu madre no te enseñó como [portarte bien con los hispanos verda?d]
45. Ana: [tu madre, tu madre te crió,] un panzón (Ana turns to Carlos and points)
46. Carlos: eres una sin vergüenza Ana, una sin vergüenza
47. Ana: tu madre (Ana turns to Carlos and points)
48. Carlos: racista mexicana--
49. Ana: tu madre (Ana turns to Carlos and points)
50. Carlos: [con] un nopal en la frente
51. Linda: [XX]
52. Carlos: tienes un nopal en la frente y eres una [racista]
53. Linda: [go to] Mexico
54. Carlos: que:: sin vergüenza
55. Carlos: (camera restarts) it's a shame Ana (.) it's a shame (.) i::t i:s an absolu:te shame
56. Ana: call the police please
57. Carlos: (camera restarts) Ana you:: should be ashamed of yourself as well
58. Linda: get a job[



76. Carlos: shame on [you]
77. Linda: [it's not] about illegal (.) we're not talking about that
78. Carlos: excuse, why do you have to go to someone else to fight your battle Ana
79. (.)
80. Ana: are you getting the police?]
81. Linda: [why don't you go, cross over the border
82. Carlos: (.) I've got her [recorded hitting] my? camera
83. Ana: [listen to him]
84. Carlos: you're going to go to jail [Ana] –
85. Ana: [oh you're going to go to jail]
86. Carlos: [if you continue this behavior]
87. Ana: you go to jail for harassing [me] (turns and points to Carlos)
88. Carlos: [I am], hey I'm simply walking down the street, I'm  
simply walking down the street

#### 4.2 Legal vs Illegal

Ana stresses a distinction between legal and illegal immigrants, and implies belonging to a superior group of Mexicans for not crossing illegally. Ana's incessant remark of entering "legally," is emphasized to deem herself as not breaking any laws as illegal immigrants or even the cartel. In this way, arbitrating illegal immigrants as equals to criminals. Similarly, the term illegal immigrant denotes images of people crossing the border, as Linda states—in addition to the pairing of illegals and authorities along the border. Therefore, by positioning her national entry in a higher superior status, Ana validates herself as a dominant person and unequal to the illegal immigrant and categorizes Carlos as belonging to that same inferior group. However,

Carlos reminds her that the process of obtaining a higher status came about for self-interested reasons as she “married a U.S. citizen to get in legal[ly].” There is speculation on whether Ana wed on illegal terms, nonetheless, she states “it’s not about racism—it’s about the law” (*Easy Valley Tribune*). For Ana, nationalism is more important and should be not confused to racism. Therefore, even though Ana belongs to the same Mexican ethnic group, she expresses opposition towards the legitimacy of illegal immigrants in the country for having entered the U.S. unlawfully.

Discourses of legal and illegal rights of citizenship are often ingrained with justifying who belongs in U.S. communities. Disparities arise as concerns of inclusion and exclusion dominate agendas of deserving citizenship. This rhetoric of dominant national ideologies is maintained by supporting policies that preserve exclusionary nationalism, thus subjugating the immigrant as the Other for posing a threat to this national ideal. Ana’s display of dominant networking permits her validation in belonging to the dominant sphere through legal nationalistic paradigms, thus subjugating her to false consciousness.

### **4.3 Cultural Affronts**

Foucault describes culture as a classified system of values that are open to all through exclusivity. In this way, speakers have access to forming interconnected groups that are capable of resisting linguistic and social pressures from outside groups, thus, describing ‘closed’ or ‘open’ networks (O’Riagain 180). The consideration of observing culture permits insight on the protagonists standing. In relation to language maintenance, the dynamics of identity work conjointly with the structure of networking.

Both Carlos and Ana refer to each other as shameless or shameful. In Spanish: “shame” is a social marker that held sufficient power to exclude or discuss a person from a social group or

community. Whether Ana rejects affiliation to the Mexican culture or not, her understanding of the term led her to angrily slap the camera (line 70). This demonstrates that Carlos not only knew what language choice would successfully offend her, but also leaving her unable to reciprocate an equal offense (Rebolledo 1993; 1995). In relation to language choice, the domain (family, friends, employment, education, and religion) is an important factor that determines which language the participant will use (Galindo & Gonzales 1999). People chose their language depending on their level of comfort with the language, with the reciprocating participant, and the domain. Most commonly, in the private domains such as the home is where people tend to use their intimate language variety or language. Even though the participants in the video were in the public domain, there was a switch from English, to Spanish, then to English. The language switch was initiated by Carlos (line 38), when he uttered “eres una ri-” and was cut off, to later in line 40 complete his utterance of “eres una racista sin vergüenza Ana.” Compared to Gonzales’s study (1999), this can be explained as what she calls a language behavior that is influenced by the need to identify and place solidarity with the ethnic group, or in this case with Ana. On the other hand, being that Carlos self-identifies as Mexican, this could also indicate his conscious resistance of a linguistic assimilation by bringing to the forefront what can be considered a private language (Spanish) to the public sphere (Gonzales 1999). In this way, Carlos uses Spanish in public to verbally insult Ana, who reciprocates in the same language with the determination to equally offend, and this further allows for the observation that she is also bilingual. Even though her Spanish turn speaking is very limited, it is observable that she correctly structures a sentence in the language in line 45 (tu madre, tu madre te crió un panzón). The word “panzón” is a colloquial version of a big bellied person, used in combination with the insult “tu madre,” evidences that she can not only speak the language, structure the

language, know how to insult in it, but also use a colloquial version of it. The last switch from Spanish to English is transitioned again by Carlos and followed by Ana who does not engage largely with the language. Ana may have not forgotten her native language; however, she may be discouraged to dialogue in it due to the public setting, her observing audience (Linda), or for her political affiliation. As has been analyzed throughout this dissertation, language choice and use participates in the ethnic and cultural affiliation of a person (MacGregor-Mendoza 2000). This explains the reasons for which Ana consciously limits her engagement when speaking in Spanish with Carlos.

#### **4.4 Phenotypic Tensions**

In the midst of the intensity while Ana was persuasively pointing at Carlos and repeating “tu madre...tu madre,” Carlos says, “[con] un nopal en la frente...tienes un nopal en la frente y eres una racista” (47-52). In the dissertation titled, *Con El Nopal Pegado En La Frente: A Psychosocial Study of Prejudice and Discrimination among Mexican Immigrants and Mexican Americans in Arizona* (2016), Natalia Hernandez Jimenez explains that the use of this phrase “con el nopal pegado en la frente,” denotes mockery towards those who reject association with their Mexican origin. The Spanish word *nopal*, meaning cactus in English, has come to symbolize “the homeland and nourishment offered by Mexico” (Hernandez Jimenez 231). More importantly, it symbolizes a person who does not accept their Mexican identity, but clearly has a Mexican appearance, such as dark skin, indigenous features or an accent. It further implies that the person is branded, or has a “permanent mark on [their] forehead that cannot be removed” (Hernandez Jimenez 231). By rejecting their identity and attempting to represent a more superior nationality, this phrase is applied to them to emphasize that “a Mexican cannot fool anyone into thinking he or she is not Mexican” (Hernandez Jimenez 230). In this way, Carlos

stresses that even though Ana intermarries to change her legal status and surname, denies and incriminates her culture, her phenotypical appearance, as a person of Mexican descent, is inescapable.

Furthermore, in *East Valley Tribune*, Ana comments “look at me, I’m brown. Dual citizenship is not right. You’re either here or there.” This remark provides insight that she is conscious of her skin color and does not deem it as a restriction to citizenship. However, her statement of having to choose, suggests having to reject the less legitimate status. Interestingly, in the same statement, Ana refers to herself as a Mexican American and says, “we are now being viewed with a bit of suspicion” (*The East Valley Tribune*). This statement further complicates intra-racial and ethnic tensions as Carlos speculates about her legal status prior to her U.S. citizenship. Notwithstanding, Ana joins in to convict illegal immigrants to agree that their status contests her position as a legal immigrant and the acceptability of belonging in a dominant network. In this way, Ana’s self-image, nationality, and political affiliation greatly affect her awareness of individuals who struggle in similar experiences. Thus, she characterizes false consciousness attributes, as she counteracts the progression of the socioeconomic and political interests of the group. Similarly, Carlos also features characteristics of false consciousness for discounting the ways in which the privileged class propagate ideologies of racism as a stratagem to prevent the inferior group from effectively uniting. In this way, the racial remarks towards Ana attribute to the disempowerment and division among isolated individuals.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

The tension implications of this YouTube video lays focus on the power of categorizations among distinct groups of Mexican descent. As political affiliates, both Carlos and Ana exercise their power in their respective network societies. Moreover, their power is

embedded in the involvement of their affiliated network. Manuel Castells explains in *Communication Power* (2009) that social change requires “communication networks in terms of their cultural codes and in terms of the implicit social and political values and interests” (372). The network society exercises their power by proper communication in accordance with the group’s beliefs. Carlos and Ana both exercise their power of influence through affiliated networking, thus circulating their discourse as a production of knowledge. Castell’s approach to power through an understanding of Marx and Foucault states that power from economic systems reconstructs in networks, while powers that belong to the State are exercised through intimidation, and both carried out through political interests. In this way, power is executed through discourse to be dispersed among communicative networks. Carlos and Ana have “integrated into a larger political and social” manifestation and have organized themselves in terms of interaction (O’Riagain 181). These interactions construct an analogous rhetoric for a dominant group who establish for national integration, and a minority group who establish for local or regional integration. In this way, both as representatives are capable of resisting pressure from outside groups and maintaining the appropriate tactics of maintaining power, preventing them from universal unity and maintaining intra-racial and ethnic tensions.

## CONCLUSION

This dissertation has presented the ways in which the systematic socioeconomic and political relations participate in intra-racial and ethnic tensions. Specifically, it has shown how the internalization and implementation of these constructs effect the Mexican-origin population in the Southwestern U.S.-Mexico Border. The observable strategies in sustaining dominant power are manifested through various factors, such as ideologies of racism with the preference of whiteness, class differences to maintain division among the working class, and nationalistic discourses to influence by legal and political means. These factors have deep-rooted among the population of the Southwest and manifested in societal interactions that create division and antagonism. The integration of dominant influence infiltrates among people of the same origin, endorsing the maintenance of dominant power. This study paid close examination on how these tensions are generated and maintained, in addition to how they embody within.

As same descendant people demarcate differences in comparison to the dominant group, they participate in the formation of the Mexican Other. Based on the evaluation obtained from the research in this study, an overall characterization of the Mexican Other embodies an individual who is conquered, inferior, a minority, dark-skinned, uneducated, disfavored, excluded, racially excluded, un-American, unassimilated, Spanish-speaking, an immigrant, and an illegal. The overall internal effects of an othered are alienation, disunion, isolation, identity conflict, unawareness, unconscious or false conscious, self-rejection, and self-hatred.

In the Introduction I explained the application of a poststructuralism and Marxist approach and contextualized theoretical racial ideologies. Additionally, it delineated the theoretical concepts of the Other, otherness, alienation, and belonging. The application of the Other was further contextualized in autobiographical works since a major portion of the texts are

autobiographies. Next, I defined the terms of class-consciousness and false consciousness to correspond with the formation of the Other. Lastly, I outlined how the Mexican Other has been contextualized in the Southwest.

Chapter 1 focused on phenotypic factors in relation to skin color, physical appearance, indigeneity, and whiteness. I framed an understanding on race in accordance to Michel Foucault's historical development of racial divisions, and highlighted the racial hierarchical categorizations that took form in enslavement and expropriation of indigenous people. To contextualize the historical encounters between Spaniards and the indigenous of 1519 that transformed race classifications in Mexico, I used Camilla Townsend's *Malintzin's Choices* (2006). As a central figure of the conquest, Malintzin's role as a language and cultural interpreter fused European and indigenous elements. Yet, her indigeneity kept her from full acceptance into the Spanish society, and she came to represent a figure of rejection and ongoing alterity among Mexicans, characterizing her as a figure of the Other. With the subsequent arrival of Anglo Americans in the Southwestern territories, the emergence of wars over land appropriation, Manifest Destiny, and political differences among the Chicana/o movement developed. New modified racial classifications prevailed to represent the new white dominant society. To exemplify the population who was left alienated from these social and political spheres, I included Oscar Acosta's *The Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo* (1972). Acosta's autobiography provided insight on a protagonist of Mexican origin, whose phenotypic appearance embodied rejection from the white dominant society, and among his own ethnic group. To explain this development, I used the concepts of Jacques Lacan and elaborate on concepts of the Other and alienation.

Chapter 2 kept in theme with the phenotypic hierarchal categorizations established in the previous chapter and elaborated on Foucault and Marx's theoretical understanding on consciousness, power, and knowledge by developing the study theme of class-consciousness and evaluated the autobiography of Richard Rodriguez *Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez* (1982). Rodriguez was very conscious of the class differences that set him and his family apart; he recognized the underclass classification of the Mexican population. While acknowledging his skin color and indigenous features as a fixed factor, Rodriguez undertook class association, assimilation, language, education, and political affiliations as his adaptable factors towards acceptability in the American mainstream. However, in doing so, these conscious executions intimately and socially alienated him, and he recognized the reality of never truly obtaining acceptance in the white dominant society for the confines his dark skin. Nonetheless, he remained grounded on the valuable necessity to reject affiliation with any marginal categorization of any degree. This meant that he also disassociated with members of the Chicana/o Movement and their efforts in academically appropriating themselves, as Rodriguez categorized their ethnic attributions as valueless and to American progression. Ultimately, his limiting confinement inescapably settled him as an Other among the Mexican and Anglo community.

Chapter 3 also kept in theme with the phenotypic categorizations established earlier and discussed national and regional ideologies to focus on delineating the circumstances that partook in Mexican immigrant tensions. To exemplify border politics and David Harvey's understanding of environmental, economic, and social consequences, I applied Victor Villaseñor's novel of *Macho!* (1973). This text showed how U.S. demands on Mexican labor contributed to intra-racial ethnic tensions among Mexican immigrants and U.S. citizens of Mexican descent. As

America capitalized on labor demands with the Bracero Program, U.S. citizens of Mexican descent formed the Chicana/o Movement to end laborer injustices. The transgressional developments of these tensions were developed in the characters of the novel as parties disagreed on the exploitation. The Mexican immigrants perceived the Chicana/o Movement as closing labor opportunities, while Chicanas/os professed the betterment of the ethnic community as a unified cause. Furthermore, *Macho!* also provided examples on Mexican Americans who did not agree with Mexican immigration or the Chicana/o Movement. In this way, the laborer exploitation executed by Anglo Americans motivated tensions of disagreement among Mexican immigrants, Mexican Americans, and Chicanas/os. The different ethnic groups were further separated by the distinctions of their physical appearance. The more dark-skinned and indigenous the person appeared, the more their social status dropped. In the same way, the more a person was lighter-skinned and/or assimilated to the dominant mainstream, the more accessibility they obtained. Yet, none of the Mexican descendant characters portrayed full acceptability into Anglo American White stream society. *Macho!* exposes the tensions among the Mexican ethnic group, and shows how generational tensions endure. Since the U.S.-Mexico Border States experiences continuous Mexican migration, these tensions among the Mexican ethnic group persist.

The ethnographical study “Fighting Words: Latina Girls, Gangs, and Language Attitudes,” is carried out by Norma Mendoza-Denton. This report is included in a compilation of other ethnographical works found in *Speaking Chicana: Voice, Power, and Identity* (1999), edited by Letticia D. Galindo and María D. Gonzales. These studies focus in works about Chicanas, for Chicanas, and by Chicanas, to express the in-group tensions related to linguistics, sociolinguistics, community, and identity. The central theme of the essays is the empowerment

and suppression of voice. In this way, it combines empirical studies and personal accounts in the form of testimonies on behalf of marginalized women. Chicanas are defined as someone who is born in the U.S. or has migrated to the U.S. As Chicanas, the authors of these studies state to have experienced exclusion and silencing in their respective cultural communities, and in the educational setting—from Anglo instructors, and by Latin American and Spanish professors. In “Fighting Words,” Mendoza-Denton detailed the evolution of linguistic forces across Mexican ethnic generations to depict linguistic, educational, and assimilation factors, as characteristics that created tensions among the Mexican migrants and subsequent generations. The educational system in this community was set up to continue the progression of those belonging to the American mainstream society. This system created division among girls of Mexican descent; those who did not adopt the assimilating factors were judged to not advance and were rejected by all who were akin to Anglo American mainstream.

Lastly, the YouTube excerpt of “Ana Gaines Racist Mexicana” (2009), by Carlos Galindo was completed in Phoenix, Arizona after the meeting of Maricopa County Board of Supervisors to discuss concerns on Mexican immigration. This excerpt shows the tensions between two people of Mexican descent who disagree on topics of immigrant crossing and legalization. Carlos criticizes Ana of being a Mexican who married an Anglo American to obtain citizenship. While both parties dispute and insult one another on political standings, Carlos verbalizes a phrase to depict Ana as a Mexican indigenous woman who discriminates people of her own origin. Even though Ana rejects those who display a similar social and political dispossession as she previously did, Carlos characterizes her as someone who will fail to belong into American mainstream for her physical appearance. In this way, Ana depicts the

Other, as someone is rejected by people of Mexican descent, in addition to the Anglo American society.

Tensions among people exist based on how they construct their identity—these factors are “based on class, gender, ethnic, and nationalistic roles,” successively, alienation contrives based on related or dissimilar racial interests (Leiker 6). Taking into consideration the racial complexities creates an “informed and conscientious vision” towards the process of identification (Leiker 18). When race classifications are analyzed through nationalism, classism and related groupings, a better understanding of the formation is delivered. The redefining of identity is incessantly ongoing and is affected by political shifts and its leadership. Universal amity is not a common factor among people who undergo racialism. Studying socially constructed systems permits a new perspective and way of understanding the past of marginalized people in the Southwest. This study participates in the discussion of awareness as it provides actual experiences that help contextualize historical accounts that optimistically contest the ways in which systematic racism has been structuralized. Recognizing how hierarchies affect minorities can counteract the intra-racial tensions and significantly change definitions and perceptions. Further research on the systemic socioeconomic characteristics and the distresses of the psychological phenomenon on a singular group, allows for better insight on the ways in which people are affected, and provides perspective on the application of proper research strategies. One approach is by taking an interdisciplinary lens that foresees a variety of contributing factors when studying the people of Mexican descent in the Southwest. More commonly, the Southwest has been studied through an interethnic “us versus them” standpoint, many times not considering how Mexicans and indigenous people continue to be subjected to subordination amongst themselves. Racial diversity allows the opportunity to study and

investigate the effects of race in different contexts. As seen, race is socially constructed and some determining variables include: racial identity formations, whiteness, education, occupation, language, community, mobility and assimilation. Along with the methodological lenses applied, these variables are entwined to function with one another in identity formations. For this reason, “a reevaluation, a reconciliation, a fuller examination, [and acceptance]” of previously contested works should be considered (Guajardo 120).

Furthermore, how others differentiate a person, molds how they will discriminate themselves. In order to reach personal or social acceptance, the answer to the question of racial belonging surfaces by first individually asking how one racially perceives oneself. The independently motivated response emerges via personal desire of communal belonging. For Mexicans in the United States, the political affairs of identity encompass an individual determination of how they racially place themselves, and how history shaped this identity. People of the Southwest self-identified by way of how they perceived the status of their race in the United States. Moreover this “racial self-identification is highly symbolic of other dynamics, including their experiences of racial and economic discrimination in the United States, their general level of inclusion in or exclusion from the nation, and their different view of race as influenced by the Spanish-Mexican racial legacy” (Gómez 155). Claiming whiteness was a way of contesting discrimination and racial subordination and avoided the amassing with other minority groups. Likewise, claiming a non-white racial status or “some other race” also reflected a response of recognition towards a “racial heritage that includes White, Black, and Indian ancestry, as well as an affirmative rejection of White identity” (Gómez 155). In both cases, it is apparent that the chosen claim ultimately relies on the person’s preferred political standing. It is notable that no matter what degree of assimilation people of Mexico descent chose, critical

dispositions supervene. For there will be disagreement on what level of extent to maintain culture and language. Herein lies the philosophical dilemma, for it rears questions of deciding how strong of a cultural tie one should preserve; what institutes desirable and undesirable cultural differences; and what level of assimilation is acceptable.

My main concern regarding this matter is to explore the reasons as to why Mexicans are pressed to discriminate against each other, thus leading to impediments in their personal advancement and of their racial or ethnic group. Regrettably, having to defend their rights as a community from racial affronts and other offensive degradations is still a prominent factor. This focus on demonstrating how racial tensions exist among the related ethnic groups in quotidian social contexts is shown in the encounters of intra-racial tensions that are relentlessly present and are overlooked, disregarded, and treated as customary. As race and class function together to shape classifications shaped by dominant structures, it is important to note that class derivations are the result of racial privileges and disadvantages. With the institutionalization of *casta*, slavery, labor systems, and socioeconomic and political agendas detailed in this dissertation, indigenous people appear to be subjected to racial discrimination, thus maintaining intra-racial and ethnic tensions among the Mexica-origin population.

## **2. “History of the Present”: The Continued Ramifications of a Racist Rhetoric**

In *Discipline and Punish* (1979), Foucault expresses ‘history of the present’ not to discredit considering the past, but rather to emphasize how to study the past. Foucault suggests that “political technologies and mechanisms of power” are considered to be relevant in the present (Fuggle 3). In this way, the present is deciphered by “transformative politics [that] only through a genealogical account” can draw attention to historical accounts (Fuggle 3). To apply this approach suggests to rethink how political actions, class and power structures were

structured, and contextualize how these forms affect the present. This proposes that in order to consider the present, it entails a disruption from our position of viewpoints that delineate the reality of personal belonging. In this way, other spaces are considered not just from an outside perspective. Marx closely relates when allowing a “relationship between power and capitalism” as so to speak of the present (Fuggle 28). Foucault’s concepts of power and knowledge, along with Marx’s theory of capitalism, point out how oppositions form outside the capital-labor relation, thereby permitting insight on the results of this relationship. The results indicate internal class struggle and delineations, and are observed with discourses of race, class, and gender.

In attempts to reverse ideologies of racism, Jabari Mahiri argues in *Deconstructing*<sup>24</sup> *Race: Multicultural Education beyond the Color-Bind* (2017) that multicultural education needs to be reformulated from the forces of white supremacy. In doing so, it will forefront the diversities among racial and ethnic groups. Additionally, by centralizing the racial and ethnic understandings in an educational context, it will frame race as a factor to comprehend diversity and identity to provide practical teaching applications for that community. This implies that “negating the effects of racism, power, and privilege wielded historically and contemporarily by groups that define themselves as White will take time and deliberate, strategic acts of deconstructing race” (Mahiri 7). For this to occur, James Leiker postulates, an unraveling of history must take place. The strategy implies “studying the history of each minority group in isolation or in their interactions with the dominant group alone” (Leiker 6). This proposes the construction of an appropriate theory and methodology system that can be applied to a group, whose intricate relationship involves the coexisting and disagreeing qualities in a society that does not completely accept them.

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<sup>24</sup> Deconstruction is a term used by Jacques Derrida –simplistically suggesting to destruct, and then reconstruct.

Since the time of his campaigning to the present, President Donald Trump has vocalized “slur[s] against Mexicans,” and validated a white supremacist rhetoric (Tharoor *Trump Tweets*). While Trump strategizes in building a wall along the U.S.-Mexico Border, it is argued that no wall can resolve “the systematic graft that still shapes Mexican society and politics” (Tharoor *Trump Tweets*). With the social problems the Mexican government undergoes, and Trump’s defamation against Mexico, tensions towards and among Mexicans in the U.S. will continue to shift.

In “Racism in Trump's America: Reflections on Culture, Sociology, and the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election” (2017), Lawrence Bobo states that racism is deep-rooted “in the American social landscape,” the inferences of white privilege and inferiority of black and brown people, continue to effect “the American body politic” (Bobo 599). Bobo further states,

“race has always been an ingredient of American national politics. Its salience, explicitness and centrality vary from one election cycle to the next, but it’s never been an irrelevance... We’ve got to forget this postracial fantasy...bridges can only be built when the legitimate grievances of all groups can be given effect voice and be heard.” (Bobo 599)

Even though the discourse of racism is a centralized topic of the present, studying the past offers similar disputes. In this way, “the provoking [of] new questions and reexamination of old answers” can be evaluated (Diner 23). For as can be observed, history tends to repeat itself in direct and/or subtle ways.

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