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Manos de Obra:
Class, Race, Gender, and Colonial Affect-Culture in Mexican American Literature

by

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ABSTRACT

MANOS DE OBRA: CLASS, RACE, GENDER, AND COLONIAL AFFECT-CULTURE IN MEXICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE

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This dissertation takes up race and class as analytical categories and interrogates them in their specificity and entanglement with Marxist class analysis, critical race theory, Chicana feminist theory and Latin American postcolonial theory in order to read cultural narratives for the ways in which affect is always present and felt. This work distinguishes itself from prior class analysis, which was predicated upon the relationship between labor and capital. Instead, this project considers the way reading for affect and coloniality broadens our understanding of social organization and class formation. Specifically, Manos de Obra deepens the understanding of the colonial, racial, and gendered class formations that underwrote the Mexican American community prior to and especially as it culminated in the Chicana/o movement (1966-1977) and analyzes the literary representations of these intersections in Las aventuras de Don Chipote (1928),¹ Los Repatriados (1935),² “Los Vendidos” (1967),³ and …y no se lo tragó la tierra (1971).⁴ This chronological timeline reveals how historical and social conditions cumulatively formed the Chicana/o movement’s portrayal and understanding of Chicana/o life in the U.S.

Manos de Obra intervenes in the fields of Chicana/o literary studies, Chicana feminist theory, Marxist class analysis, affect theory, and Latin American postcolonial theory. In order to add a new understanding of how to perform a class analysis, I propose the use of affect theory as

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¹ The Adventures of Don Chipote
² The Repatriates
³ “The Sell-Outs”
⁴ ...And the Earth Did Not Devour Him
part of my reading methodology. In so doing, I read for how colonial affect-culture gives embodied consent to racialized and gendered hierarchies, but also how “ugly feelings” can produce community, self, and other in the colonized and the colonizer.
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read in the middle of the night, and sometimes even in meetings as I discussed my research.

Thank you for making me aware of why my research is important, of why it is important for little brown boys and girls to see themselves reflected in stories, in legends, in histories, and in classrooms. Thank you for asking me how my research was going, even though you didn’t really understand. Thank you for asking me to read parts to you and to explain the “big words.” Thank you for the love that only a little boy can give to his mamá. Te amo.
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INTRODUCTION

THE LABORS OF LITERATURE

I am María Moreno, 40 years old, mother of twelve children, born in Karnes City, Texas, raised in Corpus Christi. Since 1928, I started working in agricultural work. I have been a worker all my life. I know how to handle a man’s job like a man and I’m not ashamed to say it. I’m an American citizen and I’m talking for justice. I’m asking for justice. Not only for me or for my family but for all the migrant workers…

-Maria Moreno, United Farmworkers Union organizer

As with other critical fields that emerged out of the 1960s, the analytical categories of race and class have been central, if not foundational, to Chicana/o Studies. During the Chicana/o movement in the 1960s and 1970s, race and class were at the forefront of the civil rights activists’ agenda. Chicana/o Studies grew out of the need to create alternative routes of resistance that pushed up against the pejorative American education system. Chicana/o Studies long-entertained a Marxist critique that examined the question of class through the framework of capitalism. During the Civil Rights Movement, the category of race was joined to class analysis. Yet this racialized class analysis proved problematic because, even from the beginning of Chicana/o Studies, while said scholars forwarded a body of criticism and eventually added gender as an analytic category, they also provoked parallel bodies of critique over what was invariably left out or marginalized. All the same, despite these thorough critiques, race, class, and gender continued as analytical categories, but over time their specificity has been broadly assumed as key features of the field, especially in Chicana/o literary studies. In many ways, race, class, and gender are everywhere in Chicana/o Studies, but oddly also nowhere. Although race,

5 María Moreno, Testimony before California state commission, Regeneración, Vol. 1, no. 10, p. 20 qtd. in Martha P. Cotera’s Diosa y Hembra: The History and Heritage of Chicanas in the US. Austin, TX: Information Systems Development, 1976, p. 137.
class, and gender analysis is taken for granted, nowhere is there a singular recent attempt to understand what either means, much less how to do an analysis of their relation.

Manos de Obra: Class, Race, Gender, and Colonial Affect-Culture in Mexican American Literature takes up race and class as analytical categories once again and interrogates them in their specificity and entanglement with gender, affect theory, and Latin American liberation theories. The goal is to offer a better understanding of the literary representations of the distinct and integrated race, class, gender, and colonial formations, which underwrite the Mexican American community, especially as it culminates in the Chicana/o movement (1966-1977). The title of this project itself, Manos de Obra, reflects my goal in reading for the intersections of race, class, gender, affect, and coloniality. The Spanish phrase mano de obra translates to “workforce,” “labor,” “manpower,” and “cost of labor;” literally, it translates to “work of hand” or “working hand.” On its own, obra translates to “work,” “workmanship,” or, as in the phrase obra de literatura, it means a “work of literature,” equivalent to the French “oeuvre.” I have chosen this title precisely because of the way the Spanish phrase reinserts the materiality of the body through the word mano (“hand”) and how it subtly recognizes the person or body despite the alienation that laborers confront under capitalism, which alienates them from the product of their labor and the process of production. Although the correct Spanish idiom uses the singular form of mano, I consciously choose to use the plural form in order to disrupt the phrase and call attention to hands or the body. Working hands remind us of the material reality of labor and feeling in their calluses, scars, and open wounds. Working hands remind us that there are hierarchies of labor that imprint the flesh on our bodies in very real ways.

Manos de Obra employs an affective reading analytic combined with Latin American theories of liberation to focus on the affective forces present in Chicana/o history (dating back to
the colonial period). In so doing, I read for how these forces produce community, self, and other in the colonized and the colonizer. I propose “colonial affect-theory” as a term to describe the intersection of coloniality and affect that allows me to read cultural narratives for the way affect is always present and felt, and how it culminated in Chicana/o movement political activism and the types of literature the movement produced. I pair literature by writers of Mexican descent with archival sources (such as newspapers, Congressional proceedings, letters, and court opinions) in order to elaborate on the historical conditions that shaped and continue to shape the lived experience of people of Mexican descent in the US.

I use the terms “Mexican American” and “Chicana/o” to signify two important, but different political charges and historical moments: I use “Mexican American” in reference to the non-politicized, disarticulated group of people of Mexican descent living in the United States prior to the Chicana/o movement, and I use “Chicana/o” when specifically referring to the politicized subjectivity that arose during the Chicana/o movement of the 1960s and 1970s. The texts included in Manos de Obra extend from 1928 to 1971, including both Mexican American pre-Chicana/o movement texts as well as Movement-era texts. This temporal scheme highlights the way in which discussions around race, class, and gender developed into a central anchor for the formation of Chicana/o identity over time. By beginning with early Mexican American texts that narrate the lived experience of Mexican Americans in the US-Mexico borderlands from the 1920s to the emerging Chicana/o movement (1966-1971), I connect coloniality to race, class, and gender. Mexican American authors grappled with the oppressive colonial forces of US Manifest Destiny that dismantled the Spanish caste system and introduced new modes of production. This development in turn resulted in the disruption of previously-held class positions. Mexican landed gentry, such as those found in María Amparo Ruiz de Burton’s The Squatter and the Don (1885)
and Jovita González’s *Caballero: A Historical Novel* (1930s), suddenly found themselves confronted by racial prejudice and their class position endangered by modernity, as the US moved from the established ranching culture to agrarian production. The US-Mexico borderlands is a region imbued with two separate colonial legacies. Therefore I find it necessary to employ both a critical regionalist and a transnational methodological approach in order to tease out the implications of how the local shifting borders (the US-Mexico borderlands) and reordering of regional racial, class, and labor hierarchies are connected to the larger colonial project in the Americas. This regional and transnational approach allows me to propose a post-colonial critique of border modernity that analyzes the way in which the colliding colonial models in the Mexican territories ceded to the US tied race to class, restructured the colonial caste into a capitalist class system, are embedded in the ensuing alteration of the means of production in the borderlands. My project takes into account Aníbal Quijano’s (2001) “coloniality of power” theory, which suggests that although the colonial period ended, its legacy continues to impact the modern world through racial and labor hierarchies. I add to this post-colonial critique an affective dimension in order to consider how the representation of feelings that justified racial (and racialized class) hierarchies in the colonial world play out through border modernity and the fragmentation of class along racial lines in the United States. In reading for affect, I identify the emotive affects of resignation, humiliation, rancor/rencon, vergüenza (shame), resentment, melancholia, angustia (anguish), and political love.

As my project moves chronologically through the archive, I read for the ways in which working-class experience and racial discrimination begin to form a consistent trope for the

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6 Post Chicana/o movement authors have continued the tradition of engaging the depiction of a racialized working class lived experience including: Sandra Cisneros’ famous *The House on Mango Street* (1989), Maria Amparo Escandón’s *González and Daughter Trucking Co.*, Manuel Muñoz’s *The Faith Healer of Olive Grove*, and Gwendolyn Zepeda’s collection of short stories, *To the Last Man I Slept with and all the Jerks Just Like Him* (2004) to name a few.
Chicana/o lived experience. Mexican American authors writing before the Chicana/o movement recognized the ways in which US capital manipulated Mexican and Mexican American bodies for their labor-power. A look at pre-Chicana/o Movement authors, thus, reveals not only a working-class experience, but the ways in which Mexican Americans were proletarianized under a US neocolonial system. The everyday struggles and hardships of Chicana/o were represented and experienced in terms of race, class, and gender, and they played an important role in fiction, including, for example, Daniel Venegas’ *Don Chipote: Or When Parrots Breastfeed* (1928), Jorge Ainslie’s *Los Repatriados* (1935), Luis Valdez’s one-act plays, performed by *El Teatro Campesino* (1960s-present), and Tomás Rivera’s …*y no se lo tragó la tierra/And the Earth Did Not Devour Him* (1971). These novels revolve around working-class protagonists and characters who struggle to survive an oppressive US system. Their literary production served to solidify race, class, and gender as analytical categories that spoke to a Chicana/o experience.

Chicana/o movement activists solidified this motif in the 1960s and 1970s through their fiction as well as through their alternative scholarship, which became the foundation of the field of Chicana/o Studies.

In order to situate my project within the field of Chicana/o Studies, I first provide a summary of the ways in which Chicana/o scholar activists (1960s and 1970s) used race, class, and postcolonialism in their writing. These activist scholars shaped the foundation of Chicana/o Studies as an academic discipline. I note how both their fiction and academic writing grappled with race, class, and coloniality, suggesting that they considered these issues to be significant

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7 Pre-Chicana/o movement authors who engage class and race include: Conrado Espinoza’s *El Sol de Texas/Under the Texas Sun* (1926), Daniel Venegas’ *Las aventuras de don Chipote, o cuando los pericos maman/The Adventures of Don Chipote: Or, When Parrots Breastfeed* (1928), and Américo Paredes’ *George Washington Gómez: A Mexicotexan Novel*.

8 Other examples include: Richard Vásquez’s *Chicano: A Novel* (1970), Jose Antonio Villarreal’s *Pocho* (1970), and Ernesto Galarza’s *Barrio Boy* (1971).
analytical categories. Their interrogation of race and class mainly focused on representations of lived experience, colonial history, and labor history. In the 1980s, work on gender and sexuality came to the forefront of Chicana/o Studies with landmark publications by Gloria E. Anzaldúa and Cherrie Moraga, and Chicana/o scholars began to treat class as assumed. I then turn to recent trends by Chicana/o scholars in order to emphasize that class analysis has faded out of the critical conversation, but also to highlight new methods of critical inquiry (such as transnationalism and critical regionalism) that I find useful for interrogating race, class, and gender in terms of the history of colonial power. I provide a summary of my critical intervention, which attempts to re-insert race, class, and gender analysis into the field of Chicana/o Studies in a way that employs a combination of transnationalism, critical regionalism, affect theory, and Latin American post-colonial theories. Finally, I provide proposed chapter summaries that follow a chronological timeline in order to demonstrate the shift from the colonial caste system to US capitalist class relations and the effect of colonial affect-culture on the US class structure.

**Race, Class, and (De)Coloniality in the Field of Chicana/o Studies**

Class is ever-present in the works produced by Chicana/o movement activists, most notably Luis Valdez, Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzáles, Martha P. Cotera, Juan Gómez-Quiñones, and Rodolfo “Rudy” Acuña. Class tends to be racialized in these texts and as a result, what comes to be known as the Chicana/o experience is depicted through racial discrimination and the affect-laden descriptions of working-class life. Luis Valdez, the so-called “father of Chicano theater,” described his one-act plays as having been born hungry for reality. This description captures the essence of the large majority of Chicana/o literature “[n]acieron hambrientos de la realidad. Anything and everything that pertained to the daily life, la vida cotidiana, of the huelguistas became food for thought, material for actos” (Valdez 11). Like César Chávez and Dolores Huerta
of the United Farm Workers of America (UFW) organization, Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzáles stands as one of the central figures of the Chicana/o movement itself. His activist writing includes his epic poem “Yo soy Joaquín” (“I am Joaquín”) (1967), considered canonical in Chicana/o Studies. It was the first poem published by a Chicano for Chicana/os and is quoted by Chicana/o speakers, authors, and poets to this day. The poem traces Chicana/o identification through history and speaks to the different incarnations of exploitation—exploitation that, though called by different names (colonialism, capitalism), is always justified as “progress.” “Yo soy Joaquín” refers to the Chicana/o community’s connection to land, the problem of property and its redistribution, which took land out of the hands of those who worked it and put it into the hands of Anglo American capitalists. Gonzáles firmly locates the Chicana/o in the working class in this poem, as a laborer whose brutal exploitation (felt in and on the body) benefits American capitalists (Gonzáles 66). Race, culture, and class intersect as workers are divorced from their selves and only the economical benefit of their labor to the owners is visible or important.

While these activists’ cultural productions were emerging and coinciding, academic activists were also intervening in their disciplines to issue alternative scholarship. Among them was Martha P. Cotera, an influential activist of the Chicana feminist movement, who wrote *Diosa y Hembra: The History and Heritage of Chicanas in the US* (1976). As one of the founders of Chicana feminism, Cotera focused on promoting women’s voices during the movement and reinserting the Chicana and Mexican woman into the historical, political, and economic discussions produced by the Chicana/o movement. Cotera’s work traces a history of conquest and colonization, focusing on the ways in which the imperial presence (from original Spanish conquest to US territorial expansion) manipulated caste/class organizations,
proletarianizing the Indigenous Nahua and, later, Mexican people in ways that would economically benefit the imperial forces.

Equally as important as the work of Cotera, Juan Gómez-Quiñones worked to institutionalize the full range of Chicana/o historiography through his focus on politics and labor history. His historical analysis turns to Spanish colonialism as the root of the proletarianization of Chicana/os through its imposed nascent capitalism and investments in new modes of production in the US Southwest. Gómez-Quiñones does not explain the evolution of capitalism, however, but rather jumps to its effects in the US Southwest at the turn of the nineteenth century in the aftermath of the US-Mexico War. His work charts the development of racism, labor organization, labor conflict, agricultural and industrial labor, the impact of the US-Mexico War, and the ways in which capitalism has manipulated ethnicity for capital gain, but he only loosely ties discriminatory practices to the rise of capitalism.

Like Gómez-Quiñones, Rodolfo “Rudy” Acuña places a great emphasis on the historic colonial oppression of Chicana/os in the United States. He is best known for his text book *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos* (1972), which reads the US Southwest—the territory acquired by Mexico—as a colonial territory and the Chicana/o population as an oppressed colonial, native population. Acuña situates the Chicana/o people as a colonial population that was proletarianized through colonial domination, defined through labor exploitation, land grabbing, and discrimination in the justice system (i.e. the police force and the court system). He also gives an account of the history of the Chicana/o fight against the labor, social, political, and educational inequalities that led up to the Chicana/o movement.

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In the face of a pejorative education system, activists, including Gómez-Quiñones, formed the Chicano Coordinating Council on Higher Education, which proposed an institutional overhaul of the University of California at Santa Barbara. The educational manifesto, “El Plan de Santa Bárbara: A Chicano Plan for Higher Education” (1969), proposed reforms to the educational system that took into account the Chicana/o cultural and class background. It foregrounded the problematic US educational system as pejorative, one that did not value Chicana/o cultural traditions and instead required complete assimilation. The US education system, the writers believed, exploited Chicana/os through miseducation. The document opens with a political manifesto that decries a pejorative system whose goal was to produce a very specific type of student—one completely assimilated into Anglo American culture. Success required, therefore, “turning away from el barrio and la colonia” (“Plan de Santa Barbara” 9), a distancing and denouncing of the Chicano’s racial and cultural origins. The Chicano Coordinating Council on Higher Education drafted “El Plan de Santa Bárbara” as a response, emphasizing the need to “contribute to the formation of a complete man who truly values life and freedom” (10) and called for university-level Chicana/o Studies curriculum. The “Plan” signified race through ties to culture, community, and language. Class representations (specifically working class) arise in its detailed outlining of the need to provide resources for Chicana/o students who continued to work while studying to support their families. Although the “Plan” was never fully realized, this document speaks to the status that race and class enjoyed during the early phase of Chicana/o Studies.

The relationship between the Chicana/o movement and Marxist thought is a complicated one at best. Some activists, such as César Chávez, flat-out denounced Marxism and communist philosophies, while others were open about being influenced by socialist and communist figures
such as Saul Alinsky, Fidel Castro, Franz Fanon, Karl Marx, Huey Newton, Leo Trotsky, Malcolm X, and Mao Zedong (Muñoz 119). However, “few [Chicana/o] activists,” as F. Arturo Rosales (1995) points out, actually “studied or applied a rigorous Marxist analysis to their formulations” (262). Radical student groups, in particular, relied on Marxist philosophy as a way to critique American capitalism and its dire effects on Chicana/os and other people of color. César Chávez, the figurehead for the UFW, was staunchly anti-communist and, although linked to the Chicana/o movement in the popular imagination, made it clear that he did not associate the labor movement and union struggles he led with the Chicana/o movement, Chicano nationalism, or neo-separatism (Muñoz 7). For this reason, Luis Valdez and his Teatro Campesino left the UFW. Valdez was a more radical activist and had been influenced by the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) while in college. As a young man, he travelled with the Venceremos Brigade student organization to Cuba to demonstrate solidarity with the Cuban Revolution. He returned wearing a Che Guevara style beret, smoking Cuban cigars, and preaching about revolution (Rosales 176). Together with his friend and classmate, Roberto Rubalcava, Valdez crafted what F. Arturo Rosales (1995) calls “one of the first radical assessments of the conditions under which their people lived in the United States” (177). The two wrote:

The Mexican in the United States has been…no less a victim of American imperialism than his impoverished brothers in Latin America. In the words of the Second Declaration of Havana, tell him of ‘misery, futile exploitation, illiteracy, starvation, wages, and he will tell you that you speak of Texas. Tell him of unemployment, the policy of repression against the workers, discrimination…oppression by the oligarchies,’ and he will tell you that you speak of California. Tell him of U.S. domination in Latin America, and he will tell you that he knows that shark and what he devours because he has lived in its very
entrails. The history of the American Southwest provides a brutal panorama of nascent imperialism. (177)

Like Valdez and Rubalcava’s critique of American imperialism, Marxist thought in the Chicana/o movement was mainly employed as a critique of American imperialism and capitalism and often articulated a desire to unify workers of different racial backgrounds. Valdez would later be criticized by Marxist activists for his melding of Catholic and indigenous spirituality in his work and theater workshop activities. They argued that Valdez’s use of spirituality “was too close to the religious beliefs and superstitions that hampered La Raza’s progress” (“Theater” 523). Despite this critique, Mexican muralists who also ascribed to communist politics, such as David Alfaro Siqueiros and Diego Rivera, invoked indigenous spirituality in their art. These muralists influenced Chicana/o muralists and artists as well.

The main difference between Marxist and anti-Marxist Chicana/o activists during the movement centered on the ideology of Chicano nationalism and the mythical-spiritual concept of Aztlán. Chicana/o Marxists insisted on challenging capitalism from the viewpoint of the proletariat, as demonstrated by an unpublished paper by Nacho González (n.d.):

[W]hite workers are exploited in the factory for their labor in the same manner that Chicanos, black, and other minorities are exploited. They suffer from racial discrimination… but as a class of people. The ones who benefit from this system are a small percentage of the population … who control the means of production…. What has to be understood is that Capitalism thrives on the exploitation of man by man, and the only way that the oppression of the people will be eradicated is by the destruction of this system and not by its toleration. (N. González n.p. qtd. in Muñoz 91)
Other substantial groups that advocated for a unification of workers were the Centro de Acción Social Autónoma-Hermandad General de Trabajadores (CASA), which emphasized a brotherhood *sin fronteras* (without borders) across Latin America, and the August Twenty-Ninth Movement (ATM), a Marxist-Leninist group heavily influenced by the philosophies of Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong (Muñoz 94).

But while CASA’s *sin fronteras* ideology rejected Chicana/o identity outright, the ATM continued to embrace *Chicanismo* (94). In their 1976 manifesto, “Fan the Flames: Revolutionary Position on the Chicano National Question,” the ATM made clear their commitment to both Chicana/o identity and a unified proletariat collective:

The August Twenty-Ninth Movement (M-L [Marxist Leninist]) developed, in large part, out of the revolutionary Chicano national movement. We are proud of our history of striving to give that movement a CONSISTENTLY revolutionary direction…. At the same time that we support and struggle to give revolutionary leadership to the Chicano national movement, we recognize that at the heart of the question is the class question and that the final “solution” to the national question, the key to the total liberation and unification of all oppressed peoples is the achievement of socialism….In order to smash the brutal rule of capitalism and to establish the armed rule of the working class and oppressed masses, the capitalist state, the entire capitalist system, must be overthrown by the armed working class. But such an overthrow is impossible if the working class and oppressed masses do not have their own leadership…. We dedicate this position to the achievement of that task, to the working class, to the heroic Chicano people, and to all the oppressed and struggling peoples throughout the world. (1-2)
For the ATM, Chicana/o identity was a real thing that should not be discounted (as CASA did). But the ATM also insisted that in order to free the Chicana/o from the exploitation of American capital, they needed to unite the entirety of the working class. The Partido Nacional de La Raza Unida (National United Peoples Party), known as La Raza Unida party, too was influenced by Marxist thought. While it did not begin as such, “a trend toward Marxist analysis began to develop in more and more chapters, although it was strongly resisted by many” (Muñoz 121). Many of the party members began to shift ideologically toward the left and joined “Marxist groups such as the Communist Labor Party, the Socialist Workers Party, the October League, and the Communist Party USA” (121). The Marxist party members’ desires to broaden the organization to a “multiracial people’s party” and expand their focus to international anti-imperialist issues were vetoed. As a result, many of these leftist members left the party (121).

Despite the conflict surrounding Chicana/o movement politics, approaches toward Chicana/o literary criticism in the late 1970s maintained a Marxist critique embedded in a historical-dialectical approach, which combined culturalist and formalist approaches, as noted by Joseph Sommers (1977). Such literary analysis could be outlined as an approach that takes into account three main assumptions: first, “…the understanding that Chicano literary expression is bound up with the historic pattern of economic and social oppression prevailing since 1848” (Sommers 96). Second, this literary analysis would have to incorporate the influence of historical ideology into literary analysis or evaluation (96). Thirdly, “literature, rather than merely reflecting historical experience, in its very form and structures interprets this experience, and is capable of impact upon the reader’s consciousness,” in other words, that the writer is a “creative interpreter, one who is part of a group and must assume the contradictions of this social condition and struggle to resolve them” (96). Moreover, Marxist critical approaches to Chicana/o
literary analysis included discussions of how Mexican laborers experience alienation and reification specifically as a consequence of the ways in which US capital society stratifies classes. Juan Rodríguez’s (1974) “Acercamientos a cuatro relatos de …y no se lo tragó la tierra,” for example, focuses on the socioeconomic conditions and alienation of laborers of Mexican descent that informed Tomás Rivera’s 1971 novel.

Traditionally, Chicana/o literary critics have used the concept of reification (sometimes by its Marxist terminology and other times not so explicitly) to examine the exploitation of Chicana/o workers in the United States since 1848. Class analysis centered on reification served as a foundational method for understanding the potential role of the arts in a protest movement. Although reification and Marxist critique offered these scholars the theoretical tools for analyzing the working-class themes present in the movement’s literature, these Chicana/o scholars began supplanting it with analytics that focused more on race, ethnicity, and colonial difference. Marxist class critique did not account for the complex ways in which race, ethnicity, and class intersected with the colonial legacy of the United States. The shifts in critical trends that occurred after the 1980s (by way of poststructuralism and transnational studies) ultimately led to the falling out of class analysis not only in Chicana/o literary criticism, but also in US American literary studies.

In the 1980s, as José Limón (1992) notes, Chicana/o literary critics began to pair Marxist critique with poststructuralist approaches, although they remained wary of dominant narratives and modes of analysis within poststructuralist theory (167). This Marxist-poststructuralist mode of analysis attempted to:

…[rupture] the idealistic constraints of mainstream American criticism, including its latest deconstructivist phase, and end up in a subsuming critical position—an ultimate
horizon of reading, as Frederic Jameson might say—that, indeed, centrally draws on Jameson as well as other Marxist cultural critics sensitive to the historicity and social fluidity of discourse. (Limón 167)

Such Chicana/o literary critics include Limón himself, Héctor Calderón, Teresa McKenna, Frank Pino, Jr., Juan Rodriguez, José David Saldívar, Ramón Saldívar, Rosaura Sánchez, and Joseph Sommers. One of the unintended consequences of poststructural theory, however, was its preoccupation with language, textuality, and discourse in a linguistic-based analysis of literature to the exclusion of non-linguistic features of social life. As a result of this discursive turn, what was lost was the attention to the material and affective conditions of social activism and proletarian life.

Despite the continued significance of race and class to the literary field, the stage of cultural and specifically literary analysis following the Chicana/o movement shifted the critical focus to a different set of priorities, namely gender and sexuality. Here as well, however, class moved into the background or disappeared. Although Third World feminist writings, including Chicana feminism, have always maintained class at the forefront of their methodology, the use of class as an analytical tool or reference point specifically in literary criticism was supplanted by other critical trends. Perhaps due to an urgent need for focus on current socioeconomics, recent Marxist critique has largely focused on current political events, such as social movements and civil rights issues, and not necessarily on class analysis of literature. While race, class, and gender remained embedded in the literature, the focus of criticism in the 1980s and beyond began to treat the importance of class as given. I am by no means implying that the Chicana feminist work or the work done in gender and sexuality studies is not significant to the field of Chicana/o Studies. Instead, I mean to point out that the intersection of race with class began to
fade out of the larger critical lens (especially for those scholars who did not write from a decolonial Chicana feminist perspective), rather than add to the ongoing conversations on race, feminism, gender, and sexuality. Critical attention shifted with Gloria E. Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga’s landmark feminist anthology, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (1981), which sought to identify Third World feminism as a unique and significant issue. While race and class remained a part of the conversation of this anthology in its narrations of lived racial discrimination and working-class experience, the anthology did not provide (nor did it set out to provide) a deep critical analysis class relations as they featured in the lives of women of color. What Anzaldúa and Moraga’s anthology did, and did very well, was forward a feminism grounded in affect and the structural and embodied materiality of a patriarchal gender system as is specifically lived by women of color. This affective theorization of feminism was by no means new, as early Mexican American (pre-1960s) and Chicana feminists (1960s onward) had already been articulating a decolonial feminist agenda that accounted for the material effects of affect.¹₀

Anzaldúa and Moraga’s *Bridge* moves through women’s personal experiences, the conflictive feelings of alienation and allegiance to racial Civil Rights Movements and Women’s movements, the frustration with the Women’s movement’s failure to recognize or address race as an important issue, and the specific cultural, class, and racial differences that separate Third World feminists from each other as well as the shared experiences that bring them together. The overall goal of the anthology was to identify Third World feminism as unique and as a significant issue. The fracturing of class along racial lines is apparent in these “writings by

The materialism in this book lives in the flesh of these women’s lives: the exhaustion we feel in our bones at the end of the day, the fire we feel in our hearts when we are insulted, the knife we feel in our backs when we are betrayed, the nausea we feel in our bellies when we are afraid, even the hunger we feel between our hips when we long to be touched. (xl)
I draw your attention to Moraga’s words precisely because they capture the very real materiality of life as a woman of color, and perhaps more importantly, because they echo the past and present materialism that originally framed and continues to frame Chicana feminism. The Chicana feminist movement itself was in many ways sparked by the materiality of this affective dimension of coloniality.

Six years later, Anzaldúa published her semi-autobiographical work, Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza (1987), which expanded the Chicana/o movement symbol of Aztlán beyond the limits of nationalism and self-determination in order to think about Chicana/o identity itself as Aztlán and a borderland space. Like the many Chicana/o movement activists, Anzaldúa traces the origins of la raza to the Aztec peoples, elaborating on their civilization, traditions, and religion. The moment of conquest leads to colonization and the loss of (native) lands. It is in this context that Anzaldúa first introduces her own working-class background as it relates to the land: of familial land dispossession and her father’s toils as a sharecropper.
Furthermore, she remarks on the arrival of late modernity to Southwest Texas in the 1930s and the change in the mode of production from ranching to agribusiness. Although class looms in *Borderlands* through Anzaldúa’s depictions of her racialized working-class lived experience, the main shift occurs in her queering of Aztlán in order to develop new ways of conceptualizing Chicano—and more importantly, *Chicana*—identity.

While this focus on gender and sexuality was significant and necessary to the field of Chicana/o Studies, it also invariably helped to de-emphasize race and class as analytical categories, especially in Chicana/o literary studies. The critique of gender and sexuality arrived precisely to contest the patriarchal dimensions of the Chicana/o movement as well as the sexism and homophobia present in the then-nascent field of Chicana/o Studies. Race and class faded further precisely because these two issues were so entrenched in Chicana/o culture. Rather than fully engage with class in relation to race, then, the development of identity was traced along lines of race, gender, and sexuality. Class is present, and yet class is also counterintuitively and ironically absent.¹¹

The last significant attempt to synthesize a theory for Chicana/o literature that prioritized race and class, but also attempted a balance with the growing need to focus on gender and sexuality, was Ramón Saldívar’s *Chicano Narrative: The Dialectics of Difference* (1990). R. Saldívar brought Marxist thought to literary narrative and questioned the usefulness of Western

¹¹In the same vein, consider how literary analysis of John Rechy’s *City of Night* (1963) and Michael Nava’s Henry Rios series (1986-2001) have tended to center on Chicano gender and sexuality, rather than the intersections of race and class alongside gender and sexuality. Examples of such literary analysis include: Stanton Hoffman’s “The Cities of Night: John Rechy’s ‘City of Night’ and the American Literature of Homosexuality” (1964); Emma Pérez’s “Queering the Borderlands: The Challenges of Excavating the Invisible and Unheard” (2003); James R. Giles “Religious Alienation and ‘Homosexual Consciousness’ in *City of Night* and *Go Tell it on the Mountain*” (1974), Antonio Prieto Stambaugh “La actuación de identidad a través del performance chicano gay” (1996); Juan Bruce-Novoa “Homosexuality and the Chicano Novel” (1986); Zamostny, Jeffrey S. “Comings out: Secrecy, Sexuality, and Murder in Michael Nava’s ‘Rag and Bone’” (2009), and David William Foster’s “Documenting Queer, Queer Documentary” (2010). Tim Libretti does look at class in John Rechy’s *City of Night* in “Sexual Outlaws and Class Struggle: Rethinking History and Class Consciousness from a Queer Perspective” (2004).
(Frankfurt school) cultural theory in analyzing Chicana/o literature. *Chicano Narrative* aims to highlight the way in which Chicana/o narratives use discursive strategies or “dialectics of difference” that allow readers to grasp the “real conditions of existence in postindustrial twentieth-century America” (5). R. Saldívar dedicates an entire chapter to “Race, Class, and Gender in the Southwest” and traces a historical overview of working-class Chicana/os in the United States. R. Saldívar discusses the racism experienced by Chicana/os after the US-Mexico War, but also the role of Chicana women in the labor market. Moreover, R. Saldívar’s analysis hinges on the connection between race and class on one hand and the connection between race and literary narrative on the other. His argument suggests that the experience portrayed in the literary narrative specifically reflects the Chicana/o (race and class) experience itself. *Chicano Narrative* represents and articulates a watershed moment in Chicana/o literary studies that opened up attention to the historical narrative. Yet, *Chicano Narrative*’s very success in codifying certain analytical terms, ironically, also revealed gaps that a “dialectic of difference” could not address. These gaps continue to manifest themselves in recent scholarship that, in many ways, is nevertheless resorting to R. Saldívar’s *Chicano Narrative*. The scholarship that follows R. Saldívar’s *Chicano Narrative* is marked by certain trends in the field, including: attention to narrative form, transnational or hemispheric studies, and critical regionalism.

Although, for the most part, race and class has been taken for granted in the field, Marcial González follows up on R. Saldívar’s attention to race and class in *Chicano Novels and the Politics of Form: Race, Class, and Reification* (2009), but his work too has significant gaps. M. González uses the Marxist theory of reification to tie together social history and form. He defines reification as the “failure to understand how objects, events, and situations are intricately connected to and constituted by dynamic social processes that have evolved historically at
different levels: locally, nationally, and globally” (M. González 11). Rather than critique literature thematically, M. González focuses on the narrative form itself, arguing for a continuation of Marxist critical analysis, which has been supplanted by other analytical frameworks, such as feminism, queer studies, and transnationalism. His project is to analyze the ways in which reification structures representations the Chicana/o experience. Although M. González begins his work by quoting Rivera’s …y no se lo tragó la tierra—a novel that probes the intimacies of Chicana/o life—he doesn’t delve into the Chicano personal experience at an affective level. Like Gómez-Quiñones and Acuña, M. González marks the US-Mexico War as the catalyst for the exploitation of Chicana/os in the United States. But unlike the movement critics, M. González places little to no attention on the colonial period. Nor does M. González mention significant Latin American Post-Colonialists, such as Quijano and Walter Mignolo.

Significantly, in his discussion of reification, M. González also leaves out the affective component, the physicality and psychological dimensions, or simply, the personal experience of being Chicana/o in the United States. Although he delves into an analysis of Chicano Nationalism in Oscar Zeta Acosta’s The Revolt of the Cockroach People (1973), M. González never comments on the instances of physicality or sexual encounters in the novel. And while M. González attempts to discredit the importance of location in his analysis of Cecile Pineda’s novels Face (1985) and Frieze (1986), he notes that Pineda, “does not represent Chicano identity as a cultural formation that originates in Aztlán, in the barrio, or on the US-Mexico border…. she does not represent history in a temporally limited or geographically local manner” (155). In other words, critical regionalism does not appear in Chicano Novels and the Politics of Form. And yet, although Pineda’s universal approach “transcend[s] the reifying limits of localism” (158), all the other novels chosen by M. González are deeply rooted in this localism, specifically, California.
By not acknowledging place or analyzing these texts with an eye to the significance of the local, he disregards the global designs of colonialism at large, that is, the larger mechanism of coloniality. Moreover, he underestimates how the local and the transnational components of coloniality need to be taken into account to understand the ways in which the global designs of coloniality work at the local scale.

**Critical Intervention**

As my overview of some of the key texts in Chiana/o cultural analysis suggestions, the unique location of the Chicana/o literary tradition—planted firmly between the two national literatures of Mexico and the United States—presents an opportunity for contemporary scholars: 1) to produce a more rigorous and accurate race, class, and gender analysis of the cultural formations of Mexican Americans in the United States; 2) to incorporate Latin American critical theory into the analytical questions. In other words, in order to produce an accurate class analysis of Mexican Americans in the US, class analysis needs to take into account not only the entanglement of race and gender with class relations, but also the greater history of colonialism in the Americas. Not only are jobs distributed along these hierarchies, but these racialized and gendered hierarchies were also translated into the fragmentation of the working class itself along racial and gendered lines. 3) Finally, contemporary Chicana/o scholarship needs to account for the affective coding of colonial legacies of race, class, and gender hierarchies, which manifests in the lived experience of racial oppression, discrimination, and the division of labor and their literary and cultural representation. Affect, I suggest, entails a relationship, more than a named emotion, that occurs without a conscious thought process. While emotions are felt by an individual, he or she is affected by objects, people, or situations (Flatley 12). Affects specifically come from without: something or someone does something which causes you to feel a certain
Affects are “thoughtless” and often nameless, whereas emotions are thoughts regarding pain or pleasure that are articulated in language (Brennan 116). Rather than draw boundaries between emotions, feelings, and affects, I suggest that these boundaries are blurry. It follows, therefore, that affects are not reducible to emotions (like happiness, sadness, or anger). They exist prior to emotions and are difficult to comprehend and describe through language. We experience affects as positive or negative—as either nice or ugly feelings. Affects are that tugging feeling you cannot name that results from entering into an atmosphere that just feels thick or hostile or the unnamed feeling you experience when someone gives you a certain look. Affects are that pit in your stomach you cannot explain; that knot in your throat before you know whether to cry or scream; that gut feeling of intuition a detective senses; that disorienting vertigo that makes you want to cry before you even know why; the butterflies in your stomach and that falling feeling that you get before you even realize you’re in love. Affects are ambiguous and elusive, and negative affects, in particular, are haunting in their nameless persistence.

The field of affect studies has been marked most prominently by what Patricia Clough (2008) calls “the affective turn”—a shift away from post-structuralism and deconstruction’s death of the subject toward “a dynamism immanent to bodily matter and matter generally—matter’s capacity for self-organization in being in-formational” (1). Yet, as Claudia García-Rojas argues in her article, “(Un)Disciplined Futures: Women of Color Feminism as a Disruptive to White Affect Studies” (2016), when engaging affect studies we must ask ourselves what subjects are being invoked as subjects of affects and emotions (4-5). Further, by marking a contemporary “affective turn” we discount the work of women of color feminists, who (like the contributors to Anzaldúa and Moraga’s Bridge, as well as those who came before) have been articulating a
“theory in the flesh” that invoked the materiality of affect for many years. For women of color feminists, as Bridge reveals:

A theory in the flesh means one where the physical realities of our lives—our skin color, the land of concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings—all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity…. We do this bridging by naming our selves and by telling our stories in our own words. (19)

Writing about lived experience (the physical and the affective), thus, has been a central component of women of color feminism. In addition to creating a “politic born out of necessity,” or language of politics and identity rooted in this lived experience, they were able to “produce a language of self that gives way to an ethics of survival insofar as this ethics makes possible new visions and new spaces, new words and worlds for living” (García-Rojas 2).

My reading of the intersection of affect and coloniality takes into account this “theory in the flesh” precisely as it produces a language of self and “ethics of survival” for people of Mexican descent living in the US. It is in the experience, perception, processing, articulation, and understanding of affects that people of Mexican descent are able to imagine themselves as a cohesive ethnic community that becomes politicized in response to colonial racialized hierarchies and institutions of power. García-Rojas further argues that:

Since women of color theorize from a structural position that implicates not only their embodied selves but also their communities, the language of self that they put forward reflects how they navigate intricate desires, hierarchies of race, gender, and sexuality, institutions of power, and social structures of violence that have historically and continue to disproportionately impact the livelihood of their communities and themselves. (3)
I theorize from the position García-Rojas describes above, a position that not only includes my own racialized body as a Chicana in a transhistoric Mexican American community, but also from a position that continuously insists on challenging colonial hierarchies, “institutions of power,” and “social structures of violence.” While I do draw from Anglo affect theorists, I also theorize from an intellectual foundation laid by women of color feminists such as: Sarah Ahmed, Gloria E. Anzaldúa, Norma Cantú, María Cotera, Martha Cotera, Adelaida R. Del Castillo, Maya Chinchilla, Alma M. García, Alicia Gaspar de Alba, Ellen M. Gil-Gómez, Encarnación Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, Grace Kyungwon Hong, María Lugones, Audre Lorde, Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Anna Nieto-Gómez, Enriqueta Longeaux Vasquez, Natalie Martínez, Cruz Medina, Cherríe Moraga, Sianne Ngai, Jasbir Puar, María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, Chela Sandoval, and Mirta Vidal. In order to dis-identify from and to subvert an approach to affect studies rooted in Western-European theories, I name affects and emotions in both Spanish and English, to account for the way bicultural Mexican American and Mexican immigrant subjects themselves processed and understood their own lived experiences. These emotive affects include: resignation, humiliation, renor (rancor), vergüenza (shame), resentment, melancholia, and angustia (anguish). I acknowledge, however, that Spanish, like English, is a colonizer language, and that it (as well as mestizaje or mixed blood) remains as a constant reminder of Spanish colonization for people of Mexican descent.

My class analysis hinges on the intersections of race, gender, affect, and coloniality and I also take into account a spatial component—the specificity of the territories ceded by Mexico to the US. These territories signify the location where two different colonial matrices (Spanish Catholic and British Protestant-Puritan) clashed in the moment of US expansion. The material effects (and affects) of such a clash are embodied in the narratives produced by authors of
Mexican descent. This analysis merges Marxist analysis of class, critical race theory, Chicana decolonial feminist theory, and the concept of coloniality of power theorized by Latin American culture critics, and brings to bear on their contributions analysis of cultural narratives for the ways in which affect is always present and always felt. Previous attempts to analyze race and class have centered on the narrative of lived working-class experience, the reification of race, gender, and laboring bodies as well as colonial history and labor history, yet none have synthesized an analysis that takes into account the power of affect in a lingering colonial memory and the ways in which these feelings produce fragmentation of the working class itself.

Departing from Quijano’s (2001) “coloniality of power” theory—which argues that the legacy of colonialism continues to replicate colonial hierarchies in the modern world—I develop a mode of analysis that takes into account the ways in which colonialism created an affect-culture that justified class hierarchies based on racial difference. “Affect-culture,” as defined by Rosemary Hennessy (2013), “is the transmission of sensation and cognitive emotion through cultural practices…the materiality of affect-culture is inflected by the social relations through which needs are met” (50). Furthermore, as Hennessy elaborates, “[o]ne of the ways this inflection takes place is in the circulation of cultural narratives that are themselves sites of struggle as they encode mythologies that reproduce dominant power relations and alternative narratives that question or reinvent them” (50). I add to Quijano’s thesis by demonstrating the relationship between coloniality, capital, race, gender, and affect-culture. Quijano explains the way in which colonial rule imposed a “systemic racial division of labor” that inevitably linked social classification with race in the global expansion of coloniality (536). Colonization of the Americas created an association of “nonpaid or nonwaged labor with the dominated races because they were ‘inferior’ races” (538). As a result, paid labor began to be seen as “the
whites’ privilege. The racial inferiority of the colonized implied that they were not worthy of wages” (539). Colonialism, however, is not the same as coloniality. While “Colonialism denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or people rests on the power of another nation,” making that nation an “empire,” coloniality “refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administration” (Maldonado-Torres 243). New identities emerged through colonial caste systems that assigned value to different races, ethnicities, and racial mixtures. “A characteristic feature of this type of social classification,” writes Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2007), is:

that the relation between the subjects is not horizontal but vertical in character. That is, some identities depict superiority over others. And such superiority is premised on the degree of humanity attributed to the identities in question. The ‘lighter’ one’s skin is, the closer to full humanity one is, and vice versa. As the conquerors took on the role of mapping the world, they kept reproducing this vision of things. The whole world was practically seen in the lights of this logic. This is the beginning of ‘global coloniality.’ (244)

As people were organized into racialized hierarchies, so was labor, and the “coloniality of labor control determined the social geography of capitalism” in which capital, “a social formation for control of wage labor, was the axis around which all remaining forms of labor control, resources, and products were articulated” (Quijano 539).

I posit that the affective component is missing in Quijano’s above articulation, for it is precisely the affective component of cultural forms that helped produce embodied consent to the power of coloniality and the control in the coloniality of labor. Rather than merely dictate the
hierarchies, the role of affect in a colonial cultural value system fueled the lived belief that “global cultural order” revolved around “European or Western hegemony” (Quijano 540) and the feelings of superiority based on relations to capital became codified in race and gender relations and justified the dismissal of all forms of non-Western knowledge, religion, and culture. As a result, Western Europeans began to see themselves as definitive of the modern world, the “exclusive bearers, creators, and protagonists of that modernity” (542) and people of color as primitive, pre-modern societies. The coloniality of power that Quijano describes replicated colonial power structures even in the modern world with the disintegration of colonialism and slavery. Capital developed “as a social relation based on the commodification of the labor force” (550). Due to the intricate relationship between affect, coloniality, and capital, people of color continued (and continue) to be seen as belonging to a lower class, they are relegated to the lower rungs of labor distribution and paid lower wages, and a major facilitator of that exploitation is the affective value of their skin.

By viewing class as a social relationship integral to the capitalist means of production, we can see more clearly the ways in which affect-culture fuels the power of coloniality, reproducing colonial hierarchies in contemporary racialized and gendered class hierarchies. Manos de Obra reads for these cultural narratives and the responses produced to such narratives by US authors of Mexican descent. I introduce “colonial” in the theorization of Hennessy’s “affect-culture” in order to account for the ways that coloniality structures the cultural practices and social relations that materialize in the policies, wages, and violence that discriminate against Chicana/os and people of color. Relying on Hennessy’s above definition of affect-culture, I propose that colonial affect-culture transmits the “sensation and cognitive emotion” of racial hierarchies that structured life during the colonial period. To pivot off of her abovementioned definition, the
“materiality” of colonial affect-culture is “inflected” by the “cultural narratives” of hegemonic power (immigration policies, official rhetoric surrounding immigrants and racialized bodies, “Mexican” wages, etc.) that “reproduce dominant power relations.” It is in the circulation of affects (resignation, humiliation, rancor/renchor, vergüenza, melancholia, angustia, love) and an analysis of them that “alternative narratives” can “question” or contest the hegemonic narratives that fuel the coloniality of power.

Colonial affect-culture, I maintain, highlights the blurred relationships of people to capital within their socially-constructed positions around race and coloniality. The structure of power, as Quijano notes, “was and even continues to be organized on and around the colonial axis” (568). Negative affects accompany the values encoded in representations of people of color (historically colonized peoples) and help to reproduce a fragmentation of the working class along racial lines. Rather than produce two separate images of the working class—the worthy and unworthy—these culturally coded affects help produce the compelling image of class mobility. If racial, gendered, and national ethnicities are used as markers of devalued labor, then affects allow for a distancing and for the development of a sense of lived separation based on the racist, gendered colonial ideology that because you do not have an accent, your parents did not come from a Third World country, and you are not a person of color, somehow that automatically excludes you from the working class. Today’s access to “fast cash” (loans, payment plans, and credit cards) adds to the fiction of rising above working-class status and masks the fact that owning no more than our labor (i.e. our working-class position) remains our relationship to the capitalist mode of production.

After 1492, colonial cultural narratives produced their own colonial affect-culture. Yet this affect-culture did not disappear as the New World cast off colonial rule. Dominant cultural
narratives reproduced the colonial affect-culture in the foundation of the modern nation state; hence, these narratives continue in hostile official language that excludes raced bodies from the larger national imaginary community. These dominant cultural narratives do not simply include the way in which we tell history, but are also a part of the expanding European Enlightenment ideas that “inscribed a conceptualization of knowledge to a geopolitical space (Western Europe) and erased the possibility of even thinking about a conceptualization and distribution of knowledge ‘emanating’ from other local histories…” (“Geopolitics of Knowledge” 59). Over the long history of colonialism, power and knowledge were situated along an axis that consisted of Western European Enlightenment versus all other forms of knowledge, and in doing so, eclipsed all other forms of (non-Western) epistemology and ontology. This magnified difference is what Walter Mignolo (2002) terms the “colonial difference” (57-67). Colonial affect-culture is located within this colonial difference: because epistemologies and ontologies were located on this imagined axis of Western versus non-Western knowledge, feelings tied to who was considered superior and who was considered inferior necessarily emerged. The seeds of resistance in counter-narratives are a response to narratives of domination coded with colonial hierarchies or colonial affect-culture.

Both the transnational and the local dimensions are also important in considering the ways in which class, race, gender, affect, and coloniality intersect as different colonial matrices (Spanish and British) that affected the Chicana/os who were (and are) living in the territory that now constitutes the United States. Historically shifting borders switched Mexicans from a Spanish colonial model to a British (US) colonial model. Although both colonial models produced hierarchies of labor and gender and racialized caste systems with affects attached them, it is important to note the ways in which race functioned differently in each model. While
colonialism did exploit native peoples, their integration differed, as Ralph Bauer (2008) points out in “The Hemispheric Genealogies of ‘Race’: Creolization and the Cultural Geography of Colonial Difference across the Eighteenth-Century Americas.” Racial mixing also produced a different set of affective responses under the two regimes. Under British rule, racial mixture “expanded biologically the cultural category of ‘Black’ rather than that of ‘White,’ as was the case in Spanish America” (48). In other words, the British American colonial system emphasized a person’s Black heritage, whereas the Spanish colonial system emphasized a person’s whiteness. In Spanish America a Spanish man and an Indian woman would bear a Mestiza, a Spanish man and a Mestiza would bear a Castiza, a Spanish man and a Castiza could ultimately bear a Spaniard. The “greater exclusiveness that characterized British American colonial societies from the very beginning” (47) must be taken into account when analyzing race relations in the US.

The deep imprint of a Puritan ethos in the United States’ colonial past plays a significant role in the way in which negative affects were attributed to people of color in the Americas. The Puritan venture combined economics and religion in a way that would result in a system of exclusion. The jeremiad, or political sermon, became the preferred method of social control in the colonies, as it defined America as the new “city upon a hill”, the “New Jerusalem” and the site of the Puritan’s earthly mission. The Puritan sacred errand came to stand for progress, and defined godliness through fellowship, individualism, self-reliance, and hard work. With the rise of modernity, the jeremiad was secularized and adapted through cultural mechanisms that might be called “coloniality of power.” If Puritans were the people chosen by God to live in this New Jerusalem, the native populations were defined as not chosen, as sinful, and as excluded from the narrative of the sacred errand, or modern progress. Colonial literature, such as Mary
Rowlandson’s (1682) captivity narrative *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God: Being a Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*, signals some of the ways in which natives were completely excluded from this narrative.

Over time, the jeremiad became secularized as Puritan ministers abstracted biblical metaphors (new chosen people, city on a hill, promised land, destined progress, New Eden, American Jerusalem) thereby facilitating “the movement from visible saint to American patriot, sacred errand manifest destiny, colony to republic to imperial power” (Bercovitch 92). In its secularization (which defined itself through a colonial history of racial hierarchies) the jeremiad aligned itself to the capitalist structures that require a stratification of laboring bodies. That is, in order for Americans to achieve class mobility (or, more accurately, to believe in class mobility), a lower class (of indigenous, slaves, and indentured people) needed to be maintained. Although the Spanish colonial model did not officially condone intermarriage, it was quite common, especially in light of the fact that the majority of the colonists were unmarried Spanish men. The British model, on the other hand, functioned in a more exclusionary manner. The majority of English colonists arrived “more frequently as family units than did their Spanish counterparts” (Bauer 47) and British American contact zones maintained in the city upon the hill exclusionary practices, forming a “frontier of exclusion” as opposed to the Spanish American “frontiers of inclusion” (47).

The jeremiad’s secular transformation into the American dream helped produce the fiction of the American “middle class,” especially since the Puritan/colonial affective matrix allowed Americans to define themselves through exclusions. For this reason, class analysis in Chicana/o Studies must take into account the larger timeline and transnational scope of colonial relations in US territories. The change in imperial control subjected Chicana/os to a double
colonization. US expansion posed a two-fold threat to the way of life and upper-class position of Mexican Castiza landowning families (such as those described in Ruiz de Burton’s *The Squatter and the Don* and J. González’s *Caballero*). First, it introduced the British colonial class and race distinctions and their accompanying affect-culture which relegated the upper-class Mexican Castiza to lower rungs of social hierarchy. Second, new forms of agrarian production replaced the older Spanish and native ranching culture.

I mean to call attention to the ways in which coloniality, affect, and the Puritan ethos of the British American colonial model are missing from previous conversations and yet exerted a powerful cultural force on the representation of Mexican Americans. Both Spain and Britain produced specific hierarchical affects in relation to race and gender, yet their differences collided in the incorporation of the Mexican territories. Affects are important not only in that they code personal interactions, but in the way in which they structure our understanding and definition of class organization in the US. Most significant, however, is the way in which affect, in its intersection with race and coloniality, has racialized class in the US. Fragmentation along racial lines has created a wedge that forecloses the possibility of a social revolution that could produce an alternative to capitalism’s exploitation, but not necessarily other forms of an alternative social formation that constitute what Mignolo (2000) calls “border gnosis.” Yet, in reading for affect in narratives of the Chicana/o lived experience, we can begin to see how affects have structured a new ethics of survival. Border gnosis is embodied by racialized Mexican immigrants and Chicana/os living in the US. Their affective response is “an emergent *gnoseolgy*, absorbing and displacing hegemonic forms of knowledge into the perspective of the subaltern” (“Local Histories” 12). The colonial affect-culture(s)—within both the US and Mexico—that people of Mexican descent experience in the form of feeling is a type of knowledge. It is an intimate
knowledge of colonial legacies and hierarchies—a knowledge felt in the emotive affects of humiliation, resignation, rancor/renor, vergüenza, resentment, melancholia, and angustia. This knowledge is also materially evident on the body through scars, bruises, shaved heads, physical examinations and forced disinfection baths on the US-Mexico border, sickness due to working conditions or border crossing, and in death. Reading for affect in its intersection with coloniality, therefore, is especially useful in its application to cultural narratives and lived experience of people of Mexican descent in the US Southwest.

While the Chicana/o movement fostered an image of Aztlán as Chicana/o nationalism, activists also sought to form a united effort for revolutionary humanitarianism—a “political love” that harnesses positive affects and has the power to bridge people together in camaraderie. The body holds the potential for hate (bodily harm) as well as joy and love (sexuality and intimacy); and this is especially clear when taking into account the 1960s call for “free love.” Love (romantic, political, between people and of color) is embedded in the Chicana/o experience, and its acceptance or negation defines quotidian experiences. “Political love,” as Michael Hardt (2011) terms it, is not the same as romantic or familial love. Instead, it must “move across these scales, betraying the conventional divisions between personal and political, and grasping the power to create bonds that are once intimate and social” (Hardt 677). This type of love organizes relationships in a way that challenges traditional ontology, moving past legal contracts, blood relations, class, gender, sexuality, and race. Political love, which looks across race and gender, has the ability to connect people through affect and has the ability to suture the fragmented working class and pave the way for social change. It is part of the discourse of revolutionary humanitarianism. And, as Aimé Césaire suggested in his *Discourse on Colonialism* (1972), first we must decolonize our thoughts and feelings, bridge the gap between racial
discords, before a social revolution can occur. Overall, *Manos de Obra* argues that the seeds of a Chicana/o political love did not emerge out of a vacuum, or just through the broader Civil Rights Movement, but that in fact the literary archive of Mexican America supports the argument that this brand of political love had been (and continues) evolving since at least 1848. In *Manos de Obra*, I thus theorize and chart the centrality of race, class, and gender in Mexican American literary production from the 1920s through the 1970s and draw out the origins of a political love that are in essence also the origins of Chicana/o Studies.

Chapter one focuses on the colonial Puritan roots of the American Jeremiad and traces the material effects (on raced bodies) of its secularization into the American Dream. This chapter reads an early Mexican American novel, *Las aventuras de don Chipote o, cuando los pericos maman* (1928) against F. Scott Fitzgerald’s canonical American novel, *The Great Gatsby* (1925), in order to demonstrate how the genre of the jeremiad functions as a dominant cultural narrative in the US that sustains the American Dream mythology of class mobility, while simultaneously encoding it with affects that maintain the fiction of a (colonial) racialized class hierarchy. The American jeremiad circulated the narrative of racialized citizenship and class hierarchy that bolstered a discourse of national belonging that would later underscore the affect of humiliation solicited from people of Mexican descent in the US. On the other side of the border, however, is the Mexican colonial affect-culture of the long-standing Spanish latifundia (landed estates) culture (what I name “hacienda culture”). Mexico’s hacienda culture also racialized subjects and labor and, infused by the narratives of Catholicism, provoked resignation in the peons laborers. I argue that the American jeremiad and Mexican hacienda culture are “affect-infused narrative[s]” that racialized people of Mexican descent as “social subjects” (Hennessy 50) through relations of capital and labor. This chapter identifies and interrogates the affects resignation and humiliation
in order to read for the ways that people of Mexican descent in the US felt—that is, internalized the material consequences of colonial affect-culture, and how these feelings were represented in an early Chicana/o text. I contextualize *Don Chipote* and *Gatsby* by interrogating 1920s legislative policies dealing with immigration and labor.

Chapter two highlights the lack of fluidity in class hierarchies, gender, and social dynamics across national borders. Mexican Repatriation serves as the historical backdrop for this chapter that emphasizes the circulation of Anglo American rancor directed at people of Mexican descent as a way to scapegoat them during the Great Depression (1929-1941). Anglo American rancor is an affect understood and perceived as *rencor* and evokes *vergüenza* (shame) in the Mexican characters. The articles published in the US Spanish-language press (Ignacio E. Lozano’s San Antonio newspaper, *La Prensa*, in particular) demonstrate an awareness of the precarity of people of Mexican descent living in the US during this time period. In an effort to help the US Mexican community navigate American discrimination and deportation efforts, the Spanish-language press promoted the idea of a united transnational Mexican community, *México de afuera*. This *México de afuera* ideology was created and disseminated by conservative Mexican intellectual elite journalists, editors, and publishers, who emphasized a nationalistic Mexican identity. The Spanish-language press, under the guidance of this elite bourgeois class recognized that the US racialization of class eroded the class hierarchies that positioned them above their *bracero* (manual laborers) compatriots. I argue that *Los Repatriados*, serialized in *La Prensa* in 1935, articulates voluntary repatriation as a survival tactic for Mexican nationals that has the potential to rescue them from continuous Anglo American rancor and scapegoating, as well as from this problematic racialized class hierarchy. Yet, Jorge Ainslie’s serialized novel also highlights the differences between lived class experience in the US Mexico barrios and the
Mexican nation-state. Reading for the affects of *rencor* and *vergüenza* in this novel underscores the racialization of class and labor elaborated in the previous chapter. Although people of Mexican descent could achieve some economic success, their ability to achieve social approval and respect is limited to the Mexican *barrio*. As the character Doña Refugio quickly learns, the US Mexican *barrio* functioned as a unique transcultural space where she was seen as a community leader, entrepreneur, and autonomous woman. Yet, outside of that space, her business and labor are racialized and she is groomed to become a submissive Mexican wife and abide by colonial racialized and gendered hierarchies.

In chapter three, I analyze Luis Valdez’s critique of capital’s reification of labor and laborers. I use M. González’s (2009) definition of reification—“the failure to understand how objects, events, and situations are intricately connected to and constituted by dynamic social processes that have evolved historically at different levels” (11)—as a starting point to think of the way that colonial history has played a role in the reification and racialization of Chicana/os. I also examine the ways in which colonial affect-culture prompts people to “sell out” or assimilate as a way to access a different type of class experience. That is, a negation of ethnic and cultural background provides distance from a working class fractured by imaginary differences of ethnicity and is affectively inflected. It is an experience that imagines class position through one’s relationships to social status. In the second part of this chapter, I call attention to the problematic gendering of selling out depicted through the character of Miss Jimenez. I read Miss Jimenez and the resentment directed at her for her assimilation as indicative of the larger gendered affect of resentment that Chicana feminists experienced during the Chicana/o movement. As Chicana feminists voiced their concerns about male-centered activism, they were labeled as *vendiditas* and *agringadas* (assimilated or “anglocized”). In response to this gendered
resentment, however, Chicana feminists produced work and a philosophy that accounted for the material embodiment of affect. They also worked to create an activist pedagogical strategy that did not abandon middle-class assimilated Chicana/os, but rather validated their lived experiences as part of the Chicana/o experience even if it wasn’t working class.

In chapter four, I highlight the Mexican American migrant’s unique spatial-temporal suspension by juxtaposing it with the melancholia of modernity. *Tierra* combines the inability to mourn the losses of the past with an inability to progress into the future. I argue that, unlike early Mexican American and Chicana/o novels of the past, Rivera achieves a realism that seeks to articulate a cohesive ethnic identity through what Sianne Ngai (2005) calls “ugly feelings” (negative affects) and ultimately a communal love. It is through this affective dimension of the text that Rivera produces a “Chicana/o” subjectivity and consciousness that paradoxically embodies and transcends the disjointed spatial-temporalities of the migrant experience. I argue that *Tierra*’s affective mapping of the migrant experience rereads negative affects in order to produce a counter-narrative. It provides an account of the social injustices suffered by the Mexican American migrant workers while simultaneously insisting that they constitute a community that has engineered the ability to traverse the limits of their racialized economic and cultural precarity. If affect theory reveals the complex set of dimensions to analyzing the lived experience of people of Mexican descent in Venegas’ picaresque Don Chipote, the repatriated García family in *Los Repatriados*, and Valdez’s images of the *vendida/o*, then Rivera’s novel reveals an equally complex attempt to resolve the conundrum of belonging. If Valdez’s *El Teatro Campesino* managed to give an aesthetic platform to voice the class struggle at the heart of the UFW, Rivera’s *…y no se lo tragó la tierra* offers a poetics for understanding the tragic conditions that underwrote the Chicana/o experience without abandoning all hope or agency.
Until, arguably, Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera, Tierra* was the one text, literary or otherwise, that came closest to capturing the goals of the Chicana/o movement—a “political love” or revolutionary humanitarianism that has the power to transform the ugly feelings produced by a colonial affect-culture into a binding force that transcends race, class, and gender.
CHAPTER ONE

THE AFFECTIVE VALUE OF COLONIAL LEGACY: IMMIGRATION AND THE AMERICAN JEREMIAD IN LAS AVENTURAS DE DON CHIPOTE O, CUANDO LOS PERICOS MAMEN

For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill.
-Jonathan Winthrop, “A Model of Christian Charity”

So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.
-F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby

Y pensando en esto, llegó a la conclusión de que los mexicanos se harán ricos en Estados Unidos: CUANDO LOS PERICOS MAMEN.12
-Daniel Venegas, Las aventuras de don Chipote o, cuando los pericos maman

American writers of Mexican descent in the US are well-known for representing the demotion of the criollo class under the expanding influence of Anglo Americans in the West. In particular, literary critics have noticed the pains to which authors such as María Amparo Ruiz de Burton depict the transition of California Mexicans from landowning gentlemen to manual laborers as a decline to be avoided. Ruiz de Burton’s 1885 novel, The Squatter and the Don, suggests that in the nineteenth century she was already alert to the ways that the new American regime would transition Mexican Americans into a subaltern labor force. Although the main characters of her novel are upper-class landed Alta Californio elites who identify as white, Ruiz de Burton nonetheless addresses the racialized capitalism and dispossession that affected the California Mexicans after the US-Mexico (1886-1848). The Squatter and the Don portrays the unjust discounting of the California Mexicans as participants in a nation-building project that will ultimately erase the whiteness granted to them under the Spanish casta system. By the end of the novel, Gabriel Alamar, once a landed caballero (gentleman) at the top of the Spanish racial

and class hierarchy, soon finds himself demoted from patrón to day laborer. It is in this moment that his wife, Lizzie, becomes aware of how her husband’s body is racialized and classed by the Americans: “If he had been rich, his nationality could have been forgiven, but no one will willingly tolerate a poor native Californian” (Ruiz de Burton 324).

I begin with Ruiz de Burton here in order to stress that the foreclosure of class ascension and the American Dream to Mexicans and Mexican Americans was not a byproduct of twentieth century modernization, but had already begun in the nineteenth century. One of the deepest consequences of the US-Mexico War (1846-1848) and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) for all proto-classes of the Mexican American community, especially hacendados (landed gentry), was a shift in what I call “colonial affect-culture.” This shift severely re-ordered the world order, not just the distinction between hacendado and peon, but also in the racialization of labor and class. It is through over a century of Mexican American literary production that we can trace how this shift in colonial affect-culture plays out.

Since then, from folklore to fiction, labor and laboring bodies center the experiential quotidian for Mexican American writers and the communities they represent. While the representation of class ascension or its prospects are common themes in nineteenth century and early twentieth century British and American traditions, it is less so in Mexican American literature. This myth of the American Dream and what it constitutes have historically evolved from empire-building to the ideal of a house with a white picket fence. For American writers, in particular, success of the characters is often measured by their advance toward the American Dream. One of the most persistent themes found in Mexican American literature since 1848 is the representation of working-class labor. This literature depicts characters who perform seasonal
and blue-collar jobs, such as agricultural work, laying railroad tracks, and domestic labor, to name a few.

Instead of casting working-class characters as potential inheritors of the American Dream’s success story, however, writers of Mexican descent have either continuously challenged the American Dream narrative or have been challenged by it. Either way, as early Chicano literary critic, Raymund A. Paredes (1981) argued, it was a myth steeped in the exploitation and racialization of the lower classes. As an alternative, Chicana/o writers created another set of values. These Chicana/o writers have reinterpreted success as being reached through “human values,” such as “dignity, courage, and sheer endurance” rather than through economic success and class ascension (Paredes 79-80). To Paredes’ point, if you look at a chronological sampling of texts from the Mexican American literary canon that represent working-class labor, you can see how labor and laboring bodies have been featured over time. For example: Conrado Espinosa’s *El sol de Texas* (1927), Daniel Venegas’ *Las aventuras de Don Chipote, o cuando pericos mamen* (*The Adventures of Don Chipote: Or When Parrots Breastfeed*, 1928), Américo Paredes’ *George Washington Gómez* (1930s), José Antonio Villarreal’s *Pocho* (1959), Luis Valdez’s “Las dos caras del patroncito” (1965) and “Los Vendidos” (1967), Tomás Rivera’s *...y no se lo tragó la tierra* (1971), Estela Portillo Trambley’s *Rain of Scorpions* (1972), Richard Vasquez’s *Chicano* (1972), Rolando Hinojosa’s *Estampas del Valle* (1973), Gloria E. Anzaldúa and Cherrie Moraga’s *This Bridge Called My Back* (1981), Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987), Alejandro Morales’ *The Brick People* (1988), Moraga’s “Heroes and Saints” (1992), Helena Maria Viramontes’ *Under the Feet of Jesus* (1995), Ramón Tianguis Pérez’s *Diario de un mojado* (2003), and Manuel Muñoz’s *The Faith Healer of Olive Avenue* (2007). Novels such as these relate a life of racialized labor that is incompatible with the American Dream narrative.
Despite the efforts of the characters in these novels to achieve class ascension, the Chicana/o characters continuously fail. The authors depict these failures as consequences of institutional racism and racialized class hierarchies. Even if they do achieve entrepreneurial success (as we shall see in chapter two) the racialization of labor and class continues to code certain forms of labor as lower class.

Paredes (1981) identifies that, for writers of Mexican descent, the American Dream has “held little attraction, seeming at turns an essentially harmless illusion and a cruel and insidious hoax” (71). This disinclination to embrace the American Dream myth, I argue, is conditioned by the colonial affect-culture of resignation that Mexican immigrants, refugees, exiles, and expatriates brought with them from Mexico and employed in both countries as a survival tactic to endure racialization and discrimination. According to Paredes, two significant factors play into this jaded depiction of the American Dream. First, a long history of discrimination disabused Mexican American writers of a belief in this myth, which “regards success as lying within everyone’s reach” and painted all those who do not achieve success as culpable themselves (71). Second, this American “national myth of abundance” is illegible from the perspective of a Mexican national culture, which has a history of being represented as a “poor and underdeveloped land” (71). For Mexican American writers, “the possibilities of achieving affluence are so remote as to be irrelevant” (79). Paredes, however, is dismissive of the power behind the American Dream. That is, the power of colonial affect-culture, which grants legitimacy to racialized notions of citizenship, belonging, and class hierarchies. It is precisely the irrelevance of the American Dream to Mexican immigrants (and immigrants of color in general) that I explore in this chapter. In order to highlight the way colonial affect-culture works, I focus on two particular negative affects: resignation and humiliation. By reading for resignation and
humiliation, I signal how “affect-infused narratives produce social subjects” (Hennessy 50), specifically how the jeremiad, the American Dream, and Mexican hacienda culture as cultural narratives racialized class and coded Mexican bodies as a disposable work force that could allow class mobility for American citizens of Anglo descent.

The American Dream itself, I will argue, was racialized in order to exclude people of color from class ascension, even when their labor was fueling economic and institutional expansion for Americans deemed “white.” And its relevance as such was contained even as it was promoted as the mythos of the nation. As the judicial documents, immigration legislation, and Congressional hearings I analyze in this chapter reveal, the American Dream—indeed, American citizenship itself—was defined as racially exclusive in official discourse. But—as Congress and business interests determined—in order to allow white American citizens the chance to fulfil their (socioeconomic) destiny, the Mexican immigrant had to assume the role of the non-upwardly mobile outsider laborer. As a result, official discourse defined this racialized type of labor as antithetical to the American Dream.

In this chapter, I argue that the American Puritan jeremiad played a significant role in the formation of American colonial-affect culture and the representations of immigrants that failed what José F. Aranda (2003) calls the “litmus test” of the “appropriate” immigrant selected for legitimate American citizenship. A jeremiad, as a genre, is a political speech or literary work that expresses a lament for the declining state of society and a prophesy of doom (or a “fall”) if things continue as they are. It often contains a warning that implies surveillance.13 In order to demonstrate the wide-reaching grip of colonial affect-culture and its deployment of the Puritan

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13 Classic examples of Puritan jeremiads include: Samuel Danford’s “Brief Recognition of New England’s Errand into the Wilderness” (1670), Jonathan Edwards’ “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” (1741), Jonathan Winthrop’s “A Model of Christian Charity” (1630), and Michael Wigglesworth’s “The Day of Doom: or, A Poetical Description of the Great and Last Judgement.”
jeremiad as cultural narrative, with regard to early Mexican American literature, I will look at Daniel Venegas’ *Las aventuras de Don Chipote, o quando pericos mamen* (*The Adventures of Don Chipote: Or When Parrots Breastfeed*, 1928). This novel portrays its protagonist’s desires to achieve economic prosperity; that is, his desire to achieve the American Dream. Yet, in his pursuit of happiness, Don Chipote falls, due to “the failure of America” (Byers 97). By happiness, I am referring to the Puritan religious concept of fulfilling God’s errand (both godliness and the riches of Heaven); to the Declaration’s claim that all men have a right to pursue happiness; and to secular happiness framed as economic success in the fulfillment of the American Dream. America fails him and his belief in the American Dream as it adheres to a racialized class and labor hierarchy, which is a crucial part of the capitalist structure that ultimately allows social mobility for—and only for—a select set of people (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants). As a result, the American Dream is foreclosed for the working class—or even more specifically, for an immigrant working class (i.e. Don Chipote, a Mexican farmer). Don Chipote, as a working-class Mexican immigrant from a predominantly Catholic country, cannot pass such a litmus test, according to the exceptionalist paradigm the jeremiad promoted.

I argue that the American jeremiad (the Puritan political sermon) is a specifically-American genre that evolved from the Puritan colonists’ religious and political beliefs and ultimately aided in creating a racialized rhetoric behind the American Dream and a US racialized class hierarchy. The American Dream and American culture, thus, are heir to a colonial Protestant mission. The Calvinist rhetoric that structured economic and social relations in the New World delineated specific criteria for access to what the Puritans considered God-given success and legitimate citizenship to what Jonathan Winthrop (1630) called a “city upon a hill.” He defined America as a New Jerusalem described not only as a physical site of Christian
charity, but as an earthly mission to either receive the rewards of heaven if successful, or the infamy of hell for failure. The Puritans envisioned America as a Calvinist Christian mission, an “unfolding prophecy,” which would ultimately lay the foundation for the national narrative (Bercovich xiii). The Puritan mission in America was, as Sacvan Bercovitch notes (1978, 2012), “a modern mercantile venture, funded by the Massachusetts Bay Company, Inc., offering what they advertised as unparalleled opportunities for economic advancement” (xiii). I contend that the American jeremiad’s interconnectedness with the rise of modernity and capitalism, especially in the 1920s, recalls colonial structures of power in the hierarchies of labor. My aim, then, is to demonstrate how colonial affect-culture racializes and excludes immigrants and racial or ethnic minorities from the American Dream and the “city upon a hill” narrative.

I configure the 1920s as an important temporal node for radical socioeconomic shifts in the United States in order to read the response to such shifts through the American jeremiad and, more broadly, through colonial affect-culture. Although some people would more closely associate the 1930s with socioeconomic disruptions because of the Great Depression (1929-1939), it is actually the legislative decisions, popularization of scientific eugenics, immigration reforms, and changes to the labor industry in a post-World War I America that have a significant impact on the racialization of labor, class, and—as Walter Benn Michaels (1995) points out in Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism—national identity. During the Roaring Twenties, the United States experienced a disruption of its social and economic structure in the form of massive industrial growth, the largest wave of immigration to date, shifting social values, African American migration out of the South, the flourishing Harlem Renaissance, and the revival of the Klu Klux Klan (KKK). The conflict that arose during this decade, as the United States experienced vast social changes during and after World War I, is reflected in cultural
narratives. The 1920s were an important moment in American modernity as a decade in the wake of World War I (1914-1918) that ushered in not only industrialization and immigration, but also free trade. Access to national and global markets opened up new venues for capital gain and the opportunity for social mobility. This window of opportunity included the expansion of agribusiness that produced an underground market for undocumented migrant labor, a development that is represented in Don Chipote. The novel’s demystification of America that reveals the corruption and racism of American culture exposes a specifically US colonial affect-culture. This affect-culture, I argue, ultimately leads to more obvious exclusionary rhetoric that comes in the form of official government proceedings, immigration policy, and Mexican Repatriation of the 1930s.

I read Venegas’ novel against the shadow cast by F. Scott Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby (1925) to reveal the colonial affect-culture of the jeremiad narrative that underwrites American culture. In this first section I will also discuss how the colonial socioeconomic system of haciendas and other landed estates in Mexico produced a colonial affect-culture that racialized labor in modern Mexico. This reading also allows me to demonstrate how Venegas deploys the Mexican figure of the peon as the choice of “everyman” to underwrite his productive condemnation of the American Dream. Analyzing Don Chipote in the context of the 1920s also positions America’s Roaring Twenties’ wealth of post-World War I expansion (seen in novels such as Gatsby) against the poverty of Mexico’s post-Revolutionary redistribution of land-based wealth. Such a comparative reading also contextualizes the novel within a major shift in Mexico’s race ideology of the time that began to center mestizaje, however complicated and contradictory, as the social and national policy of Mexico. The Mexican nationals immigrating to
the US during this time, thus, do so largely as economic refugees. As a result, the expansion of US wealth is achieved on the backs of people of color (cheap labor).

In the following section, I analyze *Don Chipote* and the immigrant body in terms of the “coloniality of labor” and affect, or the ways that geopolitical histories of colonialism continue to value and devalue labor—and the laboring body itself—according to race. I will then turn to *The Great Gatsby* as a foil to *Don Chipote* in order to expose how the American Dream is based on colonial hierarchies and, as a result, is affectively coded with racialized exclusions. By reading *Gatsby* as an American jeremiad I will trace the origins of what are considered quintessential parts of American culture—the American Dream and American exclusivity—to the jeremiad narrative. I read the character of Jay Gatsby not as white, but as the son of poor, immigrant Jewish farmers in order to highlight the racialization of immigrants in the 1920s and to analyze the specificity of US racial hierarchies of class and access to the American Dream. I will then bridge together the racialized exclusivity of the American Dream and coloniality of labor in my discussion of US immigration policies. By placing archival documents such as US immigration legislation, court cases, and US Congressional hearing transcripts alongside these novels, I demonstrate how labor is racialized and classed in order to sustain an exclusionary American Dream. I contend that the American jeremiad and the racialization of labor are significant contributors to a colonial affect-culture that provides embodied consent to colonial hierarchies, justifies the devaluation of immigrant labor, and codes American citizenship as exclusive and primarily white. Although this chapter focuses on the 1920s, colonial affect-culture continues to shape contemporary sociopolitical issues including immigration policies, institutional racism, political campaigns, racial profiling, and police brutality.

**Hacienda Culture and the Colonial Affect-Culture of Resignation and Humiliation**
Venegas writes against a narrative that is deeply entrenched in the American sociopolitical and cultural ideology—the American Puritan jeremiad (the political sermon) and the idea of American exclusivity. This ideology is embedded in and precedes the very foundational documents of the nation itself. All the same, of course, Venegas is not alone in writing against this narrative, even if he was unaware of the jeremiad’s history. Just three years before in 1925, Fitzgerald published his jeremiad novel, *The Great Gatsby*. Like the protagonist Don Chipote, Fitzgerald’s character Jay Gatsby strategizes, works, and connives to achieve his version of the American Dream. Fitzgerald’s main character, Jay Gatsby, challenges the American mythos that self-reliance leads to “happiness.” Although Gatsby achieves material wealth, he does not acquire what he truly desires: Daisy, and what she comes to symbolize for him—acceptance into white upper class American society. Fitzgerald complicates the jeremiad’s portrayal of the American Dream by calling attention to the racialized class and labor hierarchy underlying the culture of the dream mythos itself.

Although Fitzgerald and his protagonists are heirs to the American culture produced by the Puritan jeremiad, neither Venegas, much less his protagonist, Don Chipote, display an awareness of the jeremiad underpinnings of the American Dream. Backed by a different colonial matrix, Don Chipote crosses the border with an idea more akin to the picaresque (mis)adventures of Miguel Cervantes’ titular character in *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha* (1605). Don Chipote, a Mexican farmer, decides to leave his wife and children and head to the United States to try and strike it rich. The streets in the United States, it turns out, are not paved in gold and Don Chipote soon learns that the odds are stacked against him. Accompanied by his

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14 Although in colonial times the title “don” was reserved for nobles and royalty, it became a popular way to address respected men in the community in the twentieth century. The word “chipote” translates to “a bump on the head.” Thus, Venegas names his protagonist Sir Bump on the Head, in a humorous use of the term don and in reference to the protagonist of Miguel de Cervantes’ novel *Don Quixote*. 
faithful dog, Sufrelambre, and his friend, Policarpo, Don Chipote finds out how difficult it is to navigate American culture. Relegated to hard physical labor, Don Chipote and Policarpo work on el tranque (“the railroad tracks”) and haul cement. Despite getting paid, they always find themselves in debt to their bosses. Don Chipote ultimately comes to the conclusion that immigrants are expected to work like beasts and will only become rich in the United States “CUANDO LOS PERICOS MAMEN” (Venegas 159). Don Chipote falls in love with a flapper who performs in a Mexican vaudeville carpa (and who manipulates him into spending what little money he has on her). Finally, Don Chipote is “rescued” by his devout wife, Doña Chipota, who (fed up waiting for him to return to Mexico) decides to go find him and bring him home. I read this return to Mexico as an acknowledgement of defeat by American coloniality and capitalism. Venegas’ anti-immigration warning to his Mexican readers is that it is better to suffer under the Spanish Mexican colonial matrix than to suffer the humiliation of the Anglo American modern colonial matrix.

And yet, Venegas returns Don Chipote, despite all his (mis)adventures, to his prior class position as a peon: “Con el referido patrón encontró lo que quería, es decir: unas parcelas para sembrarlas a medias y que le comprara uno de los burros para ayudar a los gastos mientras venía la cosecha” (158). Venegas employs colonial affect-culture reality as a peon to make sense of why the rural poor like Don Chipote immigrate to the US. Despite their harsh treatment in the US and/or their failures there, immigrants often cling to the myths of “streets paved in gold” (a cruel version of Conquistador Francisco Vasquez de Coronado’s search for the Seven Cities of

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15 Translated as “Skinenbones” in the novel, but a literal translation would be “Suffers from hunger.”
16 “WHEN PARROTS BREAST-FEED” (160).
17 “He [Don Chipote] got what he hoped for from said patrón—that is, he received a few parcels to plant in halves, and he was also able to sell the patron one of his donkeys for cash expenses until the harvest came in” (158).
Gold, no doubt). The affect of hope clings to the myth of the American Dream. It is a hope envisioned through capitalism—hope for class mobility and economic success. Yet Mexican immigrants, such as Don Chipote soon experience humiliation when they realize that in the US, like in Mexico, class and labor are racialized, and as a result class mobility is not easily accessible for a racialized manual laborer. Immigrants also experience humiliation as they must submit to the demonstrations of colonial power. At border crossings, Mexican immigrants in the 1920s had to endure the humiliation of forced chemical delousing and disinfection baths as well as physical examinations and intelligence tests. These obstacles to immigration were imposed by colonial eugenic ideologies that saw their racialized bodies as dirty, contaminated, unfit, and subordinate. US immigration policies physically humiliated their bodies and in doing so emphasized their ability to control the racialized Mexican body. The return to Mexico, after experiencing humiliation in the US, is a return to the resignation that they first accepted under a Mexican hacienda racialized class system. Venegas’ novel, thus, functions as a window into the way colonial affect-culture structures (and racializes) the class of Mexican bodies as they cross over into the United States as immigrants. By examining the space carved out for the immigrant in the US racialized class hierarchy, we can see how the American Puritan jeremiad contextualized US colonial affect-culture in its absorption of a differently racialized laboring body.

The Mexican immigrating nationals, however, also bring with them a colonial affect-culture, created by a Spanish colonial latifundia culture that organized Mexico (as well as Latin America) according to a racialized and class-based socioeconomic system. Systems of landed estates, such as haciendas, encomiendas, repartimientos, and estancias, depended on racialized

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18 During the sixteenth century, Spanish conquistador Francisco Vasquez de Coronado searched for the mythical Seven Cities of Gold. His mission ended in failure, but along the way, he conquered many Southwest territories (the modern-day states of Texas, Kansas, New Mexico, and Arizona).
low-wage and free labor. Historians such as D.A. Brading (1978), James Lockhart (1969), Eric Van Young (2017), and Silvio Zavala (1948) have separated the histories of these landed estates as distinct from one another, with different legal origins. Across their different formations, however, is the continuing iteration of colonial affect-culture. In this chapter, I will focus on how the colonial affect-culture of resignation is a persistent affective feature of the latifundia.

Racialized class and labor hierarchies structured every aspect of life for peons, from where they lived to who they could marry. Due to the persistence of this hierarchy system, Mexican peons felt resigned to their plight in life and accepted the embodiment of their racialized class position and their interminable debt—the pain they felt in their bodies from manual labor and the hunger in their bellies. Like European feudal societies, the New World latifundia, depended upon a classed servile labor force, but the Spanish American landed estates also functioned as a way to interpret and organize the economic and—more specifically—social conditions of the Americas. I mean, of course, that the various incarnations of the feudal latifundia helped the Spanish deal with, interpret, and control the indigenous population through a familiar social-economic structure that racialized class according to degrees of indigeneity. Or, as Agustín de Iturbide\(^\text{19}\) (1898) put it, hacienda social rules provided the “nearest approach to a solution of the labor question that our times afford, whilst by them the racial question is eliminated from the problems of life” (426).

The Spanish colonial caste system organized labor on these landed estates according to race (the complex formulas used to describe degrees of indigenous or African blood), simultaneously assigning hierarchical values (and class status) along these racial lines. Furthermore, the Catholic Church’s support of local colonial governments secured them landed

\(^{19}\) General Agustin de Iturbide fought for Mexican independence and, once independence was secured, was named President of the Regency in 1821. From 1822 to 1823, he served as Constitutional Emperor of Mexico.
estates (in exchange for religious “sacraments and salvation”); this “concentration of land in the hands of the clergy reflected an institutional system promoting the alienation of land of the (indigenous) rural population toward private persons or institutes” (Frankema 422). The result of the Church’s intimate role in the colonization of Mexico was a religious element of resignation that helped sculpt Mexico’s colonial affect-culture. Mexico’s colonial affect-culture persuaded all laboring members of society to consent to racialized hierarchies through the catechism of resignation taught to indigenous laborers who worked these lands. Through free and low-wage labor, the divine and the economic combined in Spanish America to racialize the labor force and society as a whole and an affect-culture of resignation was the glue that bound them.

This promotion of resignation was accompanied by more explicitly repressive mechanisms, of course. Specifically speaking of Latin American haciendas, Barry J. Lyons (2006) explains that haciendas “could not pay sufficient wages to attract and retain laborers” due to “limited capital and markets” (12). As a result, they resorted to several “binding mechanisms” that would ensure a steady labor force; including: “monopolizing landownership to deprive peasants of alternatives, granting laborers access to land and other resources they could use to subsist on, indebting them, developing relationships of mutual service, and reinforcing these bonds to coercion” (12). The patriarchal structure of haciendas and other landed estates also cast the landowner as a father figure and his workers as both economically- and psychologically-dependent “children” (12). Debt peonage, then, became not only a colonial reality for Mexico’s colonized (and racialized) rural population, but also a literary trope that internalized a repressive dependency in the form of a colonial affect-culture of resignation. Debt peonage, as well as landed estate settings and the colonial affect-culture they convey, appear in a range of Mexican and Mexican American literary texts and films, including: Mariano Azuela’s *Mala Yerba* (1909),
Fabiola Cabeza de Vaca’s *We Fed Them Cactus* (1940s), Rafael Delgado’s *Angelina* (1894), Laura Esquivel’s *Como agua para chocolate* (*Like Water for Chocolate*, 1989), Jovita González and Eve Raliegh’s *Caballero: A Historical Novel* (1930s), María Amparo Ruiz de Burton’s *The Squatter and the Don* (1885), Juan Rulfo’s *Pedro Páramo* (1955), Luis Urrea’s *The Hummingbird’s Daughter* (2006), and Venegas’ *Don Chipote*.20 So prevalent was this oppressive hacienda culture, that rising insurgency against it became a leading reason behind the Mexican Revolution and its demand for land redistribution and agrarian reform. Azuela’s canonical Mexican Revolutionary novel, *Los de abajo* (*The Underdogs*, 1915), for example, invokes the culture of debt peonage that keeps lower class Mexicans subordinated as the reason for the Revolution, and in his telling line “[those who] don’t even know they are miserable”: “La revolución beneficia al pobre, al ignorante, al que toda su vida ha sido esclavo, a los infelices que ni siquiera saben que si lo son es porque el rico convierte en oro las lágrimas, el sudor y la sangre de los pobres” (27).21 For Mexican American writers, the hacienda also functions as a site of memory that, as Vincent Pérez (2006) notes, “identifies a shared agrarian sociohistorical experience since the Spanish colonial era that simultaneously reveals ruptures, displacements, discontinuities, contradictions, and silences within Mexican American cultural memory” (7).

*Don Chipote*, written in the United States by a Mexican immigrant, highlights the change from nineteenth century modes of subsistence farming to belated Mexican twentieth century industrialization. Although the Mexican War of Independence (1810-1821) had supposedly cast off all vestige of Spanish colonial rule, colonial institutions such as landed estates continued well

20 For more on the hacienda as a cultural symbol and “site of social rememberance,” see Vincent Pérez, *Remembering the Hacienda: History and Memory in the Mexican American Southwest*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2006.
21 Translation by Gustavo Pellón: “The revolution is for the benefit of the poor, the ignorant, those who have been slaves all their lives, the miserable ones who don’t even know that they are miserable because the rich turn the tears, sweat, and blood of the poor into gold” (15). See Mariano Azuela, *The Underdogs*. Trans. Gustavo Pellón. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2006.
into the turn of the twentieth century. During the celebrated “peace, order, and progress” of President Porfirio Díaz’s authoritarian rule (also known as “the Porfiriato,” 1884-1911), Mexico’s population was still 70 percent rural. And while only fifty-seven hundred haciendas existed in Mexico in 1876, by 1910 there were over eight thousand (Krauze 219). Haciendas experienced a downturn in profits as markets suffered during the mid-nineteenth century, but they quickly revived during the Porfiriato as landowners began to adapt to the capitalist markets. The depiction of agrarian labor and the poverty of laborers, however, continued to stress the colonial affect-culture of resignation to a racialized labor force and Mexican society, while also reproducing a peon class. Venegas’ novel ends and begins with references to nineteenth-century peon labor. Don Chipote plows the fields with a yoke and ox—fields that never yield enough to feed his “numerosa prole” only to go home to his “choza” and eat a dissatisfactory dinner of “un charco de agua con tres frijolitos, un molcajete de chile, un jarro de atole y gordas” (12). After returning to Mexico from the United States, Don Chipote doesn’t find himself in any better financial circumstances and must ask for aid from his old patrón, who generously provides him with “unas parcelas para sembrarlas a medias y que le comprara uno de los burros para ayudar a los gastos mientras venía la cosecha” (158). Of course, if we remember the less-than-desirable harvest described at the beginning of the novel, we may deduce that Don Chipote will not be so quick to pay back the loan.

The colonial affect-culture of resignation internalized by Mexican immigrants such as Don Chipote is precisely what American agribusiness and railroad companies capitalize on

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23 “numerous progeny” (21)
24 “shanty” (21)
25 “a puddle with three beans, a mortar of chili sauce, and jug of atole, and some tortillas” (22).
26 “a few parcels to plant in halves, and he [Don Chipote] was also able to sell the patrón one of his donkeys for cash expenses until the harvest came in” (159).
during the 1920s. The Mexican nationals, most often from rural, agrarian backgrounds, are in essence, the perfect laborers since they maintained certain agrarian or menial labor skills, away from which American citizens had “evolved,” as American congressmen and business owners argued. Belated nineteenth century forms of hacienda labor, then, are turned into twentieth century agribusiness. The hacienda ethos that organized a racialized labor force in Mexico dovetails with the American jeremiad in its advocacy to leave behind a failed state in hopes of a better future. Mexican immigrants such as Don Chipote soon discover, however, that American business interests will read their resignation as docility. In doing so, American capital codes the affect of resignation (or its misinterpretation as docility) as valuable, because resignation/docility implies that a disposable work force can become super-adequate, that it can become more than it is in terms of producing surplus labor. The Mexican immigrant laborers are therefore defined as labor-power that can produce more value added or profit, rather than subjects. As a result, as we shall see, the Mexican immigrant’s body is devalued and read as a disposable work force. The embodied stigma (and the humiliation inherent in it) is that it legitimizes a separate, lower (racialized) wage for the Mexican laborers.

THE COLONIALITY OF LABOR, AFFECTIVE VALUE, AND 1920S IMMIGRANT LITERATURE

Capitalism, as a system, requires a stratification of laboring bodies that draws upon the “coloniality of labor.” Much like historical colonialism, labor in this capitalist structure is subject to the hegemonic domination and exploitation of subaltern subjects, or laboring bodies. For Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2010), it is precisely this coloniality of labor which produces the social context that codifies value, or, in the context of immigrant labor, a devaluation of manual labor. While Gutiérrez Rodríguez limits her concept of the coloniality of labor to migrant domestic labor in Europe, I use her theorization of affect and labor to suggest how to think about
the affective dimension of immigrant labor in the United States, especially with regard to migration policies and how they reproduce the colonial schema within the nation-state’s geographical space. Although modern American immigration policies do in fact replicate colonial hierarchies (as I shall discuss later on), I argue that the ideology of exceptionalism fueled the American jeremiad within certain racially-inflected class structures. The Mexican immigrant, the narrator of *Don Chipote* tells us, is relegated to the bottom of the American racialized class hierarchy:

> Estos tipos, al igual que todos los mexicanos que vienen en busca de trabajo, han recibido de los mayordomos in finidad de vejaciones y han servido de esclavos a los negros que, por tener contentas a las compañías ferrocarrileras, para sostener su hueso los han de trabajar como si fueran bestias o peor. (43)

The American “city on a hill” actually functions as a hegemonic center that assigns immigrant bodies to the status of colonial subjects (or even beasts of burden) and relegates them to less desirable jobs (such as Don Chipote’s manual labor for the railroad company). By creating a hierarchy of labor, this hegemony produces the “modern expression of the coloniality of labor” (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 39). This racialized class hierarchy, in turn, is necessary for American modernity since, in order for white middle class Americans to achieve social mobility, an immigrant working class must step in to occupy the lower rungs of the ladder—and this is precisely the argument made in Congressional hearings on immigration, which I will discuss in the next section. Ideologies of race difference help legitimate this arrangement. If the jeremiad is about middling, or the middle class, as Bercovitch suggests, then the working-class immigrant

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27 “These people, like all Mexicans who live in search of work, have received infinite humiliations at the hands of foremen and have even served as slaves to blacks, who, in order to keep the railroad companies happy and to maintain their employment, make our compatriots work like animals or worse” (51).
doesn't really fit into the equation, especially if that middle class is dependent upon the colonial power hierarchies of capitalism (that require immigrants to do the work).

In *Don Chipote*, America is portrayed as corrupt, racist, and anti-immigrant. Within the constructs of capitalism, the immigrant’s body is necessarily reduced to its labor-power. These immigrants are treated as little more than animals, as demonstrated in the narration of Don Chipote’s work on the railroad: “…se había decidido a mandar a los que tuvieran en la jaula debido a que en las secciones los mayordomos estaban escasos de camellos y necesitaban quien ‘trampara las tallas’” (48). Modernity reduces the immigrant to only the work they are able to produce, effectively removing their humanity, or as Walter Mignolo (2013) states: “hidden behind the rhetoric of modernity, human lives become expendable to the benefit of increasing wealth and such expendability was justified by the naturalization of the racial ranking of human beings” (41). Capitalism, as a system, requires a stratification of laboring bodies that draws upon Aníbal Quijano’s (2000) “coloniality of labor.” Much like historical colonialism, labor in this capitalist structure comes to bear value through the hegemonic domination and exploitation of racialized laboring bodies. In *Don Chipote*, these laboring bodies are the Mexican immigrant laborers. Don Chipote and the other Mexican immigrant laborers become defined by their labor-power; in other words, they are defined specifically by what they contribute to the production of capital. Capitalism creates a representational system that only acknowledges Don Chipote’s value with regard to how much value (exchange-value) he can produce.

Colonial affect-culture is the social and affective dimension that produces the social context that codifies value and in doing so, devalues certain types of labor that are associated with racialized bodies. Such labor is that which is reserved for a racialized working class. It is

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28 “The contractors had decided to send those they still had in ‘the cage’ to the sections where the foremen were short on beasts of burden to hammer down the railroad ties” (55).
the hard labor that most people prefer not to do (i.e. agricultural labor, railroad labor, and even domestic labor). In order to articulate how affects create a modern colonial subject, I rely on Gutiérrez Rodríguez’s (2010) theorization of affect and domestic labor in Migration, Domestic Work and Affect. Gutiérrez Rodríguez reads Quijano’s (2000) “coloniality of labor” through Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s (1985) “Scattered Speculations on the Question of Value” in order to trace the ways in which what Spivak calls “textuality” assigns value to affective domestic labor. Spivak’s textuality, or textualization of value, is resonant of post-structuralist approaches to culture, but her ultimate goal in textualizing value is to emphasize capital’s cultural dimension and to argue that economic and cultural values are analogous to each other. Capital, therefore, creates a representational system that only acknowledges the value of the subject with regard to how much value (exchange-value) they can produce. This representational quality of value (what Karl Marx calls the “social hieroglyph”) is the textuality Spivak attributes to value; and it is the textualization or codification process that produces affective value. Gutiérrez Rodríguez argues that capitalism’s extraction of surplus-labor is not merely based on the “exploitation of physical labor” but on “its societal, relational character expressed in affect” (140). In other words, value is culturally predicated, it is codified through culture and this culture is contextualized through a geopolitical history that asserts specific colonial schemas on its work force.

Like Gutiérrez Rodríguez, I suggest that it is important to consider the materiality of affect and its role in value accumulation, since it is tied to the body, both mentally and physically. Don Chipote’s very name implies the materiality of labor and humiliation. The word

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29 “Scattered Speculations on the Question of Value” explores the question of value as “determined by a ‘materialist’ subject-predication such as Marx’s,” (Spivak 73) paying close attention to the relationship between labor-power (as defined through subject predication) and value.

“chipote” comes from the Nahuatl word “xixipochtlic;” it refers to a bump on the head, a swollen lump, a bruise. Throughout the novel he is forced to experience the physicality of racialized labor. He is clubbed and beaten by a police officer, forced to take a delousing bath, carries heavy building materials, pushes heavy carts, and swings heavy pick axes. And on both sides of the border, he is described as always feeling hungry and tired. Once in the US, his body bears the “bruising” of railroad labor, and this, in turn, produces an affective response from his fellow *tranque* workers. After receiving a letter from his wife, Doña Chipota (who is back in Mexico with the children), Don Chipote spends a restless evening worrying about his family, specifically his wife’s fidelity. Exhausted from a night of tossing and turning, Don Chipote has a work-related accident: “levantó el pico sobre su cabeza lo más alto que pudo y lo dejó caer sobre la talla con tan mala puntería, que, en vez de darle a ésta se encajó el pico en un pie” (78).  

Immediately after noticing his bleeding foot, the workers all rush to help: “Tanto el mayordomo como los demás compañeros, en cuanto se dieron cuenta de lo que había pasado, se rodearon de don Chipote, tratando de hacer algo por él” (78). Affect is physically inscribed on the body of laborers, such as Don Chipote, through “the bodily expression of scars, wounds and sensations born from this experience” (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 38). Not all of these wounds and sensations are as dramatic or obvious as a pick-ax wound; however, they still impact the body in some physical manner, be it wounds, scars, muscle aches, coarse hands, or even feelings that arise from the labor and the circumstances of the labor. Affect is transferred as energy between bodies, between bodies and objects, and between bodies and spaces.

Not only does affect materialize through the physical labor itself, but it is also imprinted on the body as information. Jasbir Puar (2007) describes this “body information” as the data

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31 “He raised the pick-ax over his head as high as he could, and he struck at the rail with such bad aim, that, instead of hitting the beam, the pick-ax buried itself into his foot” (85).
32 “the foreman and all of the other workers gathered around Don Chipote, trying to do something for him” (85).
ascribed to a physical body through “visual and affective qualities (as they are acquired historically and discursively)” as well as through “information and statistics” (175). Puár’s “body information” concept is particularly important for Gutiérrez Rodríguez’s coloniality of labor argument, as it deals with the biopolitics behind the racism and discrimination encountered by migrant domestic laborers, especially in regard to undocumented workers. Such biopolitics, reflected in the media and immigration policies, as Gutiérrez Rodríguez points out, affectively charge the immigrant/migrant laborer’s body and mark it as Other: “The imagery produced by the media and political debates codify refugees as ‘invaders,’ producing the ‘migrant body’ as ‘body information,’ a body created through the affective circulation of media images, policy inscriptions and political discourses” (38). Within the geographic space, then, immigration policies reproduce the colonial schema. The US nation-state acts as a hegemonic center that assigns immigrant bodies to the status of colonial subjects and relegates them to less desirable jobs, such as agricultural and railroad work. By creating a hierarchy of labor, this hegemony produces the “modern expression of the coloniality of labor” (39).

Affects create a modern colonial subject (and a coloniality of labor) precisely because they emerge from a historical and geopolitical context, that is, colonialism. Immigration restructures the geographic exteriority of the colonial system, positioning the “Other” within the borders of the US territory (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 39). Affects emerge from the collision between these once-external bodies (immigrant laborers) and the US space. These affects, then, have a direct connection to the material world; Gutiérrez Rodríguez writes:

…affects are not free-floating energies. They emerge in a space delimited by a concrete historical and geopolitical context, structured by inequalities. Our affects act and react in this context, bearing traces of the materiality that they transcend through their energy, but
in which they remain embedded through their context of emergence. The expression and transmission of affects, thus, occur in a space marked by historically produced, socially configured and culturally located power relations. (132)

Affects are more than sensations; they are also a cultural context and operate within a “matrix of social inequalities” (130) that creates hierarchies according to race, ethnicity, national origin, and gender; and these hierarchies are forged by a history of colonialism (i.e. these “historically produced, socially configured and culturally located power relations”). Colonial affect-culture becomes internalized to create the coloniality of labor. As a result, laboring spaces (fields, train tracks, and domestic spaces) are also imbibed with these affects and power relations. They become physical spaces where the pre-modern and the post-modern exist at the same time. The fields and tracks become for the Mexican immigrant laborer colonized spaces, and encounters between bodies (employee-employer), bodies and objects, and bodies and spaces “bear traces of transculturalization, where two worlds meet that are geopolitically, economically, and culturally separate. Thus, relations of economic dependency and labor exploitation circumscribe this encounter” (146). Capitalism requires this “economic dependency and labor exploitation” that re-establishes the power structures of coloniality.

Perhaps because of the depth of this exploitation, Venegas inserts himself into the narrative of Don Chipote to emphasize the reality of the conditions that immigrants experienced in these “colonized spaces.” In an attempt to affectively relate to the readers of his novel, he writes: “El que esto escribe que, en época no muy lejana, al igual que la mayoría de los que vienen de México, tuvo que meterle al famoso tranque, se dio cuenta exacta de los abusos que
los mayordomos cometen con los trabajadores” (64). In one instance, he writes, he and two other Mexican laborers were asked to replace a rail direction switch in a short amount of time; when they cannot complete the task in time, the foreman proceeds to demean the Mexican laborers:

Los que con ocen este trabajo saben perfectamente que en media hora es imposible hacerlo…el mayordomo nos empezó a regañar de una manera tan soez que, no pudiendo soportar más sus insultos le contesté, me dio un golpe que contesté con otro, y ¡a volar!...Casos por el estilo pasan a diario en las secciones y no son pocos los mayordomos que hasta han matado a mexicanos, quedando tales crímenes sin castigo…(64)

Like Don Chipote, even the author suffers bumps and bruises, especially when he tries to push back against the impossible expectations and inhumane treatment in “colonized spaces.” Unfortunately, the prevalence of such treatment made it part of the sad quotidian reality for Mexican laborers and as a result, they resigned themselves to it being a part of their daily lives. Venegas reveals this colonial affect-culture of resignation as he writes: “Estas consideraciones para los pobres que trabajan en campos y secciones, son cosas que por muy comunes no hay quien las tome en cuenta” (63). The work space here is located in the United States, however, as a colonized space with unequal power relations between employer and laborer, it is devoid of the ethics and justice associated with US freedom. Expected to produce super-adequate labor-

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33 “The author of this novel, not too long ago, had to join up with the infamous tranque, like the majority of those who come from Mexico, and he took perfect account of the abuses which foremen commit against the workers” (70).
34 “Those familiar with this kind of work know perfectly well that this is impossible to do in half an hour…. the foreman began to yell at us in a manner so vile that, unable to take any more of his insults, I talked back to him. He socked me. And I returned his lick. I got canned…. Incidents like these happen daily on the tranque, and not few are the foremen who have gone as far as killing Mexicans, such crimes going unpunished....” (70-1)
35 “This kind of treatment for the poor guys who work in the camps and in the railroad sections is so common that one doesn’t even take notice” (70).
power, the Mexican immigrant, Venegas suggests, has no recourse to ask for more humane working conditions. He must resign himself to being bruised over and over again.

Value is the central question for analyzing labor and the coloniality of labor. The force that dictates the value of commodities is both economically and culturally produced (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 89). Marx (1876) calls value a “social hieroglyph;” he writes:

Whenever, by an exchange, we equate as values our different products, by that very act, we also equate, as human labour, the different kinds of labour expended upon them. We are not aware of this, nevertheless we do it. Value, therefore, does not stalk about with a label describing what it is. It is value, rather, that converts every product into a social hieroglyphic…to stamp an object of utility as a value, is just as much a social product as language. (322)

The cultural codification of value determines what is considered unskilled labor. It is nothing more than an ideological construction that functions within a specific cultural matrix. It is infused with (colonial) geopolitical histories that devalue hard labor by assigning certain predications of certain subjects. The legacy of colonialism still operates as the post-modern reproduces the pre-modern; Spivak writes:

[the] primitive notion of money must work complicitously with the contemporary sublation of money where it seems to question the “materialist” predication of the subject; that the post-modern, in spite of all the cant of modernization, reproduces the “pre-modern” on another scene. (86)

The premodern colonial schema is reproduced within capitalism in the hierarchal structuring of power, as Spivak puts it, “on another scene;” as Mexicans cross into the United States and into a new phase of capitalism which is played out in the arena of the production of new subjects. Such
power organizes twentieth century labor policies and markets through racialized and gendered subjectivities. These organizing powers include immigration legislation and quota restrictions, as we shall see later on in this chapter.

**The Puritan Jeremiad and American Exclusivity**

Literary critics have undervalued the coloniality and racialization of class embedded in *The Great Gatsby*, thereby also overlooking the role of what I call the colonial affect-culture of resignation. The characters who embody economic and social success of the American Dream do not present us with the image of laboring bodies. The more obvious laboring bodies are most maligned and marginalized. For example, George B. Wilson (the mechanic whose wife, Myrtle, has an affair with Tom Buchanan), lives and works “halfway between West Egg and New York,” in a dim, polluted “valley of ashes” (Fitzgerald 16). *The Great Gatsby*, told from the point of view of the Yale graduate and bond salesman, Nick Carraway, narrates the societal rise and unfortunate demise of the young, “new money” Jay Gatsby. Night after night, the handsome Gatsby throws extravagant parties in hopes of calling the attention of his long-time love, the (married) socialite, Daisy Buchanan. In time, the two rekindle their romance. Angered by his wife’s infidelity (despite his own affair), Tom Buchanan ultimately confronts Gatsby. But rather than attack Gatsby for the adulterous tryst, Tom attempts to humiliate him by revealing him to be a fraud—a lower class man who managed to earn his money through illegal activity such as bootlegging alcohol and his involvement in Jewish organized crime. The racialized (upper) class allegiance Daisy has to Tom, he implies, supersedes any bond of love between Daisy and Gatsby.
At the end of *The Great Gatsby*, as the narrator, Nick Carraway, reflects on Gatsby’s life and on the landscape of West Egg, which recalls the colonial history embedded in the American landscape itself. Staring at Gatsby’s empty house, he thinks to himself:

…I became aware of the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailors’ eyes—a fresh, green breast of the new world. Its vanished trees, the trees that had made way for Gatsby’s house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams; for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder. (Fitzgerald 115)

Nick’s configuration positions America as the physical site of the location of dreams. While the Dutch were not Puritans, what this description does is fold coloniality and colonists’ dreams into the American narrative through the physicality of the landscape. America’s colonial legacy, or perhaps more specifically, the narrative of this land being the site where dreams would be fulfilled, haunts the very landscape itself. Yet, there is a negative connotation to the formulation of these American dreams, as Nick notes that the trees “had once *pandered* in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams” [my italics]. Somehow the (American) dream, therefore, is not pure, but rather, the word “pander” implies a corruption intrinsic to the underlying colonial legacies that structure these dreams. I suggest that *Gatsby* (read alongside *Don Chipote*) both acknowledges the colonial legacy that structures the American jeremiad and the American Dream narrative as inherently corrupt, because it panders to dreams of social and economic success for all dreamers, yet also hides the less-than egalitarian reality of persistent colonial hierarchies.
Sacvan Bercovitch’s *The American Jeremiad* (1978) stands as the landmark study on the influence of the Puritan jeremiad, or political sermon, on the formation of US literary and cultural traditions. These traditions include a longstanding literary canon (spanning from early American literature to contemporary literature) and foundational political documents that have structured American politics and culture since the sixteenth century. The Puritan jeremiad, Bercovitch asserts, originated in the Protestant political sermon, which conveyed a church-state in which “theology was wedded to politics and politics to the progress of the kingdom of God” (xliv). Unlike the European jeremiads, the American Puritan jeremiads emphasized a “peculiar” mission or, as Samuel Danford called it in his 1670 election-day sermon, an “errand into the wilderness,”36 to be carried out by the chosen people—people chosen not just for heaven, but as “instruments of a sacred historical design” (8). The end goal of such a historical design, or errand, was to guide the people to the American city of God (9). Although Bercovitch does not describe it as such, the Puritan errand into the wild was tinged with a settler-colonialist understanding of the New World, which portrayed native America as a godless wilderness. This understanding of native America as wild suggests that the Puritan errand was seen as civilizing religious progress, or as Bercovitch writes, “the church's gradual conquest of Satan's wilderness world for Christ” (12).

Although America, as a mission/errand, was originally defined in terms of Calvinist virtues, capital ultimately penetrated the Puritan tradition and expanded its mission to an ideology of American exceptionalism. Puritan rhetoric emphasized the need for fellowship, individualism, self-reliance, and hard work as outward signs of godly dedication. In doing so,

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they “merged the economic venture within a larger spiritual narrative” (Bercovitch xiii).

Bercovitch attributes the rise of American middle-class culture to the Puritans’ abandonment of feudal England and their creation of a new type of socioeconomic community, one he describes as:

a commercially oriented economy buttressed by the decline of European feudalism, unhampered by lingering traditions of aristocracy and crown, and sustained by the prospect (if not always the fact) of personal advancement—a relatively homogeneous society whose enterprise was consecrated, according to its civic and clerical leadership, by a divine plan of progress. (20)

Yet, this “divine plan of progress” that opened up “political, educational, and commercial opportunities to a relatively broad spectrum of the population” (19) was not without its limitations. Despite the developing mythos of the self-made man in New England, the Puritan rhetoric still relied on exclusion—the idea of America as the chosen site of a New Jerusalem accessible only by God’s chosen people. As the jeremiad gave rise to a new American political culture, this caveat persisted through the American Revolution (1765-1783) and the distinctly American discourses surrounding it.

The American Revolution extended the jeremiad to political liberty and forever tied it to American cultural identity, which can be seen in foundational US documents, such as the Declaration of Independence (1776), The Federalist Papers (1778-88), Thomas Paine’s Common Sense (1775-1776), and even Benjamin Franklin’s Autobiography (1791). Paine’s arguments in Common Sense, for instance, rely on the mythos of America as inherently exceptional. He states that America’s independence is imperative since the world will look to America as an example of liberty and that America will inevitably become independent anyway.
American Revolutionary discourse, including most famously, the *Declaration of Independence*, embraced enlightenment thinking espoused by philosophers such as John Locke. Locke’s “Essay Concerning Human Understanding” (1690) suggested that people were born with certain rights, such as the right to “life, liberty, and property,” which Thomas Jefferson famously adapted as “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” in the *Declaration*. This coalescence of the Puritan jeremiad and Lockean universalism, Bercovitch notes, allowed the founding fathers to exclude anything they believed “hindered the progress of the republic” including certain people (153-4). Moreover, the American citizen was signaled as an exceptional person chosen to fulfill a specific errand, which was, in turn, limited to:

a “peculiar” nation. Thus (in the notorious paradox of the Declaration of Independence) he [the “American”] could denounce servitude, oppression, and inadequate representation while concerning himself least (if at all) with the most enslaved, oppressed and inadequately represented groups in the land. Those groups were part of “the people,” perhaps, but not the chosen people; part of America, but not the America of the Revolution. Through the ritual of the jeremiad, the leading patriots recast the Declaration to read “all propertied Anglo-Saxon Protestant males” are created equal. (153-4)

Thus, the black slave, the Native American, and the undesirable immigrant were not meant to form part of the American “city upon the hill.” It is perhaps for this reason that the contemporary imagining of the American Dream includes not only a house, a hetero-nuclear family and a white-collar job, but also a white picket fence— a barrier meant to delineate property and signify a tangible border that separates us and what is rightfully ours from an outside other.

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37 This imagery of the American Dream was popularized in visual culture, such as Norman Rockwell paintings and television sitcoms like *Leave it to Beaver.*
The American Revolution (1775-1783) cemented the secularization of the Puritan jeremiad and its virtues into political and economic ideals. Moreover, the rise of modernity in the New World relocated the Puritan jeremiad’s “city upon a hill” within the parameters of modernity—defined by structures of capitalism, specifically industrialization and a hierarchy of laboring power. Modernity allowed for a class structuring that paralleled the colonial stratification of labor. That is, it created a coloniality of labor that followed the same social organization, division, and cultural valuation of labor during the colonial period. Just as colonial affect-culture justifies such laboring divisions based on feelings of superiority/inferiority and hatred/shame it continued to codify the way in which labor and society were hierarchically organized. In turn, this modern-colonial social organization also reflected an interpretation of class along racial/ethnic lines. I argue that Puritan jeremiad rhetoric played an important role in the structuring of colonial affect-culture in the United States. Long after the American Revolution, the Puritan jeremiad continued to function as a colonial apparatus that excluded racialized Others (non-white, non-Protestant) as unworthy of accessing godly success in America and simultaneously, through religion, encouraged a negative affective response to this racialized Other. This racialized Other was expected to resign themselves to this racialized colonial hierarchy.

Indeed, the Puritan jeremiad has had such an impact on American literature and culture that its influence is present even in the writings of immigrants that are often excluded by its rhetoric. José F. Aranda’s *When We Arrive* (2003) articulates how the ethos of the early Puritan

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jeremiad influenced early Mexican American writers by framing “the rise of Chicano/a literature within a larger institutional history,” a history produced by a nativist exceptionalist paradigm that “conflates a Puritan myth of origins with a literary history in which American literature is heralded as the product and producer of social and political dissent” (xvii). Aranda draws on Camille Guerín-Gonzales’s *Mexican Workers and American Dreams* (1994) in order to argue that individuals—and communities—who do not personify the chosen image of the American Dream are at risk of being targeted for expulsion (Guerín-Gonzales 5; *When We Arrive* 125). Guerin-Gonzales states that while the American Dream symbolizes a certain idealized identity, it also allows individuals, such as Mexican and other immigrants, to interpret it in a way that made sense for them (Guerin-Gonzales 2) and “produce a counterdiscourse of alternative but parallel narratives of the American Dream. In the end, this process of contestation and interpretation led both Anglo farmer and Mexican worker to claim legitimacy for their differing interpretations” (*When We Arrive* 125). The American origin myth and its exceptionalist paradigm of American culture, therefore, constructed the Puritans as the “ideal and archetypal immigrant community of the nation” (123). In doing so, American cultural narratives identify certain immigrant groups as “potential citizens while others seemed to fail the litmus tests of appropriate racial, religious, and prior colonial identities and history” (123), thus encoding “resignation” into one’s place outside or marginal to hegemonic national identity.

Like Puritan jeremiad sermons that prophesized the end of the world as a consequence of failing to maintain the boundaries of the “city upon the hill,” *Gatsby* underscores the tension of the American jeremiad: that the exclusion necessarily inherent in the rhetoric of the American Dream clashes in stark contrast with the egalitarian image of America as the land of hope and opportunity. *Gatsby’s* Tom Buchanan (Daisy’s husband) is a wealthy, arrogant, and aggressive
former Yale football player, with eugenic political leanings. Early on in the novel, the character reveals his white supremacist preoccupations at the dinner table:

‘Civilisation’s going to pieces,’ broke out Tom violently. ‘I’ve gotten to be a terrible pessimist about things. Have you read *The Rise of the Coloured Empire* by this man Goddard? […].

‘Well, it’s a fine book, and everyone ought to read it. The idea is if we don’t look out the white race will be—will be utterly submerged…. It’s up to us, who are the dominant race, to watch out or these other races will have control of things.’ (Fitzgerald 10-11)

Tom preaches a type of jeremiad in and of itself, warning of the impending doom that will befall the chosen people (white upper-class Americans) if hierarchical (colonial) racialized class structures are allowed to completely break down. In doing so, he calls attention to American social anxieties of the 1920s in light of the country’s shifting demographics. His speech also reveals the racialized concepts of American exclusivity and civilization and echoes the KKK’s mission to protect the idealized white Christian civilization of the past.

Tom’s reference to “*The Rise of the Coloured Empire* by this man Goddard” conflates eugenicists Lothrop Stoddard and Henry Herbert Goddard and their works (both published in 1920): *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy* and *Human Efficiency and Levels of Intelligence*, respectively. Tom’s confusion only highlights the similarities between these studies of scientific racism, and points to the larger conversations about eugenics popular in American culture at the time. Stoddard’s study claims that the white race and colonialism will fall due to the rise in minority racial reproduction rates. Stoddard makes this assertion in light of World War I, as large numbers of white male soldiers perished in action, and waves of
immigrants entered America.\textsuperscript{39} Goddard, a clinical psychologist, was the man responsible for instituting intelligence testing at Ellis Island for immigrants.\textsuperscript{40} He worried that the “feeble-minded” masses would have a detrimental effect on the United States; and advocated for a restriction of civic participation based on intelligence. Other racist ideas circulating in the United States at the time were propagated by Madison Grant, author of \textit{The Passing of the Great Race} (1916), who wrote the introduction to Stoddard’s \textit{The Rising Tide} (1920), and supported the theory that immigrants would soon dominate the US—and the world—by “the mere force of breeding” (xxx). And despite the progressive hiring practices of the American business icon, Henry Ford,\textsuperscript{41} he published racist, anti-Semitic articles in the newspaper \textit{The Dearborn Independent}, later published in a four-volume book titled \textit{The International Jew, the World’s Foremost Problem} (1920-1922).\textsuperscript{42} Such paranoia about the urgency to maintain racial purity ultimately leads to the material expression of colonial affect-culture, through the humiliation of immigrants crossing over the border, subpar working conditions, and the creation of a separate wage for racialized laborers.

With eugenics swirling in the air in response to increasing numbers of immigrants arriving in the US, Tom’s outburst in \textit{Gatsby} allows us to center the conversation on exclusion in America and what it means to be American. For Tom and other eugenicists, America takes on the qualities of an exclusionary “city on the hill.” The “city on the hill” mythos is necessarily


\textsuperscript{41} Ford was known for hiring African Americans and women.

exclusionary, because to be one of the “chosen” implies exceptionalism defined against a larger population of the Other. Legislation and official Congressional debates influenced by these eugenic theories, as we will see in the following section, construct America, American citizenship, and American identity around notions of exclusion and of whiteness. Tom emphasizes the boundaries implicit in the city upon a hill rhetoric in his description of civilization as white. His outburst in the Plaza Hotel suite is a jeremiad warning of the dangers of miscegenation not just for racial purity, but also for racially-determined class hierarchies:

Enraged, Tom verbally attacks Gatsby, saying:

‘I suppose the latest thing is to sit back and let Mr Nobody from Nowhere make love to your wife. Well, if that’s the idea you can count me out… Nowadays people begin by sneering at family life and family institutions and next they’ll throw everything overboard and have intermarriage between black and white.’

Flushed with his impassioned gibberish, he saw himself standing alone on the last barrier of civilisation. (83)

Tom’s tirade in the Plaza Hotel recalls his earlier reference to The Rise of the Coloured Empire (or the combined eugenic writings of Stoddard, Goddard, and others like them) that warns of the dangers miscegenation presents to Anglo Saxons. “The impending marriage between Daisy and Gatsby,” writes Michael Pekarofski (2012), “…is only an issue [to Tom] because it would threaten the purity of a class-based and ethnicity-based hierarchy in which Daisy, Tom, and Nick represent the ruling elite” (67).

By specifically pointing out Gatsby’s dubious origins, Tom excludes him from the “American” chosen people allowed to live on the city on the hill, that is, Tom claims that Gatsby does not have a legitimate claim to the American Dream. Tom’s jeremiad foretells Gatsby’s
fall—it is because he is not one of the chosen people that he is unable to traverse rigid social boundaries. Despite his ability to obtain economic success (albeit through the black market), Gatsby is not able to garner the type of social acceptance he desires and he never achieves the American Dream. He is not accepted by Old Money socialites, as evidenced in Tom’s insistence that he is a “Nobody” and in Daisy’s ultimate rejection of him. Her rejection, of course, represents his inability to legitimately secure socioeconomic acceptance in America.

It is, of course, ironic to read Gatsby as both Jewish and ethnically marked as excluded from or not chosen for the city upon the hill because of biblical citations (such as the Book of Deuteronomy) of the Israelites being chosen to be in a covenant with God. Yet, the Puritan Jeremiad specifically repurposed the narrative of being chosen to fit their “peculiar” religious and socioeconomic mission in America. Further, as Michaels (1995) notes, Jews and Eastern Europeans were not considered “white” in the 1920s; instead they were collectively defined as “Asiatics” or “Mediterraneans” (25). Though intermarriage between Jews and “white” people was “not taboo for the lower and working classes” (Pekarofski 67), it did present a class problem—or perhaps more specifically, a racialized class problem, as Tom’s outburst emphasizes.

Jay Gatsby is marked in the novel not only as New Money, but also as possibly the son of poor Jewish immigrants. Nick reveals his change in name from James Gatz to Jay Gatsby (Fitzgerald 62), and although Gatz sounds German in origin, the novel’s play on the phonemes [g] and [k] as in “gonnection” for “connection” and “Oggsford” for “Oxford,” makes the leap from “Gatz” to the more Jewish-sounding surname “Katz” (Pekarofski 59; Bourgeois and
Michael Pekarofski (2012) suggests that Gatsby’s father, Henry C. Gatz, is probably also passing and most likely reluctant to reveal a (Jewish) past that “might ultimately cast a shadow upon Gatsby’s legacy, a legacy Gatz seems highly eager to preserve” (68). Indeed, “the Anglicizing (or ‘Americanizing’) of ethnically or religiously identifiable names, either to simplify them or deliberately to mask their origins, was certainly not an uncommon practice for immigrants and subsequent generations, especially in a climate of intense anti-immigrant sentiment” (59). Nick reveals Gatsby to be the son of “shiftless and unsuccessful farm people” from the Upper Midwest (Fitzgerald 63)—descriptions that don’t easily align with well-known Jewish communities. Yet, when his father arrives in West Egg, he tells Nick that if Gatsby had lived, he would have “been a great man. A man like James J. Hill. He’d of [sic] helped build up the country” (107). James A. Hill, a railroad tycoon, is best known for founding the Great Northern Railway Company, but,

...he was also instrumental in co-founding a Jewish farm settlement on railway land located in the vicinity of Milaca, Minnesota, in 1891. Working together with banker and philanthropist Jacob H. Schiff, who represented the Baron de Hirsch Fund, Hill built homes for approximately fifty Jewish families who were to take up farming as means of achieving social assimilation and securing economic stability. (Pekarofski 58)

Although Hill and Schiff’s project lasted less than a decade, there were many other similar projects to establish Jewish farming communities across the United States, especially in the Dakotas and throughout the Midwest (Pekarofski 58; Rikoon 106).

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43 Pekarofski notes: “The term voice here refers to the vibration of the larynx when producing phonemes. All that distinguishes these two basic units of sound is this vibration. All other movements of the tongue, throat, and teeth are exactly the same” (69, note 5).
44 Gatsby was born in North Dakota (62) and, at the time of his death, his father lives in Minnesota (106).
Gatsby’s connection to Jewish organized crime (and Meyer Wolfsheim in particular) not only marks him in Tom’s eyes as racially/ethnically Other, but also highlights the way the black market of the 1920s offered economic mobility to immigrants. The first connection between Gatsby and Wolfsheim is established when Nick joins Gatsby for lunch in a “Forty-second Street cellar.” Upon meeting Wolfsheim, Nick notices all his defects and describes him in stereotypical pejorative terms, as “A small, flat-nosed Jew raised his large head and regarded me with two fine growths of hair which luxuriated in either nostril. After a moment I discovered his tiny eyes in the half-darkness” (Fitzgerald 44-45). Local gossip in *Gatsby* tie the titular character to the legendary “underground pipeline to Canada” (62), a secret physical or metaphorical conduit or network with the purpose of importing illegal alcohol across the Canadian border. And in the Plaza Hotel, Tom claims that he discovered that “He [Gatsby] and Wolfsheim bought up a lot of side-street drugstores here and in Chicago and sold grain alcohol over the counter” (85).

Prohibition generated a demand for alcohol, which in turn spurred a new underground market for its illegal production and trafficking. Not only did bootlegging become “a means of survival” for immigrants in the United States, but it also became “an instantaneous pathway to economic prosperity” (Pekarofski 54). The large majority of these bootleggers were, according to Mark H. Haller (1985), poor non-white immigrant groups, such as Polish, Irish, Italian, and Jewish, with approximately half of the bootleggers being Jews of Eastern European origin (9; Pekarofski 54). Gatsby’s connection to Wolfsheim, especially as a third father figure (after his own father and Dan Cody), then, further marks him as a corrupt gangster that could threaten the idealized image of America.

Prohibition politics themselves, or rather, the politics that ultimately led to the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment in 1919, were actually tied to anti-immigrant sentiment of the
time. The revitalized KKK, with a new eye toward anti-Jewish and anti-Catholic agenda, began to define itself in narrower Christian terms that defined Americanism through more and more exclusions (Pekarofski 53). The KKK fueled a political nativism that would celebrate temperance and legislate in favor of Prohibition. With the mass influx of racialized immigrants, nativists “wanted nothing less than to remake the nation in their own image, purging the land of alien and hostile influences” while simultaneously exalting the image of a “sober republic” (Lender and Martin 93). This exclusive “sober republic” is another iteration of the “city on the hill” that delineated inclusiveness according to race. As mentioned above, however, Prohibition had an effect opposite to that envisioned by antiliquor nativists. Rather than exclude immigrants from an imagined American identity (and the American Dream narrative itself), the emergence of the alcohol black market actually provided these immigrants with access to economic success and class ascension. The conversations following such changes in American society would refocus official attention to re-defining American citizenship and actively creating legislation that would attempt to limit access to the American Dream itself.

US IMMIGRATION POLICY

The harsh reality of trying to achieve the American Dream for Mexican immigrants begins with a physical and psychic bruising in the form of humiliation, as Venegas reveals in his novel, Don Chipote. Humiliation functions as the flip-side of resignation. Rather than a simple acceptance of fate, humiliation is the embodiment of colonial devaluation. Like resignation, this affect involves oppression and submission and is the result of a gross, often public, show of colonial hierarchical power (the ability to subvert someone to your will, at your desire). It is connected to resignation in its relation to humility, the humble resignation to your lack of
importance (or lower status on a colonial hierarchy). As Don Chipote first crosses in the United States, he is subjected to special disinfection and delousing showers:

…[el soldado] lo condujo por el mismo procedimiento al baño que ex profeso ha puesto el gobierno americano para los mexicanos que deseen pasar a su territorio.

Don Chipote no entendió por qué lo trataban así…. se encontró en el cuarto donde otros paisanos se quitaban la ropa para entrar al otro lado…mientras todos se reían de su candidez, uno le dijo que era necesario que lo bañaran y desinfectaran su ropa para poder pasar al otro lado (26). 46

Venegas’ burlesque style is parodic and comedic, but his target readership of working-class immigrants would understand that the real-life indignities suffered by Mexican immigrants really were over the top. Kanellos (2000) notes that, originally published in the Spanish-language daily newspaper El heraldo in Los Angeles, CA, Venegas directed this novel at a bracero (Mexican laborer) readership, “even if some of the readers were in reality listeners—listening to their literate companions, who would read aloud to the other braceros after a long day’s work” (1-2). Don Chipote takes the bathing requirement in stride, yet in reality these disinfections were quite horrendous, dangerous, and thinly veiled in racist discourse of Mexican immigrants as “dirty.”

El Paso Mayor, Thomas “Tom” Calloway Lea, Jr. sent multiple letters and telegrams to Washington officials, petitioning for a full quarantine to protect against the “hundreds of dirty lousey [sic] destitute Mexicans arriving in El Paso daily” to protect against typhoid fever (Lea). Washington did not grant Mayor Lea’s request; however, they did grant an alternative request by

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46 “…the officer…directed him to the shower room in order to comply with the procedure that the American government had created expressly for all Mexicans crossing into their land. Don Chipote could not understand why they treated him that way…. he was forced into a room where his fellow countrymen were taking off their clothes to enter the shower…. Everyone laughed at his naiveté, but someone explained that it was necessary for him to bathe and disinfect his clothing before he could go to the other side” (35).
Dr. BJ Loyd (the El Paso public health official) to construct a disinfection plant at the bridge. The plant opened in January 1917 and, in that year alone, 127,173 Mexicans were forced to undergo humiliating and unhealthy disinfection procedures (Romo 229). Upon crossing the border, “second class” Mexicans were forced to:

…strip completely, turn in their clothes and baggage to be steam dried and fumigated with hydrocyanic acid and stand before a customs inspector who would check his or her “hairy parts”—the scalp, armpits, chest, pubic area and anus—for lice. Those found to have lice would be required to shave their head and body hair with No. 00 clippers and apply a mix of kerosene and vinegar on his body. Each time the “sterilization process” was performed, the Mexicans would receive a ticket certifying that they had been bathed and deloused, and had their clothes and baggage disinfected.... This disinfection ritual needed to be repeated every eight days in order for Mexican workers to be readmitted to the United States. (235-7)

These procedures would continue for four decades (237). Chemicals used to “bathe” these Mexican immigrants included gasoline, kerosene, sodium cyanide, cyanogen, sulfuric acid, DDT, and Zyklon B, a commercial form of hydrocyanic acid (HCN) (24).

Don Chipote, too has his clothes run through the industrial fumigating dryers, which shrinks his clothes to the point that “la ropa quedó como para vestir a uno de sus chipotes. Sin embargo, como no había más, tuvo que ponérselas y ser el hazmerreír de cuantos lo veían” (27). Venegas portrays the power of the dryer comically, but the immigrant readership of his novel must have seen the truth in this scene. David Dorado Romo includes a dedication in his book, Ringside Seat to a Revolution (2005), that reads: “Tía Abuela, I still feel bad about your

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47 “looked as if they were made for one of his little Chipotito children. Nevertheless, since he had nothing else to wear, he had to put them on and became the laughingstock of all those who saw him” (36).
melted shoes” (n.p.). Romo explains that his great-aunt Adela Dorado, who worked as a maid in El Paso, recalled the humiliation of being sprayed with chemicals and how her shoes actually melted in the industrial dryer (223). Don Chipote’s experience is far from unique. These border baths did more than merely humiliate the border crossers, they also caused illness (240), death—as in the case of prisoners who burned to death while being forced to bathe in gasoline (220), and even a “Bath Riot” in 1917, which US newspapers ridiculed as Mexicans simply refusing to bathe (223-226). While some Mexican immigrants resigned themselves to this humiliation, others protested in various forms— from individual vocalized protests to the spontaneous large-scale protest mounted by the 17-year old domestic worker, Carmelita Torres. Torres, and the women who participated in this “Bath Riot,” rose up in anger and frustration to challenge the racialized gendered humiliation they were made to feel. Not only did they have to bear the humiliation of forced baths (humiliation that occurred precisely because of racialized hierarchy), but also the humiliation of the Anglo male gaze (gendered hierarchy), as official correspondence reveals that nude photographs of the Mexican women were displayed at local bars: “It has been reported that pictures of nude women are displayed in a saloon in El Paso, Texas, with the inscription below that they were taken at the Service disinfecting plant” (Pierce n.p., qtd. in Romo 226).48 Finally, the 1920s also ushered in a new era of border security, as Congress officially created the Border Patrol agency (within the Immigration Bureau) with the passing of the Labor Appropriations Act of 1924 (“1924: Border Patrol Established”).

As if being sprayed with dangerous chemicals wasn’t enough humiliation, US Customs also subjected Mexicans to physical and mental evaluations (similar to those imposed on Ellis Island immigrants by Goddard), which were steeped in eugenic theories put into practice. In order to protect the American nation from the lesser races, US Customs officials were ordered to

48 See also “Auburn-Haired Amazon at Santa Fe Bridge Leads Feminine Outbreak.” El Paso Times. 29 Jan. 1917.
inspect immigrants for a list of physical “deformities,” which included many common and harmless physical traits, such as asthma, bunions, clubbed fingers, flat feet, sciatica, and varicose veins (Surgeon General 19). The mental health of the Mexican immigrants, in turn, was to be evaluated by a contradicting list of subjective signs, including: untidiness, dullness, great amount of calmness, nervousness, expressionless face, jovial air, self-confident smile, sad faces, talkativeness, excessive friendliness, refusing to be examined, objecting to have eyelids turned (inside out), nail-biting, and hostile attitude (20).

This treatment of Mexican immigrants on the US-Mexico border did not exist in a political vacuum. Instead, it reflected the material consequences of the racist ideas (specifically the belief in racial hierarchies) that permeated US culture and ultimately US immigration legislation. US anti-immigrant sentiment became apparent in the years during World War I (1914-1918), and shortly thereafter. Although the American Dream narrative attracted immigrants from around the globe, the exclusionary nature of the Puritan jeremiad that undergirds the narrative itself, pressured (and continues to put pressure on) the definition of who can access it. Colonial affect-culture is implicit in this American cultural narrative and as a result, it is also present in the cultural narratives of US immigration policy. The history of US immigration policy explicitly centers citizenship and Americanness around race and creates laws that attempt to structure society along a colonial racialized class hierarchy.

It is no coincidence that these immigration procedures—the Zyklon B chemical shower chambers, mental and physical evaluations, and racialized restrictions—bear shades of Nazi Germany. Colonial affect-culture, a racist mindset that evolved out of colonialism, is, as Aimé Césaire (1955) would say, the “accomplice” to Nazism. Those who allowed such treatment of
immigrants at the US border “legitimized” it and “cultivated that Nazism” (36). This isn’t merely a metaphorical connection. In fact, Nazis employed the same fumigation agent, Zyklon B, at German border crossings, and later, during the Final Solution, employed the same chemical in their gas chambers to murder millions of human beings (Romo 223). Dr. Gerhard Peters was directly inspired by the US-Mexico disinfection plants and wrote an article for the German pest science journal, *Anzheimer für Schadlinskunde*, in 1938 touting the effectiveness of Zyklon B. Said article cited the El Paso border crossing and included two photographs of the delousing chambers. Dr. Peters would soon become “the managing director of Degesch, one of two German firms which acquired the patent to mass-produce Zyklon B in 1940. During WWII, the Germans would use Zyklon B in concentrated doses in the gas chambers to exterminate nine million Jews, gypsies, homosexuals, communists and other human ‘pests’” (241-3). This transnational connection brings together the local with global designs. It demonstrates how local immigration policy speaks to the larger global history of colonialism, subjugation, and power.

Before moving on to the debates surrounding Mexican immigration and potential citizenship, it is necessary to draw out the racist underpinnings of immigration and naturalization laws in the US during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, especially as they pertained to citizenship. Immigration legislation of the 1920s reflected the national concern with the racialized immigrants who crossed the national borders. Still reeling from the aftermath of World War I (1914-1918), the United States experienced economic recession, mass migration (people immigrating from a war-torn Europe), and social hysteria in response to said immigrants.

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49 Césaire writes: “People are surprised, they become indignant. They say: ‘How strange! But never mind—it’s Nazism, it will pass!’ And they wait, and they hope; and they hide the truth from themselves, that is barbarism, the supreme barbarism, the crowning barbarism that sums up all the daily barbarisms; that it is Nazism, yes, but that before they were its victims, they were its accomplices; that they absolved it, shut their eyes to it, legitimized it, because, until them, it had been applied only to non-European peoples; that they have cultivated that Nazism, that they are responsible for it, and that before engulfing the whole edifice of Western, Christian civilization in its reddened waters, it oozes, seeps, and trickles from every crack” (36).
“threatening” the racial makeup of Anglo-American society (Filindra 89). Prior to World War I, immigration to the United States was largely unrestricted, much as it had been since the colonial period, but from 1880 to the beginning of World War I, roughly twenty-five million people (mainly Europeans) immigrated to the United States (M. Ngai 11). At the turn of the twentieth century, “there were no passports, no visas, no green cards” (11). Despite these early open borders, the first immigrants to suffer under exclusionary US immigration policies were Chinese and Asian immigrants who immigrated to participate and to fill the labor needs of the United States’ industrial expansion (11). Yet, their immigration “collided with the racial imperatives of American manifest destiny—the ideology of continental expansion that declared that the Western US was the domain of Anglo-Saxon civilization” (11). The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 set a ten-year moratorium on unskilled and skilled Chinese labor immigration; non-laborers had to obtain certification from the Chinese government to immigrate, although this was rarely approved (Teaching With Documents). When the ten-year ban ended, Congress extended it with what was known as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1892 or the Geary Act (long title: An act to prohibit the coming of Chinese persons into the United States), which added that all US Chinese residents would be required to carry a resident permit at all times or be subject to deportation or a punishment of one year of hard labor (Chinese Exclusion Act). Such exclusionary immigration legislation also influenced how citizenship was understood and defined. Asians were not eligible for birthright citizenship until 189850 and, less than a decade later, the Expatriation Act of 190751 stripped American women of their US citizenship if they married foreigners. The Cable Act of 1922 revised the 1907 act by limiting the loss of citizenship only to American woman who

50 See US v. Wong Kim Ark (169 US 649)
51 See The Expatriation Act of 1907 § 3, Fifty-Ninth Congress, Sess. II. Chs. 2534, 1228-1229.
married “aliens ineligible for citizenship” (men from Japan, China, India, Syria, and Armenia) (Sheridan 4).

As Mae M. Ngai (2007) points out, understanding the history of immigration restriction, beginning with Chinese exclusion, “helps situate American immigration policy in a global context and explains why the edifice of restriction has remained in place to the present day” (12). The history of immigration restriction in the United States combined with war-time nationalism to foment distrust of “hyphenated Americans” (mainly German Americans) and fear of foreign refugees (M. Ngai 11). And the precedent of US immigration restriction paved the way for new legislation in the 1920s that responded to the public’s rising concerns of post-war global immigration. In 1921, the US government passed the Emergency Quota Act (long title: An Act to limit the immigration of aliens into the United States), which limited the number of people immigrating to the US to three percent “of the number of foreign persons of such nationality resident in the United States as determined by the United States census of 1910” (Emergency Quota Act of 1921). Shortly thereafter, the Immigration Act of 1924 (also known as the Johnson-Reed Act) reduced the number of immigrants to two percent of nationals residing in the US according to the 1890 US census or to those who had resided in a nation in the western hemisphere for five years prior to immigrating to the US. In addition, immigrants had to pay a $10 visa fee, an $8 head tax (pre-existing under the previous bill), be literate, and not be “likely to become a public charge” (Sheridan 5). The Immigration Act of 1924 also “imposed a numerical limit of 155,000 admissions per year (compared to an average of one million a year before the war)” (M. Ngai 12). The quotas set by the Act strongly favored people immigrating from “Great Britain, Ireland, Germany, and other northern and western European countries, granting them two-thirds of the total” (M. Ngai 13). The Act upheld previous Asian immigration
bans and “prevented Asians who had managed to come from acquiring naturalized citizenship, in effect foredooming them to permanent foreignness” (13).

This history of restrictive immigration legislation justified a narrow conceptualization of US citizenship based around race and ethnicity. Citizenship during this time period was defined through “race, gender, class, and nationality” (Sheridan 3) and as a result, immigrants “struggled to prove their whiteness in order to claim eligibility for citizenship” (4). In 1915, for example, Takao Ozawa, a Japanese man who had lived in the United States for twenty years, and had graduated from a Berkeley, CA high school, attended the University of California for three years, and spoke English, filed for US citizenship. The unanimous 1922 court ruling on the denial of his citizenship relied on racial limitations outlined in previous immigration law. The Court contended, wrote Justice George Sutherland, that previous naturalization acts (the Naturalization Acts of 1790, 1870, and 1906) limited naturalization to “white persons (with the addition in 1870 of those of African nativity and descent)” (Takao Ozawa v. US 193-4). Justice Sutherland argued that the language of racial exclusion was accidentally omitted from the Naturalization Act of 1906 and that the court had an obligation to imbue the missing phrase with the intended meaning of the original framers in 1790. That is, although the original framers only stipulated the exclusion of African and Native Americans, the more important aspect of the provision of the “affirmative form of the legislation” (196) is that it entitled only a specific race to citizenship. “The provision is not that Negroes and Indians shall be excluded,” wrote Justice Sutherland, “but it is, in effect, that only free white persons shall be included. The intention was to confer the
privilege of citizenship upon that class of persons whom the [Founding] fathers knew as white, and to deny it to all who could not be so classified” (196).52

While Congress and the people of the United States concerned themselves with limiting the immigration of non-whites from Europe and elsewhere after the war, Mexican immigration remained unrestrained. Mexican immigration paled in comparison to the global numbers, making up “only 0.6 percent of total, legal immigration in 1900-1909, and 3.8 percent in the 1910s” (Sheridan 4-5). Yet, between 1900-1930, about 10 percent of Mexico’s total population (one and a half million people) immigrated to the United States (“Always the Laborer” 231). Although legislation limited the number of immigrants from Europe, Congress decided against imposing limits on immigrants from the Americas for two main reasons. First, the US government of the 1920s had begun to move away from the interventionist diplomacy of Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft and toward a “good neighbor” Pan American policy (M. Ngai 13). Limiting immigrants from the Americas, they feared, would be seen as “unfriendly.” Second, growing Southwest agribusiness required a large seasonal labor force and the 1920s drew “large numbers of new immigrants from Mexico as well as more established immigrants and Mexican Americans” to perform said migratory agricultural labor (13). Southwest agricultural and railroad companies pressured Congress to exempt Mexicans from restrictive immigration legislation (Filindra 88).

Pressured by agricultural and railway business interests to secure cheap seasonal labor, Representative Claude Hudspeth (D-TX) introduced a bill that would permit illiterate Mexican workers to be exempted from the literacy requirements of the contemporary immigration legislation (Filindra 88). Southwestern business owners also pressured Congress to exempt the

52 See also US v. Bhagat Singh Thind. 261 U.S. 204 (1923), in which the Supreme Court of the United States unanimously ruled that Bhagat Singh Thind, an Indian Sikh man who identified as a high caste Hindu, was ineligible for US citizenship on the basis of race.
Mexican laborers from the $8 head tax imposed under the Immigration Act of 1917, claiming that the immigrants could not afford to pay it (Coerver 224). These Congressional hearings occurred at the beginning of 1920, just as the nation was facing an economic depression caused by a 60 percent decrease in industrial production and a 3.5 percent increase in unemployment as the end of World War I ended the need for army supplies and thousands of soldiers returned home (Romer 91-115; Filindra 89). The House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization’s hearings on House Joint Resolution 271, *Temporary Admission of Illiterate Mexican Laborers*, concerned labor shortages, the restriction of immigration, the waiving of literacy requirements on Mexican immigrants, and racial issues, such as the character of these Mexican immigrants (US Congress, House 1920).\footnote{See also the Senate hearings: United States Congress, Senate. *Admission of Mexican Agricultural Laborers: Hearing before the Committee on Immigration, United States Senate, Sixty-Sixth Congress, Second Session, Pursuant to S.J. Res. 66*. 1920.}

Venegas depicts Don Chipote’s attempt to cross the border as a comedy of errors, complicated by the Immigration Act. After enduring the border delousing and disinfection bathing procedure and having to wear shrunken clothes, Don Chipote waits for hours in line at US Customs:

> A victim of circumstance, he endured the embarrassment and followed the others to the office where they prepared their immigration papers and had to pay the eight-dollar fee, something that Don Chipote did not know about. Our hero did not have the money to pay.

(36)

Here, Don Chipote endures the embarrassment, or humiliation, of not knowing how the system works. Navigating the Immigration laws, Don Chipote soon learns, will take the help of his fellow compatriots. They, too, have experienced the humiliation and, rather than turn their backs on him, the small *bracero* community binds together to offer to help him. Still on the Mexican side of the border, Don Chipote finds a job barricading the Río Grande to prevent flooding. It is
his fellow compatriots—not US agribusiness owners—who help him navigate the US immigration system. While he is working, his news friends (who know the process better than he), “se encargaron de ponerlo al corriente de las artimañas de que se valen los que no satisfacen los requisitos que la Ley de Inmigración requiere “(33).54

Arguments for and against the lifting of restrictions on Mexican immigrant laborers were steeped in eugenics, exerting the power of coloniality that justified the racialized labor. In other words, the value of affect-culture to the coloniality of power is in its ability to interpret and use resignation and humiliation as a tool to manipulate a labor force. The rhetorical strategy displayed during congressional hearings exemplifies how resignation/docility contained economic potential to produce super-adequate subjects out of Mexican immigrants. Mexicans were cast as the perfect laborer: “docile, peaceable, inoffensive” (US Congress, House 1920, 19), uninterested in government or politics due to his “primitive state” (18), and only concerned with “frijoles and tortillas,” that is, making enough money to eat (18). The Mexican laborer, claimed Representative Carlos Bee (D-TX), was ideal for seasonal labor, since they limited themselves to the spring and summer seasons, they “hibernate in the winter and just as soon as the winter breaks they come back again to make some more money” (18), they are, Bee continued, like “a hot-weather plant; he does not like this cold business” (18). Thus, as Alexandra Filindra (2014) argues, the Mexican laborer was cast as a “temporary” laborer who would always return to his homeland, dismissing the fears of their naturalization. Furthermore, Bee contended that the Mexican laborer was biologically suited for this labor, saying:

…the Mexican is adapted for that special character of labor; whether in the providence of God he has been so constituted I won’t say. But I do say to you that the Mexican is

54 “entrusted themselves to give him the scoop on the tricks of the trade needed to cross the border in ways which did not satisfy the Immigration Act” (42).
specially fitted for the burdensome task of bending his back to picking the cotton and the burdensome task of grubbing the fields. (US Congress, House 1920, 19)

During the hearing, Representative Hudspeth attributed US agricultural labor shortages to the migration of African Americans from the US Southwest to northern cities (15). The Great Migration shifted US regional demographics as the twentieth century witnessed what Nicholas Lemann (1991) calls “one of the largest and most rapid mass internal movements in history” (6). The growing need for factory workers in the north during World War I, coupled with the harsh—and often violent—life in the Jim Crow South, influenced many African Americans to migrate in search of new economic opportunities. Over approximately 1 million African Americans left the US South by 1919; and between 1910-1920, major Northern cities had in some cases doubled their black population (Kopf; Nowrasteh; “Great Migration”).

RACIALIZING LABOR AND ACCESS TO THE AMERICAN DREAM

The lights seen across the borders of water in both Don Chipote and Gatsby call out to the titular characters with the promise of fulfilling a dream—the pursuit of happiness in America. Yet, we come to learn that the light and the dream contained therein are elusive. For Gatsby, the green light that shone across the bay signified the possibility of marriage to Daisy and, perhaps more significantly, acceptance into white upper-class society. But, more broadly, the light that historically called to European immigrants, such as Gatsby’s parents, was the Statue of Liberty on Ellis Island—the metaphorical embodiment of the American Dream that marked their entrance with hope and despair, as they endured myriad immigration tests. In Don Chipote, the

55 Rep. Hudspeth said: “It is a fact that the negro has quit the farms and gone to the cities.” (US Congress, House 1920, 19).
gateway to the US is relocated to El Paso, Texas (which literally translates to “the pass”). As Doña Chipota and her children swim across the Rio Grande, it is El Paso’s lights that “les servían de faro” (140). Both novels end with reflections on a dream and nostalgia for a lost love that can be read through the jeremiad as reflections on the elusiveness of the American Dream itself. Divorced from the romance story of Daisy and Gatsby, nostalgia becomes an American desire to return to the strict social structures of the past, and Nick’s closing lines take on a new meaning:

Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgiastic future that year by year recedes before us.

It eluded us then, but that’s no matter—tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms father…And one fine morning—

So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past. (Fitzgerald 115)

While Gatsby and other immigrants believed in the American Dream (the green light), the jeremiad’s exclusivity reminds us that it is only attainable for the chosen people. The green light continuously recedes, and although there is the suggestion that it is attained, the sentence ends right before the acknowledgement of its fulfillment. It too leaves us hanging. It does not solidify the achievement of the American Dream. Nick’s switch to the first-person plural, “we,” depicts the whole of America as reaching for the same dream, and is beat back into the past like boats in the hands of an angry sea, or perhaps like sinners in the hands of an angry God. It is an ambiguous ending that questions the attainment of the American Dream itself. The novel questions whether the dream could be achieved if the nation overcame racism and classism, but in the ambiguity of its ending, we are left without answers.

Don Chipote also ends with a reflection on a dream—a nostalgia for his time in America and a lost love. Yet, this ending makes obvious the harsh reality of Mexican immigration:

57 “served as their beacon” (142).
Y mientras tanto, soñaba… y en sus sueños veía pasar como cinta película las amargas aventuras de que fue protagonista… recuerdo que no le hacía olvidar los fracasos que los chicanos se llevan por dejar a su patria, ilusionados por los cuentos de los que van a los Estados Unidos, dizque a barrer el dinero con la escoba.

Y pensando en esto, llegó a la conclusión de que los mexicanos se harán ricos en Estados Unidos: CUANDO LOS PERICOS MAMEN. (159){58}

Don Chipoteends on a note of resignation and humiliation as the narrator acknowledges the failure of America and the inability to attain the American Dream for anyone other than the “chosen people.” The final line is an attempt to drive the point home, to compensate for the many (humiliated) immigrants who return to their native land only to validate lies of social fluidity imbedded in the American Dream.

Immigration legislation of the early 1920s, as case law and Congressional hearings demonstrate, helped to cement the racialization of labor in modernity, which in turn, also racialized class in the United States. Agricultural and railroad labor, which became associated with Mexican seasonal labor, depressed wages to a “Mexican wage” (Sheridan 15) and, as mentioned above, was described as something best suited, biologically, to Mexican workers. Congressmen in favor of seasonal Mexican immigration claimed that white men had risen above such labor. “The war,” Representative Bee stated during the 1920 hearing, “for some unaccountable reason, has raised the dignity of the laborer to such an extent the man does not feel he ought longer to indulge in manual labor” (US Congress, House 1920, 20). This line of reasoning, steeped in eugenics, continued through the decade, as demonstrated by the 1928

58 And all the while, he dreamt….It was a memory that would not allow him to forget the troubles that Chicanos experience when leaving their fatherland, made starry-eyed by the yarns spun by those who go to the United States, as they say, to strike it rich. And in pondering all of this, he came to the conclusion that Mexicans will make it big in the United States… WHEN PARROTS BREAST-FEED” (160).
Congressional hearings on quota restrictions on immigrants from the Americas.\textsuperscript{59} A.C. Hardison,\textsuperscript{60} a citrus grower representing the California State Grange and the California Farmers’ Union, stated the following before the House of Representatives:

… we as a Nation in rising to this pinnacle of our development have raised ourselves to the extent that to-day we have no class of Americans who desire to work at many of the essential forms of menial toil. We have educated ourselves away from working on bended knees or even from swinging a pick and shovel—educated ourselves to a point where we are even physically unfitted for this class of work in the limits where it must be performed. Who, then, is to perform that work? (US Congress, House 1928, 225)

The white race—claimed congressmen, agribusiness owners, railway businessmen, and eugenicists alike—had risen above harsh manual labor and were no longer biologically disposed for it. What’s more, they argued that barring a lower (and so-called “biologically inferior”) immigrant class from picking up the slack would have a dire impact on the very essence of America and Americanness. Such restrictions would prevent (white) Americans from achieving the American Dream, as stated by E.E. McInnis, General Solicitor of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad Co.:

I think that if a lack of a labor supply from the outside prevents a process whereby an American boy born in circumstances of poverty…can still look forward with the aspiration that he may someday be President of the United States—I think if we cut off our foreign-labor supply and cut that boy off from the possibility of ever realizing that or

\textsuperscript{59} House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization’s hearing on \textit{Immigration from Countries of the Western Hemisphere}, 1928.

\textsuperscript{60} Hardison was a member of the board of directors for the Limoneira Co. and vice president and president of various California agricultural associations.
some other laudable ambition, we will make a fatal mistake. We will have destroyed the
thing that makes us different from the European, who has no chance. (418)

The Congressional hearings on immigration policy articulated the racialization of labor in terms
of the American Dream. Doing this type of labor was beneath American citizens who were heir
to the rewards of America as a “city upon a hill” in the form of the American Dream’s economic
success. But the assumption that working in such a labor sector essentially forecloses the
American Dream, also suggests that the workers who take these manual labor jobs do not qualify
to achieve or even aspire to the American Dream. They are, quite simply, excluded from the
concept of America or Americanness.

In her article, “Contested Citizenship: National Identity and the Mexican Immigration
Debates of the 1920s,” Clare Sheridan (2002) argues that the Congressional debates over
Mexican immigration during the 1920s contributed to the ongoing construction and racialization
of American nationhood and citizenship as white. The status of Mexican immigrant workers (or
“peon” workers) not only depressed wages, as mentioned above, but “their status as a degraded
class stigmatized the labor they performed” (Sheridan 15), racializing the labor itself. Their so-
called economic dependence upon the US to make enough money to feed themselves (US
Congress, House 1920, 19) meant that Mexicans “were not considered citizenship material,” and
as a result, the association with “lower class labor” racialized as “Mexican” or “Mexican peon”
labor devalued the worker’s claim to American citizenship (Sheridan 15-16). Lower class
workers, Sheridan writes, found themselves in a precarious situation; and rather than risk
association with racialized labor—and a racialized class—they rejected union alliances with
Mexican workers (15-16). They preferred, as W.E.B. Du Bois (1935) termed it and David
Roediger (1991) later takes up, the psychological “wages of whiteness” over association with
Mexican immigrants as a racialized laboring class. Mexican immigrants’ willingness to work for lower wages and perform “stoop” labor furthered claims that Mexicans were “a racial caste of laborers,” and as a consequence, were “outside the boundaries of the polity” (Sheridan 18). The continued stereotyping of Mexican immigrant laborers as “docile” and willing to work for “un-American wages” also “contributed to the notion that as a race, Mexicans were not capable of becoming self-made men” (17).

These “backward” or “unprogressive” Mexican immigrants were described by US congressmen and business owners as locked in a biologically-determined state of peonage. The Mexican colonial affect-culture of resignation promoted in the hacienda and that immigrants had internalized was reflected in a superficial work ethic that was misread as biological inferiority. American landowners or patron for the immigrants experience a type of debt peonage as they are required to purchase their food and supplies in advance, against their (future) paycheck. As a result, their paychecks are always lacking:

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Este gusto al recibir el cheque la mayoría de las veces termina en rabias, pues obligados a comprarle al Suplai la provisión para la quincena, éste, que tiene facultades por la compañía, de cada pago les rebaja lo que le pega la gana; resultando que los pobres camellos, por más que tratan de economizar, siempre salen cortos. (71)

Even more debilitating to the immigrant is the lack of redress for injustice such as this—or even more aggressive actions such as threats of deportation as well as violence. Ultimately, it was the culminating history of discrimination and injustices that led to the formation of the United Farm Workers union (UFW) by labor leaders, César Chávez and Dolores Huerta in 1962, and the subsequent rise of the Chicana/o civil rights movement in the mid-1960s. Injustices against Mexican immigrant laborers continue to be depicted in novels and film, including, for example, the third season of the contemporary television series, American Crime (2017).

Turning back to the abovementioned legislation on US citizenship, the court opinion on Takao Ozawa v. US, and the transcripts of the Congressional hearings during the 1920s, we can see how American citizenship and, by extension, access to the American Dream, were constructed as limited to certain people and specifically excluded certain “types” of people. These people were defined not simply by class or race, but more specifically, as a racialized immigrant class. American citizenship and, more abstractly, the American Dream were constructed both by official rhetoric (immigration policy, case law, congressional hearings) and a colonial Puritan ethos that defined America as a “peculiar” nation composed only of people who contributed to the “progress of the republic” (Bercovitch 153-4). Mexican immigrants were imagined as outside of this progress, as noted by Mark Reisler (1976):

62 “[Their] enthusiasm at receiving their paycheck usually ends up in rage, because, obligated to purchase their fortnight’s provisions from the Supply, he who is granted the authority by the railroad company takes out whatever he wants from each of their paychecks; and the result is that the poor workers, for all they try to economize, always come away with the short end of the stick” (78).
To Americans, who defined Mexicans by and identified them with the work they did, the servile peon was antithetical to the rugged, self-reliant yeoman who had made their nation prosperous and progressive. The [Mexican] peon could be directed and used to perform the lowest class of labor, but he was incapable of carrying on independent projects in pursuit of progress. (By the Sweat 143-4)

The confluence of the Puritan jeremiad and the American Dream narrative undergird exclusion, as they carry forward the notion that the reward of prosperity was reserved only for chosen people.

Much like community oral stories (as will be discussed in chapter four), public policies function as cultural narratives that carry an affective charge. They contribute to the national imagining of what it means to be American and who can be American. Historically, immigration policy has reflected the exclusionary narrative of a US colonial past. While all this is true, Venegas ends his novel (serialized in the Spanish-language press for a Los Angeles readership north of the border) by reminding readers that the myth of the American Dream is also produced and promoted South of the border and for reasons that have to do with their affectively-coded colonial labor histories in Mexico:

La llegada de la chipotería fue todo un acontecimiento para los vecinos y familiares, los que hasta se peleaban por servirles en algo o en mucho, pensando que como iban [llegando] de los Estados Unidos, llevaban costales de fierrada, cosa que ellos se cuidaron bien de desmentir o afirmar, sabiendo que si los desengañaban y manifestaban que iban en la bruja, dejarían de hacerles fiestas y ayudarles. (158)

63 “The arrival of the Chipote clan was quite an event for the neighbors and family. They even fought among themselves to help them in some way, believing that because they had gone to the United States, the Chipotes had brought big bags full of dough. This was something the Chipotes were careful not to confirm or deny, knowing that
Don Chipote, like other Mexican repatriates, recognizes the vergüenza or shame (an affect I will elaborate on in the next chapter) that he will feel if he reveals the truth of his failure to achieve economic success in the US. What is also true is that the Chipote clan, while penniless and materially poor, is nonetheless richer in cultural capital with regard to the US. And by extension, so are Venegas’ readers.

*Don Chipote* exposes modernity’s coloniality of labor, America’s demand for imported manual labor, and the jeremiad’s myth of prosperity in a way that *Gatsby* cannot. While we see Gatsby at the height of his ascent, we do not get a chronicle of a humiliating social and economic climb. *Don Chipote* narrates the physical realities of immigration—from humiliating delousing to unemployment and hunger, as well as the return to his resignation to his position in life. And to this extent, the novel promotes the affect-culture of resignation even as it also exposes the repression and humiliation inherent to its racialized class structure. Don Chipote’s particular position as an immigrant laborer demonstrates that equal access to social mobility within America is unattainable for the racialized working class. America is reconfigured in the novel as a society that has already fallen to temptation and has suffered the disintegration of social and family values. Like other Mexican American immigration narratives, *Don Chipote* portrays America as corrupt, racist, and anti-immigrant. Within the constructs of capitalism, the laboring body of the immigrant is reduced to its labor-power. The “city upon a hill” actually functions as a hegemonic center that assigns immigrant bodies to the status of colonial subjects and relegates them to less desirable jobs (such as the work on the *tranque* or cement work), reproducing the coloniality of labor. This social structure is necessary for American modernity since, in order for

if they told the truth and confessed their penury, everyone would stop helping them and throwing parties for them” (158-9).
middle class Americans to achieve social mobility, both an immigrant and a formerly-enslaved black working class must step in to occupy the lower rungs of the ladder.

By focusing on the exclusionary social order maintained by the jeremiad in its many forms, we see how modernity’s blurring of social boundaries complicated the imagined access to the American Dream. Exclusivity and exceptionalism have played a significant role in the development of the jeremiad from the onset, as the “chosen people” were necessarily defined in opposition to those who were not chosen. As a result, the blurring of social boundaries that occurred in the 1920s conflicted with and challenged traditional notions of the metaphorical “chosen people.” Within modernity, the American Dream is corrupted by the coloniality of labor that attempts to erase the possibility of immigrant participation in its achievement. Moreover, the colonial-affect culture of resignation and humiliation accompanies this phase of the American jeremiad in Mexican American literary representations. Reading for these affects demonstrates how resignation itself is a survival tactic used by people of Mexican descent to navigate the hostility (and humiliation) of colonial hierarchies and the material consequences of the racialization of their bodies. Reading *Don Chipote* against the American jeremiad tradition demonstrates that although we can expand the sociopolitical definition of the American “chosen people” to be more inclusive, such a move would merely mask the inequalities that have been engrained in the nation’s sociopolitical and cultural foundation.
CHAPTER TWO

SÓLO UN MIRAJE: THE SPANISH-LANGUAGE PRESS, MEXICAN REPATRIATION, AND THE LIVED CLASS EXPERIENCE OF RANCOR AND VERGÜENZA IN

JORGE AINSLIE’S LOS REPATRIADOS (1935)

No es laguna, hija. Es un miraje…. Esa ilusión de óptica ha costado la vida a muchos viajeros que caen en el mismo error que tu, y que van hacia esas lagunas a buscar agua, y a las que nunca llegan, pues parece que aquellas se van retirando según el viajero pretende acercarse.  

-Jorge Ainslie, Los Repatriados

On Easter Sunday, 1930, Los Angeles, California celebrated the opening of the tourist attraction, Paseo de Los Angeles—a square that promised to transport visitors to the state’s Mexican past. Anglo tourists poured onto the Mexican market street lined with “…colorful piñatas, hanging puppets in white peasant garb, Mexican pottery, serapes, mounted bull horns, oversized sombreros, and the always popular life-size stuffed donkey strategically placed at the entrance of the street for the ‘perfect photo opportunity’” (Estrada 115). Paseo de Los Angeles, which would later be known as Olvera Street, predated Disneyland by twenty-five years, but was a type of forerunner to such theme park manicured spaces (Rieff 72). Christine Sterling, responsible for the revival of Olvera Street, described the grand opening in her diary as follows:

The Street opened last night in a blaze of glory. Thousands of people came and every one [sic] seemed happy…. Once more the surface of the old street felt the touch of dainty

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64 All translations of Los Repatriados in this dissertation are from *The Repatriates*, Taller Americano de Traducción, Rice University (Forthcoming), unless otherwise noted: “That’s not a laguna, daughter. It is a mirage…. It is a common phenomenon that happens in the deserts, and it is produced by solar reflections. On occasion one sees large cities, trains that pass by at enormous speeds, and other kinds of shapes. This optical illusion has cost the lives of many a traveler who fell victim to the same error you did, walking in search of water toward a laguna that could not be reached; they seem to retreat as the traveler attempts to near”.
slippers and polished boots. Romance sang the love song of yesterday and vendors softly called—“Dulces Mexicanos, señora, pruebe Ud. uno.”65 (Sterling 12 qtd. in Estrada 118)

Olvera Street, often described as “A Mexican Street of Yesterday in a City of Today,” came alive with Mexican immigrants and Mexican American merchants working at puestos (temporary wooden stalls with canvas or thatched roofs), selling their artisanal crafts. Dressed in traditional costumes, these Mexican merchants performed the manual labor of creating crafts such as pottery and baskets out in the open as part of the lure of the street. These Mexican artists lent authenticity to the experience and personified a romantic docile image of Old Mexico and Mexican people. The film reel “A Street of Memory” (1937) describes the serenity of Olvera Street as far removed from the economic woes of the United States during the 1930s: “Truly a street of memories: soft-speaking olive-skinned guides, languid in business: ‘you buy or you don’t buy, what does it matter?’ Happiness is his [the Mexican merchant’s] when humming an old love song. And he is lost without the inevitable guitar.”

Meanwhile, as Anglo tourists took romantic strolls through Olvera Street’s Old Mexico among docile Mexicans in the 1930s, a few paces away at the Los Angeles Plaza (affectionately known as “La Placita”) a large-scale raid was conducted against Mexicans in what was then a public park. The most infamous immigration raid of the 1930s occurred in the Placita on February 26, 1931. Walter E. Carr, local superintendent of the US Immigration Service, recruited agents from nearby cities to aid in this massive raid (Balderrama and Rodríguez 73). At three o’clock in the afternoon, the tranquility of the Mexican square was broken by the abrupt and unexpected appearance of immigration agents. Police officers physically blocked the entrances. Chaos ensued as four hundred Mexicans enjoying the Placita that day suddenly found themselves forced to line up and prove their legality by showing “their passports or other evidence of legal

65 My translation: “Mexican candies, taste one, madam.”
entry and residency…. What was or was not acceptable proof of legal entry or residency was entirely up to the whim of the interrogating officers” (73). Upon hearing news of the raid, Mexican Vice Consuls Ricardo Hill and Joel Quiñones immediately made their way to the Placita in order to aid the immigrants. They too “were accorded rude and discourteous treatment until their diplomatic identity was established” (74). Raids such as these—or razzias and levas, as they were called by the Mexican community—occurred across the Southwest as well as major US cities. Like the xenophobic attacks launched on people of Mexican descent in 1910-1920 by the Texas Rangers, these raids targeted any person whom the immigration officials deemed to “look Mexican.” And “[a]ll Mexicans, whether legal or illegal, looked alike to immigration officials” (70). After raids, the chaos was punctuated by “women crying in the streets when not finding their husbands” (70).

The 1931 raid and others like it demonstrated that people of Mexican descent did not benefit from the romantic vision of California’s past that Olvera Street perpetuated. Taken together, Olvera Street and the Placita razzia demonstrate that Anglo America’s concept of an ideal California did not include Mexicans in the present, or even in the future. Instead, Mexicans and Mexico itself only belonged in carefully-manicured performances of Califronia’s past, where they were limited to the social roles and racialized class of peons, peasants, and artisans. The US Spanish-language press of roughly the same period indicates that many people of Mexican descent were all too aware of their precarious positions in California and other regions across the Southwest. During the Great Depression (1929-1941), the US Spanish-language press kept its immigrant readership aware of the razzias occurring throughout the country and provided useful

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information for them should they either find themselves forced to repatriate or if they chose to do so voluntarily.

One such newspaper was San Antonio’s *La Prensa*, founded by the Mexican immigrant, Ignacio E. Lozano, in 1913. Unlike working-class Spanish-language newspapers, such as California’s *El Malcriado* (“The Brat,” 1964-1975), *La Prensa* catered primarily to a growing Mexican immigrant population that belonged to Mexico’s upper and middle classes who had fled to the United States during the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) and subsequent counterrevolutionary efforts, such as the anti-Catholic Cristero War (1926-1929). Yet, it also sought to embrace and inform a less-educated readership through its discourse on Mexican politics, the Spanish language, cultural heritage, and the arts. The San Antonio newspaper, *La Prensa*, in particular, denounced the racism behind the *razzias* and kept its readership informed of both forced and voluntary repatriation. But Lozano’s paper, similar to other immigrant presses headed by Mexican intellectual elites, also attempted to create a Mexican American culture that could either withstand the dominant US culture or voluntarily repatriate to Mexico. Because of the de facto segregation throughout the Southwest and anti-Mexican racism across the country, newspapers like *La Prensa* created a unique interpretation of the repatriation of “the Mexican” in the United States.

In order to reveal the role of the Spanish-language press during this time, I focus specifically on *Los Repatriados* (*The Repatriates*) a serialized novel by Mexican immigrant, Jorge Ainslie.67 *Los Repatriados* follows a group of Mexican immigrants who voluntarily decide

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67 According to José Aranda (work-in-progress), Jorge Ainslie was born in Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico in 1891 and immigrated to San Francisco, California around 1918. *La Prensa*, he notes, “identifies Jorge Ainslie as a long-time editor of the Lozano newspapers (2-27-1938, p. 8), he becomes best known to its readers in a span of just over three years, between April 1934 and January 1938. In this period, he publishes three novels, one novella, over twenty short stories, and three memoirs, each fictionalized to different degrees. Altogether, his writings cover a range of issues, events, and topics, from the Mexican Revolution and immigrant life in the U.S., to more common melodramatic love stories, to tales of mystery and the unknown” (5).
to repatriate from Los Angeles, CA to Santa Rosalía, Chihuahua, Mexico. This novel comes as a response to the anti-immigration narrative, such as *Don Chipote*. It also responded to a deep, cultural imperative which was lived as a felt desire among immigrants: to return to Mexico. Although this desire to return to Mexico is wide-spread, represented in literature and among Mexican immigrant laborers even today, this is one of the few instances in which the return is actualized in a novel. *Los Repatriados* narrates how Mexican repatriates must negotiate their lived class experiences in the United States within an hacienda colonial history (discussed in chapter one) that organizes class and gender within Mexico. The novel was serialized in *La Prensa* beginning Sunday, September 22, 1935. What both the Olvera Street tourist attraction and *Los Repatriados* demonstrate is that US culture re-presents Mexico through a racialized hierarchy that places limits on people of Mexican descent living in US society and class relations. *Los Repatriados*, and indeed, *La Prensa* itself, portray voluntary repatriation as a nationalistic endeavor that reiterates these assumptions. I argue that such portrayals should be read through an affective decolonial lens in order to reveal how colonial affect-culture, like coloniality and capitalism, is a transnational phenomenon that devalues the Mexican American community and their labor. The Mexican American lived experience, too, is discounted as it is filtered through colonial hierarchies and perceptions of racialized class and gender. In other words, the devaluation of the Mexican American lived experience is occurring north and south of the border. Although *La Prensa* attempted to push back against a US colonial affect-culture that devalued Mexican immigrants, it simultaneously promoted a conservative Mexican colonial affect-culture that also racialized and gendered labor according to the values of its own colonial past. My decolonial affective critique of *Los Repatriados* highlights how women of Mexican
descent figure prominently in this imaginary and as such are in danger of being subsumed by colonial gendered hierarchies, as we shall see in the example of Doña Refugio.

The racialization of labor, discussed in chapter one, plays a significant role in the perception of a racialized class hierarchy and attaches social prestige to only certain types of work. I argue that a colonial affect-culture is attached to these constructions of class, as historical colonial caste systems continue to dictate the definition of social prestige. Colonial affect-culture skews the relationship between labor and lived class experience by imagining distance between the type of work performed and the epistemology of class experience. Under a racialized class system, in other words, class differs from a lived economic reality. For the characters in Los Repatriados, this means that while the protagonist Doña Refugio can experience class mobility as she works her way up from domestic laborer to entrepreneur, this mobility—and its acceptance as such—is limited to the space of the US Mexican barrio. Colonial affect-culture dictates the social prestige attached to different types of labor and prestige shifts based on the social and cultural space, be it a US Mexican barrio, the US (outside of the barrio), or Mexico. And as a result, when the characters repatriate to Mexico, Doña Refugio finds herself subjected to hacienda colonial affect-culture that values her husband’s socially-acceptable intellectual labor as a professor more than her labor as the owner of various tortillerías (tortilla bakeries) and nixtamal mills. Once in Mexico, her husband, Don Filemón, continuously attempts to regulate her behavior by shaming her. By pointing out her incorrect Spanish and telling her she should feel vergüenza (shame), he demonstrates how the affect of vergüenza (shame) represents the devaluing of her racialized and gendered class. Vergüenza, however, is not only reserved for repatriated women, but also represents the devaluation that occurred within the US as Anglo
American rancor (another negative affect) evoked shame in people of Mexican descent as they were scapegoated and deported during the Great Depression era.

In this chapter, I will elaborate on Lozano’s mission to educate the Mexican community in order to encourage the rise of a Mexican American middle class. Through La Prensa Lozano promoted Mexican cultural capital that would keep Mexican national traditions and the Spanish language alive, as well as educate a larger transnational Mexican “imagined community”—to use Benedict Anderson’s (1983) phrase. I will then turn to Ainslie’s novel, Los Repatriados, as an example of literature published in the newspaper that coded repatriation in nationalistic overtones and provided readers with information about navigating the return to Mexico.

Attention to the affects circulating in Los Repatriados demonstrates that voluntary repatriation attempted to circumvent two particular affects: vergüenza and an Anglo American rancor that identified people of Mexican descent as other, not belonging, illegitimate, and the cause of their misery during the Great Depression. Yet, reading for affect in Los Repatriados reveals that Mexico’s own colonial affect-culture also reiterates colonial hierarchies of labor and gender, so that the characters must re-learn how to negotiate Mexican society. Instead of the shame of deportation, Doña Refugio is made to feel shame about her gender and her racialized business (a chain of tortillerías, or tortilla bakeries).

GUARDANDO RENCOR: COLONIAL AFFECT-CULTURE AND MEXICAN REPATRIATION

The 1930s marked not only the Great Depression in US history, but also a decade of Mexican scapegoating that resulted in the repatriation of approximately one million Mexicans—both forcefully and voluntarily (151). Olvera Street, despite its charming allure, epitomized the vulnerability for Mexicans in the United States. In other words, the labor performed by Mexicans in this space—such as the production of artisanal crafts, cooking of Mexican food, and
performance of traditional Mexican music and other entertainment—did not compete with Anglo American businesses. In fact, despite the overall marketing of the street as “authentically Mexican,” the majority of the permanent shops (as opposed to the temporary *puestos*) were leased by Anglo Americans (“Citizens of the Past?” 40). The people of Mexican descent on Olvera Street performed racialized “Mexican” labor and behaved like “good Mexicans.” They embodied the docile character imagined by businessmen and congressional representatives alike in the 1920s House Committee hearings, described in chapter one. As a result, people of Mexican descent who did not fit the Olvera Street mold of the “good Mexican,” were characterized as criminals and scapegoated during the Great Depression because of “widespread assumptions that Mexican immigrants were taking the lion’s share of public relief” (35).

I suggest that this scapegoating or targeting of people of Mexican descent in the United States during the Great Depression was influenced by the colonial affect-culture of rancor. Rancor (and the passionate anger and hate that followed it) helped legitimize the mainstream acceptance of large-scale deportations, *razzias*, social segregation, and the more radical vigilante violence directed at Mexican immigrants (and even Mexican Americans with US citizenship and legal residency, for that matter). I associate rancor with colonial affect-culture because it feeds off of internalized colonial hierarchies that devalued the bodies of people of color. And it appears across cultural forms in the period. Rancor is apparent, for example, in the eugenic outbursts made by Tom Buchanan throughout *The Great Gatsby* (discussed in the previous chapter) that exhibit mounting anger at any disturbance of historic colonial racial hierarchies. Rancor was at work in Anglo American news accounts of Mexicans as depleting government resources for aid and taking American jobs. It “allowed” Americans to cast Mexicans as the antagonists of hardworking Americans during the Great Depression. It gave credence to their paranoia. It
justified the call to deport as many Mexicans as possible. This affect, like all affects, did not exist alone or in a vacuum. Affects can be transmitted to others and others feel the impact of that transmission. As Teresa Brennan (2004) notes in *The Transmission of Affect*:

…all affects…are material, physiological things…. [They] have an energetic dimension. This is why they can enhance or deplete. They enhance when they are projected outward, when one is relieved of them; in popular parlance, this is called “dumping.” Frequently, affects deplete when they are introjected, when one carries the affective burden of another, either by a straightforward transfer or because the other’s anger becomes your depression. (6)

In order to fully encompass this aspect of transmission, I want to distinguish between what the Anglo Americans accounts projected onto the Mexican bodies and what the Mexican immigrants, on the receiving end, may have perceived in this transmission. While the Anglo American representations projected rancor outwardly, the people of Mexican descent understood this affect as *rencor* and it would be transformed, for them, into *vergüenza*.

*Rencor*, the Spanish word for rancor, has a textured nuance that sits between hatred and disgust, but also implies a connection to the body. Mexican immigrants would have interpreted Anglo American rancor from their own colonial affect-culture experience of racialized anger (a landowner’s anger at a *peon* did not necessarily have a rational cause). Unlike the English “rancor,” one does not just feel or have *rencor* for someone. Rather, in the Spanish phrase, “*guardar rencor,*” this emotive affect has a material connection to the body: one holds it, keeps it, stores it, maintains it. *Guardar rencor* is to carry the bitterness inside the self, even though it is directed at someone outside. The Spanish phrase more readily lends itself to my conceptualization of colonial affect-culture than does the English word, because of this
materiality. It is the transmissive capacity of rancor/rençor, its introjection and outward projection onto something or someone else that in turn incorporates it that constitutes its “energetic” dimension. During the Great Depression, Americans held on to their rancor. They cultivated it, they defended it, they let it ferment and then projected it onto others. In its projection, it became resituated as rençor a for a vulnerable Mexican immigrant community. This outward projection of rancor onto people of Mexican descent had very tangible and material effects. The overall public opinion held that Mexicans were receiving the majority of US government aid, leaving little to none for US citizens (Kropp 35). Thus, this popular rençor directed at people of Mexican descent legitimized and allowed their targeting and scapegoating during the Great Depression.

Although estimates for the number of people of Mexican descent deported from 1930 to 1940 varies considerably from US and Mexican documentation, and many repatriates avoided legal crossings, conservative estimates approximate the number of repatriates at one million (Balderrama and Rodríguez 151). This estimate includes both involuntary and voluntary repatriates. For all the repatriates, however, the act of repatriation was coded in the transmission of affect. Those forcibly deported bore the physical consequence of American rençor as many were physically rounded up, chased, and handcuffed. One 1931 razzia witness reported that “[f]or a time officers of the Department would arrest Mexicans by the truckload; they would drive up in front of a store or poolroom and fill the truck” (Bank of America witness report qtd. Balderrama and Rodríguez 68).

Moises González, a US resident of Mexican descent, for example, was targeted during a razzia. Although he had his residency documents on his person, the Immigration officials continued to read his body as “illegal.” The immigration officer

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68 See Bank of America Branch at Seventh and Olive to Arthur Arnold, 8 May 1931, George P. Clements Special Collections, Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles, in box 62, bundle 7 (qtd. in Balderrama and Rodriguez 68).
“merely pocketed González’s papers and shunted him aside to wait with the other suspects” (74). Shunted, shoved, tackled, and corralled—the bodies of Mexicans in the United States experienced the materialization of *rencor*. As this *rencor* is transferred it is received and interpreted as pain, discomfort, and even *vergüenza* (shame).

We know from the testimonies of eye witnesses that Mexican repatriates felt the pain, discomfort, hunger, and *vergüenza* of this targeted *rencor* on their bodies as they were crowded into trains, ships, and cars for deportation. Lucas Lucio, president of the Comisión Honorífica Mexicana, described the sights and sounds of a typical scene during repatriation: “the majority of men were very quiet and pensive” and “most of the women and children were crying” (Lucio qtd. Balderrama and Rodríguez 130). The brunt of forced repatriation is expressed in silence and in tears. This response also recalls the witness report of women crying in the streets after *razzias*, when they could not find their husbands (70). It was felt in the monotony of the trip, as María de la Luz Sánchez (only six years old at the time of her repatriation), recalls: “one would sit, eat, and sleep in the same location” (Saint 58). The hunger pains experienced by repatriated children emphasized the miserable physical component of this transmitted affect (142). The sights and sounds on these repatriation trips were reminders of the physicality of affect. They expressed the pain of displacement and separation of families. They carried the weight of civil rights ignored. They conveyed what it felt like to be on the receiving end of *rencor*. Blank stares, tears-streaked faces, wails of inconsolable children—these sights and sounds ground affect in the body, as Brennan remarks: “…sights and sounds are physical matters in themselves, carriers of

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social matters, social in origin but physical in their effects. Every word, every sound, has its valence; so, at a more subtle level, may every image” (Brennan 71). And despite the heartbreaking sights and sounds of these huddled masses, the local English-language presses celebrated the mass deportations by touting the number of rail departures (of train cars overfilled with Mexican immigrants) (Kropp 35).

Taken together, the transmission of this affect crystallized in the sights and sounds of overflowing trains, ships, and cars and how they represented the energy from the outward projection of renco (joy, celebration, victory) and the depletion experienced by its introjection (silence, monotony, resignation, fear, sorrow, vergüenza). Hundreds of residents were reported to be deported on a daily basis (Balderrama and Rodríguez 73; McKay 97) and “small barrios virtually disappeared. Once bustling colonial took on the eerie look of abandoned ghost towns. Rows of houses stood empty, lonely sentinels and mute witnesses to the life and laughter that had once filled their small, dingy rooms” (Balderrama and Rodríguez 127). The crowded trains, ships, and cars contrast to the sight and lack of sound in the abandoned colonias.

Prompted by these “sights and sounds,” which carried important information about “social matters” (repatriation efforts), many people of Mexican descent (including undocumented braceros, legal residents, and even US citizens) decided to voluntarily repatriate to avoid feeling humiliation and vergüenza. Signs around US towns warned “Mexican residents to leave town” (Balderrama and Rodríguez 121), emphasizing the growing renco directed at the US Mexican population. Mounting renco, of course, posed the threat of boiling over into hatred. This indeed occurred in Malakoff, Texas in 1931, where “a gang of ruffians bombed the headquarters occupied by the Society of Mexican Laborers” (121). In 1931, the Mexican Consul General in San Antonio, Luis Lupían, informed Texas Governor Ross R. Sterling that, “There is
intense excitement and fear among Mexican Nationals of serious bodily injury” (121).\textsuperscript{71} Many, thus, stuffed as much as they could into their cars and began their journey to Mexico (127-8), leaving behind the hopes and dreams they had ascribed to a new life in the United States. Cars headed southward travelled in caravans to avoid bandits, and “[t]hose too poor to afford any kind of transportation joined the mass exodus on foot, carrying their belongings on their backs,” creating a sight that the magazine \textit{Living Age} (1927) aptly named, “A Caravan of Sorrow” (122).\textsuperscript{72}

\textit{México de afuera: Imagining a Transnational Community}

In order to help the US Mexican community navigate the growing colonial affect-culture of \textit{renco}, US Spanish-language immigrant presses, such as Ignacio E. Lozano’s \textit{La Prensa} (San Antonio) and \textit{La Opinón} (Los Angeles) attempted to provide a type of cultural roadmap that could guide their readers. In this section, I argue that Lozano’s Spanish-language newspapers tried to keep the Mexican community up to date on Mexican repatriation efforts, but also continued to uphold its original mission: to imagine a transnational Mexican community and to cultivate a Mexican American middle-class culture that could survive both Mexican and US colonial affect-culture. \textit{La Prensa} and \textit{La Opinión} included extensive coverage of \textit{razzias}, deportations, and voluntary repatriation, and also provided useful information for immigrants who chose to remain in the United States. Already dedicated to defending the civil rights of its readership, the Spanish-language press attempted to keep its readers informed as to how to survive the ongoing forced repatriation efforts. \textit{La Opinión}, for instance, published “an extensive article warning its readers about the forthcoming [immigration] roundups” on January 29, 1931 in order to prepare them for the potential dangers of these raids (Balderrama and Rodríguez 73).

\textsuperscript{71} See Consul General Luis Lupían to Secretaría de Relations Exteriores, 20 May 1931, in ASRE 329-3 (qtd. in Balderrama and Rodríguez 121).

\textsuperscript{72} See “A Caravan of Sorrow.” \textit{Living Age}, 332, 1927, pp. 870-2 (qtd. in Balderrama and Rodríguez 122).
*La Prensa* and *La Opinión* continuously reported the news of repatriation and denounced the inhumane treatment of people of Mexican descent by Immigration agents, citizen labor groups, and vigilantes. For example, when the League of Unemployed Voters in El Paso, Texas pressured business owners to stop hiring Mexicans in their stores, factories, and workshops, *La Prensa* was quick to report the meeting of Mexican political leaders and civil servants, who announced the economic power of Mexican consumers on both sides of the border: “Si en El Paso ponen en práctica sus planes contra los trabajadores mexicanos, nos organizaremos para un boicot contra las casas comerciales” (My translation: “If their plans against Mexican workers are put into place in El Paso, we will organize a boycott against the commercial businesses.”) 73 While it was true that many Mexicans held jobs in the US city of El Paso, the Mexican leaders claimed, it was also true that Mexicans on both sides of the border contributed a significant amount to the El Paso economy. 74 This chapter highlights the connection between Mexicans living on both sides of the border. These were not two separate communities, Lozano (and many other publishers) argued, but rather, one large, transnational community. From the inception of *La Prensa* and *La Opinión*, Lozano sought to bridge together the disparate, transnational Mexican community on both sides of the border. The growing racial tensions within the United States only further emphasized the need for transnational community as Mexican immigrants repatriated to Mexico.

Aware of the discrimination and difficulties encountered by Mexican immigrants in the United States, Lozano and other publishers promoted the cultivation of a uniquely Mexican cultural capital that sought not only to keep Mexican traditions and the Spanish language alive, but also to educate what he and other publishers called the *México de afuera*, or “Mexico

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73 My translation: “If their plans against Mexican workers are put into place in El Paso, we will organize a boycott against the commercial businesses.”

74 When Mexicans began to repatriate during the Great Depression because of the fear that they were draining economic funds, US businesses and banks actually suffered as Mexican repatriates withdrew their savings and abandoned their local businesses. In Los Angeles, for example, banks lost over “seven million dollars in deposits. The same was true about banks across the nation that serviced barrio residents” (Balderrama and Rodriguez 146).
abroad.” México de afuera is an ideology invented by Spanish-language press publishers, editors, and columnists that imagined the Mexican population in the US as “a Mexican colony existing outside of Mexico, in which it was the duty of the individual to maintain the Spanish language, keep the Catholic faith and insulate their children from what community leaders perceived as the low moral standards practiced by Anglo-Americans” (“A Brief History” 37). As Juan Bruce-Novoa (1989) argues, Lozano and others like him recognized that the Mexican immigrant population in the United States continued to identify strongly as Mexican, especially in light of the discrimination they experienced:

…a good percentage of the native population of central and south Texas, even some who had never been in Mexico, wanted to be Mexican and considered themselves Mexican, perhaps because the Anglo Americans kept telling them they were exactly that. For these people Lozano provided a vehicle through which they could play out their illusion in a way previous Spanish-language newspapers had not made possible and that English-language publications could never do. (151)

Thus, for Mexican immigrants, the press served as a useful tool for navigating the new and different US culture and society, as well as a way of connecting to a larger community. Rather than encourage assimilation, La Prensa and La Opinión emphasized the importance of retaining a Mexican identity. Their main goal was to protect the Mexican community from discrimination and from what they considered to be the negative influence of US culture and Protestantism (“A Brief History” 37). I should point out, however, that since the México de afuera ideology was dictated by the political beliefs of the Mexican elites who edited and wrote for the newspapers, it was “nationalist and extremely conservative in its efforts to preserve Mexican identity in exile. It tended toward a bourgeois, elite classism and was decidedly anti-woman” (López 110).
Lozano’s mission to protect the Mexican community from the anti-Mexican sentiment of the United States underscores how the US colonial affect-culture of *rencor* worked to exclude people of Mexican descent from the national cultural space. Thus, the force behind imagining a cohesive *México de afuera* community was one of resistance. Creating a coherent Mexican community insulated the immigrants and imagined Mexico within the United States. The Mexican intellectual elites who invented *México de afuera* began to imagine the US Mexican community as both a part of the Mexican nation, but also as a removed colony that still had to navigate US culture. While *México de afuera* was physically located within the United States, it still imagined itself as a separate polity not unlike Anderson’s (1989) conceptualization of the nation in *Imagined Communities*. For Anderson, a nation is imagined as limited, sovereign, and as community. The nation is imagined as a “community,” Anderson states, “because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep horizontal comradeship” (7). *La Prensa* (and other similar immigrant presses) promoted the idea of the Mexican community as united. *México de afuera* was connected to the Mexican nation-state through an imagined community, and although Mexican elites did not consider themselves to be in the same class as Mexican *braceros* working in the United States, the *México de afuera* required a “deep horizontal comradeship” to maintain a cultural connection to Mexico. *México de afuera* was also similar to Ernest Renan’s understanding of the nation in “Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?” (1882) in that people of Mexican descent had many things in common (language, religion, cultural traditions): “[L]’essence d’une nation est que tous les individus aient beaucoup des choses en commun, et que aussi que tous aient oublié bien des choses” (38). 75 It was the Mexican colonial caste system that needed to be subverted or

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75 My translation: “[T]he essence of a nation is that all the individuals have lots of things in common, and that they also forget a lot of things.”
overlooked to imagine a unified community. However, unlike Anderson’s and Renan’s concepts of nations, the México de afuera imagined community was not bound together by national boundaries. Instead, it was embodied by a more elusive geography that was often limited to the segregated Mexican colonias for the working class and middle-class business owners.

The fact that México de afuera was an imagined community that united the Mexican immigrant compatriots to each other and to the Mexican nation-state sets a significant precedent for Chicana/o consciousness. While it is true that the Mexican elite espoused a different political rhetoric than the future Chicana/o movement agenda, it is the conceptualization of a transnational community that ultimately served as a useful rhetorical device for bridging together disparate Mexican American communities. I am suggesting, in other words, that México de afuera—the imagined bond that connected Mexican immigrants to each other as well as to their homeland—functioned as a model for the Chicana/o movement’s imagining of Aztlán. As Marissa K. López states in her book Chicano Nations: The Hemispheric Origins of Mexican American Literature (2011), “Aztlán is part of a broad geographic and historical continuum, a vast network of transnational latinidad, within which,” she argues, “Chicana/o nationalism must be understood” (6). In this way, México de afuera precedes latinidad—which Walter D. Mignolo (2005) describes as a rhetorical political tool used by elite Latin American criollos who needed to imagine a cohesive postcolonial identity for themselves. Although La Prensa emphasized a Mexican identity rooted in conservative Mexican nationalism, it nonetheless provided its Mexican American readers with a transnational and trans-historic way of conceptualizing.

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76 Aztlán is a spatial metaphor that evolved out of Alurista’s preamble to “El Plan de Aztlán,” written during the First National Chicana/o Youth Conference in Denver in 1969. It is the territory occupied by the Aztec peoples before their migration to central Mexico and it is said to have been located in the Southwest United States. The symbol of Aztlán, then stood for a Chicana/o ethnic nationalism that “makes specious claims to Aztlán, grounding Chicana/o identity in an embrace of indigeneity, working-class roots, the myth of an Aztec heritage, and the patriarchal family” (López 6).

community. *La Prensa*, along with other Spanish-language newspapers in the United States contributed to the evolution of Chicana/o consciousness and allowed people of Mexican descent to conceive of a unifying metaphor for ethnic nationalism. In effect, I suggest that the Chicana/o movement’s imagining of Aztlán function as both inspired by and a critique of *México de afuera*. On one hand, the imagined community, with its transnational history and culture, served as a foundation for the Chicana/o community. On the other hand, Atzlán would stand in opposition to some of the conservative politics of the *México de afuera* in order to imagine a community that celebrated the working-class experience and identity of Mexican Americans. As I will explain in chapter four, the rhetoric of an imagined community that knits together a disparate ethnic community was necessary for the conceptualization of Chicana/o political consciousness during the Chicana/o movement (1966-1971).

All the same, it is quite ironic that if the Spanish-language press was bringing together the Mexican community in a profoundly influential way, as mentioned above, the *México de afuera* ideology was perpetuated by Mexican elites, who did not see themselves as equals to Mexican *braceros*. As Kanellos points out in “A Brief History of Hispanic Periodicals in the United States” (2000):

> Inherent in the ideology of “México de afuera” as it was expressed by many cultural elites was an upper-class and bourgeois mentality that ironically tended to resent association with the Mexican immigrant working class. To them, the poor *braceros* and former *peons* were an uneducated mass whose ignorant habits only gave Anglo-Americans the wrong impression of Mexican and Hispanic culture…. It was, therefore, important that *la gene de bien*, this educated and refined class, grasp the leadership of the
community, down to the grass roots, if need be, in the holy crusade of preserving Hispanic identity in the face of the Anglo onslaught. (39)

Two important things come to light in Kanellos’ description. First, Mexican elites were still operating under the class hierarchy prescribed by the hacienda legacy of colonial Mexico (described in chapter one). Second, pressured by the discrimination of US colonial affect-culture, these Mexican elites (partially) subverted these racialized hierarchies. Aware that US culture read all Mexicans as a racialized lower class, the editors and writers of the Spanish-language newspapers made a commitment to education of the Mexican working class. This outreach to the working class, however, mimicked the paternalism of hacendados and missionaries who provided education and catechism to their indigenous peons. Unlike the hacendados and missionaries, though, the Mexican elites did not receive free labor from the lower class in the United States. And these elites were now painfully aware of the way that US colonial affect-culture influenced Americans to perceive them to be in the same class as their working-class compatriots. Under the US racialized class model, they realized, all Mexicans were the same.

**VERGÜENZA: RACIALIZED AND GENDERED SHAME DURING MEXICAN REPATRIATION**

Given the conservative political leanings of the publishers, editors, and writers of *La Prensa* and *La Opinion*, the coverage of repatriation tended to emphasize a nationalist duty. Consul General Eduardo Hernández Cházarro expressed this nationalism in an interview with *La Prensa*; he claimed, according to Francisco E. Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez (2006), that repatriation “presented an opportunity for bringing back Mexico’s prodigal sons and daughters. Successful repatriation, he believed, would preclude any future exit of compatriots to the United States” (171).78 The promotion of voluntary repatriation, however, also attempted to protect

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78 There appears to be an error in the Balderrama and Rodríguez citation. This article is cited as *La Prensa*, 4 September 1930 (qtd. in Balderrama and Rodriguez 171), but I could not find this article in *La Prensa*. This article
people of Mexican descent from the vergüenza produced by US rencor. On September 27, 1931, Hernández Cházar made a heartfelt, nationalistic appeal to Mexicans living in Southwest Texas to come together to support the 800 families who, having depleted their financial resources, planned on making the 150-mile trip to the border on foot. Through La Prensa, Hernández Cházar expressed a “caluroso llamamiento a todos los mexicanos” (“a warm plea to all Mexicans”) to contribute in some way to this “obra humanitaria de repatriación” (“humanitarian work of repatriation”) (“800 Familias Mexicanas” 2). Hernández Cházar characterized aid as nationalistic, calling it a “work of charity in favor of our own [people],” which resulted not only from generosity, but, perhaps more importantly, from the community’s shared Mexicanness:

Hay en todos los lugares mencionados—nos manifestó el señor Hernández Cházar,—infinidad de personas que pueden hacer esa obra de caridad en favor de los nuestros, sin perjuicio de ninguna naturaleza, y yo espero fundadamente de su altruismo, de su mexicanismo y de sus sentimientos géneros, que sabrán acudir en ayuda de nuestros compatriotas de la región de Karnes en el trance tan aflictivo en que se encuentran. (2)

If Mexicanness united México de afuera in the first place, it would surely come into play in aiding the Mexican community as it dealt with the material consequences of the Great Depression and rencor. Hernández Cházar went on to warn Mexican immigrants “… que no esperen regresar a México hasta la última hora, es decir, hasta que se les haya agotado todos sus recursos pecuniarios, porque entonces su regreso será muy dificil y lleno de penalidades” (2).

Hernández Cházar’s appeal suggested, as Balderrama and Rodríguez (2006) note, that he was may have come from La Opinión instead, however, the archives of La Opinion has not been digitized yet and I was unable to access them.

79 My translation: “There are an infinitude of people in the abovementioned places—Mr. Hernández Cházar informed us—who can perform this work of charity in favor of our own [people], without any type of prejudice. And, it is with good reason that I hope, based on your altruism, your mexicanness, and your generosity, that you will know to come to the aid of our compatriots in Karnes, who find themselves in such an afflicting crisis.”

80 My translation: “…do not wait until the last minute to return to Mexico, in other words, until you have exhausted all your pecuniary resources, because then your return will be very difficult and full of hardship.”
“determined to avoid the ‘shameful spectacle’ of twenty-seven hundred men, women, and children, many of them suffering from malnutrition, hiking over 250 miles to Nuevo Laredo, Mexico” (170-1).

Hernández Cházaró’s plea was not only couched in nationalist discourse; instead, it also iterated a desire fueled by camaraderie that aimed to avoid vergüenza. He sought to protect the US Mexican community from having to suffer the introjection of rencor. Negative affects associated with immigration and deportation, such as vergüenza and fear, are detailed in Chicana/o and Mexican literature dealing with the theme of immigration. These affects appear in Chicana/o and Mexican fiction and non-fiction texts such as: Alicia Alarcón’s collection of testimonios (testimonies) La Migra Me Hizo Los Mandados (The Border Patrol Ate My Dust, 2002), Gloria E. Anzaldúa’s Borderlands/La Frontera (1987), Carlos Fuentes’ La frontera de cristal (The Crystal Frontier, 1995), Graciela Limón’s The River Flows North (2009), Rubén Martínez’s Crossing Over (2002), ire’ne lara silva’s flesh to bone (2013), and Luis Alberto Urrea’s The Devil’s Highway (2005). The vergüenza inscribed on the immigrant body during deportation, for example, is described by Anzaldúa (1987) in Borderlands/La Frontera, as she watches La Migra (Border Patrol) take her relative, Pedro, away: “Sin papeles—he did not carry his birth certificate to work in the fields. La migra took him away while we watched. Se lo llevaron. He tried to smile when he looked back at us, to raise his fist. But I saw the terrible weight of shame hunch his shoulders” (26). The transmission of affect is one felt in both the body and the mind, as Pedro hangs his head, aware of the way his body has been read as illegal and not belonging within the US national space.

Faced with the potential to be avergonzados, ashamed or made to bear shame, voluntary repatriation seemed to offer an alternative, especially when coupled with Mexico’s ongoing
colonization projects. Mexico’s Secretaría de Agricultura y Fomento (Department of Agriculture and Planning) seemingly anticipated the mass repatriation in August of 1929 when it began surveying land that could be used for a colonization project (Balderrama and Rodríguez 197). After the Mexican Revolution, lands from haciendas and other landed estates were seized for redistribution. In light of the Great Depression in the United States, colonization, for repatriating Mexicans,

presented an opportunity to escape the worst travails of the depression and to put their agricultural skills to personal use. The dream of owning their own small farms seemed within their grasp, at last. Rather than enriching the gringos, they would be working for themselves. The possibility of being their own patrón (boss) was heady wine indeed. It also represented their stake in the future. Here was a legacy they could leave to their children. With substantive roots in their own nation, there would be no need for future generations to emigrate to El Norte to seek an illusory fortune. Imbued with the hope and expectation of potential success, unemployed Nationals flocked to apply for acceptance as colonizers. In colonias throughout the United States, a panorama of groups sprang up to aid and encourage those seeking return. (198-9)

Let down by the American dream and chased out by Anglo American renco, many people of Mexican descent decided to take their chances in their homeland. They brought with them the dream of ownership, which was inflected with elements of the American dream narrative and hacienda culture elaborated in the previous chapter. In this, too, the Spanish-language press continued to exert its influence, through crónicas (chronicles), short, weekly literary publications that “humorously and satirically commented on current topics and social habits in the local
community,” especially in light of the way that the “very existence [of the Mexican community] was seen as threatened by the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture” (“A Brief History” 44-45).

Although Jorge Ainslie’s novel, *Los Repatriados* (1935) is longer in length than the typical *crónica*, his writing style employs the genre’s use of humor to discuss the way that current events and social topics had an effect on the local community. In particular, this novel engages Mexican Repatriation and portrays the García family’s return to Mexico. *Los Repatriados* opens as *Licenciado* Anselmo Mendoza attempts to deceive a group of Mexican immigrants living in the US to exchange their hard-earned businesses and property for over-priced land in Mexico. Doña Refugio García is easily seduced by his description of the high society life that inevitably awaits her in Mexico. While listening to his shady business proposition, she is carried away by her desires for social class ascension:

…Doña Refugio sentía que un suave cosquilleo de placer le recorría todo el cuerpo, al pensar en la oportunidad que le deparaba la suerte en la persona del licenciado, que iba a sacarla de su humilde posición y convertirla mediante unos cuantos miles de dólares en una señora hacendada, respetada y tratada por igual por todos los terratenientes de la comarca. Ya se veía sentada cómodamente en un equipal en los portales de la casa de la Hacienda, dando órdenes al mayordomo, regañando a los peones o tomando chocolate con los vecinos. (Ainslie 9)

Doña Refugio’s working-class background and social aspirations are key. Back in Mexico, she worked as a maid for a Porfirista family who later escaped to the US during the onset of the

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81 “Doña Refugio felt a soft tingle of pleasure run through the body. She thought about the opportunity apparent in the person of the licenciado, which would extract her from her humble social position and make it, through just a few thousand dollars, into a hacendada, respected and treated equally by all landowners in the region. She could already see herself seated comfortably in a nice wicker chair on the veranda of the house of the Hacienda, giving orders to the foreman, reprimanding the peons or drinking chocolate with the neighbors.”
Mexican Revolution. Unfortunately, when the family returned to Mexico, they left her behind in a country where she did not know the language. After finding a hospital cleaning job, Doña Refugio slowly managed to save enough money after years of hard work to open a tortillería and sell tortillas to the Mexican restaurants in the barrio. She ascended from working class to business owner—or, to frame it in Marxist terms, from proletarian to petite bourgeoisie. While the petite bourgeoisie are subject to economic trends and precarity (and therefore share more with the working class that with “big capitalists,” who own the means of production), Doña Refugio does distinguish herself as a business owner with no debt, as she always insists on paying in cash in order to avoid loan “traps” (14). By the beginning of the novel, her business has expanded to include several tortillerías, two nixtamal mills, and various rental properties (2). She employs others to carry out the day-to-day labor of the businesses (such as making and distributing the tortillas), leaving her to look after her businesses from the comfort of a cozy chair (11).

I call your attention to Doña Refugio’s class here: as a business owner, she no longer lives off the physical labor she once suffered as a maid. And among her compatriots in the Mexican barrio, she is a respected member of the Mexican immigrant community. In the meeting with Licenciado Mendoza, the group turns to Doña Refugio for her thoughts on the proposition because of her status in the barrio and her business acumen. Like Doña Refugio, many “independent businessmen, merchants, shopkeepers, farmers, and property owners” who “catered to the special needs and interests of the colonia” had to “liquidate their properties” and return to Mexico (Balderrama and Rodríguez 136). The meeting described at the start of Los Repatriados reflects the active efforts by the Mexican government to colonize the lands it had
reclaimed after the Mexican Revolution. Yet, because the United States was suffering from the economic downturn of the Great Depression, Mexican repatriates found that:

Possessions and property that had taken a lifetime of hard work to acquire now had to be disposed of for a few cents on the dollar—if one were lucky enough to find a buyer. As a last resort, attempts were made to exchange commercial real estate for property of equal value in Mexico. A major problem in effecting an equitable trade was the scarcity of good farmland south of the border. (137-8)

Despite Doña Refugio’s ownership of her businesses and properties, the economic downturn of the Great Depression, and (more significantly in this novel) Mexican Repatriation, reveal the precarity of small business owners. With the increasing threats of forced deportation, people of Mexican descent were forced to “dispose” of their hard-earned possessions and property “for a few cents on the dollar.” Although the novel does not present us with an interaction between Doña Refugio and Anglo Americans, she does comment on their perception of Mexican immigrants once the family arrives in Mexico. Speaking to her friend, Doña María Godínez, Doña Refugio remarks: “Siquiera aquí le entienden a uno y le tratan a uno como la gente….No que allá qué somos?” (118). There is dark silence in Doña Refugio’s words as she trails off. The gap, marked by ellipses in the original text, notes something unspeakable. She searches for words, but only comes up with a question: “qué somos?” This something is the colonial affect-culture that gives a negative inflection to the lived experience of Mexicans in the United States. While the characters can name some vergüenzas experienced in the United States, it is their debasement that she cannot name. After her silence, she asks, what (qué) are we in the United States—not who (quién) are we. Her comment suggests that people of Mexican descent are not treated as people, much less equals. This recalls the signs posted in restaurants and stores in the
Southwest that cautioned, “No dogs or Mexicans allowed.” The claim that the Anglo Americans do not treat the Mexican immigrants with respect suggests that outside of the Mexican barrio, Anglo Americans perceive Doña Refugio to be of a lower class because she is Mexican, despite the fact that she is a business owner. Her Mexican body is coded and devalued through the colonial affect-culture of rancor/renchor, and she is forced to introject it as a vergüenza too heavy for words.

Due to the intricate relationship between affect, coloniality, and capital, people of color are perceived as belonging to a lower class even today. Affect plays a role as the projection of negative qualities onto raced bodies enforces social hierarchies, which in turn reproduces colonial structures of subordination, the “coloniality of power.” As mentioned in the introduction and chapter one, rather than merely dictate hierarchies, the role of affect in a colonial culture value system is to fuel the lived belief that “global cultural order” revolves around “European or Western hegemony” (Quijano 540) and animates feelings of superiority based on capital-codified race relations. The coloniality of power replicates colonial power structures even in the modern world with the disintegration of colonialism and slavery.

As Doña Refugio soon learns, the types of labor one engages in and the types of businesses one can own are categorized according to a culturally-assigned value system. Once in Mexico, Don Federico Godínez warns the Garcías:

Por ningún motivo vayan a decir que ustedes tenían tortillerías en Los Angeles, no porque sea una vergüenza…sino, que para la gente que se llama aquí de sociedad, hay ciertos trabajos que ellos conceptúan humillantes, y prefieren entramparse y vivir de préstamos, a ponerse a trabajar en cualquier oficio honrado, que les dejara lo suficiente
The conceptualization of class and social status through this value system is connected to the Marxist claim that modern capitalism has skewed our perception of class. Growing access to credit cards, payment plans, pay advances, and loans helps to obfuscate our continued relationships to capital, labor, production, and commodities. It is no coincidence that the issues of La Prensa containing the installments of Ainslie’s novel boast several advertisements for products such as clothing and furniture that can be purchased through installment plans or by opening store credit card accounts (La Prensa 29 Sept. 1935, 3-4).

This imaginary access to instant capital allows us to own property associated with markers of a higher class, such as cars and homes. Consequently, we tend to think of class in terms of our relationship to property, rather than our relationship to the means of production. Thus, the perception of class experience is predicated upon our imagined relation to property (what we own) and not the question of whether or not we have to sell our labor in order to possess said property. Specifically speaking about the US, the American Dream narrative itself promises not only monetary rewards as a result of hard work (again, selling your labor), but also a certain type of class defined through property—a dream house with a white picket fence. Tied into our perceptions of class are also the lingering colonial affects that culturally assigned value to different raced bodies and the type of labor performed by these bodies.

Negative affects directed at persons of color helped maintain social order during the colonial period, and continue to influence cultural perceptions of class. Within this imaginary,

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82 “And I am going to suggest another thing to you all. Under no circumstances should you say that you owned tortillerías in Los Angeles, not because it is a shame; no, doña Refugio—seeing her facial expression change—but because, for people called society here, there are certain jobs that they perceive as humiliation, and they would rather get tangled up and live by loans, than to work in any honest trade that provides them with enough to live by… [Say] [I]hat Don Filemón was a Spanish professor at a university, and that you had two or three drugstores.”
the relationship to means of production was—and is—forgotten. What becomes more important is distancing oneself from the bottom in order to participate in a different social class experience. Whereas Doña Refugio and her family undoubtedly experienced much better quality of life than her working class compatriots (or even a much better quality of life as compared to her previous working life as a maid), her social class experience in the US, because of their ethnicity and immigrant status, is undoubtedly distinct from the class experience of Anglo Americans in similar economic brackets. This is precisely why Doña Refugio decides to return to Mexico. Despite having achieved economic success in the US, she recognizes the impossibility of reaching social ascension there. She hopes that owning land in Mexico will grant her the social status of hacendada (landowner) that will allow her to rub elbows with Mexico’s elite.

Unlike Doña Refugio, her husband, Don Filemón held a higher social position back in Mexico prior to the Mexican Revolution as “Profesor de Instrucción Primaria” (Professor of Primary Instruction). Once in the US, however, he finds himself living in squalor. Unwilling to deign to perform physical labor, he lives off the pity of his acquaintances, and decides to propose to Doña Refugio as a way out of his miserable poverty. In the US, Don Filimón bears a gendered vergüenza. As a Mexican immigrant, his body is racialized and both the class and male privilege once afforded to him in Mexico is revoked north of the border. His elite status as an intellectual is not recognized. He feels emasculated as the husband of a bossy entrepreneurial wife and demoted from Profesor to repartidor de tortillas (tortilla deliveryman): “Cuando me casé con Refugio, y empecé a repartir tortillas, sentía vergüenza en desempeñar tan humilde oficio, después de haberme quemado tantos años las pestañas, estudiando para catedrático” (60). He silently accepts his fate and doesn’t complain until he has the opportunity to re-instate his class

83 “When I married Refugio and began to distribute tortillas, I felt ashamed to perform such a horrible job after having burned the midnight oil for so many years studying to be a professor…”
and male privilege. While in the US, Doña Refugio acts as the head of the household and makes all the monetary decisions, including the one to sell her businesses and purchase Mexican lands. Don Filemón, on the other hand, makes no business decisions and silently obeys her (106). Yet, upon crossing the US-Mexico border, Doña Refugio immediately loses her status as head of household and decision-maker. After 20 years of marriage, Don Filemón decides to rebel:

Aquí ya no estamos en Estados Unidos donde la mujeres le pegan a los maridos; nos encontramos en México, y aquí dejo de ser el repartidor de tortillas y me convierto de nuevo en el Profesor García; y te voy a advertir otra cosa…si quieres que yo te presente con mis amigos como mi mujer, debes de ir aprendiendo a hablar español como la gente y dejarte de *trajites, vinites, juites* y tantas otras barbaridades que dicen.\(^84\) (84)

It is significant that his rebellion comes precisely as they cross into Mexico. Social order and social status take precedent over economic class in Mexico, according to Ainslie’s depiction. Indeed, Doña Refugio was aware of her husband’s Mexican social status when she married him. Whereas Don Filemón proposed to Doña Refugio to rescue himself from poverty, Doña Refugio accepted *because* of his higher social lineage.

Just as the distinction between immigrant and nonimmigrant bodies matters in the US, so does the distinction between male and female bodies as they cross the border. The novel suggests that women are permitted to succeed and own businesses in the US, whereas in Mexico this position of economic power is reserved for elite men. In the US, Doña Refugio refused to let her husband participate in any business decisions; and he was happy to oblige. Once in Mexico,

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\(^84\) “And I’m going to tell you something. We are not in the United States anymore, where the women abuse their husbands; we are in México, and here I stop being the tortilla deliveryman and once again become *el Profesor García*; and I’ll tell you another thing—he continued with arrogance—if you want me to introduce you to my friends as my wife, you must learn to speak Spanish like civilized people do and stop with the *trajites, vinites, juites* and all the other atrocities that they all say.”
however, Don Filemón takes it upon himself to assume all monetary responsibility and to become the sole decision-maker. He has no agricultural experience, but actively begins his blind attempt at cultivating the Mexican land his wife purchased. The gender dynamic at work here, like the dynamics surrounding race, class, and labor mentioned earlier, is also tied to coloniality, as María Lugones proposes in her article “Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System” (2007). According to Lugones, heterosexism functions “as a key part of how gender fuses with race in the operations of colonial power” (186). Colonial/modern Eurocentered capitalism imposed changes to indigenous social systems through “slow, discontinuous, and heterogenous processes that violently inferiorized colonial women” (201). What is most relevant to my analysis of this novel is Lugones’ interest in the intersections of race, class, and gender which underscores the indifference men and men of color, specifically, “exhibit to the systematic violences inflicted upon women of color” (188). Once the family crosses into Mexico, Don Filemón immediately takes advantage of the superiority assigned to him by Spanish colonial legacy. He wastes no time in reclaiming the social prestige assigned to him by lineage and gender. Knowing or perhaps sensing his wife’s desire for social mobility, he threatens her access to it by saying he will not introduce her to his friends as his wife if she continues to display non-conformity to Mexican gender and class-sector norms. Moreover, the couple attempts to fit in to colonial social structures by creating a socially-acceptable past. They lie about who earned the money, how they earned it, how much money they have, and how they lived.

For both Doña Refugio and Don Filemón, the operative affect is vergüenza. Colonial affect-culture that racialized labor produces vergüenza in Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans. Doña Refugio is instructed to feel avergonzada of her business under both Mexican and US colonial affect-cultures. Both affect-cultures work to racialize the tortillería and devalue
it as a commercial enterprise. Only within the US Mexican barrio can Doña Refugio enjoy economic and social ascension. Outside of the barrio, however, Doña Refugio’s labor infused with vergüenza because of the race she bears on her body. There is a significant relationship of body and mind to vergüenza, as Gilles Deleuze (1993) writes of shame: “The mind depends on the body; shame would be nothing without this dependency…the mind is ashamed of the body in a very special manner; in fact, it is ashamed for the body. It is as if it were saying to the body: You make me ashamed, You ought to be ashamed” (123). In Mexico, Don Filemón emphasizes gender and social hierarchies that code her gender as subordinate. He points out that her speech betrays her lack of education and if she refuses to speak as an educated woman, he will block her access to high society in Mexico. Colonial hierarchies, thus, code her body through race, gender, and tongue and teach her (and her husband) to assign vergüenza to her racialized, gendered, uneducated mind and body. “Shame,” writes Elspeth Probyn (2010) “is subjective in the strong sense of bringing into being an entity of an idea through the specific explosion of mind, body, place, and history. Shame is the product of many forces” (81). Here, shame, or vergüenza, is the explosion of mind, female/Mexican body, the movement from US Mexican barrio to Mexico, and Mexico’s own history of colonialism.

While moving from the United States to Mexico seems to offer Doña Refugio the opportunity to ascend in class status as an hacendada, it comes at the expense of her autonomy. Unlike other novels of immigration, Los Repatriados offers an immigration story from north to south. It provides the opportunity to think about how the repatriated characters bring back their experience of US colonial affect-culture to Mexico. As mentioned above, Doña Refugio once enjoyed the respect of her fellow compatriots as a leader of the Mexican immigrant community. She not only makes the decisions for her family, but also influences the decisions of others, as
occurs in the opening scene. After Licenciado Mendoza pitches the Mexican land parcels to the group of Mexican immigrants, they all look to Doña Refugio for her reaction, turning to her, one of them says, “a ver qué dice doña Refugio, que es la que tiene más propiedades, y la que está más entusiasmada” (2). She, of course, decides to repatriate. The long car ride to Mexico accentuates the transnational coloniality that pervades the US-Mexico borderlands. Like repatriates in real life, the García family joins a caravan of twelve other cars; and while Cuca reads a magazine of love stories (60), Don Filimón is invested in recounting the colonial history of California and the US Southwest (61-66). He takes joy in retracing the steps of the conquistadores who “se atrevieron a cruzar por aquí en busca de aventuras…Eso sí que eran hombres!” Don Filemón collapses colonial conquest into masculinity here, and foregrounds his own investment in a colonial hierarchy that privileges men. While Filemón imagines the conquest, Doña Refugio just complains. His outburst that contrasts the role of women in the US and Mexico suggests that if there is less patriarchal control, women can be more vocal. Although Doña Refugio originally decided to repatriate in order to gain social prestige as part of a higher class, what she loses in the move is the ability to voice her complaints. As the novel progresses, she complains less and less as the Mexican colonial affect-culture begins to sink in and she is groomed, in essence, to be a submissive Mexican wife. “En boca cerrada,” says the old Mexican adage, “no entran moscas.” At this point, it is still open to question whether or not Ainslie was aware of the way he constructed the US Mexican barrio as a space where Mexican women can achieve autonomy.

85 “Let’s see what Doña Refugio says, since she owns the most property and she is the most enthusiastic.”
86 “dared to cross through here in search of adventures…Those were truly men!”
87 My translation: “Flies do not enter open mouths.”
THE REPATRIATION OF POCHO CHILDREN AND THE FUTURE OF MEXICO

Ainslie’s novel ends on the high note of the pochos (assimilated Mexican Americans) Cuca and Joe getting married and departing for Mexico City. The term pocho, is a widely-used term among Mexicans to describe Americanized Mexicans who speak Spanish with an accent or who speak Spanglish. It is sometimes used affectionately and sometimes used as a critique of assimilation. The novel’s concluding scene signals that these pochos can and should play a significant and nationalistic role in rebuilding post-Revolutionary Mexico. Yet, repatriation for pochos was not always such an easy transition. Already used to the language and culture of the US, first-generation Mexican Americans (such as the pochos in Los Repatriados: Cristi, Cuca, and Joe) found it difficult to accept their parents’ decision to repatriate to Mexico. As Balderrama and Rodríguez (2006) note:

…bitter arguments erupted as older children tried to talk their parents into letting them remain behind. When parents refused, desperate last-minute solutions or alternatives ensued. Young boys ran away from home or hid, teenage girls got married, older children opted to stay with friends or relatives…. The prospect of living in Mexico created tension, anxiety, and consternation among young Mexican Americans. (130-1)

As I discussed earlier, families suffered divisions because of deportation, but they also suffered divisions when voluntarily repatriating. Here, too, do people of Mexican descent feel the effects of rencor, as Mexican parents experienced bitterness directed at them not just from outside the community, but also from inside their own families. In many cases, Mexican mothers, torn between repatriating with their husbands and staying with their children in the US, “beg[ged] to

88 Ainslie also published a novel titled Los Pochos in La Prensa in 1934. It is the precursor to Los Repatriados and employs many of the same characters. It was serialized in the following issues of La Prensa: 15 April 1934, 22 April 1934, 29 April 1934, 6 May 1934, 13 May 1934, 20 May 1934, 27 May 1934, 3 June 1934.
remain in the United States. She [the Mexican mother] faces a divided family. She is pulled strongly in two different ways at the same time” (Bogardus 94-95).89

This suffering is interpreted as bitterness, sorrow, anger, and vergüenza, as parents feel the weight of the impossibility of keeping their family together. In the novel, Doña Refugio and Don Filimón are forced to deal with their eldest daughter, Cristi’s resistance. When asked by her comadre (godmother of her daughter) where Cristi is, Doña Refugio responds by communicating vergüenza:

-No me hable usté’ de la Cristi, comadre…no me habla de esa arrastrada, porque me dan ganas de vomitar.

[...] 

-….pos nomás de acordarme me pongo furiosa….! la muy sinvergüenza!.... No sabe lo que m’hizo?... Pos nomás afígurese que el día que le dije que nos íbamos, se puso como una fiera y me dijo que’lla no s’iba, porque no quería irse a limpiar con periódicos ni comer grijoles tatemados. Pos cuando oyi aquello, se me pusieron los ojos colorados y vide amarillo, nomás al verla tan despatriota y mal hija; y me le jui encima pa’ darle unas guantadas…… pero la muy chivata se me escapó de las manos y agarró rumbo a la puerta;.... Allí se paró, y cuando me l’iba yo a echar encima otra vez pa’ matarla… Sabe usté’ lo que hizo? Pos me sacó la lengua…. Y no jué eso lo pior, sino que me hizo un ruido muy feo con la boca…. la muy arrastrada agarró por la cocina y luego se jué por el porche…. agarró pa’ la calle y se trepó en el automóvil dese baquetón del Samaniego, que dizque es su novio.90 (55-8)

89 See also Balderrama and Rodríguez 130.
90 “Don’t speak to me of that Cristi, comadre...don’t talk to me of that tart because it makes me want to vomit…. just thinking about it makes me furious….! That shameless girl! Don’t ya know what she did to me? Well just imagine that the day I told her we were leaving, she acted like a demon and told me that she ain’t leaving, because she didn’t
The reader does not get a first-hand account of the event. Nor does the novel include Cristi’s perspective at all. The only account the reader gets is Doña Refugio’s memory of the event. In fact, Cristi does not appear in *Los Repatriados*, except as a reference in the above dialogue.

Doña Refugio’s recounting of her eldest daughter’s defiance reveals a rollercoaster of affects and emotions. Doña Refugio expresses anger, bitterness, resentment, and rage (“before I could get at her again to kill her”). She accuses Cristi of being *sinvergüenza* (shameless), reading her refusal to repatriate as a lack of Mexican patriotism. According to Mexican cultural vernacular, then, Cristi is read as a *vendida*, a sellout to her cultural roots (a theme I will explore in chapter three). Put simply, Doña Refugio interprets her daughter’s defiance as the sign of being a “bad” Mexican. Through her disobedience, she simultaneously breaks with the conservative, Mexican Catholic model of the heteronormative family while also breaking up her own family. Doña Refugio even goes as far as insulting her daughter, calling her an “arrastrada” (‘tart’) when she chooses to run off with Samaniego. The insult conveys Doña Refugio’s critique of Cristi’s sexuality, which does not comply with older Mexican customs of courtship—Cristi is enacting an elopement with a “baquetón,” a “good-for-nothing” man of whom her parents do not approve. The two elope, of course, in order to remain in the United States. The couple refuses to bear the *vergüenza* that the Mexican immigrant community has dictated as the “appropriate” response to American culture. Instead, the repatriating Mexican family must bear

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want to go clean with newspapers or eat stewed *frijoles*.... Once I heard that, my eyes turned bright red and I started seeing yellow, just seeing her so unpatriotic and such a bad daughter. I went at her to give her a few slaps, but the little *chivata* [squealer] got away from my hands and beat a path toward the door. She stopped there and before I could get at her again to kill her, do you know what she did to me?....Well, she stuck her tongue out at me, and that’s not the worst of it, because she made an ugly sound at me with her mouth.... the little tart headed toward the kitchen and then toward the porch.... she headed toward the street and got into the car of that good-for-nothing Samaniego, who she says is her boyfriend.”
the weight of this other vergüenza—children who they read as betraying their cultural roots in favor of the country whose rancor prompted the need to repatriate in the first place.

Ironically, however, Doña Refugio herself doesn’t fit the mold of the traditional “good” Mexican wife, either. Both Cristi and Doña Refugio challenge the patriarchal hierarchy of the conservative Mexican tradition. Doña Refugio assumes that repatriating to Mexico will help her gain more prestige and allow her class mobility, but she doesn’t realize that class ascension within a colonial hierarchy will be at the cost of her gendered independence. While Cristi is most likely not completely aware of the degree to which repatriation would change her life, she does recognize that the move to Mexico would inevitably stifle her growing autonomy. Chicana feminists recognized the limiting nature of traditional Mexican customs and vocalized the oppression of traditional Mexican gendered hierarchies as their movement began to gain more visibility during the Chicana/o movement of the late 1960s (as I will discuss in the next chapter).

While Cristi and Samaniego represent the shameless pochos seduced by American culture, Cuca and Joe represents the hope for a bright Mexican future. The very last line of the novel, spoken by Cuca’s father, Don Filemón, voices this desire: “Me siento feliz porque hemos conseguido que se vayan rumbo al Sur; hacia el rumbo que deban seguir todos los mexicanos que se encuentran allá en los Estados Unidos; al Sur; hacia la patria” (296). Parenting for Mexican immigrants, then, is imbued with patriotic goals. Just like the Spanish-language press provided pedagogical resources for parents in order to keep Mexican culture alive in the next generation, 

91 “That’s not why I’m happy, my wife. I feel happy because we have succeeded in getting them to go Southward; toward the path that all Mexicans living over there in the United States have a duty to follow; to the South; toward the homeland.”
92 The newspaper published children’s sections, such as “El Tesoro de la Juventud” (“The Treasure of Youth”), printed articles from the popular children’s encyclopedia of the same name, published by Grolier International. Other issues of La Prensa ran articles on science, history, and literature, which included, “Los Personajes de Shakespeare” (“Shakespeare’s Characters”18), “La niñez de Carlos Dickens” (“The Childhood of Carlos Dickens” 14) and “El Joven Dickens Empieza a Trabajar” (“Dickens Begins to Work as a Young Boy” 14). The paper also published sections for parents of young children that included pedagogical suggestions for structuring learning
Ainslie’s novel also emphasizes the role parents should play in encouraging their children to remain loyal to their Mexican roots.

*Los Repatriados* slowly builds to the climax of Joe and Cuca’s wedding, however, and does convey the difficulties that the couple experiences in navigating a different set of social norms. When the García family first crosses over into Mexico, Cuca turns her nose up at traditional Mexican food, complaining, “Aquí no hay Hot Cakes, ni Avena ni Bacon ni nada de lo que a mí me gusta para desayunarme—refunfuñó Cuca, retirando con la mano el plato de refritos…” (36). This scene provides a little humor to the readers, and is the least of the Mexican parents’ worries (especially when compared to a transgression such as Cristi’s). Yet, it still conveys one of the milder forms of resistance that Mexican American youth could display toward their parents’ culture. Once together, Joe and Cuca express their difficulty adapting to life in Mexico and their desire to move back to Los Angeles as soon as they are married. At the beginning of their courtship, when Cuca is newly-arrived in Mexico, Joe asks her to take a stroll with him, but warns her, “no me hables en inglés, porque van otra vez a empezar a decir que soy un agringado” (109). His warning suggests that he resents this label, though he wants to return to Los Angeles (110). Unlike the “shameless” Cristi, who firmly asserted and enacted her connection to the US through bodily expressions of rebellion (sticking her tongue out, making an “ugly” noise at her mother, and running away), Joe still associates vergüenza with assimilation. He finds himself in a double bind that threatens to cast vergüenza on him: that of being called

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93 “‘They don’t have any Hot Cakes, or oatmeal or bacon or anything else that I like to eat for breakfast here,’ grumbled Cuca, pushing away the plate of refried beans.”

94 “…don’t speak to me in English, because they’ll start saying I’m agringado [Americanized] again..”
agringado and that of wanting to return to the United States and abandoning what the novel’s concluding lines suggests is a duty to “the homeland.”

The narrative’s slow buildup to the actual wedding ceremony seems to hint at a sudden change of heart in the pocho couple, as if the Mexican ritual itself (and the honeymoon in Mexico City) has the power to re-baptize them as “true” Mexicans. I read this as a slippage on the part of the author, as no explanation is offered of why Joe and Cuca would choose to remain in Mexico after they spend so much time complaining about Mexico. At the beginning of their courtship, Joe suggests to Cuca that he doesn’t like Mexico’s customs; he claims that there is something unspeakably absent: “A mí no me gustan estas costumbres de que no salgan con uno [a] solas…además, yo quiero volverme a Los Angeles…. A tí tampoco te va a gustar. Ya lo verás. Aquí la gente es muy buena pero falta algo…no sé qué” (110).95 While Anglo American rancor/renkor and the razzias it inspired sought to control Mexican bodies in the US space, Joe observes that Mexican conservative traditions control the body’s sexuality and autonomy, especially with regard to young people. And as his previous warning related to language suggests, the national culture also regulates their tongues. Refusal to obey these cultural norms can result in being shamed. And since appearances matter in Mexico’s colonial class hierarchy (as Don Filemón tells Doña Refugio in the car), vergüenza can affect social perception of class belonging. Yet, Joe and Cuca subtly resist Mexico’s colonial affect-culture as they begin to fall in love. When Cuca recounts to Joe that she told Doña Refugio that they were going to get married and return to Los Angeles, the couple inadvertently slips back into English: “E instintivamente empezaron a hablar en inglés. Volvían a usar el idioma de su niñez, que les

95 “I don’t like these customs that do not allow you to be alone with one another. Besides, I want to return to Los Angeles…. You won't like it either. You’ll see. Here the people are good but something is missing, I just don't know what.”
facilitaba más expresar lo que sentían ambos” (166-7). Although the pochos are fluent in Spanish, they find it hard to express their love for each other in Spanish. Instead, they revert to “the language of their childhood,” the language in which they think and, more importantly, feel (or use to process their affects and emotions).

Thus, Ainslie’s novel never resolves the bicultural and bilingual heritage of Mexican Americans who find themselves labeled as outsiders by the colonial affect-cultures of both the US and Mexico. Why then, does his novel insinuate a resolution of the tension between the “repatriated” pocho’s identity and Mexican national culture? I would venture to suggest that one possibility is that he and other Mexican intellectual elites who wrote for La Prensa worried that the growing rancor/rencor would pressure Mexican braceros in the US to rise up in arms to protest their conditions in the US, inadvertently proving their “unworthiness” as validated in the Anglo American press. Colonization seemed to offer an alternative to the vergüenza of deportation, which exalted the México de afuera nationalistic ideology. But what Los Repatriados does instead is highlight how navigating Mexican colonial affect-culture was much more daunting for young Mexican Americans. Reading for colonial affect-culture in this novel also reveals the extent to which repatriated Mexican Nationals also encountered difficulties in navigating differences between the gendered and class hierarchies that existed on either side of the border. Throughout the novel, the characters find themselves having to abide by a new set of social rules once in Mexico, but they also find themselves lying about their class and social experience in the US in order to fit into Mexico’s societal expectations. The lies expose the role of affect in the construction of this hierarchy since affects code all the forms of coloniality in the novel. As a result, Doña Refugio ends up trading her voice and autonomy for dubious class

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96 “And instinctively they began to speak in English. They returned to using the language of their childhood, that aided them in expressing what they both felt.”
ascension in Mexico that continuously reminds her to feel avergonzada (ashamed) of her lower-class upbringing. None of the characters, not even the young pochos, Cuca and Joe, are exempt from colonial affect-culture. This persistence across generations, as demonstrated by the novel, is what makes coloniality especially damaging. Moreover, reading representations of the lived experience of Mexican Americans specifically requires an analysis that acknowledges and accounts for the intersections of race, class, gender and coloniality in their confrontation with and expression through affect. The perceptions and assumptions made around these loci are dictated by a colonial affect-culture that continues to exert power even in today’s world.
CHAPTER THREE: VENDIDOS Y VENDIDAS: REIFICATION AND THE GENDERED COLONIALITY OF SELLING OUT IN LUIS VALDEZ’S “LOS VENDIDOS”


Soy la Mujer Chicana, una maravilla… Soy la India María/Soy la Adelita… Soy la Revolucionaria/Soy la Chicana en los picket lines/Soy la Chicana en los conferences/Soy la Chicana en los teatros… Soy el grito: “Chicano Power!”… Soy la madre (El esclavo) de mi padre/De mi hermano, de mi esposo… Soy achieving a higher status en la causa, De la mujer/U del hombre Chicano –La Chrisx, “La Loca de la Raza Cósmica: Feminist response to ‘I am Joaquin’”

This chapter interrogates the various ways reification is at work in Chicana/o literature. Rather than settle on a static conception of reification, I am interested in the multiple layers of reification where a “failure to think totality” (Bewes 12) is a failure to think about how a broader colonial history structured and continues to structure twentieth and twenty-first century capitalist social relations, including perceptions of and feelings toward class, race, and gender. While capitalism reifies (or “thingifies” and fetishizes) workers, colonization creates a racialized and gendered class and labor system. I read this racialized and gendered hierarchy through the lens of early Chicana feminist theory, which (although they did not call it so) was framed around ideas of decoloniality.97 Like the Chicano activists of the 1960s and 1970s, the Chicana feminists anchored their theories of oppression in the history of colonialism. Unlike the Chicano activists, however, the Chicana feminists proposed a decolonial analysis that accounted for social hierarchies based not only on race, but also on gender. I therefore suggest an analysis that keeps

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97 Walter Mignolo (2011) describes decoloniality as the “response to the capitalist and communist imperial designs” that originated with theorists such as Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon (xiii). The project of decolonizing knowledge and being “requires one to engage in rebuilding what was destroyed and to build what doesn’t exist yet” (109). It requires a new “genealogy of thought” (108-9) to produce something new instead of reproducing what already exists (i.e. Western European epistemology and ontology).
in mind a totality\textsuperscript{98} that includes the deeper history of class formation, a class formation that includes capitalism coloniality, race, and gender. With this understanding of class, we can also begin to grasp the role of affect in the Chicana/o movement’s (1966-1977) political organization and literary production. We can begin to understand how the colonial period’s racial and gender hierarchies impacted movement progress and some of its central literary texts by encoding in them resentment toward Chicana feminists during the 1960s-1970s.

Chicana/o literature emerged from the Chicana/o movement itself, in response to the growing need to represent the Chicana/o lived experience in the US. The vast majority of characters represented in this literature were from working-class backgrounds. Although middle-class Mexican Americans were also part of the Chicana/o movement, most of the activism had a working-class political investment. This stance was clearly represented in most Chicana/o literary production. Moreover, class tends to be racialized in these texts, and as a result, what comes to be known as the “Chicana/o experience” is often depicted through racial discrimination as a component of working-class life. Literature produced during the Chicana/o movement (1960s-1970s), as well as contemporary Chicana/o literature, often depicts the difficult lives of working class Chicana/o characters and historical figures. Prime examples of fiction include: Sandra Cisneros’ \textit{The House on Mango Street} (1984); Ernesto Galarza’s \textit{Barrio Boy} (1971); Dagoberto Gilb’s \textit{The Magic of Blood} (1993); Rodolfo “Corky” González’s \textit{Yo Soy Joaquín} (1967); Manuel Muñoz’s \textit{The Faith Healer of Olive Avenue} (2007); John Rechy’s \textit{City of Night} (1963); Tomás Rivera’s \textit{…y no se lo tragó la tierra} (1971); Richard Vasquez’s \textit{Chicano} (1970);

\textsuperscript{98} Totality is the counterpart of reification. Whereas reification fragments, totality is the whole picture that spans space and time. Marcial González (2009) defines totality in relation to literature as a reference to: “(1) the imagined world of the novel, which always implies much more than what is written on the page, and (2) the assumed existence of social totality—always present but never fully graspable or capable of being represented—that gives meaning to the novel and to which the novel repeatedly alludes” (29-30). See also Martin Jay, \textit{Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas}, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984.
José Antonio Villareal’s *Pocho* (1959); and Ray Villarreal’s *On the Other Side of the Bridge* (2014). Notable nonfictional examples include: Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987) and Marta Cotera’s *Diosa y Hembra: The History and Heritage of Chicanas in the U.S.* (1976). Yet, even prior to the 1960s, Mexican American authors highlighted the ways in which people of Mexican descent have been historically reified, or generalized into abstractions or types. Examples of these early texts include: Jovita González’s *Caballero* (1930); Maria Cristina Mena’s short stories “The Gold Vanity Set” and “The Education of Popo” (1913); Américo Paredes’ *George Washington Gómez* (1930s); Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton’s *Who Would Have Thought It* (1872) and *The Squatter and the Don* (1885); and Daniel Venegas’ *The Adventures of Don Chipote: Or When Parrots Breastfeed* (1928). Chicana/o movement period literature specifically underscored how reification (objectification or “thingification”) affected the day to day lives of Chicana/o families. This literature portrays working class Chicana/o characters whose lives revolve around the trials and tribulations of reification as lived experience in the United States—racism, discrimination, segregation, crime, lack of education, over working, illness, etc. Often, conflict arises in such Chicana/o narratives at the hands of Anglo American *patrones* (bosses), who stand in for the American capitalist system as owners of the means of production.

One of the most notable Chicana/o movement activist-writers, Luis Valdez, is known as the “father of Chicano theater,” and became the artistic arm of the United Farm Workers of America (UFW) in the 1960s. His background in theater and his childhood experience of growing up as a migrant worker came together in forming the first Chicano farm workers’ theater troupe. In 1965, *El Teatro Campesino* emerged on the heels of the UFW’s first strike against the Delano, California grape growers (Bagby 74). *El Teatro Campesino* quickly became
a significant educational tool and vehicle for broad conscious-raising, both for the UFW and growing Chicana/o movement activism. Given the structure of the UFW as a workers’ rights organization, a strong undercurrent of Marxist critique comes across in Valdez’s plays, as they sought to represent the problematic effect of capitalism on working class Chicana/os. Valdez’s plays were well-known for parodying the unequal relationship between field workers and their *patrones*, the reification of workers, and *vendidos* (“sell outs”) or Chicana/os who distance themselves from their racial and cultural heritage. Valdez actively unveiled the problems of reification in his corpus of plays and he became the movement’s main author of proletarian literature. Even the productions themselves—performed in migrant camps on flatbed trucks with little more than crude signs and masks as costumes—reflected the Chicana/o working class condition of transient field labor, limited funds, and a need-based reliance on everyday repurposed materials.

Among the corpus of plays from this period, Valdez’s play, “Los Vendidos” (1967) stands out for its advanced and sophisticated understanding of labor and race, but also for its early depiction of emerging neo-liberal policies under then-Governor Ronald Reagan. This one-act play is a blend of Marxist critique balanced by a racialized history and is thoroughly marked by affect. “Los Vendidos” addresses two main problems within the Chicana/o movement: strikebreakers (who derail organized attempts to draw attention to and remedy civil rights violations) and middle-class assimilated Chicana/os like the female character, Miss Jimenez. “Los Vendidos” is set in a futuristic imagining of an alternate present where Mexican laborers can literally be bought or sold as robots. The events of “Los Vendidos” take place in “Honest Sancho’s Used Mexican Lot and Mexican Curio Shop,” which sells what appear to be robotic Mexicans and Mexican Americans. They come in a variety of models—Farmworker, Pachuco,
Revolucionario, and the educated, well-spoken Mexican American. When Miss Jimenez (who introduces herself using the Anglo pronunciation, “JIM-enez”), a secretary from Governor Reagan’s office, comes to the shop, Honest Sancho gives her working demonstrations of each model. She lists the very particular qualities she seeks to purchase (suave, debonair, dark but not too dark, hard-working, fluent in English, sophisticated, traditional and attractive to women, able to function in politics, patriotic, economical, etc.). The models pose different problems for her and when she finally settles on the perfect model, the “bilingual, college educated, ambitious” Mexican American (Valdez 48-49), she is shocked to hear him go from a very patriotic speech, which spins him out of control, to a Spanish speech on “Chicano power” (51). The robots surround Miss Jimenez and chase her off stage. After the secretary runs out of the shop in fright, the robots come to life and we learn that the only actual robot in the shop is Honest Sancho himself. Thus, the play articulates a clear threat of cultural excommunication to assimilated people of Mexican descent: fall in line with Chicano nationalism, or we will run you out.

In this chapter, I interrogate the multiple meanings that extend from the play’s Marxist critique of capital’s reification of labor and laborers, to the dense history of coloniality and racial identity. I also examine how colonial affect-culture prompts people to “sell out” or assimilate in order to achieve class mobility. Much of Chicana/o movement literature articulates a strong opposition to the sociological discourse of assimilation and represents assimilation as contrary

99 All future references to Valdez’s play will be indicated in the text only with page numbers.
100 Valdez’s use of robots as the perfect models in some way anticipates the fusion of human and machine and Marxist critique in both Ira Levin’s (1972) “The Stepford Wives” and Donna Haraway’s (1984) “A Cyborg Manifesto.” Unlike Valdez, however, both Levin and Haraway challenge Western male-centered capitalism and patriarchal structures. Haraway specifically criticizes identity politics and the lack of a gender component in Marx’s understanding of the division of labor.
101 Robert E. Park and E.W. Burgess (1921) provided the founding definition of assimilation as: “a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life” (735). See Robert E. Park and E.W. Burgess, Introduction to the Science of Sociology, Including the Original Index to Basic Sociological Concepts, 3rd ed. Chicago, IL: University
to Chicana/o cultural authenticity (Cutter 10-12). In the second part of this chapter, I analyze how, despite the productive critique of reification and assimilation, “Los Vendidos” presents a troubling gendering of this selling out vis-à-vis the figure of the assimilated Chicana, Miss Jimenez. This gendering of assimilation, in turn, takes place by way of the gendered affect of resentment surrounding Chicanas during the Chicana/o movement. As a consequence of this resentment, Chicanas vocalized their oppression within the male-dominated activism of the movement. The emergence of the Chicana feminist movement was met with increased resentment as the *femenistas* were immediately labeled as “vendidas” (sell outs) and “agringadas,” Angloitized traitors to their race. Yet, the *femenistas* held their ground, holding workshops and conferences, publishing feminist journals, and producing feminist literature that tackled the oppression experienced by women of color that accounted for the intersections of gender, race, class, and sexuality.

**Reification and Racism**

“Los Vendidos” articulates its critique of exploitation by linking local production to global capitalism. In doing so, it also exposes the ways (racist) colonial legacies contribute to the reification of the workers themselves and to their place in capitalism’s exploitative chain of production. The *Revolucionario* model, Honest Sancho explains, was “made in Mexico in 1910! .... Once in Tijuana, twice in Guadalajara, three times in Cuernavaca…” (47). Valdez’ naming of these cities functions in three distinct ways: first, to comment on revolutionary uprising against capitalist exploitation of labor in second and third world countries; second, to signal a relation between Mexicans and the US and this larger Mexican historical narrative; and third, to create parallels between the Mexican Revolution’s and the Chicano movement’s mission

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to liberate oppressed people of Mexican descent. By citing these cities in conjunction with the process of production (“made in Mexico”), Valdez situates a capitalist history of maquiladoras—American factories in Mexico that take advantage of lower wage requirements and overhead costs in order to produce more products at a lower cost—in a history of Mexico’s revolutionary past, thus coupling two eras of political betrayals. Even those robots produced in the US would most likely be produced by minority laborers. Buying Mexican bodies produced by Mexican bodies signifies a double exploitation within the global capitalist structure. A third exploitation comes in the form of commodity fetishism that reifies workers. Reification skews and obscures social relationships and transforms the worker into an object, a thing.

Reification is often described as an “objectification” (or “thingification”) of the products of labor—that is, the process whereby the products of labor come to be seen only as things and the labor of their production is made invisible; yet, reification also can be applied to workers themselves and be understood as functioning in instances of racism and sexism, when people are “generalized into an abstraction” and are “perceived not as human beings but as things or ‘types’” (Bewes 3-4). The thingification or dehumanization that comes at the hands of reification has in large part been articulated as a negative consequence of capitalism or modernization. Karl Marx himself does not specifically use the term reification; but the concept, which Georg Lukás later elaborates in History and Class Consciousness (1923), originates from Marx’s concept of commodity fetishism. In Capital I, however, Marx does describe the “mysterious”

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102 Mexican maquiladoras located on the US-Mexico border were inaugurated in 1965 as part of the Border Industrialization Program, the same year as the inception of Luis Valdez’ El Teatro Campesino. These Mexican border factories, which provided cheap labor for US companies, were still very new at the time Valdez wrote “Los Vendidos” (1967). The Border Industrialization Program emerged a mere year after the official end of the Bracero Program.

103 Positive elaborations of reification are few and far between, but include Arnold Gehlen, Bruno Latour, and Paolo Virno (Vandenberghen n.p.).
nature of commodities and the ways in which a person’s labor appears to become a characteristic of the commodity; he writes:

A commodity therefore is a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men’s labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour; because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labour is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labour. This is the reason why the products of labour become commodities, social things whose qualities are at the same time perceptible and imperceptible by the senses…. This I call Fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour, so soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities. (321)

The concept of this dehumanization and alienation of workers can be traced to other Western philosophers, including “Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Dilthey, Husserl, Heidegger, Simmel, and Max Weber to criticize the dehumanizing, rationalizing, calculating and alienating tendencies of modernity” (Vandenberghhe n.p.).

Reification, Lukás claims, can only be truly exposed by having full knowledge, by understanding the “totality of history,” which can be achieved by turning to historical materialism as a form of analysis (197). Marx (and subsequently Lukás in History and Class Consciousness) links class struggle to history from the very start of The Communist Manifesto (1848): “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles;” or, as the phrase is often simplified: “all of history is the history of class struggle.”

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104 Lukás writes: “It [reification] can be overcome only by constant and constantly renewed efforts to disrupt the reified subject of existence by concretely relating to the concretely manifested contradictions of total development, by becoming conscious of the immanent meanings of these contradictions for the total development” [Lukás ‘ italics] (197). See also Bewes, Reification, pp. 93-94 and Andy Merrifield, Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction. New York: Routledge, 2006, p. 150-151.
Engels developed the materialist conception of history (i.e. historical materialism) in works such as *The German Ideology* (1845) and Engels’ *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (1880), as a method for historical research. Historical materialism suggests that, as Marx (1859) writes, “It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence that determines their consciousness” (“Preface” 4). According to historical materialism, the development and organization of society—as well as our consciousness or understanding of the world around us—is dependent upon society’s mode of production. Social progress (such as technology) affects the ways in which commodities are produced and, consequently, affects the social organization, which in turn, create our consciousness. The result of our social organization, molded by capital, is our inability, or failure to perceive the ways in which capital has created our world in different ways throughout history.

Marcial González’s *Chicano Novels and the Politics of Form: Race, Class, and Reification* (2009) is one of the few recent Chicana/o scholarly works that is rooted in and continues this understanding of history and culture which is also found in the Marxist critique performed by early Chicana/o literary scholars. He specifically uses the concept of reification through the lens of historical materialism to tie together social history and narrative form. Rather than reading the representation of Chicana/os in literature thematically, he focuses on narrative form itself, arguing for a continuation of Marxist critical analysis, which has been overshadowed by an emphasis on other analytical frameworks, such as transnationalism and post-structuralism. By way of his attention to form he analyzes the ways in which reification structures the Chicana/o experience. For M. González, a study of form reveals how Chicana/o novels are a contradictory form that embodies, responds, and resists reification; thus, the critique of
reification in these novels “reveals their social class content even in cases where class in not overtly represented” (12).

M. González defines reification through historical materialism as “the failure to understand how objects, events, and situations are intricately connected to and constituted by dynamic social processes that have evolved historically at different levels: locally, nationally, and globally” (11). Key to M. González’s definition of reification is his immediate interjection of a value system through the word “failure.” What M. González wants to draw our attention to in his use of the term “failure” is the way in which reification tricks us into perceiving “social relations as natural rather than conditioned by class contradictions” (11). He draws his definition of reification from theories elaborated by Rosemary Hennessy (2000), Moishe Postone (2003), and Susan Oyama (2000) that further develop the concept of reification as “thingification.” He suggests that reification blinds us to “totality,” or a fuller perception of the way in which the world works: that our consciousness actually stems from the “experience of living in a social system based on commodity production and exchange” (11). In other words, reification does not allow us to see that it is precisely these social relations based on “commodity production and exchange” that (unnaturally) structure our consciousness and lives.

I would like to take M. González’s definition of reification—“the failure to understand how objects, events, and situations are intricately connected to and constituted by dynamic social processes that have evolved historically at different levels: locally, nationally, and globally” (11)—as a starting point in order to expand his historical timeline and think about the ways in which colonial history is implicit in the reification of Chicana/os. Although he identifies history as a central component of his argument, his focus on history is limited to California within the US national historical perspective. M. González notes that Chicanas and Chicanos came together
in solidarity during the 1960-70s because of “long-term effects of capitalist accumulation” (78). He summarizes these effects as: “the state-enforced, class-based racialization and general oppression of Chicanas and Chicanos, a process that began in the nineteenth century and by some accounts has continued to this day” (78). In his analyses, however, this historical timeline only reaches as far back as the mid-nineteenth century with the US-Mexico War (1846-1848) and he marks the US-Mexico War as the catalyst for the exploitation of Chicana/os in the United States. But unlike movement critics, he places little to no attention on the colonial period. Nor does he mention significant Latin American postcolonialists, such as Aníbal Quijano and Walter Mignolo. Such a timeline, I posit, is oversimplified, since this historical oppression reaches as far back to the colonial era and the rise of hierarchies that allowed for profitable exploitation based on racial caste systems. Although M. González explicitly states that reification, the “failure to think totality” (Bewes 12), is a failure to take into account a social and historical timeline of the local, national, and global, his project itself does not acknowledge the significance of place nor of the local. By doing so, he does not account for the global designs of colonialism at large, that is, the larger mechanism of coloniality that dates centuries prior to 1848 and that leaves its imprint upon the literature and lived reality of Chicana/os. In distinction from M. González, I find it necessary to keep in mind the ways legacies of colonialism have developed at these local, national, and global levels in order to parse out how reification is at work specifically in Chicana/o cultural narratives.

Returning to Valdez’s play, at this conclusion the Farmworker notes: “They think we’re machines” (52). Here, he articulates the Marxist critique that capitalism values Mexican bodies for the (cheap) labor-power they sell for a wage and their ability to function within a set of Anglo American social values and norms. Along the same lines, the title itself, “Los Vendidos,” (the
sell outs) signals Mexican subjects who betray their community and instead support their Anglo American employers or the powers that be. Capitalism, combined with racial hierarchies and racism in the US, forces working class people to remain at the mercy of the system—always working to provide food and shelter for their families, but always desiring more. Propelled by the myth of the elusive American Dream, workers become seduced by what Lauren Berlant (2011) terms “cruel optimism”—an affective attachment, in this case, to the American success story of social and economic mobility. Cruel optimism is a relation which “exists when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing” (Berlant 1). Functioning as “an analytic lever,” cruel optimism “is an incitement to inhabit and to track the affective attachment to what we call the good life, which is for so many a bad life that wears out the subjects who nonetheless, and at the same time, find their conditions of possibility within in” (27). Despite the obstacles such an optimistic person has to endure, which often cause them to experience negative affects, they remain “optimistic” that they too, can one day achieve the American Dream.

**Reification and Decoloniality**

“Los Vendidnos” acts out how the legacy of colonialism devalues Mexican-raced bodies and in doing so, reifies them, despite the subversive aura of the “Chicana/o.” In the play, the Chicana/o identity is divorced from the bodies of Honest Sancho’s robots and is turned into a valuable marketing tool. Although Miss Jimenez comes into the store searching for a model with a different set of qualities, the audience (or reader) learns that the *Revolucionario’s* qualities are also valuable, albeit in the commercial, rather than political, market. While the Mexican American’s racial heritage, combined with his American assimilation, adds the valuable element of “diversity” for politics and politicians, the racial stereotyping of the *Revolucionario* becomes a marketing ploy for the entertainment business. According to Honest Sancho, the *Revolucionario*
appears in movies and even commercials, playing the part of the “Frito Bandito,” the cartoon mascot for Fritos corn chips from 1967-71, a stereotypical Mexican bandido, complete with sombrero, white peasant clothes, double crisscrossed bandoliers, pistols, boots, mustache, exaggerated accent, and broken English. American capitalism, thus, subtracts Mexican cultural history from this cartoon representation. What is left is only an attractive commercial commodity to be sold and purchased.

Valdez calls attention to the problem of education in the Chicano community as embodied in the Mexican American robot described as bilingual and college educated. Although we get the sense that the Farmworker, Pachuco, and Revolutionario are interchangeable, the one type that receives some acknowledgement from the US social system is the Mexican American who has completed his education. Indeed, the only model that has access to Anglo American class experience is the educated Mexican American robot. Once educated, he is thought to fit a corporate/political mold. Sancho asserts that the model is “bilingual, college educated, ambitious… intelligent, well-mannered, clean” (48). He is fully equipped to function on any government policy board, including those associated with President Lyndon B. Johnson’s Great Society domestic programs (49). Such qualities become valuable to US politics as the ideal Mexican American (robot) board member will attain votes just by appearing in the Governor’s luncheon (50) and giving the appearance of diversity.

The first catch, however, is that this model is not economical, as demonstrated by Miss Jimenez’s reaction to the price: “Fifteen thousand dollars? For a Mexican!!!!” (50). In response, Sancho points to the complexities of achieving this perfect model: “Mexican? What are you talking about? This is a Mexican-American! We had to melt down two pachucos, a farmworker and three gabachos to make this model! You want quality, but you have to pay for it! This is no
cheap run-about. He’s got class!” (50). Herein lays a problem that Valdez’s audience knew well. The “production” of a “high-end” Mexican American requires a large investment. The clue to this investment occurs at the end of the play, when, dropping their feigned roles as robots, the Chicano playing the Mexican American challenges his type-cast role:

MEXICAN AMERICAN: “The only thing I don’t like is how come I always get to play the goddamn Mexican-American?

JOHNNY [Pachuco]: That’s what you get for finishing high school.” (52)

The problems faced by Mexican Americans in the US education system are a motif explored by many Chicana/o authors and poets, among them Gloría Anzaldúa’s Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza (1987), Américo Paredes’ George Washington Gómez, (1930), Tomás Rivera’s ...y no se lo tragó la tierra (1971), Tino Villanueva’s Crónica de mis años peores (1987). The thread common to these texts is the limited access to education for Mexican Americans and, perhaps more threatening, a pejorative curriculum that enforces and upholds racism through the strict disciplining of Spanish language use in the school classroom and playground, the lack of resources for children learning English as a second language, and an American indoctrination that casts Mexicans as the enemy in American historical progress. In order to succeed, the Mexican American, then, has not only to assimilate by casting off his or her Mexican heritage and Spanish pronunciation of his or her name (as Miss JIMenez does), but also has to completely “sell out” and buy into a pejorative telling of American history. What does it cost to buy the American Dream—this dream of class mobility and middle class experience? You must suppress the reality of your social relation to the means of production. You must sell your cultural heritage and buy into a new class experience: the ruling ideas perpetuated by the education system.
Let’s not forget that “Los Vendidos” is a play designed to be performed in front of an audience. *El Teatro Campesino*, sought to provide an alternative education, one that did not spout hegemonic rhetoric. Valdez’s free plays incorporated audience participation and attempted to draw even illiterate Chicanos into the critical thinking process. Miss Jimenez’s exit off stage is meant to elicit laughter from the audience, yet it is also meant to invite the audience to reconsider their own relationship to the means of production and to the Chicano movement. Juan Bruce-Novoa and David Valentin (1977) call “Los Vendidos” the *ars poetica* of *El Teatro Campesino* because of the way it presents traditional “archetypes,” then reveals these types to be something else (45). Not only do the characters turn out to be something else, but so does the entire production; as Bruce-Novoa and Valentin write:

> Anyone who thinks that Chicano theatre is simply entertainment, or irrelevant, better think twice, lest he buy a safe Mexican-American, and later discover himself in possession of an activist Chicano; or perhaps wake up to find himself transformed, his own self-image revolutionized. (50)

And this is exactly the point of “Los Vendidos”: to revolutionize Chicana/os and to call attention to the damaging political consequences of “selling out.”

In combating the reification of Mexicans, “Los Vendidos” demonstrates that appearances are not what they seem. In Miss Jimenez’s denial of her ethnic roots, she attempts to display or perform an Anglo Saxon middle-class experience. Here affect and capital intertwine as class consciousness depends upon the unveiling of the reality of our relationship to the means of production and removing the negative affects (indoctrinated into our psyches through a pejorative education system and media representations) that blind us to our own class position. Valdez’s critique of Western epistemology is not unlike that of Walter Mignolo (2002) and other
Latin American postcolonialists for whom this suppression is a manner of thinking that “inscribed a conceptualization of knowledge to a geopolitical space (Western Europe) and erased the possibility of even thinking about a conceptualization and distribution of knowledge ‘emanating’ from other local histories” (59). Privileging Western forms of knowledge and dismissing non-Western forms reflects what Aníbal Quijano (2000) terms the “coloniality of power,” which defines the many ways that colonialism has left behind a mark on the modern world. This colonial legacy created social hierarchies based on race and privileged Western epistemology while dismissing any other forms of knowledge, religion, language, and local customs. These legacies propel culture as the site for exerting power long after the formal end of colonialism. Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein (1992) elaborate on the relation of these colonial legacies to the division of labor that accompanied colonial hierarchies and cultural systems in the following manner:

Ethnicity was the inevitable cultural consequence of colonality. It delineated the social boundaries corresponding to the division of labour. And it justified the multiple forms of labour control, invented as part of Americanity: slavery for the Black Africans, various forms of coerced cash-crop labour (repartimiento, mita, peonage) for Native Americans, indentured labour (engagés) for the European working class. These of course were the early forms of ethnic allocation to position in the work hierarchy. As we came into the post-independence period, the forms of labour control and the names of the ethnic categories were updated. But an ethnic hierarchy remained. (550-551)

My analysis aims to draw out the fact that embodied, feeling subjects became affectively-charged according to the value they had for capital and these feelings infused their class experience as it too was coded according to this value. This value system persisted even as the
colonial period gave way to modernity and was reproduced in large part through culture, which preserved colonial legacies and the feelings encoded within them. This is what I call “colonial affect-culture.” Colonial affect-culture influences how we perceive people as “types” and, in turn, how we feel about types of people, valuing certain “types” of people more than others. In this regard, epistemology and ontology bear the affective legacy of colonialism and promote values only if they fit into the Western conceptualizations. Affect-culture is most visible when it is challenged or resisted by those it targets. For this reason, I find it important to return to Chicana/o nationalist literature to re-read it for the ways in which affect is present in the texts and to see how colonial affect-culture is being resisted. Affect is thus encoded in Valdez’s “Los Vendidos” twice over: once from the lived Mexican American experience the play represents and also in its critique of this affect-culture.

The coupling of race and class in the Americas (particularly in the US) demands an analytical framework that not only recognizes the ways in which the categories have been joined together since the Western (capitalist) colonial project of the 15th century, but also one that takes into account the ongoing aftershock of coloniality. Scholars including Timothy Bewes (2002), Angie Chabram (1991), José Limón (1992), Walter Mignolo (2000, 2011), and Cedric J. Robinson (1983) have noted that Marxist theory has its limitations precisely because it is a Western construction. As Mignolo (2011) points out, “Marxism focuses on class struggle, decolonialism on the racism that justified the exploitation of labor in European colonies. Marxism and decoloniality are two different agendas that could nevertheless work in collaboration if both were to understand their own limits and potentials” (The Darker Side 326). Therefore, I stress the necessity of keeping present not only the “local histories of Spanish legacies in America,” (Local Histories 67) which Mignolo emphasizes in Local Histories/Global
Designs (2000), but also the British colonial histories and American neoliberal histories, specifically because people of Mexican descent living in the Southwest United States found themselves the unfortunate heirs of the damaging effects of two imperial histories (as discussed in chapter one) and witnesses to emerging American neoliberal policies.

The Coloniality of Selling Out

At the beginning of Valdez’ play, the audience is led to believe that “Los Vendidos” refers to the supposed robots themselves or even Sancho’s willingness to sell out his fellow Chicana/os for an easy buck (as did contratistas of the time). But by the end of the play, after Miss Jimenez has left the stage, what is more apparent is her own problematic assimilation, or “selling out.” “Vendidos” are a group of people who have “sold out,” that is, Chicana/os who have turned their backs on their Mexican heritage and completely assimilated into US culture. Miss Jimenez’s initial entrance is marked by her ethnicity, as Honest Sancho notes: “Ah, una chicana!” (41). The secretary, however, refuses to accept this classification as “Chicana” by repeatedly distancing herself from that identity. She initially does this through her insistence on the anglicanized pronunciation of her name and on speaking English: “My name is Miss Jimenez. Don’t you speak English? What’s wrong with you?” (41) Not only does she insist on speaking English, she also labels the inability to do so as a deficiency; she suggests that something is wrong with Sancho if he cannot speak English. In doing so, she privileges English over any other language or mode of communication. Miss Jimenez also tries to distance herself from the Chicano robots through her denial of comprehension as the Farmworker mimics field labor. Sancho points out, “As you can see he [the Farmworker] is cutting grapes” (42). Miss Jimenez defensively responds: “Oh, I wouldn’t know” (42). This denial marks an important fracturing of both racial and working class unity. Miss Jimenez is trying to distinguish class from
class experience. By class experience, I do not mean an actual change from proletariat to bourgeoisie, but rather the ways in which a distancing from one’s position in class relations (one’s relation to property) is re-imagined. This re-imagining shapes how a class position is denied or suppressed and shapes the epistemology of class experience, ethnicity and affect. It is an experience that imagines class position through one’s relationships to property. Miss Jimenez is not referring to her inability to understand the robot’s charade; instead, she is trying to suggest that she has no reference point for understanding field labor. She wants to make it clear that she is not the same as the Farmworker. But in watching the Farmworker operate at a fast speed picking imaginary melons, Miss Jimenez accidentally slips in her reaction: “Chihuahua…I mean, goodness, he sure is a hardworker” (42). This humorous slip of the tongue reveals her true, albeit suppressed, ethnic and class identity. Her attempt to conceal her slippage makes visible the affect-culture that otherwise controls and dictates her behavior.

Affect plays a large role in Miss Jimenez’s desire to maintain the separation between herself and the Mexican Farmworker, as well as the other robot types. Affects are closely tied to identity, since identity too is embodied and felt. In referring to race and ethnicity, we automatically make a connection between identity and skin (both skin color and phenotype). Rosemary Hennessy (2013) thinks of identity as a “second skin,” a subjectivity and historical subject positioning both worn and felt. The “second skin” is, she writes, “a tissue of values that organizes sensations and affective intensities and integrates them into the representations and lived experience of who we are” (126). The “second skin” contains value determined by history. Historical conditions (such as colonial legacies and racial oppression) determine the cultural values assigned to these second skins as people project affects (either positive or negative) onto different identities. In this case, the colonial legacies of racial hierarchies assign lower values to
people of color. The education system has played a hand in the propagation of such colonial thinking. US education exalts Western European knowledge (history, social sciences, philosophy, art, languages, and literature) over any other forms of knowledge. It stages historical events and battles in ways that emphasize imperial power and control, and in doing so, casts the losers in a negative light. The projection of imperialistic values regarding who or what is better, stronger, or more important seeps into national culture and is interpreted on an individual level as well. It is felt in and on the physical body as negative sensations or affects. In other words, colonial legacies are both epistemological and ontological. Identity is problematic for Miss Jimenez; her insistence on an Anglo identity only emphasizes what eventually slips out: that she is a sell-out. By assimilating, she has also bought into the colonial legacies that devalue Mexican bodies, and therefore, wishes to distance herself from that identity.

Confronted by the three Mexican “robots” that turn on her and espouse Chicano Power rhetoric, Miss Jimenez runs off screaming. Faced by the idea that “Esta gran humanidad ha dicho basta! Y se ha puesto en marcha!”105 (51), Miss Jimenez does not join the ranks, but rather, “sells out.” What Miss Jimenez fails to recognize is that she herself is already the perfect reified subject. The idea of living an Anglo American middle-class experience has already purchased and commodified her. Furthermore, she is not merely frightened by the sight of the protesting robots advancing toward her, the experience is an encounter with the uncanny. Mirrored in the robots, she sees her own suppressed Mexicanness. Miss Jimenez trades her embodied race in order to ascend to an imaginary class experience. Although this class experience is a largely imaginary one it comes with certain material benefits, dependent on affect and the cultural value placed on people. Such a class experience is attainable in differing levels based on education and phenotype. By relinquishing her racial heritage, Miss Jimenez capitalizes on her ability to “pass”

105 My translation: “This great humanity has said enough! And has been set in motion!”
as Anglo American. In doing so, she also denies value to the Mexican American cultural heritage.

What makes Valdez’s play so deceptively complex is that the Chicano Power speech that spews out of the Mexican American “robot” also prompts us to ask if there is something robotic in the Chicano Power rhetoric itself. What happens when revolutionary rhetoric becomes static or dogma? Is there a reification taking place here as well? And to what consequence? One effect historically was that when Chicano Power became dogma, the patriarchal value system embedded in its cultural nationalism became difficult to perceive. As a result, these values also became naturalized into robotic (reified) behaviors. Colonial affect-culture is replete with normalized patriarchal structures; and attention to its role in male-dominated activism reveals how colonial gender hierarchies were at work even in the Chicana/o civil rights agenda. Early Chicana feminists involved in the Chicana/o movement recognized these patriarchal underpinnings of the social movement. Their efforts are a response to the robotic, static, and sexist Chicano cultural nationalism that pervaded movement politics, organization, and leadership. And it is to a reading from this standpoint that I now turn.

CHASING AFTER MISS JIMENEZ: THE ROLE OF THE CHICANA FEMINIST MOVEMENT

Although the play signals Miss Jimenez as the titular vendida, or sellout, the ending of the play is troubling in its feminine gendering of cultural betrayal. The final scene is often read as Miss Jimenez rejecting the call to join the Chicana/o cause (also called “La Causa”), yet, the threat of gendered violence looms heavily over it. After the Mexican American “robot” begins his Chicano power speech, he and the other robots quite literally chase her out; the stage directions state:

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The Mexican American turns toward the Secretary [Miss Jimenez], who gasps and backs up. He keeps turning toward the Pachuco, Farmworker and Revolucionario, snapping his fingers and turning each of them on, one by one. The three models join together and advance toward the secretary, who backs up and runs out of the shop screaming. (51)

Apart from Miss Jimenez’s earlier assimilated actions, we can also see the discomfort and threat posed by the male-dominated activism. To add to the threatening nature of this scene, the Pachuco sexualizes the threat, yelling: “I’m going to get you, baby!” (52). If we take into account the negative affect directed at Chicana feminists during the Chicana/o movement, we see more clearly the gendered issues taking place. Read through a Chicana feminist lens, what is initially interpreted as a confrontation with Chicano nationalism or the Chicana/o self turns out to be a threat of gendered violence, of hatred, perhaps even the threat of rape as the group of men advances menacingly toward her and she runs away screaming in fright. The ending that chases her out of Honest Sancho’s shop eliminates other options, including the option of reaching out and educating her about civil rights and the Chicana/o movement itself. Instead, the Chicana is met with a threatening situation. Valdez ends his play there, with Miss Jimenez chased off the stage, but, in the same methodological vein as the early Chicana feminists, I insist on chasing her down. Chicana feminist theory intervenes in this moment by allowing us to “rescue” Miss Jimenez (and others like her) from anonymity and shame by restoring her, from the assimilated Miss JIM-enez back to her cultural Chicana roots as Miss Jimenez once again. Like Cotera in Diosa y Hembra (1976), it is crucial that we actively work to reinscribe Chicanas into the historical archive of the Chicana/o movement.

While texts such as “Los Vendidos” may be content to chase Miss Jimenezes off the stage, Chicana feminists sought to create new pedagogical approaches that instead chased after
people labeled as cultural sellouts. These supposed sellouts were not always assimilated
Mexicans. In fact, one of the problems within the Chicana/o movement was its hostility toward
feminists who voiced their concerns about the lack of women’s rights in the movement agenda.
Early Chicana feminists attempted to educate the Chicana/o population on the necessity of
attending to women’s issues and forwarding the agenda to encompass intersecting problems of
racism, classism, and sexism. I suggest that the overarching affect coded in the depiction of Miss
Jimenez—the educated, assimilated secretary for Governor Reagan—is a type of displaced
machismo that hinges on this gendered class resentment. This resentment occurred in response to
changing Chicana gender roles, the involvement of Chicanas in political activism, and their
recruitment into the job market. By gendered class resentment, I specifically mean the
unconscious ways in which Chicano men responded to the increasing entrance of Chicana
women into the white collar service industry during the 1960s and 70s. Chicano men, on the
other hand, did not experience a similar increase in white collar jobs. As a consequence,
Chicanas suddenly had more access to a different type of class experience without the need for a
Chicano man to support them. Valdez’s play reiterates a patriarchal script in his characterization
of Miss Jimenez while also espousing the Chicano Power rhetoric that fails to take into account
the role of Chicana activists and feminist discourses circulating during the movement. It is this
type of casting of Chicano Power activism as male-centered that prompts Chicana feminists to
begin publishing writings and organizing conferences urging Chicanas to “wake up” and push
back against sexism in the movement, as, for example, in Elvira Saragoza’s “La Mujer in the
Chicano Movement” (1969), Enriqueta Longeaux Vasquez’s “¡Despierten Hermanas!” (“Wake
Moreover, “Los Vendidos” fails to recognize the negative environment fomented by gendered
resentment and its historical roots in the colonial caste system. Caste systems not only racialized class, but also instituted a strict gender binary and racialized gender hierarchy in which women of color, marked as female, but not feminine, were relegated to the lowest rungs of the social hierarchy.

Early Chicana feminists of the 1960s and 1970s theorized race and gender through the lens of colonial history in order to identify the roots of patriarchal social structures of female control (such as gender hierarchy and heteronormativity). Chicanas such as Alma M. García, Adelaida R. Del Castillo, Martha P. Cotera, Francisca Flores, Elena Hernández, Anna Nieto-Gómez (founder of Encuentro Femenil: The First Chicana Feminist Journal, 1973), Adaljiza Sosa Riddell, Cynthia Orozco, Enriqueta Longeaux y Vásquez, and many others framed their critique through a feminist history of consciousness (based on an elaborating a historical materialist approach) that traced gender and racial hierarchies to colonialism. Chicana feminists, or femenistas, directly confronted patriarchal narratives that sought to control female behavior through the use of historic, folkloric, and religious indigenous and mestiza female archetypes. During the next decades Chicana femenista scholars, authors, and artists such as Adelaida R. Del Castillo (1974), Esther Hernández (1975), Yolanda M. López (1978), Norma Alarcón (1983), Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) reappropriated Aztec goddesses (such as Coatlicue, Cihuacoatl, and Tonantzin), La Malinche (also known by her Spanish name, Doña Marina), La Llorona (the weeping woman), and la Virgen de Guadalupe. In this same vein, I propose a reappropriation of Miss Jimenez in order to re-read “Los Vendidos” as a figure of gendered resentment brewing within the Chicana/o movement. Branding Miss Jimenez as a vendida identifies her as a Malinche-figure—a traitor to her race and culture. A Chicana feminist approach, however, insists on recuperating Malinche from historical critique by contextualizing the historical situation and,
I would add, considering the affect-culture swirling around the *feministas* during this historical moment.

From the start Chicana feminists confronted a culture of resentment and were forced to take on a defensive position because they too were being run out or abandoned by the male-centered activist environment of the Chicana/o movement. In *Diosa y Hembra: The History and Heritage of Chicanas in the U.S.* (1976), Cotera directly calls out the gendered resentment and the machismo that labeled women as *vendidás*:

Some Chicano males, already in leadership and authority positions, challenged women’s participation in activities outside the home. Their claims were that ‘everyone knew,’ and history, and culture and tradition established that Mexican American women could/should only be homemakers and mothers. Chicana activists who acted differently were vulnerable to charges of being “Agringadas,” “Anglocized,” “feminists” and worst of all “anti-traditionalists.” Chicanas began their frantic search then on a very defensive posture. (9)

Cotera’s landmark critical text reinscribes Chicana women into Mexico’s cultural-historical narrative by locating and describing the roles women have always played in political and civic life. She traces this Mexicana/Chicana role from pre-Columbian to modernization periods, including the War for Independence (1810-1821) and the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Cotera reveals the female presence in the historical cultural memory of pre-Columbian Mexico by emphasizing the roles played by women in Nahua civilizations. In turning to the situation of Chicanas in the United States, Cotera notes how the US-Mexico War (1846-1848) replicated the conditions of the conquest. In presenting the history of Mexican women, Cotera focuses on the
ways in which the imperial presence manipulated caste/class organizations, proletarianizing the Mexican people in ways that would economically benefit the imperial forces.

From the beginning, Chicanas were well aware of the ways in which their everyday experiences were the material (and affective) manifestations of a long history of colonial patriarchal hierarchies. Not only were Chicanas exposed to sexism, racism, and classism by a dominant US culture, but they also dealt with these issues within the Chicana/o movement itself, as the Chicano men, in many instances, reinforced heteronormative gender roles through their 

* machismo, or sexism. The pressure to constantly exhibit culturally-prescribed masculine traits, such as dominance, strength, virility (i.e. the “Latin lover” stereotype), or courage, combined with the “inequalities in our system that has the Chicano constantly having to ‘prove’ their manlihood” and “[b]y denying Chicanos jobs, dignity, and a sense of worth…” manifested itself, Rosalie Flores (1975) writes, through “aggressiveness and male ‘watchfulness’ over his female counterpart” (10; *Chicana Feminist Thought* 95-6). In response to the oppressive patriarchy of the Chicano Movement, the editor of the Chicana feminist publication *Regeneración*, Francisca Flores (1971), asserts:

> [Chicanas] can no longer remain in a subservient role or as auxiliary forces in the [Chicano] movement. They must be included in the front line of communication, leadership and organizational responsibility…. The issue of equality, freedom, and self-determination of the Chicana—like the right of self-determination, equality, and liberation of the Mexican [Chicano] community—is not negotiable. Anyone opposing the right of women to organize into their own form of organization has no place in the leadership of the movement. (F. Flores 6; *CFT* 5)

107 It is not a coincidence that Francisca Flores’ feminist journal bore the same name as that of the Flores Magón brothers’ Mexican anarchist newspaper (published during the Mexican Revolution). She modeled this publication after their newspaper.
F. Flores articulated the force behind the Chicana Feminist Movement and drew a line in the sand that highlighted the role Chicanas had to play in order to truly achieve the liberation of the Chicana/o community as a whole. The struggle to combat machismo involved direct confrontation with the legacy of a colonial past: a woman’s role as restricted to the standard imposed by the Catholic Church: una mujer buena (a good woman) modeled after the Virgin Mary.

Nieto-Gómez (1995) notes that this mujer buena ideal ties Chicana oppression to both the Catholic Church as well as to the colonial caste system. In addition to enforcing ideals of virginity, heterosexuality, domesticity, submissiveness, and motherhood, the mujer buena ideal primarily defined the racial superiority of women of European descent over indigenous and mestiza women in Mexico. In order to overwrite the narrative of Spanish miscegenation under hundreds of years of Moorish rule, Spain implemented a caste system that ensured Spanish dominance through a detailed hierarchical social and political structure (“La Chicana—Legacy” 22-24; CFT 49). In order to safeguard this Spanish European dominance (and bloodline), Spanish brides were exported from Spain to the Americas:

…destitute women, poor widows and women from debtor’s prison were exported across the Atlantic from Spain to marry Spanish men. This new Spanish import to Mexico changed the Mexican concept of beauty, greatly affecting the position of the Indian woman who stood to lose much if she did not fit the Spanish ideal. (“La Chicana—Legacy” 22-24; CFT 49)

This colonial moment marks a clear intersection of class, race, and gender as well as the shift in the understanding of class and gender through race during the colonial period. Whereas these destitute Spanish women would have been considered poor and lower/working class in Spain
prior to colonial rule, the racialized geographical space of New Spain, charged with emerging imperial designs on power and dominance, re-valued their bodies as desirable. Simultaneously, indigenous and mestiza women in New Spain became devalued because of their racialized bloodline. The racialized valuation of women, of course, did not go unnoticed by indigenous women. Colonial affect-culture controlled feelings of superiority and inferiority among women (and men) in New Spain and, Nieto-Gómez continues:

As a result, the importance of Spanish women led to the further devaluation of indigenous self-esteem….Some Indian women tried to bleach their skin, but most only hoped that their children would be born white and thereby accepted as free Spaniards….The Spanish women and their children gained an indirect economic and legal social status through recognized marriage, but the Indian women who lived under common law had not legal or economic protection….Gradually the Spanish woman became identified as the ideal and the Indian woman and her mestizos children became the pariahs of society. (“La Chicana—Legacy” 22-24; Chicana Feminist Thought 49-50)

While the Spanish mujer buena was considered upper class, with legal rights, she was also dependent upon her husband and isolated from politics and economic life. On the other hand, indigenous women actively participated in “the religious, social and commercial life of their own people. They shared the responsibility of the household and also contributed to the economy and social life” (“La Chicana—Legacy” 22-24; CFT 50). As a consequence, this type of active social participation became culturally cemented in Mexico as a characteristic of la mala mujer, a marker of indigeneity, racial inferiority, and lower class/caste (“La Chicana—Legacy” 22-24; CFT 50).
Maria Lugones (2007) points out that the role of gender (and heteronormativity) is often missing from contemporary discussions of coloniality and, more specifically, of Quijano’s (2000, 2001) theorization of colonial social hierarchies and the naturalization of feelings of superiority/inferiority in the colonial period and beyond (or, what he calls “the coloniality of power”). Scholarly discussions that center on Quijano’s concept of coloniality of power have tended to naturalize a gender binary; in doing so, they ignore the heterosexual gender systems that violently reorganized indigenous social structures and life (Lugones 187). “Understanding the place of gender in precolonial societies,” Lugones writes, “is pivotal to understanding the nature and scope of changes in the social structure that the processes constituting colonial/modern Eurocentered capitalism imposed. Those changes were introduced through slow, discontinuous, and heterogenous processes that violently inferiorized colonized women” (201).

The abovementioned importation of poor Spanish women to the Americas and the buena mujer/mala mujer dichotomy contributed to the Spanish colonial apparatus that devalued indigenous women and fomented a culture of violence toward them, since these women were considered little more than animals. To this effect, Lugones continues:

They [women of color] were understood as animals in the deep sense of “without gender,” sexually marked as female, but without the characteristics of femininity. Women racialized as inferior were turned from animals into various modified versions of “women” as it fit the processes of global, Eurocentered capitalism. Thus, heterosexual rape of Indian or African slave women coexisted with concubinage, as well as with the imposition of the heterosexual understanding of gender relations among the colonized—
when and as it suited global, Eurocentered capitalism, and heterosexual domination of white women. (Lugones 202-3)

Gender, in other words, was racialized through colonialism, and, in turn, labor itself became categorized according to race and (racialized) gender. While a novel such as Don Chipote, discussed in chapter one, can reveal the way labor hierarchies were constructed according to colonial hierarchies, what “Los Vendidos” reveals (when read through the lens of Chicana feminist critique) is how racialized gender helps to organize labor along such colonial hierarchies. The contradictory joining of Christian morality (the buena mujer/mala mujer dichotomy) and the non-ethics of colonial violence solidified the dominant narrative of “femaleness” or what it meant to be female (and all the legal rights associated with it or missing from it) in the Americas. For while this colonial categorization allocated certain types of labor and prescribed certain types of behaviors for females, it also permitted sexual access to racialized women. Despite the Christian buena mujer narrative that prescribed a set of genteel social behaviors (including sexual abstinence outside of marriage), the dehumanization of people of color that occurred during the colonial period created a loophole that allowed the colonizer to mentally justify the rape of people of color not as a violation of Christian morals, but as a normal part of domination and subjugation. Colonialism, as Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2007) suggests, normalized the conditions of war by marking people of color as conquered people and making actions such as enslavement, separation of families, murder, genocide, and rape everyday realities for them (247-8). Therefore, any violence directed at people of color, although in striking contrast to Christian teachings, were accepted as normal.

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108 I say “femaleness” as opposed to “femininity” or “womanhood” precisely because only the gendering as female was universal. Colonized females, while sexually coded along a gender binary, were not considered to have feminine characteristics, nor did they fully share the moniker of “woman” with their white bourgeois women colonizers.
Nieto-Gómez’s discussion of the colonial history and racialization of social participation pinpoints the colonial origins (namely the buena mujer/mala mujer image) that dictated the behaviors and types of labor acceptable for Chicanas. Chicanas were mainly relegated to domestic-type and menial jobs within the movement, such as filing paperwork and cooking for the men (Del Castillo 8; CFT 47); not to mention the demeaning sexualization that Chicanas bore as part of the machismo attitude. In the (anonymous) article “Macho Attitudes” published in the student Chicana feminist newspaper, Las Hijas de Cuauhtémoc, a Chicana describes how Chicanos “use the movement and Chicanismo to take [Chicanas] to bed. And when she refuses, she is a vendida [sell-out] because she is not looking after the welfare of her men” (Nieto 9; CFT 117). Chicanas of the 1960s-1970s had three main roles within the Chicana/o movement, summed up colloquially by Cherrie Moraga (1993) as “the three f’s…feeding, fighting, and fucking” (157). And those Chicanas who resisted these roles and spoke out were identified as enemies of the Chicano nationalist cause, as Alicia Gaspar de Alba (2014) reflects:

Thus, feministas in the early days of El Movimiento—that is, women who believed they should have more of a role in La Causa than typing up the minutes or making the food for the meetings, or having the future Emilianos and Panchitos of the movement—those mujeres were said to be dividing the movement and spouting Anglo middle-class beliefs that had no place in the life of La Raza. They were called men-haters and “agringadas” and sellouts because, in seeking equality with men and personal liberation for themselves as women, they were accused of putting the individual before the culture. Rather than working toward cultural nationalism and the empowerment of the Raza brotherhood, they were said to be polluting the movement from within and splitting up the Chicano Holy

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109 Las Hijas de Cuauhtémoc was founded in 1971 by Anna Nieto-Gómez and Adelaida Del Castillo at California State University-Long Beach State. In spring 1973, they reorganized it and converted it into Encuentro Femenil, the first feminist Chicana journal (García 8).
(not to mention heterosexual) Familia. For this position they were ridiculed, humiliated, and consistently harassed by the men and their female loyalists. To make matters even more interesting, it was rumored among the more paranoid of the Chicano leadership that *feministas* were actually FBI infiltrators seeking to undermine the revolution. (70)

The Chicana feminists sought to break this image and call attention to the intellectual value they could bring to the movement as a whole. Although Chicanas were tasked with reproduction of culture they had no control or choice over how they chose to reproduce this culture, but were relegated to the role of mother. In their attempts to call out their male counterparts and point out the deficiencies of male-centered activism, Chicanas soon found themselves labeled as *vendidas*—sellouts to their culture and race.

The Denver Youth Liberation Conference’s *Chicana Workshop*, held in March 1969, is infamous for its report on Chicanas. After a workshop dedicated to discussing the role of the Chicana, the workshop representatives reported—in front of all the conference attendees: “the Chicana woman does not want to be liberated” (Longeaux y Vásquez 66-68; CFT 29). Longeaux y Vásquez (1972) reflects on her affective response upon hearing this report: “…I felt this as quite a blow. I could have cried…. Then I understood why the statement had been made and I realized that going along with the feelings of the men at the convention was perhaps the best thing to do at the time” (66-68; CFT 29). Both men and women within the Chicana/o movement viewed feminism as an Anglo women’s movement that detracted from the Chicano nationalist cause. This caused a split among the women in the Chicana/o movement between what became known as the “loyalists” and the “feminists” (or *femenistas* in Spanish).

The loyalists to the movement echoed the men’s critiques of the *femenistas*. They accused the *femenistas* of dividing the movement, of being “anti-family, anti-cultural, anti-man
and therefore anti-Chicano movement,” not to mention selfish in their agenda (“La Femenista” 34-47 qtd. CFT 88). In comparing the *femenistas* to Anglo women, the loyalists accused them of selling out their Mexican heritage for access to individualism—a concept associated with Anglo American culture. An anonymous article in the Chicana student newspaper *Popo Femenil* titled “Chicanas Take Wrong Direction” (1974) articulated the loyalists’ claim that Chicana *femenistas* sought a false identity more akin to that of Anglo American women:

…And since when does a Chicana need identity? If you are a real Chicana then no one regardless of the degrees needs to tell you about it. The only ones who need identity are the *vendidas*, the *falsas* [the false ones], and the opportunists…. We are going to have to decide what we value more, the culture or the individual (as Anglos do)? (“Chicanas Take” 13 qtd. CFT 88)

The loyalists equated the desire for an individual identity outside of Chicano nationalism with a desire to sell out their heritage in order to (falsely) pass as white. They labeled the *femenistas* as *agringadas*, Anglocized women who wanted to access an Anglo American class experience, one that was more concerned with individualism rather than racial oppression. The *femenistas* argued that sexism was “an integrated part of the Chicana’s struggle in conjunction with her fight against racism” (“La Femenista” 34-47 in CFT 90).

The harassment the *femenistas* encountered in the Chicana/o movement largely affected their platform and their ability to influence change. As Longeaux y Vásquez reflected on the infamous proclamation at the Denver Youth Liberation’s *Chicana Workshop* that the Chicana did not “want to be liberated,” oftentimes the *femenistas* had to remain silent due to fear of harassment. And despite the large numbers of women drawn in by regional Chicana conventions and conferences, any resulting Chicana caucus pressure group was only temporary since “their
diffused return to each individual organization brought few results, where numbers as well as morale were weak” (“La Femenista” 34-47; CFT 88). The divide between the loyalists and the _femenistas_ came to a head at the first national Chicana conference, _Conferencia de Mujeres por la Raza_, also known as the National Chicana Conference, held in Houston, Texas on May 28-30, 1971. Approximately six hundred women attended the event (Acosta n.p.) The conference covered topics such as gender discrimination, marriage, the Chicana’s role in the family, childcare, education, welfare, and employment discrimination, among others (Acosta n. p.; Vidal 7-9 in CFT 21). A survey conducted during the conference revealed the following, which seemed to point to a unified understanding of how sexism affected Chicanas:

84% felt that they were not encouraged to seek professional careers and that higher education is not considered important for Mexican women…. 84% agreed that women do not receive equal pay for equal work…. When asked: Are married women and mothers who attend school expected to also do the housework, be responsible for childcare, cook and do the laundry while going to school, 100% said yes. 88% agreed that a social double standard exists. (_Regeneración_ qtd. in Vidal 7-9 in CFT 21)

And more directly: “The women were also asked if they felt that there was discrimination toward them within La Raza: 72% said yes, _none_ said no and 28% voiced no opinion” (Vidal 7-9 in CFT 21).

Despite the sentiments reflected in the abovementioned survey, the fear that Chicanas felt at the threat of harassment from the men held a stronger sway during the National Chicana Conference. Nieto-Gómez (1974) describes the negative power this fear had over such a large group of women as she writes:
the fears of being associated with non-movement activities hung over the conference like a confusing and disorganizing paranoia…. Consequently, the intense feelings arising from the conflicts between the *femenistas* and the loyalists created such anxiety and confusion that the group of 600 women split up into two groups of women. Half the group “returned to the *barrio*” to officially offer feminine support to the already recognized and “legitimate” issues of the Chicano movement. The other half stayed to discuss how to support Chicanas who wanted the movement to recognize and fight the issue of sexism. (“La Femenista” 34-47 in *CFT* 90).

Not only were Chicanas paranoid about what the men would think of their association with “non-movement activities,” but they also feared that the Anglo women who had helped plan the event at the Magnolia Park YMCA had an ulterior motive to split the Chicana/o movement along male/female lines in order to further their own Anglo feminist agenda (Acosta n.p.).

Gómez-Quiñones and Irene Vásquez (2014), however, attribute this division to more than just the rhetoric surrounding gender equality (81-3). Many walked out, Gómez-Quiñones and Vásquez write, citing “differences over the arguable slighting of major Chicana and Chicano movement priorities, for example labor organizing, education reform, and the comparative importance of electoral participation in relation to other issues” (83). Chicana feminist and activist Betita Martinez, for instance, criticized the lack of focus on working-class Chicanas (Acosta n.p.). Gómez-Quiñones and Vásquez suggest that the walkouts at the Houston National Chicana Conference were not so much a simple ideological rivalry between Loyalists and *femenistas*, yet the atmosphere of dissent, paranoia, and even resentment that coded the conference (and other similar gatherings) should not be disregarded. This atmosphere of negative affects hung over Chicana *femenistas* and the movement as a whole.
Valdez’s play, written in 1967 at the beginning of the Chicana/o movement captures the affects that lingered in the movement into the 1970s. The play ends with the men remaining loyal to their ethnic roots, while the only female character betrays her ethnic heritage. Valdez’s gendered juxtaposition is troubling, yet it has gone largely unnoticed by literary critics. There is an affect of resentment surrounding Miss Jimenez in this play that this history of Chicana resistance and debate helps to explain. The fact that this resentment bears a class and gender profile speaks to historical realities that some saw as contradicting an “authentic” Chicano/a standpoint. Moreover, the coded resentment in “Los Vendidos” hints at the larger affect of resentment felt toward Chicana feminists and other Chicanas not associated with the movement during the 1960s-70s.

**Reification of Women**

Although Valdez recognizes the problematic reification of race and ethnicity, his play fails to address the ways in which women are also reified. Capital accumulation requires the formation of reified subjects; this is a process that developed over the long course of the colonial exploitation of people of color. As a consequence, the Mexican body and phenotype, for example, is turned into a thing that possesses certain marketable qualities. One of the marketable features signaled by the play is the masculine *Revolucionario* model’s “Latin lover” qualities. During Sancho’s working demonstration, the *Revolucionario* grabs Miss Jimenez and, according to the stage directions, “folds her back, Latin-lover style,” while saying “Ay, mamasota, cochota, ven pa ‘ca!”¹¹⁰ which the Secretary then describes as “rather nice” (47). Gender is thus alluded to as something that can be reified. Chicano masculinity is reified as the stereotypical Latin-lover type exemplified in film, television shows, and romance novels, while Miss Jimenez’s femininity is reified as submissive and complicit in her consent, “Well, it was rather nice.”

¹¹⁰ My translation: “Oh, hot mama, sexy mama, get over here!”
The period between 1930 to the Chicana/o movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and onward to 1979, saw a steady increase in the number of Chicanas working in white collared jobs. According to Evelyn Nakano Glenn’s study, “Racial Ethnic Women’s Labor” (1985): “The proportion of women employed as farm workers fell from 21.2 percent in 1930 to 2.4 percent by 1979… As with other racial ethnic groups the occupational dispersion of Chicanos is related to labor shortages during the war, especially World War II. In the post-war period, rising numbers of Chicanas found employment in clerical and sales jobs…” (99-100). As this shift occurred, the growing service industry began to feminize secretarial roles and often incorporated caretaking in the job: in addition to skills such as typing, scheduling, note-taking, and receptionist duties, secretarial responsibilities also included domestic chores such as serving tea or coffee. Even today, secretarial duties can include running errands, scheduling the boss’s lunch, or buying flowers or gifts for the boss’s wife on Valentine’s Day. The feminization of this type of job emphasized the way in which women were reified for certain stereotypical traits, including: domesticity, nurturing personality, cheeriness, and submissiveness.

While women of color gained access into the US white-collar service industry, men of color remained locked into the manual labor industry. One of the reasons was that men of color continued to pose a threat. As highlighted in Valdez’s “Los Vendidos,” the reified traits of Mexican men included hypersexuality, strength, endurance, and aggression—traits considered valuable for entertainment, advertising, and physical labor, but seen as threatening in the service industry. As Grace Kyungwon Hong (2006) writes: “Racialized and gendered difference is absolutely necessary to the hierarchization of workers and the extraction of capital in this era” (xxiii) and although gendered difference generally results in higher wages for men, the racialization of labor negatively impacts Chicanos and other men of color. The difference coded
in gendered subjects (women vs. men) itself reified, allowed Chicanas access to the service industry and locked the Chicanos in to working class labor. Whereas internalized colonialism or *coloniality*, continues to play a role in the hierarchy of white-collar working women, it does not account for the abovementioned gendered split in which women of color gained access to higher wages than their male counterparts.

Contradictions of this sort occurring at the intersection of gender and value point to colonial capital’s flexible and opportunistic harvesting of cheap labor sources. Negative affects are produced when the internalized patriarchal hierarchy does not match up with the reality of gendered access to capital for Chicanos and Chicanas. I specifically refer to this affect as resentment or *gendered class resentment* in order to highlight the envy, shame, and betrayal felt by Chicano men at the discrepancy of access into the service industry. Valdez’s negative depiction of the secretary Miss Jimenez as a “vendida,” is, in a way, a type of displaced *machismo* that is predicated upon internalized patriarchal hierarchies, yet it also underscores both a murky solidarity environment and a male-dominated social activist culture. Valdez’s play hints at the question: how can you trust certain Chicanas if they’re white-collar workers and not toiling alongside you in the fields, factories, etc.? A recurrence of gendered class resentment in Valdez’s plays and other canonical Chicano literary texts points to the problem of how Chicano men felt toward Chicana women suddenly having access to white collar jobs, larger paychecks, and subsequently access to a middle-class experience in much larger proportions than themselves. Understanding this gendered class resentment helps us to see the rise of Chicana feminism as one of the responses to such resentment that is encoded in the narratives of Chicano movement literature.
Gendered class resentment targets the historical realities that belie an “authentic” Chicano standpoint as an imaginary stance that shelters the legacy of colonial patriarchal investments. As mentioned earlier, Chicano nationalist literature defined the quotidian Chicano experience through working-class life. Chicanas with access to white collar jobs (and single Chicanas living on their own) did not fit into the working-class Chicano imaginary. In addition, the rhetoric surrounding gender equality and emerging access to the service industry availed Chicanas an important feature of Anglo American middle-class experience: independence. However, the idea of female independence was extremely threatening to the traditional Mexican Catholic family structure. Even today, unmarried Chicanas who seek independence in their desires to go to college, move to a different city, live on their own, identify as anything other than heterosexual, or experience sexuality before marriage face being negatively labeled as “agringadas,” which in itself is a betrayal of culture and ethnic roots. The term “agringadas” is used as an insult to describe assimilation into specifically Anglo American culture. Its common association with Chicana women is tied to the myth of La Malinche as traitor and discloses the anxiety of loss of culture through intermarriage, as Chicana and Mexican women were historically tasked with the duty of cultural reproduction as mothers. Consequently, the shadow of assimilation hung heaviest over Chicanas, as John Cutter (2015) notes:

Interrace and interracial desire have been particularly vexed for Chicana writers, in part because of the cultural mythology surrounding La Malinche, Hernán Cortés’s indigenous translator and mistress, now synonymous with female teacher in Mexican and Chicana/o culture. Chicana feminist and queer scholars have repeatedly critiqued the cultural nationalist deployment of malinche discourse to police female power and sexuality. (14)
Access to female power and sexuality threatened patriarchal control, as the access to female independence left behind the colonial (religious) *buena mujer* model of female discipline and control.

The portrayal of the Chicana/o movement (and Chicana/o Studies) as one dependent upon *male* activism negates a genealogy of feminist decolonial thought that has significantly shaped Chicana/o social activism, art, and literature. The Chicana/o movement’s history and canon is largely recognized as one dominated by male activist leaders and writers due to the lack of visibility of Chicana feminist leadership, artists, and writers. This incomplete picture of the movement skews the field of Chicana/o Studies and in many ways reproduces the affect of gendered resentment through its erasure of the significant role Chicanas played in Chicana/o social activism and literary production. A striking example of the ongoing erasure is Ignacio M. García’s work, “Juncture in the Road: Chicano Studies since ‘El Plan de Santa Bárbara’” (1995), which suggests that there has been a decline in Chicana/o Studies scholarship since the inception of the field due to the Chicana feminists themselves. He echoes the gendered affect of resentment of the movement, ignoring (and simultaneously silencing) the struggles of gender and sexuality produced by a patriarchal, male-centered activist culture. He writes:

Because they [Chicana feminists] are critical of the ideological premises of the Chicano Movement, they reject much of what came out of it. They believe that the concepts of community and family much extolled by early Chicano intellectuals are sexist and seek to limit their non-domestic growth…. Some Chicana feminists have, however, not limited themselves to attacking Chicanos who do not follow their brand of feminism. Their adversarial approach has created divisions in a number of institutions, particularly those in California. While they see themselves as victims, they are in fact quite influential in
their programs and in NACS [the National Association for Chicano Studies]. The lesbian Chicana scholars have even gone as far as promoting the idea that homosexuality is an integral part of Chicano culture. (190)

What I. García fails to acknowledge is how the Chicana feminists pushed the Chicana/o movement agenda to be more inclusive. Instead, he articulates the same damaging patriarchal rhetoric that often excluded (or chased) people like the “Los Vendidos” character, Miss Jimenez, from the social movement. Re-reading canonical texts such as “Los Vendidos” through a Chicana feminist lens underscores the limits of male-centered Chicano nationalism. Although Chicano nationalism condemned the reification of people of color and even of women, the critique of capital it produced failed to point out how Chicano nationalism itself reproduced colonial gender hierarchies.

My goal in reading Valdez’s “Los Vendidos” against the grain is to reiterate the importance of filling in the gendered gaps of Chicana/o movement history. We need to revisit Chicana/o literature and history for the silenced women’s voices as well as the silenced voices of the Chicana/o LGBTQ community. It is problematic, as Maylei Blackwell (2011) asserts, that the field of Chicana/o Studies has not fully addressed issues of homophobia and sexism “because these issues are seen as ‘resolved’” (32). Chicana/o Studies curricula has instead substituted texts by Moraga and Anzaldúa—namely their co-edited anthology This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color (1981) and Anzaldúa’s Borderlands/La Frontera (1987)—as stand-ins for the emergence of Chicana feminist theory prior to the 1980s (32). And Sandra Cisneros’ (1983) The House on Mango Street now stands in for all Chicana fiction. “The irony” of this pedagogical move, however, “is that what these authors said in the 1980s was impossible to say in most movement spaces” (Blackwell 33) and their creative writing, activist poetry, and
personal essays were a direct result of and a response to the gendered affect of resentment that excluded Chicanas and members of the LGBTQ community during the Chicana/o movement. Not to mention that Moraga and Anzaldúa would have been labeled as *vendidás*, *agringadas*, and *malinches* because of their sexual orientation and feminist theories.

I agree with Blackwell’s argument that “we need all these histories and genealogies of the contested histories of gender and sexuality in Chicana/o and Latina/o communities in order to transform these exclusions” (33). Moraga and Anzaldúa mark not definitive Chicana feminist theory, but rather a culmination of social activism, leadership, and literary production by Chicanas that are often forgotten, and still need to be recovered. This includes Chicana movement feminists mentioned in this chapter, such as: Marta P. Cotera, Adelaida R. Del Castillo, Francisca Flores, Rosalie Flores, Esther Hernández, Yolanda M. López, Anna Nieto-Gómez, Adaljiza Sosa Riddell, Cynthia Orozco, Enriqueta Longeaux y Vásquez, and Mirta Vidal. Other Chicana activists not mentioned in this chapter that played a significant role include: Elizabeth Martinez, Ana Montes, Bernice Rincón, Rita Sánchez, Alicia Sandoval, and many others collected in A.M. García’s significant anthology, *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writings* (1997). Chicana feminist journals and newspapers such as *Encuentro Femenil: The First Chicana Feminist Journal*, *Regeneración*, and *Hijas de Cuauhtemoc* need to be re-examined by Chicana/o Studies scholars. Much work was done by Chicana students in clubs, college theater, and newspapers, not to mention leadership in Chicana/o student organizations and in the 1968 Chicana/o Blowouts (also known as the East L.A. walkouts), but has yet to be fully incorporated into anthologies, syllabi, and critical work by Chicana/o Studies scholars. Literature produced by Chicanas during the movement has been long overshadowed by Chicano writers, especially since many Chicana texts are rare, out-of-print, or even unpublished;

Many more literary texts, no doubt, remain undiscovered. Extending the timeline further back, prior to the Chicana/o movement, uncovers even more literary production by women of Mexican descent living in the United States. The message early Chicana feminists hoped to articulate in order to combat the resentment directed at Miss Jimenezes was, perhaps, voiced in Anzaldúa’s monumental work, *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987); but more importantly, this work should be viewed as the result of a long history of theoretical and literary work produced by early Chicana feminists.
CHAPTER FOUR

MAPPING THE LOST YEAR: CONSTRUCTING CHICANA/O SUBJECTIVITY THROUGH AFFECT IN TOMÁS RIVERA’S ...Y NO SE LO TRAGÓ LA TIERRA

Siempre empezaba todo cuando oía que alguien le llamaba por su nombre, pero cuando volteaba la cabeza a ver quién era el que le llamaba daba una vuelta entera y así quedaba donde mismo….Una vez se detuvo antes de dar la vuelta entera y le entró miedo. Se dio cuenta de que él mismo se había llamado. Y así empezó el año perdido. – Tomás Rivera, ...y no se lo tragó la tierra

In Tomás Rivera’s writings, to be a Mexican American migrant is to be suspended in time and space, to be in movement both between the US and Mexican nations as well as within the US national space itself, to be a part of a literal movement of labor which has occurred in the past and continues to occur. For Rivera, because of the association with transient field labor, the migrant is caught in a grammar of industrialized labor that positions him or her in the past progressive, a continuous past that does not seem to allow for an arrival in the present or progress toward the future. In his 1971 novel, ...y no se lo tragó la tierra (And the Earth did not Devour Him), Rivera highlights the Mexican American migrant’s spatial-temporal suspension by juxtaposing it with the melancholia of modernity. Because of the migrant’s tenuous relationship to the past, he or she is unable to progress into the future. Without the ability to mourn the losses of the past, Rivera suggests, the immigrant is a fugitive of time in search of an analysis that makes sense of his or her social condition.

In this chapter, I argue that reading ...y no se lo tragó la tierra through negative affects—or what Sianne Ngai (2005) terms “ugly feelings”—provides a map of the social injustices

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111 All translations of ...y no se lo tragó la tierra in this dissertation are by Evangelina Vigil-Piñon. “It always began when he would hear someone calling him by his name but when he turned his head to see who was calling, he would make a complete turn and there he would end up—in the same place….One time he stopped at mid-turn and fear suddenly set in. He realized that he had called himself. And this the lost year began” (Tierra 83).
suffered by the Mexican American migrant workers. Such a map charts the persistence of coloniality’s hostile dominant cultural narrative. Nevertheless, focusing on moments of ugly feelings simultaneously expresses the Mexican American community’s ability to traverse the limits of their racialized economic and cultural precarity through communal action. The act of producing a cohesive identity through ugly feelings (specifically melancholia) is political in and of itself when framed between a longing for a better future and an anguishing present. Such ugly feelings have the capacity to establish an alternative cultural narrative that ultimately brings together a new imagined community even in the face of the displacement inherent in migrant work. Moreover, I suggest that despite the melancholia often found in Chicana/o texts, a text like *Tierra* has the potential to leave the Mexican American reader with a sense of pathos or *angustia* (anguish). This focus on affect allows us to understand why ugly feelings have the counterintuitive power to provoke political action from readers, who identify with the ugly feelings as familiar, if not also familial and communal. *Tierra* provides a strong example of conflicting cultural narratives that define life in the US for people of Mexican descent. In the moments of ugly feelings experienced by the Mexican American characters, we see how the legacy of colonialism and colonial affect-culture continue to manipulate the US social and political environment and create hostile racial hierarchies. Colonialism left behind a legacy of social hierarchies based on race, gender, and language; these hierarchies were coded with affect and created a colonial affect-culture, that is, an affect-culture which continues to manifest itself in the modern world through racial oppression, discrimination, and divisions of labor.

Reading for affect in *Tierra* highlights not only how this counter-narrative narrates and evokes ugly feelings associated with the migrant working class experience, but also allows for a revelation of the ways in which confronting these ugly feelings has the potential to bring people
together through a camaraderie that reaches across class, race, and national origin, termed “political love.” “Political love,” as Michael Hardt (2011) terms it, is not the same as romantic or familial love. Instead, it must “move across these scales, betraying the conventional divisions between personal and political, and grasping the power to create bonds that are once intimate and social” (677). Rivera, himself, pointed to the role of love in Tierra (and the Chicano reality that inspired the novel). The Chicana/o migrant worker, Rivera (1973) said, was surrounded by the hostile “political, economic, and social systems…that tried to structure him,” systems that the Chicana/o did not always understand (“Recuerdo” 4). The one thing that the Chicana/o understood was love: “He gives love and from it generates life…. To a certain point, he also rejected the external system since he realized that under the system in which he had to live, no indication was given to him that there would be any rewards for acting human or for loving his neighbor unselfishly” (4). Rivera suggests that in order for Chicana/os to survive the dehumanization of migrant labor in the US, they had to cling to their relationships with one another. It is the ability of a people to cling to humanity in the face of dehumanization that becomes a political action. I read the potential for such political love in a shift from ugly feelings to the good feelings that occurs through the critical process of discernment, which allows people to contain their unnamed ugly feelings through language. More than simply creating a name for a feeling, however, I contend that it is the narration of experienced ugly feelings that allows people to bond and begin the process of building a community as well as a subjectivity that arises precisely through shared experiences.

It is because of the need to theorize these “ugly feelings” that affect theory is key here. One of the aims of my reading of Rivera is to uncover the political agency embedded in Tierra’s negative affects or ugly feelings—feelings that at first glance appear depressing and politically
unproductive\textsuperscript{112} and yet these ugly feelings have the power to bond the Mexican American migrant community through “political love.” I choose to focus on ugly feelings, rather than the few instances of anger (a passionate emotion) because anger is not positive in this novel; indeed, it is represented as potentially destructive. This representation is especially ironic given the larger context of the Chicana/o movement at the time of the novel’s publication, and its immediate adoption by Chicana/o activists. By focusing on ugly feelings, I argue that we can recover their aesthetic and “critical productivity” and the suspended agency of the politically-ambiguous work they perform in literature (S. Ngai 3). Moreover, attention to ugly feelings in Rivera’s novel produces an alternative understanding of the formation of “Chicana/o” subjectivity and consciousness (within the historical framework of the US Civil Rights movements during the 1960s and 1970s).

WRITING AGAINST THE GRAIN OF EARLY MEXICAN AMERICAN RESISTANCE NARRATIVES

Unlike early Mexican American writers and his contemporary Chicana/o writers, Rivera departs from a singular regional depiction of the lived experience of people of Mexican descent in the US. While other authors situated their characters in the US Southwest (for example, Jovita González, Zamora O’Shea, Américo Paredes, María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, and Daniel Venegas), Rivera sets his characters in the Southwest and the Midwest. Rivera’s novel also stands in distinction from well-known Mexican American novels such as J. González’s \textit{Caballero} (1930s) and Paredes’ \textit{George Washington Gómez} (1930s), and the notorious “Plan de San Diego” (1915), which articulated a clear resistance narrative, often promoting, describing, or suggesting violent uprising. In \textit{Tierra}, there is no plan for an uprising in the classic sense, nor is there an argument for assimilation and accommodation. Rivera’s novel, however, reiterates the

\textsuperscript{112} I use “negative affects” and “ugly feelings” interchangeably in this chapter.
same critique his predecessors highlighted by calling attention to the lived experience of Mexican Americans dealing with racial discrimination and pejorative education in the US.

Early Mexican American authors exposed westward expansions as colonialism or invasion through military occupation and established the US-Mexico border as a site of political and legal contention with a history of military presence and violence. As a result, their writing reflected a pattern of response to these border conflicts. The theme of military occupation and surveillance in early Mexican American literature, thus, maps out a trajectory of violence and legal ambiguity that includes the violence inherent in the Taos Revolt of 1847, the “Plan de San Diego” (1915), and the resulting aggressive border security of the Texas Rangers. The US-Mexico War was part of American expansionist efforts that fueled the theory of Manifest Destiny. American history, as Laura Gómez (2007) notes, tends to cast Americans as pioneers, rather than colonizers. More specifically, it erases the colonial history of the US in its invasion of Mexico’s northern frontier. Both US history and the Western genre “teach that the ‘frontier’ (a concept connoting an empty, unpopulated region) was ‘settled’ by brave and hearty pioneers (with the notion of settlement itself implying a benign presence, rather than a military occupation” (16). Popular culture, such as John Wayne Western films, *Little House on the Prairie*, and Western dime novels recast the American presence as folk heroes, battling only warring Indians and the untamed environment. And sensationalist Wild West sideshows, specifically Buffalo Bill’s Wild West, functioned as the “the most important commercial vehicle for the fabrication and transmission of the Myth of the Frontier” (Slotkin 83, 86). Similarly, literature (including Willa Cather’s 1913 novel *Oh Pioneers!* and her 1918 novel, *My Ántonia*) also conveys a romanticized account of settling an empty, savage frontier. This genre tells tales of the human ability to overcome great odds in the move westward. Yet, these frontier tales erase
the Mexican presence. They negate the civilizing efforts put forth by Mexicans and settlements long-since established during Spanish rule. The US-Mexico War (1846-1848), referred to as one of the United States’ “forgotten wars,” nonetheless “had formative effects on constructions of race, class, and nation in the mid-nineteenth century and on the Civil War itself” (Streeby 6). So, while Americans collectively recall the nineteenth century as a time of expansion and pioneering, Mexican-Americans collectively recall it as a violent time of colonization and de-legitimization. These two versions of embodied history (the American pioneers versus the Mexican conquered people) are as distinct as the English word “frontier” and its Spanish cognate “frontera.” In English, “frontier” suggests a border between civilization and the uncivilized; an empty, unconquered space. On the other hand, “frontera” means border or borderlands. It does not suggest emptiness, nor does it necessarily imply a separation between the tamed and the wilderness.

As a result, early Mexican American literature exposed westward expansion as colonialism or invasion through military occupation. In J. González’s *Caballero* (1930s), this invasion is the embodiment of trouble. The repetition of “trouble” as an anthropomorphized being occurs throughout the novel:

Trouble rode in Texas, on a fresh mount. It galloped over the plains, lay at ambush in the hills, stalked the mesquite thickets, camped at the water holes, swaggered and strutted in the towns. Trouble whispered to the domineering Anglo, to the marauding Indian, to the mercurial, high-tempered Mexican. Trouble kindled the fire beneath a pot where simmered racial antagonisms, religious fanaticisms, wrongs fancied and wrongs real—and brought it from the simmer to boiling, up to the edge spilling over. (22)
Military presence not only stirs the “domineering Anglo,” according to this description in *Caballero*, but also fueled the anger and frustrations of the Native Americans and the people of Mexican descent living on the border. The invading presence attempts to push them out and seize their historic legitimacy.

Early Mexican American literature suggested that the Mexican American collective memory remembered the bloodshed of wars past as well as their history, erased from US history books; or, as the narrator of *Caballero* states: “There was blood. Texas dipped a pen deeply in it, and wrote its history with it” (22). Years later, Anzaldúa (1999) would also use the bloody metaphor to describe the clash between two cultures, although less literal in meaning: “The US-Mexican border *es una herida abierta* [an open wound] where the Third world grates against the first and bleeds” (25). The US-Mexico War, Andrea Tinnemeyer (2006) notes, influenced “the national imaginary” and changed the way the nation “projected and imagined itself;” this not only affected the Mexican residents of the newly-incorporated territory, but also the nation’s perception of itself and the “boundaries…[of] citizenship were found to be porous” (xiv-xiv). Article IX of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo granted the newly incorporated Mexicans “all the rights of the citizens of the United States, according to the Constitution” (“Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo” Article IX), yet it would soon be known as the “broken promise” in the Mexican American community, as American courts and legal representatives used loopholes to avoid enforcing protection of Mexican Americans under the law.\(^{113}\)

Injustices experienced by the Mexican-American community due to the many conflicts and manipulation of official discourse produced the Plan de San Diego, a Mexican American

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manifesto discovered in 1915, which proposed the creation of an independent republic through a reappropriation of the lands lost during the US-Mexico War, that is:

the States bordering on the Mexican nation, which are: Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and Upper California, of which States the Republic of Mexico was robbed in a most perfidious manner by North American imperialism (“Plan de San Diego”).

The violent language of the Plan called for an outright race war against Anglo Americans, stating that the uprising would begin “[o]n February 20, 1915, at 2 o’clock in the morning” against the “Government and country of the United States” (“Plan de San Diego”). More troubling, however, was Provision 7 of the Plan that called for a full-out race war: “[e]very North American over sixteen years of age shall be put to death; and only the aged men, the women, and the children shall be respected; and on no account shall the traitors to our race be spared or respected” (147). Although “[s]everal Chicano historians have uncritically accepted the Plan at face value” (Harris and Sadler 213), Rodolfo Acuña (1972) suggests that:

[Its] [e]xtremism must be understood in the prevailing conditions and differences must be drawn between the normal circumstances and the violence suffered by Mexicans in Texas. Few, for instance, would have considered it extreme if Europeans had published a similar plan against the Germans during World War II. (176)

Racism, segregation, alienation, questioned legitimacy, stolen property/land, and other injustices suffered by Mexican-Americans placed them in a defensive position and produced this extreme, unofficial discourse, which challenged the broken promises of official discourse.
Novels such as *Caballero* and *George Washington Gómez* recast westward expansion as a US military encroachment, with images of military camps, soldiers, Texas Rangers, and squatters invading the once-Mexican land. González and Raleigh (1996) remind us of the role of Manifest Destiny in the conquering of Texas: “‘Texas is ours,’ Houston liked to say, repeating Jackson’s words. ‘We are in Destiny bound to bring it under the flag’” (69). Such a powerful statement suggests that nothing will stand in the way of the US conquering force. The history of de-legitimacy of Mexican-Americans on the border is strongly tied to hegemonic rhetoric and the careful navigation of legal language. The border was— and still is— a place of ambiguity, where loyalties and identities are continuously questioned. Neither people nor bullets respect imaginary political boundary lines. The border’s conflictive nature, therefore, has prompted a historical trajectory of militarization along the border in an attempt to enforce these political boundaries through the threat of violence. We can see this historical trend starting with Spanish presence during the Texas Revolution, the abovementioned US-Mexico War, the Texas Rangers and vigilante groups who patrolled the border during the Mexican Revolution, the institution of the US Border Patrol to protect and defend the border, mass deportation efforts, the Minute Men, and military deployments to the Southwest border to protect against escalating drug violence.

The trajectory outlined by Mexican American novels such as *Caballero* and *George Washington Gómez* attempts to transform the conquered subject into conqueror. Guálinto’s enlistment in the US Army (in *GWG*) and Vigil’s choice to accept a position in the US-imposed New Mexico government (in *Caballero*) complicate the issue of military presence and surveillance on the border. Mexican American literature from the 1930s onward continued to trace the abovementioned trajectory of military presence; and subsequent authors record the historical transition from a military to a state presence. These authors attempt to re-address the
issue of state presence, which takes the form of border patrolling, surveillance, immigration, and the violation of civil rights in novels such as Daniel Venegas’ (2000) *Don Chipote*, in which the immigrant character finds himself slave to the United States’ oppressive illegal labor force, struggling to survive.

Yet, while early Mexican American novels (and “The Plan de San Diego”) promoted an often-violent resistance to Anglo American encroachment upon lands and violation of civil rights, Rivera neither positions his nameless central figure (“the boy”) as an incarnation of the border hero Gregorio Cortés, nor as a version of the Mexican Revolutionary heroes, Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata. By the end of *Tierra*, the boy does not, as the border corrido (Mexican folk ballad) “El Corrido de Gregorio Cortés” says, have a “pistol in his hand.” Instead, *Tierra* ends with an empty-handed boy who instead climbs a tree and happily waves his hand back and forth in hopes of connecting to someone else, someone like him. The resistance Rivera portrays, I suggest, is in stark contrast to previous generations of work by early Mexican American writers, and emphasizes community connection through affect. Rivera nonetheless provides a critique of many of the same topics that previous writers of Mexican descent had grappled with, including: racial discrimination, issues of citizenship, language, pejorative education, gender, sexuality, and religion. His engagement with these topics connects his text to previous narratives, but he produces a critique or resistance that does not involve violence. While previous narratives, such as *Caballero* and *George Washington Gómez* have responded to “ugly feelings” through armed resistance, *Tierra* articulates a resistance that comes through political love.

**Reading for a Grammar of Ugly Feelings**

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Ugly feelings circulate within *Tierra* as responses to the social and historical conditions experienced by Mexican American migrants. Such ugly feelings underscore the social precarity of the spatially-displaced Mexican American migrant. In the vignette titled, “La noche buena” ("The Night Before Christmas"), doña María’s agoraphobia conveys this precarity. Agoraphobia is an anxiety disorder triggered in social situations and environments; it is a spatial-temporal affective response to “an anticipated or projected event” (future temporality) and an outward (spatial) projection or displacement of a “quality or feeling the subject refuses to recognize in himself and attempts to locate in another person or thing” (S. Ngai 210). Doña María projects her social precarity onto her surroundings when she suffers an anxiety attack at the Kres department store as she shops for Christmas presents for her children. On her way to the department store, she questions her geospatial location: “Dios mío, ¿qué me pasa? Ya me empiezo a sentir como me sentí en Wilmar…. A ver. Para allá queda la hielería. No para allá. No, Dios mío, ¿qué me pasa?” (*Tierra* 56). In this questioning of location, she also projects her status as a migrant. She is not just lost, but disoriented. Rivera conveys the spatial displacements of the Mexican American migrant community as a whole through this politically ambiguous moment. The Mexican American migrant is spatially displaced in two important ways. First, she is physically separated from her nation. Second, she lacks any sort of spatial stability, because she travels across the United States in accordance with the seasonal agricultural work. Doña María refers to the various cities to which they have to travel for work; this story takes place in South Texas, but she also references their trips up north to Iowa (*Tierra* 55). There is no stable home or community for the Mexican American migrant, leading to constant spatial-temporal disorientation characterized here as an anxiety attack.

115 “My God, what is happening to me? I’m starting to feel the same as I did in Wilmar…. Let me see…the ice house is in that direction—no it’s that way. No, my God, what’s happening to me?” (*Tierra* 133)
Doña María’s anxiety in this social environment indicates a psychological projection of the Mexican American migrant’s social precarity within the United States. Once inside Kres, she becomes overwhelmed by the people and objects, which further the dizzying effect of this displacement:

Le entró más miedo y ya lo único que quería era salirse de la tienda pero ya no veía la puerta. Sólo veía cosas sobre cosas, gente sobre gente…. Era que ya no sabía los nombres de las cosas. Unas personas se le quedaban viendo unos segundos, otras solamente la empujaban para un lado…. De pronto ya no oía el ruido de la gente aunque sí veía todos los movimientos de sus piernas, de sus brazos, de la boca, de sus ojos. Pero no oía nada…. Empujó y empujó gente hasta que llegó a empujar la puerta y salió.

Apenas había estado unos segundos en la acera tratando de reconocer dónde estaba, cuando sintió que alguien la cogió fuerte del brazo….

—Here she is…these damn people, always stealing something, stealing. I’ve been watching you all along. Let’s have that bag.

—¿Pero…?

…. Luego ya no supo nada. Sólo se sentía andar en un mar de gente.

(Rivera 57)\textsuperscript{116}

\textsuperscript{116} “Her anxiety soared. All she wanted was to leave the store but she couldn’t find the doors anywhere, only stacks and stacks of merchandise and people crowded against one another. …She couldn’t even remember the names of the things. Some people stared at her for a few seconds, others just pushed her aside…. Suddenly she no longer heard the noise of the crowd. She only saw the people moving about—their legs, their arms, their mouths, their eyes…. She pressed through the crowd, pushing her way until she pushed open the door and exited.

“She had been standing on the sidewalk for only a few seconds, trying to figure out where she was, when she felt someone grab her roughly by the arm…. ‘Here she is….these damn people, always stealing something, stealing. I’ve been watching you all along. Let’s have that bag.’

“….Then she lost consciousness of what was happening around her, only feeling herself drifting in a sea of people…” (Rivera 133).
Doña María cannot interpret the social situation and forgets the names of the objects around her. She is hyper aware of the reactions her social status as an immigrant inspires: some people stare at her, while others are oblivious to her existence. Her body is inscribed by the negative affects projected onto her by Americans. They are “watching her all along,” (Tierra 57) expecting her to steal. In this act of watching, they read her body as information, projecting “visual and affective qualities (as they are acquired historically and discursively)” and “information and statistics” onto her body (Puar 175). She is both hypervisible alien and insignificant nobody within the US social sphere.

The projection of negative affective qualities enforces social hierarchies, which, within the discourse of capitalism, reproduce colonial structures of subordination, what Quijano (2000) calls the “coloniality of power.” Quijano explains that colonial rule imposed a “systemic racial division of labor” that inevitably linked social classification with race in the global expansion of coloniality (536). Colonization of the Americas created an association of “nonpaid or nonwaged labor with the dominated races because they were ‘inferior’ races” (538). As a result, paid labor began to be seen as “the whites’ privilege. The racial inferiority of the colonized implied that they were not worthy of wages” (539). If coloniality is embedded in capitalist forms of labor and resource extraction, it is the colonial affect-culture that helped produce embodied consent to the power of coloniality. Rather than merely dictate hierarchies, the role of affect in a colonial cultural value system fueled the lived belief that “global cultural order” revolved around “European or Western hegemony” (540) and animated feelings of superiority based on relations to capital codified as race relations and justified by the dismissal of all forms of non-Western epistemologies. As a result, Western Europeans felt themselves to be definitive of the modern world, the “exclusive bearers, creators, and protagonists of that modernity” (542) and people of
color as primitive, pre-modern societies. The coloniality of power that Quijano describes finds colonial power structures even in the modern world with the disintegration of colonialism and slavery. Capital developed “as a social relation based on the commodification of the labor force” (550). Due to the intricate relationship between affect, coloniality, and capital, people of color continue to be seen and felt as belonging to a lower class and relegated to the lower rungs of labor distribution and paid lower wages.

It is this residual colonial affect-culture that produces the social context that codifies value into a corresponding “coloniality of labor” hierarchy (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez 38-39), devaluing, in this case, migrant labor. The migrant body is pushed and pulled by US society and capitalism. As a labor force, Mexican American migrants are reduced to their labor-power. As they migrate along seasonal agricultural routes, they produce more value, and become, as Marx (1844) writes, “more valueless…more unworthy” (73). Doña María’s feeling of floating in a sea of people (“un mar de gente”) further suggests the way in which the migrant body is manipulated by US socioeconomic needs. Her attempt to participate in a US capitalist society as a consumer is disrupted by the questioning of her legal status. As a Mexican American, she is relegated to the role of manual producer of consumer goods rather than a consumer. The result is that once again her children do not receive Christmas gifts; yet their silent resignation is indicative of an awareness of their social and economic precarity.

Affects work overtime in Tierra: the characters experience ugly feelings, which, in turn, have the ability to make the reader experience ugly feelings. The ugly feelings that persist as angustia draw the reader closer to a community generations apart. Angustia does not allow the reader simply to put the book down. It agitates him or her and can ultimately lead to political activism. The vignettes in Tierra tell individual stories of the harsh realities suffered by Mexican
American migrants on a daily basis. Most of these stories do not name or describe particular emotions. Instead, the stories narrate the disorienting effect of ugly feelings experienced by the Mexican American migrants. These ugly feelings result from the relationship or interaction between migrants and objects, situations, or people within the United States. Lack of closure in the individual vignettes helps reproduce the persistence of ugly feelings for the reader. Ugly feelings are “far less intentional or object-directed, and thus more likely to produce political and aesthetic ambiguities, than the passions in the philosophical canon” (S. Ngai 20).

Reading moments of ugly feelings, then, not only helps to shed light on the hostile political and social environment surrounding Mexican American migrants that originally provoked these feelings, but also demonstrates the way in which ugly feelings can unite people across space and time through communal storytelling. As opposed to a traditional character-driven narrative, *Tierra* is driven by a narration that joins the migrant’s various spaces and temporalities through ugly feelings—a structure that suggests that shared stories of ugly feelings can pull people closer together. Drawing from Jonathan Flatley’s (2008) “affective mapping” technique, I argue that ugly feelings join the reader and storyteller (the disembodied voices of the migrants in the novel). Flatley contends that a narrative’s “affective map” serves as a way to record and organize the affective values of the locations and situations we experience in our social world (78). His “affective mapping,” though, is limited to the connective ability of melancholia, which Freud defines as a failure to mourn a loss. I would like to open up “affective mapping” to include all ugly feelings (such as anxiety and angustia), with melancholia serving as the overarching ugly feeling that structures the novel. All the ugly feelings in the novel work in concert with melancholia, which stems from the loss of the American Dream. The American Dream—the Mexican American migrant comes to learn—is nothing more than a fiction. Further,
I argue that aurality, or storytelling, functions as mechanism for the circulation of affect. It binds the storyteller and audience together not just in words, but in the narration of the affective experiences. This narration of the experience of ugly feelings can produce a haunting angustia in the reader that is not easily shaken, but forges affective bonds which unite (or “map”) people together. Rivera’s fragmentary stories do not pursue a logic of narrative causality, but rather, are connected by the migrant’s melancholia for a lost community, as embodied in the nation as an imaginary place of collective belonging, and a lost home, as an actual place of family life in the traditional sense. If affective mapping in Tierra allows readers today to map themselves onto a broader historical and social context, the original readers of the 1970s could find themselves connected not just to their Chicana/o contemporaries, but to a broader history of Mexican Americans in the United States. By contrast, for non-Mexican American readers then or now, affect maps together a broader civil rights fellowship and also allows them to imagine Mexican Americans as a cohesive group or political subject.

Through the affective dimension of the text, Rivera produces a Chicana/o subjectivity and consciousness that somewhat paradoxically embodies and transcends the disjointed spatial-temporalities of the migrant experience and offers as a cohesive unit: a deeply affective collective subject as a potentially politicized force for social change. The structuring of affective attachments occurs via the narration of Mexican American migrant workers’ experiences in the 1940s and 1950s as a historical condition that helped produce the cohesive Chicana/o subjectivity of the 1960s and 1970s. While the novel was published in 1971 during the Chicana/o movement, it narrates experiences taking place around the time of the Bracero Program (1942-1964). This set of agreements between the United States and Mexico arranged for the migration of approximately 2 million Mexican men, who were brought to the United States to work in
agricultural fields (Cohen 1-2). The Bracero Program sought to extend “an individual modernization figured as key to Mexico’s national transformation” and paralleled the “grand narrative of opportunity, progress, and self-refashioning that newly arrived immigrants have been told” about the United States (2). The project of modernity (characterized by regional industrialization, the rise of capitalism, and a reliance on hierarchies of labor) carries with it a utopian sense of progress. Yet, its promises—upward mobility and economic stability—are dashed as the Mexican American migrants encounter the exploitative realities of a US capitalism haunted by a colonial affect-culture, and third world conditions replicated in the first world space.

In this manner, melancholia is inextricably connected to this experience of modernity; it is proof of the historicity of subjectivity and becomes “the site in which the social origins of our emotional lives can be mapped out and from which we can see the other persons who share our losses and are subject to the same social forces” (Benjamin 481). The melancholia associated with the origins of modernity’s displacement of people allows for an alternative understanding of the political trajectory of Mexican Americans in the United States. In the place of mourning, the melancholic “internalizes the lost object into his or her very subjectivity as a way of refusing to let the loss go” (Flatley 2). The Mexican American migrant, in this case, feels (but does not mourn) modernity’s broken promises, the shattering of the American Dream. Melancholia carries with it the threat of trapping individuals in a paralyzing depression. Such a state would not allow for progress. The affective map then mobilizes melancholia in a productive manner. As a connective device within affective mapping, melancholia can be useful in “show[ing] how one’s situation is experienced collectively by a community” (4). Through literature and storytelling, the affective map is not limited by time or space, because these stories are passed on, through
language either orally or in written text. Thus, people can affectively map themselves in relation to the world around them across space and time to tell or preserve stories otherwise not wanted.

**LANGUAGE AND AFFECT**

While many literary critics have examined the role of the “Spanglish” vernacular (also known as “Pocho”) in Rivera’s text as an indication of migrant dual identity and displacement, the fragmentary nature of the text, and as an indication of American realist and modernist aesthetics, none have identified its political agency of affect. I suggest that affect theory offers a fertile analytical approach that deepens our understanding beyond the historical scope of the narrative. S. Ngai’s (2005) understanding of “ugly feelings” as carriers of political potential and my extended version of Flatley’s (2008) “affective mapping” allow us to trace the way affect maps together a Mexican American community and, in doing so, one uncovers the political agency of affect in *Tierra*. By combining this mapping with Teresa Brennan’s (2004) theory of discernment we can see more clearly how these ugly feelings, as seeds of political agency, need to be processed and contained by language in order to produce a positive political outcome: a cohesive political Chicana/o subject and civil rights activism through camaraderie, or political love.

It is through a distinctive vernacular prose that Rivera attempts to map together a community consciousness and relationality across distinct spatial and temporal nodes. Moreover, his linguistic constructions highlight the cultural importance of the aural. In essence, he creates an aural consciousness, a narration that weaves together internal monologue with external dialogue, yet maintains the vernacular patterns of uneducated migrants in the United States that “imitate the simple and direct, face-to-face style of the Mexican-mestizo speech community” (Calderón 105). As a result, Rivera’s vernacular Spanish carries a symbolic value

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117 This includes: Ralph F. Grajeda, Nicolas Kanellos, Brooke Fredericksen, Héctor Calderon, and Ramón Saldivar.
that allows for an aural circulation of affect throughout the novel. It is due to this affective load carried by language, as well as its role in affective mapping and discernment, that I chose to quote from the original Spanish text, as opposed to a translated version. I read the function of language in *Tierra* two ways: first, as a carrier of affect, and second, as mechanism for discerning negative affects. As previously mentioned, affects are pre-lingual; and yet, the affect in Rivera’s language does not pertain only to the words and meanings themselves. Instead, I locate language’s capacity for carrying affect in the tones and cadence of the familiar vernacular itself. It is the sound and inflection of the vernacular or *familiar* Spanish language in this text that offers a counter-mood to the stories that are *expressed* through language. That is, the affect is *felt* in the sound of a familiar speech pattern that conjures home. It is, for example, the *feeling of* hearing your name correctly pronounced after hearing it distorted in an unfamiliar language over and over again, or the warm feeling of reading or hearing your native tongue after daily humiliation in another language. Rivera’s unique style creates a familiar space that pushes back against the hostile official discourse (produced in the media, federal policy, and the US school classroom) that most often takes the shape of academic English (or even academic Spanish) and signals colonial class hierarchies. By capturing the linguistic rhythm of the Mexican American working class, Rivera allows each novel fragment to produce the intimacy of face-to-face familiar spaces. The hostile English discourse included in the novel, on the other hand, remains untranslated, suggesting a refusal to allow its acceptance into the intimate Mexican migrant community.

Hostile language from the outside also penetrates the intimate space of the novel in the form of English. In order to maintain the realism of the Chicana/o experience, Rivera makes “no attempt to translate his words into Spanish to create a linguistic unity in the book; this would not
be true to life” (“Language and Dialog” 59). By suddenly including English in this vernacular text and refusing to translate it, Rivera faithfully represents the reality of these migrant workers and also refuses to allow discriminatory institutions to completely penetrate the intimate space. The Spanish vernacular, in other words, is reserved for the Chicana/o. Not only does it “provide an authentic view of traditional culture,” but, according to Joseph Sommers (1979), it also demonstrates “how people respond to each other and to the harsh realities of their existence” (103). These instances of English invasion in the text occur as examples of the discrimination posed by US institutions, including the education system, the legal system, and the social sphere.

In “Es que duele” (“It’s that it hurts”), for example, the education system produces hostile language both through its Anglo students and the administration when a young boy is expelled from school for physically fighting with his Anglo schoolmate. This vignette is an interior monologue that teases out the ugly feelings involved in the boy’s harsh reality— the discrimination and humiliation that leads to the fight, the institutional racism that determined expulsion as the disciplinary measure, and the vergüenza (shame) he feels for having been kicked out of school. The boy’s opening reflections associate language with pain, shame, and anger: “Es que duele…. Yo creo que empezó todo cuando me dio vergüenza y coraje al mismo tiempo” (Tierra 16). These ugly feelings are produced by the hostile language that is directed at him, and he recognizes that the situation stems from the discourse produced by US institutions. The Anglo bully who provokes the fight that leads to his expulsion initiates the contact through language, rather than physical violence, and it is the language itself that resonates with the Mexican child:

Aquel gringo me cayó mal desde luego luego…. Me dio coraje pero más vergüenza porque estaba aparte y así me podían ver todos. Luego cuando me tocó

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118 “It hurts a lot…. I think it all started when I got so embarrassed and angry at the same time” (Tierra 92).
leer, no pude. Me oía a mi mismo. Y oía que no salían las palabras….Pero, la culpa no fue toda mía. Ya me andaba por ir para fuera. Cuando estaba allí parado en el escusado él fue el que me empezó a hacer la vida pesada.

—Hey, Mex…I don’t like Mexicans because they steal. You hear me?
—Yes.
—I don’t like Mexicans. You hear me, Mex?
—Yes.
— I don’t like Mexicans because they steal. You hear me?
—Yes. (Tierra 17-18)\textsuperscript{119}

Under the US gaze, both in and outside of the classroom, the boy feels powerless. He feels lost when confronted by a hostile Anglo gaze, and as a result, he cannot read in class. The narration moves from colloquial Spanish (the language of the home and his interior thoughts) to a harsh accusatory English. Untranslated, the English feels sudden and harsh. It does not reflect the boy’s home or his thoughts. When confronted by the Anglo bully, he once again finds himself powerless to answer more than the affirmative—a simple “yes.” His “yes” reflects the inability to contest the stereotypes created by the hostile language that surrounds him in English. That is, the assertion of his subjectivity must come, not through English, nor through an academic Spanish, but through the vernacular language of the Chicana/o migrant and farm worker community.

\textsuperscript{119} “I didn’t like that gringo, right off….I was mad but mostly I felt embarrassed because I was sitting away from everyone where they could see me better. Then when it was my turn to read, I couldn’t. I could hear myself. And I could hear that no words were coming out….But it wasn’t all my fault. I couldn’t wait anymore. While I was standing there in the restroom he’s the one that started picking on me” (Tierra 93).
Yet, the boy’s inability to protest against racial discrimination does not stop there. English also invades the text as he overhears the administrative telephone conversation that leads to his expulsion:

—The Mexican kid got in a fight and beat up a couple of our boys, … No, not bad…but what do I do?
—…
—No, I guess not, they could care less if I expel him…They need him in the fields.
—Well, I just hope our boys don’t make too much about it to their parents. I guess I’ll just throw him out.
—…
—Yeah, I guess you are right.
—…
—I know you warned me, I know, I know…but…yeah, okay. (Tierra 18)

Although the boy asserts physical superiority over the Anglo bullies, he still feels helpless in the face of the discrimination that led to the fight in the first place. The hostility of language and the discrimination continues through the authorities of the educational institution. The unknown school administrator assumes that, because he is Mexican, the boy and his parents do not value education. The conversation also suggests that the institution (represented by the unheard voice on the other line) assumes that this is the case for all Mexicans, as he or she had warned the school administrator about this type of behavior.

Once again, Rivera demonstrates that the boy’s response cannot come through the English language. His preoccupation with his expulsion, as he repeatedly tries to negate the
experience, has to occur in this Spanish vernacular: “Y ahora ¿qué hago? A lo mejor no me expulsaron de la escuela….N’ombre sí. Sí es cierto, sí me expulsaron…. ¿Qué les voy a decir? A lo mejor no me expulsaron. Sí, hombre, sí. ¿A lo mejor no? Sí, hombre, sí” (Tierra 16-17). Sommers (1979) calls attention to this idiom, arguing that “its very form parallels and reinforces the narrated irony” (97). In this story, and in others throughout the novel, “the ironic use of the negative [is used] elliptically, to render more vehement the positive” (97). The lived experience, then, is not only expressed through the Spanish vernacular, but also through the very construction of the vernacular idiom itself.

The repetition of these phrases and the questioning of reality (whether or not he was expelled from school) contradicts the stereotype of devalued education. Indeed, the boy keeps hoping that he isn’t really expelled from school. His entire family has invested hope in his education as a way to break the cycle of poverty. The pain of disappointing his father hurts more than the humiliation itself: “Lo que me duele más es que ahora no voy a poder ser operador de teléfonos como quiere papa” (Tierra 19).\footnote{For other literary representations of discrimination suffered by Chicanos, see also: Anzaldúa, Gloria. \textit{Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza}. San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute Books. 1987. Paredes, Américo. \textit{George Washington Gómez}. (1940) Houston, TX: Arte Público Press, 1990. Villanueva, Tino. \textit{Chronicle of my worst years/\text{Crónica de mis años peores}}. Trans. James Hoggard. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press. 1994.} The responses to these humiliating (or “ugly”) situations always occur within the confines of Spaniglish or pocho, the language and thought process that make sense to the Chicana/o. Vernacular texts, thus, highlight the social function of language by demonstrating how it connects and disconnects people. The Spanish vernacular connects the Chicana/o community through intimate conversation, while it simultaneously disconnects them from the hostilities of an English-only speaking outside. Its hybridity, however, which alters English words into a folk Spanish, also dislocates the Chicana/o from Mexico. They are geographically and linguistically displaced from their homeland (Mexico). Although they are
geographically situated within the US nation-state and have adapted English words and phrases into their vernacular, they are still linguistically disconnected. In this way, language has a mapping function. The Spanish vernacular situates the Chicana/o in geographical ambiguity. The language in *Tierra* belongs to the South Texas borderlands, situating its speakers in between two nationhoods and sociopolitical personhoods.

Second, if language functions as mechanism for discernment by releasing us from negative affects through cognition, then the careful attention to dialect within *Tierra* reflects an attempt to cognitively mitigate negative affects through this affective charge that language carries. Language, Brennan (2004) writes, “functions by giving us a place in relation to others, so enabling us to overcome the subject-centered illusions that plague each of us, and it also gives a voice to the affective blocks and feelings that otherwise stand in the way of rejoining enough of the flow of life to survive” (143). Rivera’s linguistic constructions highlight the cultural importance of the aural and create a path toward discernment and affective mapping.

Storytelling implies more than one person, and in this way, it binds people together through the telling and the listening processes. It constellates the community by uniting narrations of experience, while maintaining individual voices and experiences intact. It also allows for a grouping of similar experiences or affects. By using the vernacular in this storytelling style, Rivera privileges an aurality that binds community and maps these affective experiences in relation to one another. Through aurality, politically-ambiguous experiences become the baseline for the construction of a cohesive Chicana/o community and subjectivity. For example, in the last anecdote before “Debajo de la casa,” Bartolo passes through the town, selling poems. He always sells out quickly because they contain the names of people in the town. Literature and poetry in this fragment become a way to create a cohesive communal structure.
The poems bring the people together not only in the written word (including the individuals’ names in the poems), but also through the spoken word, as Bartolo reads them aloud and encourages the people to do the same: “Y cuando los leía en voz alta era algo emocionante y serio. Recuerdo que una vez le dijo a la raza que leyeran los poemas en voz alta porque la voz era la semilla del amor en la oscuridad” (Tierra 71). Bartolo’s instructions to continue an oral tradition emphasize the “social function of storytelling which is to bind the culture together by representing human experience… And the suggestion to read aloud is Rivera’s reference to an oral-aural context in which the human voice memorializes the culture” (Calderón 105). Bartolo’s narrative fragment underscores the significance of Rivera’s carefully-constructed prose, which mimics the spoken word rather than the stream of consciousness narrative style of other American modernist authors.

Consequently, the affective mapping produced by the aural also clears a path for a discernment that is aural-based. Unlike the majority of the other fragmented narratives in the novel, Bartolo’s section alludes to a circulation of positive affect—that unnamed emotional and serious sensation (“algo emocionante y serio”) and the seed of love in the darkness (“la semilla del amor en la oscuridad”) (Tierra 71). The experiences shared through storytelling carry negative affects, yet Rivera’s text suggests that the community mapping that occurs through aurality allows for a discernment of these affects. The aural nature of storytelling allows listeners to discern the affects and, because of its social-communal nature (the affective mapping), results in the seed of a positive affect: love. In other words, discernment—here enacted through the formal positive containment of negative affect—turns negative affects into a community-binding love, producing in effect a counter-mood. Here, discernment comes not through the writing

121 “And when he read them aloud it was something emotional and serious. I recall that one time he told the people to read the poems out loud because the spoke word was the seed of love in the darkness” (Tierra 147).
process or the development of a sophisticated language for naming of the affects, but through an inchoate, affective social understanding that forms a community network through the affective mapping. In this way, an illiterate community is presented as involved in a critical intellectual process.

**RESOLVING UGLY FEELINGS INTO POLITICAL LOVE**

*Tierra* is not a character-driven novel, but it does have one central figure, a young boy who becomes a figurative anchor “around which,” writes Ramón Saldívar (1990), “the collective subjective experiences of Rivera’s Texas-Mexican farmworkers coalesce, forming a communal oral history” (Saldívar 75). He serves as what M.M. Bakhtin (1981) terms a “chronotopic point,” a point in which space and time intersect (84). In the crawlspace under the house, the boy (who feels he has lost a year) “remembers” these spatially and temporally distinct stories, bringing them together, and he suddenly emerges as an old man. In this act of remembering, he reconstitutes the year through the individual stories that make up the novel, thereby coalescing distinct spatial and temporal nodes. This chronologic collapse produces a coherent (and also an incoherent) Mexican American migrant voice.

As I have argued, the development of a coherent Chicana/o community occurs in this novel through a mapping and understanding of the circulating affects. In 1982, eleven years after the publication of *Tierra*, Rivera commented on the work Chicana/o literature sought to do in terms of community-building:

Perhaps the most important element of Chicano literature is that it was able to capture from the beginning of the decade this very wisdom of a very disparate and amorphous nation or kindred group. It was able to do that because there was a hunger not only in the community but in the Chicano writer to create a
community. Up to the present time, one of the most positive things that the Chicano writer and Chicano literature have conveyed to our people is the development of such a community. (*Tierra* 340)

The hunger to create community Rivera describes is produced and fed by affective mapping. Constructing a community in this way not only bridges together what Flatley calls a “heretofore unarticulated community of melancholics” (4), but also creates a space for political and social change. In doing so, the process of affective mapping that Rivera provokes produces for the reader the politicized Chicana/o subjectivity, as it arises from a history of social and economic inequalities born under the necessarily exploitative structure of labor in capitalism as a function of modernity.

In order to construct a community, *Tierra’s* central figure must take in and understand the circulating affects narrated through the novel. He functions as a receptacle for these projected negative affects, which echo in his head as disembodied voices. These voices tell stories of ugly feelings, which disorient him because they are affects that originate from others, from the outside. In the first vignette, “El Año Perdido” (“The Lost Year”), the boy hears the voices calling him: “Siempre empezaba todo cuando oía que alguien le llamaba por su nombre pero cuando volteaba la cabeza a ver quién era el que le llamaba, daba una vuelta entera y así quedaba donde mismo” (*Tierra* 7). 122 This disorientation comes about through what Brennan (2004) calls the myth of self-containment—the idea that we experience affects in isolation and that feelings only originate within ourselves, that they are not transmitted (13). Affects, however, defy the myth of self-containment. They can be transmitted in social environments, through interactions between people and environments and can have a physiological impact (3). The boy turns around

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122 “It always began when he would hear someone calling him by his name but when he turned his head to see who was calling, he would make a complete turn and there he would end up—in the same place” (*Tierra* 83).
in a circle, unable understand or resist these projected affects. This process of resistance against negative affects depends, according to Brennan, on a person’s ability to consciously examine them, understand the situation that is causing them, and assign language to them in order to positively contain them through discernment (11). Until the boy can discern these stories of ugly feelings, he cannot turn them into something positive.

The central figure’s inability to name or discern the projected negative affects confuses him and disrupts his grasp on spatial-temporality resulting in “el año perdido,” the lost year (Tierra 7). At night, as he lies in bed, he struggles to cognitively organize the projected affects: “A veces trataba de recordar y ya para cuando creía que se estaba aclarando todo un poco se le perdían las palabras…. Pero antes de dormirse veía y oía muchas cosas” (Tierra 7). Discernment requires a distancing in order to construct a cognitive reflection that, in turn, produces a vocabulary for the ugly feelings and interprets them (Brennan 11, 125). This production of a vocabulary is important, because language “releases us from the affects…via words that express something occluded and thereby release the energy deployed in this occlusion” (140). Discernment requires that we realign “fleshy codes and language,” so as to produce “conscious connections” that allow us to understand the history embedded in the ugly feelings and contain them in a positive manner (146). While the boy “sees and hears many things” before going to sleep, he does not have the language to name these affects and therefore fails to cognitively comprehend them.

In the last vignette, “Debajo de la casa,” (“Under the House”), the affective experiences merge with the boy’s thoughts and he is able to assign language to the projected affects (discern them) that once disoriented him. The fragmented stories come together; the voices mix and meld.

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123 “At times he tried to remember and, just about when he thought everything was clearing up some, he would be at a loss for words…. But before falling asleep he saw and heard many things…” (Tierra 83).
The space underneath the house serves as an affective site where “the social origins of our emotional lives can be mapped out and from which we can see the other persons who share our losses and are subject to the same social forces” (Flatley 3). Under the house, the boy is finally able to discern the affects projected onto him and he emerges, smiling:

> Se sintió contento de pronto porque…se dio cuenta de que en realidad no había perdido nada. Había encontrado. Encontrar y reencontrar y juntar. Relacionar esto con esto, eso con aquello, todo con todo. Eso era todo. Y le dio más gusto. Luego cuando llegó a la casa se fue al árbol que estaba en el solar. Se subió. En el horizonte encontró una palma y se imaginó que ahí estaba alguien trepado viéndolo a él. Y hasta levantó el brazo y lo movió para atrás y para adelante para que viera que él sabía que estaba allí. (Tierra 75)

Discernment and affective mapping work hand in hand in the space under the house, as they enable the boy to contain the projected ugly feelings positively, and in this way, derive pleasure (or produce a counter-mood) from the articulation of a coherent community. When the central figure is finally able to understand and contain ugly feelings, he is effectively using the melancholia as “a mode of vital connection with the world” that changes the mood (Flatley 4-5). “Mood” in this sense is a phenomenological concept which describes a person’s being in the world, or “one’s way of having certain things in that world matter to one; it is the atmosphere in which intentions are formed, projects pursued, and particular affects can attach to particular objects” (5). The central figure produces this counter mood by using melancholia and ugly

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124 “He immediately felt happy because… he realized that in reality he hadn’t lost anything. He had made a discovery. To discover and rediscover and piece things together. This to this, that to that, all with all. That was it. That was everything. He was thrilled. When he got home he went straight to the tree that was in the yard. He climbed it. He saw a palm tree on the horizon. He imagined someone perched on top, gazing across at him. He even raised one arm and waved it back and forth so that the other could see that he knew he was there” (Tierra 152).
125 Flatley develops this concept of mood from Martin Heidegger’s *Stimmung*, also translated as “attunement.” See Flatley 4-5.
feelings as a way to establish connections or “map” ourselves in relation to the historical and social context of our world. The acts of melancholizing and discernment become uplifting in *Tierra*, as the central figure smiles not at the negative experiences, but at this counter-mood that creates a community. The process of discernment allows him to recuperate (or map) his lost year, a temporal metaphor that represents the lost times and histories of the Mexican American migrant community’s affective experiences. It also permits him to create an affective map that brings all this together.

By presenting the ugly feelings as disembodied voices originating from outside of the boy, he also practices what Walter Benjamin (1999) calls self-estrangement, a process of self-distancing that not only allows the central figure to evaluate himself from an outside point of view, but also defamiliarizes him from his emotional life, so that he becomes “capable of a new kind of recognition, interest, and analysis” (Flatley 80). The disembodied voices facilitate self-estrangement (of not only the central figure, but also the reader) through what Theodor W. Adorno (1997) terms the aesthetic “shudder” (245)—an awareness that occurs not through a lived experience but rather as a confrontation with the historicity of the whole of one’s affective life (Flatley 82). The central figure (and the reader) experiences this shudder when he shifts from the affective experience produced by the work to the affective experiences of his own life. The shudder is precisely the moment of transition from the disembodied voices in the space of the text to the reality of the central figure (and the reader’s) own subjectivity. It also occurs as the central figure (suddenly an old man) imagines someone else in the distance, since it allows for a shift from the text to the recognition of the reader’s subjectivity. As the central figure sits in the tree and looks toward the horizon, he looks forward to the future (the readers of the 1970s and even contemporary readers), connecting the subjectivities of Mexican Americans across a
spatial-temporal divide. In doing so, he affectively maps the historical and social contexts that lead to the creation of a politically-charged Chicana/o subjectivity. *Tierra* takes the potentially immobilizing ugly feeling of melancholia and turns it into something productive. It projects ugly feelings onto the central figure, who, through the processes of self-estrangement, affective mapping, and discernment, is able to contain them, put them into language, and create a positive, productive counter mood that can provoke political action.

The process of affective mapping and discernment is productive in the reading of ugly feelings in *Tierra* precisely because it provides a chronology of the social injustices suffered by Mexican American migrant workers and creates a community that crosses space and time. The spatial-temporal suspension experienced by the migrants because of their melancholia parallels a suspended agency or political ambiguity that is activated and resolved only through strategies for reading negative affect. The novel’s aural consciousness circulates symbolic affective value through the Spanish vernacular, which allows for a mapping, a discernment, and the production of a counter-mood that creates a space for social change. This is a counter-mood of love, a political, as opposed to romantic, concept that forges solidarity and creates “bonds that are once intimate and social” (Hardt 677). While Rivera’s political love unites, it also maintains the individual voices that carry the human element necessary for converting experiences of ugly feelings into sites of political change. Personal experiences are crucial to understanding the social precarity of the Mexican American migrant, as their “melancholic concern with loss creates the mediating structure that enables a slogan—‘The personal is political’—to become a historical-aesthetic methodology” (Flatley 3). Estrangement for the reader that occurs in Rivera’s narrative of individual experiences produces an aesthetic shudder that allows them to bear witness and “begin to repair damaged subjectivity by taking up a position as speaking subjects”
Chicana/o subjectivity, thus, is formed in the novel not through an affirmation of oppression, but through an affective mapping that produces communities and allows for a discernment and containment of ugly feelings. While the novel describes the suffering of the community without an overt political call to action, it is the angustia produced on the reader that ultimately provokes political action.
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