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Michael Leon Trujillo

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**The Dissertation Committee for Michael Leon Trujillo Certifies that this is the
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**The Land of Disenchantment:
Transformation, Continuity, and Negation in
the Greater Española Valley, New Mexico**

Committee:

José E. Limón, Supervisor

Pauline Turner Strong

Richard Flores

Kathleen Stewart

Sylvia Rodríguez

**The Land of Disenchantment:
Transformation, Continuity, and Negation in
the Greater Española Valley, New Mexico**

by

Michael Leon Trujillo, B.A.; B.S.; M.A.

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Dedication

For my mother and father.

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I am indebted to many people and institutions for assistance in the various stages of this project. My first thanks must go to the people of north-central New Mexico who often took me under their wing and sometimes challenged me. This project is my effort to work through their diverse and often profound lessons. Due to the sensitive nature of my research, many of the people that played an important role cannot be named. Of those that can, I owe a special thanks to Teresa Archuleta, James and Angel Espinoza, John Garland, Father Julio Gonzáles, Michael Trujillo, and Beth Velasquez.

I completed this dissertation as a Riley Scholar in Residence at Colorado College (CC), where I was affiliated with the Hulbert Center for Southwestern Studies and the Department of Anthropology. I was both encouraged and challenged by this liberal arts institution's fine community of scholars. A pivotal section of this dissertation was written when I was an Ethel-Jane Westfeldt Bunting Fellow at the School of American Research (SAR) in Santa Fe, New Mexico. During 2002 and 2003, I was a member of a team in a New Mexico Department of Health funded ethnographic study. Over the course of my time in Española, other institutions played an important role in my intellectual development. I was employed the local newspaper, the *Rio Grande Sun*; at the University of New Mexico at Los Alamos (UNMLA); and at the Hoy Recovery Program. My 2001-02 research was partially funded by a University Federal Credit Union Fellowship. I am particularly grateful to the University of Texas at Austin (UT) and UT's Department of Anthropology for their generous support of my academic preparation, research, and writing. A 2001-02 UT Thematic Fellowship funded the bulk of my field research.

At UNMLA, Juanita Jabbanema and Carlos Ramírez encouraged me in the tough, early days of this project. The *Rio Grande Sun*'s Robert E. Trapp and Robert

Braiden Trapp taught me to see Española with the critical eye of a journalist. At the Hoy Recovery program, my employers Sherrijean Padilla, John Garland, and Ben Tafoya exemplified integrity and empathy. New Mexico drug use researcher Cathleen E. Willging showed me how to study drug use with both a deep sense of understanding and academic rigor.

Conversations with a number of New Mexican and New Mexico scholars shaped my research, questions, and theoretical perspectives. Of particular influence were discussions with Peter García, Felipe Gonzáles, Sarah Horton, Enrique Lamadrid, Gabriel Meléndez, Tey Marianna Nunn, and Brenda Romero. The work of University of New Mexico (UNM) anthropologist Sylvia Rodríguez profoundly shaped my vision of New Mexico and I am very thankful that she agreed to serve on my dissertation committee. The SAR's Nancy Owen Lewis provided insight at a crucial time in my dissertation's development. Colorado College folklorist and anthropologist Mario Montaña read and commented on my dissertation in full, and mentored me through the project's completion. Also at CC, Claire García, Anne Hyde, and Victor Nelson-Cisneros provided support in this project's final year and welcomed me into the college's community of scholars. At UT, Richard Flores, Kathleen Stewart, and Pauline Turner Strong taught me to be an anthropologist and cultural critic, and served on my dissertation committee. José E. Limón supervised my dissertation and deserves my profoundest gratitude for shepherding me through this process. I continue to be inspired by his scholarship.

My family has supported me throughout my life and graduate studies, and was often working on this project with me in spirit. First, I must thank my parents, Gregory Trujillo and Gladiola Eleanor Trujillo. This dissertation is dedicated to them. Secondly, my uncle Manuel Ferran, aunt Sister Carmela Trujillo, and aunt Cleo Ulibarrí deserve my great gratitude for the kindness they have shown me over the years. Finally, I must thank my wife and partner, Ronda Brulotte. She has read parts of this text countless times, shown great patience, and this project could not have been completed without her.

Preface

When I first wrote my dissertation proposal in the spring and summer of 2000, I planned a thematic focus on the complex and often fraught relationship between emerging and traditional or residual aspects of northern New Mexican Hispanic or Chicana/o ethnic/racial identity. I believed a geographic focus in the Greater Española Valley of north-central New Mexico to be an excellent location for such a project. My dissertation has retained these thematic and geographic foci. However, the text I wrote has changed from the one I planned in most other respects. At the time I wrote the proposal, mostly sitting at a desk in my studio apartment in Austin, Texas, I imagined a far shorter research period and producing a very different sort of text. The ethnographic writing that I foresaw was more in line with the previous ethnographies written in the region. As so often happens, my fieldwork, research, and writing became a more profound and drawn out journey than I first planned.

What emerged was a dissertation that focuses on the "negative" and "positive" aspects, in the Hegelian sense, of New Mexican racial/ethnic identity and/or assignment. As I will show throughout this text, I posit that New Mexicans are becoming increasingly defined by these dialectical notions of what *they are* and what *they are not*. Implicated within this dialogue are tropes such as visions of New Mexico as the "Land of Enchantment" and jokes about Española's residents. In this exploration, I have come to envision my project as a social and creative anthropological commentary on the Española Valley. My intent is to evoke some aspects of these issues rather than attempt to create an exhaustive or complete rendering. As will become apparent, such a full rendering remains a tremendous and complex undertaking that is only begun in this dissertation.

The Journey

I first began to seriously imagine this dissertation's focus after a car ride from New Mexico's Tierra Amarilla to southern Colorado's San Luis Valley with community and political organizer Maria Varela. At that time, 1997, I was in the process of completing a master's thesis that dealt with community mobilization based in the ongoing land movement in northern New Mexico. The land movement seeks the return of land often swindled from the area's Hispanic population following the American annexation of the Southwest. In that conversation, Varela described a gap between northern New Mexico's youth and older generations that she had seen grow since her arrival in northern New Mexico in the 1960s. My interest in this gap led me to switch my research interest from the villages of northern Rio Arriba County, where relatives of mine still live, to southern Rio Arriba County's city of Española. In the late 1990s, when the Española Valley began to appear in regional and national headlines for extraordinarily high rates of fatal drug overdoses, the significance of this issue, and its importance in this particular location became even more urgent.

As I first intended, in the summer of 2000, I moved from Austin to Española. But once I was in Española my activities varied greatly from those I foresaw in my proposal. As planned, in 2001–02 I solely focused on my dissertation research. I was afforded this luxury by a University of Texas Thematic Fellowship. However, in the previous year (2000–01), while I awaited research funding, I worked as a newspaper reporter for Española's *Rio Grande Sun* and taught adult basic education and a Chicana/o Studies course at the University of New Mexico, Los Alamos. In 2002–03, I worked as a detox attendant and facilitated drug treatment groups at an Española-based treatment facility, and I worked on a University of New Mexico (UNM) study of drug treatment. My journey continued over the course of the two years I primarily devoted to writing. In that time, I lived in Oaxaca, Mexico; Austin, Texas; and Colorado Springs, Colorado, I spent a summer at the School of American Research in Santa Fe and taught at the University of Texas at Austin (UT). As I write these lines, I am a Riley Scholar-in-Residence for the Center of Southwest Studies and Department of Anthropology at Colorado College (CC). In the course of this journey,

I continued reading and advanced my theoretical perspective. The new point of view, experiences and information gleaned in the course of these years challenged and reshaped my theoretical orientation and writing style. In the process, I threw out countless pages of written text and reformulated and discarded entire chapters.

This project has also become a personal intellectual journey. In my research and writing, I have confronted my own visions of New Mexico. Although New Mexican by "blood," I grew up in central Washington state rather than the northern New Mexican communities where my family has lived for hundreds of years. Nevertheless, through my parents' stories, their assertions of "who we are," and countless trips to see relatives, New Mexico played a major role in my childhood and young adulthood. I also spent some of my twenties living in New Mexico and, in the course of my undergraduate and graduate education, the extensive ethnographic literature by New Mexico anthropologists such as Paul Kutsche, Charles Briggs, and Sylvia Rodríguez began to play a role in my thinking.

However, in my actual experiences in northern New Mexico in the 1990s and 2000s, I did not find the communities that my parents described nor the communities I remember the countless family trips "home." Similarly, the objects of my ethnographic analysis are not the people that populate the more romantic ethnographies of the region, as these representations seemed to be incomplete. Rather, in my research and wider experience, I found "something more" or, perhaps, "less" that required inclusion in my text — a something that I would eventually recognize as negativity both in a popular and philosophical sense. I believe the following dissertation will evoke this something else.

Focusing on the Negative

Along these lines, the vernacular usage of "the negative" is a particularly loaded description of one aspect of my time in Española, the year I spent working as a reporter for the *Rio Grande Sun*. The newspaper's longtime owner, Robert E. Trapp, and managing editor, Robert Braiden Trapp, are often accused of "focusing on the negative." In particular, this view is often stated by community leaders who accuse

these editors of overlooking the "positive." In this sense, my dissertation could be subject to the same criticism. Nevertheless, I am encouraged by Theodor Adorno's view that the popular praising of those who are "positive" is a fetish of the Hegelian notion of the positive-in-itself. In this sense, focusing on the negative is a refusal to sanction things as they are (Adorno 159:1973). This dissertation's focus is thus intended to both evoke and employ a certain oppositional politics. Citations of the negative are an incitement to negate blockages and closures and assert an openness and affirmation that resist the violence and denial required to sustain the very real processes of domination.

**The Land of Disenchantment:
Transformation, Continuity, and Negation in the
Greater Española Valley, New Mexico**

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This dissertation examines the views that people hold of New Mexican Hispanic racial/ethnic identity and/or assignment in the Española Valley of north-central New Mexico. Included in this exploration are tropes that idealize New Mexico as the "Land of Enchantment" and Española in opposing and often disparaging terms. Deploying Hegelian notions of "negativity" and "negation," this dissertation reviews these characterizations of Española and New Mexico and argues that the Valley represents the negative hidden within and necessitated by tropes of enchantment. This dissertation is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Española over the course of three years (2000, 2001, 2002) and reviews of the anthropological and popular literature about Española and neighboring communities. In each of this dissertation's chapters, I explore the dialectical construction of this vision of Española and New Mexico. The first chapter analyzes the ethnographic writings of two cohorts of anthropologists that conducted fieldwork in the Española

area in the 1960s and 1970s. The second chapter explores the embroidery of Española Valley native, Policarpio Valencia. The third chapter considers both the life and writings of Jim Sagel and his love for a New Mexican woman, artist Teresa Archuleta. The fourth and fifth chapters examine two acts that deconstructed positive visions of the Valley, the vandalism of a statue of conquistador and New Mexico founder Don Juan de Oñate and the murder of two teenagers as they walked in the annual Good Friday pilgrimage to Chimayó. In the final chapter, I examine current drug use in the Española Valley. My goal is to present a vision of Española that encompasses both the positive and negative, thus absorbing contradictions rather than abolishing them. Ultimately, I intend for these chapters, each written in the form of an essay, to constitute a social and anthropological commentary on the Española Valley.

Table of Contents

List of Figures	xvi
Introduction: Marco Cholo and Other Española Jokes	1
The Land of Enchantment	5
The Anti-Santa Fe	8
Española Jokes	15
Tarrying with the Negative	19
My Research	22
New Mexican Identity and Nonidentity	23
Modernist Ethnography	27
This Dissertation	28
One: A Time for Bitterness.....	31
Village Ethnography	34
Española Ethnography	44
Negativity.....	53
Village Ethnography Revisited	55
Unintended Consequences	58
Two: Appearances Teach.....	61
Embroidering Santa Cruz and Española	65
A More Genuine Culture	68
Embroidering Continuity	70
Embroidering Transformation	75
Negating the Negation	86
Three: Cuando Hablan Los Enamorados	90
Sagel's Ouvre.....	94
You Must Get Out.....	97

Linda y Rara Brujería.....	98
The Cultural Dynamics of Spanglish.....	105
Jaime Sagel (Sah HELL) aka Jim Sagel (Say Guell).....	107
I am Somewhere Inside.....	109
The Road Deadends.	112
Four: Remembering and Dismembering	116
The Cuartocentenario.....	119
Dismembering Oñate	122
Commemorating Oñate.....	127
Shaking the Family Tree.....	131
Remembering Oñate	135
Options for the Foot.....	137
Five: The Passion of Ricky Martinez	143
Sacred Geography.....	146
Good Friday	150
Ricky's Passion	150
Flipping Out.....	153
Oñate's Passion	156
Descansos.....	160
Six: A Northern New Mexican "Fix"	163
Within a Quarter Mile of Here.....	167
Drug(s) of Choice	169
You Feel this Intense Rush	171
Culture as Cure	177
Let's Get real	182
Bulletproof	185
Conclusion: Of Jokes and Redemption	188
A Mad Medly.....	191
Something Inherently Comic	193
A Strain of Redemption	196

References.....	200
Vita	229

List of Figures

Figure 1:	Billboard in Arroyo Seco	2
Figure 2:	Don Juan de Oñate on Riverside Drive	17
Figure 3:	Española Parade Spectators	17
Figure 4:	A View of the Valley and Mountains	32
Figure 5:	Córdova in November 2004	38
Figure 6:	Cañones in November 2004	38
Figure 7:	The City of Española's Historic Business District	48
Figure 8:	San Juan Pueblo's Ohkay Casino	48
Figure 9:	Policarpio Valencia Embroidery MNM A 9.54.28	62
Figure 10:	Policarpio Valencia Embroidery SCAS L5.1954.40	66
Figure 11:	Policarpio Valencia Embroidery MNM A 9.54.28	81
Figure 12:	Divorce	91
Figure 13:	The Statue of Oñate	117
Figure 14:	The Passion	144
Figure 15:	The Santuario de Chimayó	148
Figure 16:	The Santuario on Good Friday 2002	148
Figure 17:	Oñate Bearing a Hypodermic Needle	159
Figure 18:	Oñate's Passion	159
Figure 19:	Descansos	161
Figure 20:	Mementos	164
Figure 21:	Reflecting Icons	189

INTRODUCTION

Marco Cholo and Other Española Jokes



Figure 1. Billboard in Arroyo Seco. An Española Valley Chamber of Commerce billboard trumpets the Española Valley just before you enter the area from the south.

INTRODUCTION

Marco Cholo and Other Española Jokes

He was born with a gift of laughter and a sense that the world was mad.
And that was all his patrimony (Sabatini 1921:3).

G. Benito Córdova cited an old joke as the epigraph to his book, *The 3 ½ Cultures of Española*. With apparent irony and perhaps a gleam in his eye, the former Española Valley High School teacher, education scholar, and northern New Mexican asked, "Who discovered Española?" This joke teller's question speaks to the fact that the Española Valley of north-central New Mexico holds a special place in the Southwest's history. In 1598, Don Juan de Oñate led a group of approximately 500 colonists, including 129 soldiers, into what would become the Española Valley and the first site of Spanish colonial settlement in the current Southwest of the United States.¹ Today, surrounded by the art-tourism centers of Santa Fe and Taos and the high-tech laboratory-town of Los Alamos, the Española Valley is largely populated by descendants from the Spanish and Mexican periods of settlement.

However, Córdova's joke cites a different figure than Don Juan de Oñate as Española's founder. The answer is, of course, "Marco Cholo"—apparently, the New Mexican cousin of the famous Italian explorer of the Orient. In this punch line, this joke teller addresses Española's special status in northern New Mexico's discursive geography. For those who don't know, *cholo* is a term long used for indigenous Latin

¹ Oñate and his group of colonists first settled in the Native American Pueblo community of San Juan and later across the Rio Grande river at the village of San Gabriel. Today, a small and neglected monument within the bounds of San Juan Pueblo in the form of a cross on concrete pedestal marks the spot of New Mexico's first capital.

Americans who are partially acculturated to the dominant, there Spanish-speaking, culture. In the United States, *cholo* is an often used (and sometimes derogatory) term for a particular working-class Chicano style (stereo)typified in its male variant by closely cropped hair, tattoos, and slang.² In northern New Mexico, *cholo* refers to a part Nuevomexicano, part mainstream American, but an entirely shifty way of being that is considered somehow illicit and menacing by those passing through Española and other working-class Hispanic areas on their way home to neighboring communities. Much like the *cholo* who supposedly discovered Española, the Valley's social geography must be viewed as shifting and contradictory, and like *cholos*, Española, as almost all New Mexicans know, has a questionable reputation in the larger social milieu. Nevertheless, by virtue of the Valley's location between the art-tourism meccas of Santa Fe and Taos, Española is centrally located in a regional discursive geography defined by state and popular discourses of the "Land of Enchantment." Thus, the Valley is steeped in its Nuevomexicano roots and the romanticism that accompanies them.

The Valley is also a place of suffering and tragedy. In particular, in the late 1990s a shocking series of newspaper articles and news stories in both the regional and national media described the area's high rates of death due to overdoses from illegal drugs. Indeed, Española's Rio Arriba County had the highest statistical rate of illicit drug overdoses of any county in New Mexico, with New Mexico in turn having the highest rate of illicit drug overdoses of any state (Morgan and Morgan 2002:172, 176, 184–185, 187–188). In other words, Española is a place where discourses of tradition and the most painful aspects of postmodernity seem to intermingle, boil, and saturate the landscape.

In this dissertation, I explore the qualities of Española that imbue a subversive humor into Marco Cholo's supposed discovery of it. This exploration is premised on

² James Diego Vigil defines *cholo* in the glossary to his book *Barrio Gangs: Street Life and Identity in Southern California* (Vigil 1986:177). According to Vigil, *cholo* is, "A Chicano street style of youth who are marginal to both Mexican and Anglo culture; also used historically for cultural marginals and racial hybrids in Mexico and some parts of Latin America."

Mary Douglas's contention that a joke is a play upon form that brings into relation disparate elements and subverts them by presenting a second element that was hidden in the first (Douglas 1968:366). Along these lines, I suggest that Española is, in part, the object of jokes because it represents the negative hidden within and necessitated by positive narratives of New Mexico as the "Land of Enchantment."³ In each of this dissertation's chapters, I will explore the dialectical construction of narratives of Española and New Mexico. My goal is to present a vision of Española that encompasses both the positive and negative, thus absorbing the contradictions rather than abolishing them. In the process, I will heed the calls of cultural critics such as Slavoj Žižek who, referencing Hegel, tell us to tarry with the negative and thus privilege the condition of struggle and pain that pushes plainly to the surface between Santa Fe and Taos's more recently painted and safely contained geographies (Žižek 1993). This, I believe, is the subversive power that may be found in Córdova's telling of the Española joke. However, before I delve into negativity, I will first briefly describe the positive narratives of enchantment that serve as Marco Cholo's straight man.

The Land of Enchantment

Premised on the notion of Native American–Hispanic–Anglo "tricultural harmony," the popular conceptualization of New Mexico as the "Land of Enchantment" powerfully fuses race, landscape, architecture, and food into romance and commodity (Lomelí et al. 2002, Rodríguez 2003). Indeed, much of the Valley's social geography may be understood within this vision. The Greater Española Valley is largely located within Rio Arriba County and is situated at the center of the Rio Arriba region of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. This region has long

³ A second and obvious reason that Española is the butt of jokes is the "-isms" (such as racism, classism, and sexism) that pervade U.S. society. As I will show later in this introduction, Española is a largely Hispanic and working-class place and is therefore an easy target for jokes premised in racist and classist discourses.

maintained a concentrated and long-term resident Hispanic population.⁴ Based on fieldwork completed in the mid 1960s, cultural geographer Lynn Rubright's thesis, "A Sequent Occupance of the Española Valley, New Mexico," outlines the historical and tricultural constitution of the Valley as well as the historical evidence that can still be seen in the landscape.⁵ Rubright states that she first became interested in the Valley when she drove through and saw landscape elements that seemed to belong to past centuries. At the time of this first impression, she thought the Valley seemed to exist in a small world of its own (Rubright 1967:vii–viii).

Despite the existence of the Valley in the minds of most of northern New Mexico's residents and the reality of institutions such as the Española Valley School District and Española Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Valley lacks any exact political or census designation. Rather, the Valley extends far beyond the limits of the city of Española and reaches from Española's Rio Arriba County into northern Santa Fe County. In terms of census data, the Valley is perhaps best understood in terms of a collection of census units including the "Española, NM Urban cluster," San Juan Pueblo, and Santa Clara Pueblo. However, even this inclusive definition is problematic as neighboring communities such as Pojoaque share similarities in terms of the ethnic makeup.

As Rubright sees it, the Valley extends north and south from the Rio Grande, to the east along the Rio Grande's Santa Cruz River to the village of Chimayó, and to the northwest up the Chama River toward the village of Abiquiú. The history of many Valley communities dates to the Spanish and Mexican period of colonization, while the Native American pueblos of San Juan and Santa Clara are far older. Located just outside the Valley are the more rural and isolated villages made famous by popular

⁴ The Rio Arriba region of New Mexico and Southern Colorado roughly includes Taos, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe, and San Miguel counties in northern New Mexico, and Conejos and Costilla counties in southern Colorado.

⁵ In the body of Lynn Rubright's lengthy thesis, she elaborates the evidence for all three, Native American, "Spanish," and non-Hispanic white, or "Anglo," cultural systems in the Valley's landscape.

novels such as the *Milagro Beanfield War* and *Red Sky at Morning* and paintings by Georgia O'Keeffe. To the east rise the impressive Sangre to Cristo Mountains and to the west are the Jemez Mountains. Today, the Valley contains a diversity of residents including a large Native American population, an influential "Anglo" or non-Hispanic "white" minority, and an emerging Mexican immigrant community. Still, northern New Mexican Hispanics remain the majority, control city and county politics, and are the most easily identified actors in the local social scene. Accordingly, the 2000 United States Census describes 84.4 percent of the 23,272 people that live within the "Española, NM Urban Cluster" as "Hispanic." Similar to Española, the census counts 72.9 percent of the 41,190 people who live in Rio Arriba County as "Hispanic" and another 13.9 percent as "Native American" (United States Census Bureau 2005).

Many Española residents—especially politicians and members of the Valley's emerging middle class—assert a vision of the Valley that conforms to notions of tri-cultural harmony and the Land of Enchantment. Española native and then New Mexico Department of Health Secretary, Alex Valdez made this statement to the visiting U.S. Senate Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations. In 1999, the subcommittee met in Española to discuss the Valley's reputed drug problem and methods for combating it. In the face of such negative publicity, Valdez said:

We are gathered here in Española, my hometown, where I was born and raised and where I have chosen to raise my family. I have always cherished my upbringing in the Valley with its grand vistas, wonderful culture and rich history. Anyone who enters the valley need only look to the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, with their snow caps, to our centuries old churches, to our Rio Grande River to understand what the Valley means to its inhabitants (United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Appropriations. Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies 1999:65).

Next, Valdez slipped into the local brand of multiculturalism that elides the area's simmering conflict along ethnic and racial lines. He said:

Throughout our history, many have been captivated by its beauty, people, and way of life and have elected to stay. We welcome all who come and who bring good will. New Mexico is known as the Land of Enchantment. When you look out upon this valley, it is a microcosm of all this State has to offer." (United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Appropriations. Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies 1999:65).

The Anti-Santa Fe

Despite such championing of the Valley by politicians and civic boosters such as Valdez and longtime mayor Richard Lucero, Española remains off the well-beaten tourist path that runs from Santa Fe to Taos and ironically, down Española's Riverside Drive. Unlike its neighboring communities, Española has not seen an influx of Anglo immigrants.⁶ Rather, Española has become even more Hispanic in recent censuses, and the Española Valley School District's student population has become 90 percent Hispanic, as both Anglos and even Native Americans have found alternatives to the

⁶ Interestingly, one group of non-Hispanic immigrants has increased since the 1970s. The largely Anglo American Sikh community centered in the Española Valley community of Sombrillo has increased in size. Members believe in a syncretic mix of Sikhism and yogic traditions that also incorporate elements of New Age and counter culture thought (Elsberg 2003:xv). The vast majority of members of the area Sikh community are followers of recently deceased Yogi Bhajan and are members of his organizations, the Happy Healthy Holy Organization (3HO) and Sikh Dharma. Anthropologist Constance Waeber Elsberg described 3HO and Sikh Dharma on a national scale in a recent ethnography titled *Graceful Women: Gender and Identity in an American Sikh Community* (Elsberg 2003). 3HO is a teaching and outreach organization that sponsors courses in subjects such as kundalini yoga, meditation, nutrition, and spiritual healing (Elsberg 2003:xv). Sikh Dharma is the administrative and religious arm of the organization, and it consists of an international network of ashrams whose affairs were, at the time Elsberg wrote, hierarchically organized under Yogi Bhajan's leadership (Elsberg 2003:xv).

public school system.⁷ This marginalization in terms of tourism and Anglo immigration sets Española apart from other northern New Mexican communities and likely results from the fact that Española's working-class economy has constituted an accompanying social geography. On a closer look, even the cultural geographer Rubright herself saw a landscape "marred" by its mixture of cinder block and stucco homes, vehicles, and the television antennas sprouting like "silver weeds" from roofs (Rubright 1967:103).

Furthermore, the area now conceptualized as the Española Valley did not become known by that name until the twentieth century, and, in many ways, the Valley is the creation of modern and increasingly postmodern circumstances and the specifics of American socioeconomic penetration and development. In previous times, this area was more or less recognized as a loose conglomeration of agricultural villages and Native American pueblos under the ecclesiastical authority of the parish of Santa Cruz (Ellis 1980). Robert D. Shadow and Maria J. Rodríguez-Shadow describe the Spanish and Mexican-era settlers of what would become the American Southwest as "an agrarian-based civil population of rancher-farmers, 'common' everyday men and women whose livelihood rested on exploiting family labor, raising livestock and tending crops" (Rodríguez-Shadow and Shadow 1994, 1998, Shadow and Rodríguez-Shadow 1997:173).

In May 1846 the United States declared war on Mexico and proceeded to invade its southern neighbor in a war that would prove bloody and expand the boundaries of the United States. As part of that invasion, the U.S. army arrived in Santa Fe on August 18, 1846 after a two-month trip over the Santa Fe Trail from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas (Weber 1982:273). A few days before, New Mexico's governor, Manuel Armijo, judged the situation hopeless and abandoned all defenses. The invaders raised the American flag over Santa Fe's Governor's Palace and Kearny

⁷ According to New Mexico Department of Education figures for 2003–2004, the Española Valley School District had 4,946 students. In 2004–2005, 90.2 percent of District students are Hispanic. 6.4 percent are Native American, 2.6 percent are Anglo, 0.5 percent are Black and 0.2 percent are Asian (New Mexico Department of Education 2005).

announced the United States's annexation of New Mexico. Many residents continued to fight the Americans, including in a battle near the Española Valley community of Santa Cruz and another just to the north of Española Valley near the village of Embudo, and American forces did not gain full control until January 1847 (Weber 1982:275). After the 1848 signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, New Mexico and the rest of Mexico's north became a part of the southwestern United States. Following the firm establishment of U.S. authority, much of northern New Mexico was appropriated from Mexican- and Spanish-era communities by the machinations of the government and land speculators (Ebright 1994). Ultimately, most of the land in Española's Rio Arriba County became federal and state lands, and much of the remainder now is reservation and private lands owned by Anglo American ranchers and developers or seasonal homes for Anglo American retirees and artists.

Ironically, for a current stronghold of Nuevomexicano numerical dominance and political strength, the city of Española's founding in the 19th century and growth in the 20th are the result of two symbols of American economic and technological power. Española was founded in 1881 as a railroad stop on the Denver and Rio Grande Railway (Gjevre 1967) and has since served as the area's commercial center.⁸ In the second half of the 20th century Española became economically bound to the Los Alamos National Laboratory—the people who brought you the atomic bomb. The Valley has also become the labor source for the blue-collar and service-sector elements of Los Alamos's thriving economy. I attribute the reconceptualization of the area as the Española Valley to the rise of the city of Española, the 1950s founding of the area's weekly newspaper, the *Rio Grande Sun*, the creation of the Española Valley

⁸ The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway arrived in nearby Santa Fe in 1880, a year prior to the arrival of the Denver and Rio Grande Railway in Española. A rail link between Santa Fe and Española was completed in 1887 (Gjevre 1967).

School District in the 1960s, and the consolidation of Española High School and Santa Cruz High School into Española Valley High School in the 1970s.⁹

Today, driving on Highway 285 into Española from the south, the town first appears to be a collection of fast-food restaurants, hotels, gas stations and both adobe and mobile homes. Few tourists stop in Española proper as they do in the Native American pueblos and Hispanic weaving village of Chimayó.¹⁰ On the highway to Taos, Española is dominated by a Wal-Mart Supercenter, the Dreamcatcher Cineplex, and two casinos, Santa Clara and San Juan Pueblo enterprises respectively. In the city itself, much of the architecture bears a resemblance to working-class barrios in the urban centers of the western United States. The recognizable hearts of the centuries-old villages with their predominately adobe architecture and Native American pueblos are off the highway.

Interestingly, the Valley is also known for the local retooling of one American icon, the car, into a symbol of Hispanic identity, the lowrider. Over the last three decades, the modified cars have become inseparable from Española's wider reputation. The community is often called the "lowrider capital of the world." Brenda Jo Bright's 1998 article in *American Ethnologist* and a chapter in her multi-sited dissertation, "Mexican American Low Riders: An Anthropological Approach to Popular Culture," focus on lowrider culture in the greater Española Valley community of Chimayó (Bright 1994, 1998). In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the

⁹ In the specific terms of Rio Arriba County government, the northern village of Tierra Amarilla remains the county's nominal seat. However, in practice, the majority of county business is carried out in the county office annex in Española.

¹⁰ Chimayó is the center of a regional weaving tradition and the site of the Catholic shrine called the Santuario de Chimayó. Numerous tourists stop in Chimayó to visit weaving studios, of which Ortega's Weaving Shop is the most well known. Helen Lucero's and Suzanne Baizerman's dissertations as well as a book they cowrote describe this weaving tradition in great depth (Baizerman 1987, Lucero 1986, Lucero and Baizerman 1999). The Santuario de Chimayó is a well-known pilgrimage site for Catholics in New Mexico and beyond. Located within the church is a small hole that is said to contain healing dirt, as well as numerous photographs, crutches, and other objects left by people who hope to be cured or who have been cured.

Ohkay Casino in San Juan hosted a major lowrider show that attracted attendees from all over New Mexico and southern Colorado and featured major national music acts such as South Park Mexican. The show was prominently featured in the August 2001 issued of *Lowrider* magazine (Gilbert 2001:105–106, 216–218).

This thoroughly modern landscape is matched by a local economy that is similarly defined by regional and national economic processes. The large majority of area Hispanics' income comes from the government, service, and retail sectors. According to figures for 1997, only 982 people in Rio Arriba County were employed in farm employment compared to 12,719 people who were employed in other jobs (Bureau of Economic Analysis 1999). Of those 2,159 were employed in retail trade, 4,725 were employed in service jobs, and 3,028 were employed in the government or government enterprises (Bureau of Economic Analysis 1999). I cite these figures cautiously, because I suspect that in a place where people must often patch together a living from various sources of income, the actual contribution and need for agricultural income and subsistence as well as forest resources is underestimated.¹¹ However, I believe that the larger lesson holds true: the traditional economy of agriculture, ranching, and the collection of forest products has been superseded. Rather, today, area residents form the labor force for the state and federal government's and tourist and recreation industries.

Moreover, this economy has often provided an uneven living for the Española population. For many, the day-to-day effort to cobble together a living is a constant struggle. Some area families make ends meet through a precarious combination of wage labor in Los Alamos or Santa Fe, government support, small-scale agriculture, and the harvesting of forest resources. According to the 1990 census, the annual per capita income of people of Hispanic origin in Rio Arriba County was \$7,496, compared to a national average of \$15,687 for "whites" not of Hispanic origin and \$8,400 for Hispanics. Indeed, Rio Arriba county is among the poorest counties in

¹¹ I suggest that the traditional economy may be of greater importance than indicated by these figures. For example, in a place with both a high poverty rate and a harsh climate, the collection of firewood provides an affordable source of both cooking fuel and heat in the winter.

New Mexico, and New Mexico maintains some of the worst poverty rates in the United States (Dalaker 1999, United States Census Bureau 2000).¹²

In reference to the irrefutable realities of such a landscape, the recent Lonely Planet guide to Santa Fe and Taos succinctly describes Española as a sort of anti-Santa Fe (Penland 2004). The guide's writer contrasts Española's seemingly authentic social milieu with the simulated adobe, art galleries, and expensive nouveau New Mexican cuisine of the popular tourist destination and artist colony to the south. She states that in Española, the adobes are real and restaurants are "authentic and inexpensive." In reference to lowriders, she wrote that, "masterpieces" are exhibited at "Sonic drive-ins rather than museums" (Penland 2004:122). She further states:

At the heart of the northern Rio Grande Valley, Española was designed for commerce, not postcards. Sure the setting is stunning, bookended by the Jemez Mountains and Truchas Peak, with the lush farms of the Rio Grande as a dramatic centerpiece but the city itself feels absolutely no need to gussy itself up for sightseers (Penland 2004:121–122).

The guide's author is not alone in her view of the Valley. Some thirty years earlier, an academic writer confessed to a similar but more negative, in the popular sense, first reaction to Española.

In the only anthropological monograph focused on Española proper, Spanish anthropologist Alfredo Jiménez Núñez's *Los hispanos de Nuevo México*, made an initial critical assessment of Española as a field site. Jiménez wrote that although he soon discovered the enchantment of Española's people and the treasure of unforgettable friendships, "en estas primeras visitas la ciudad se me aparece fea,

¹² According to a report by the United States Census Bureau, 22.4 percent of people in New Mexico lived in poverty during 1996, 1997, and 1999. While this average was slightly lower than the District of Columbia's 22.7 percent, these two averages are not statistically different (Dalaker 1999), and both were significantly higher than the next poorest state, Louisiana, with an average rate of 18.6 percent.

impersonal, carente de toda armonía. La comparación con Santa Fe o con esos pequeños pueblos cercanos a Española la hacen todavía menos atractiva" (1974:71).¹³ More recently, University of New Mexico anthropologist and Taos native Sylvia Rodríguez commented that, "To the tourist gaze, Española is all class, lower class that is, and no culture, therefore invisible and uninteresting but slow to drive through, on the way from one site of greater attraction to the other."¹⁴ She also rightly described Española's particular socio-geographic position as the working-class labor source for the wealthy and overwhelmingly Anglo Los Alamos. Along these lines, her comments suggest that Española's uniqueness in the northern New Mexican context rests in the relative ease of the perceived congruence of race-ethnicity (Nuevomexicano) and class (working-class, underemployed and unemployed) in the area's character.

While agreeing with the conditions that Rodríguez insightfully elaborated, I would prefer to emphasize that Española retains continuity with the remainder of the Upper Rio Grande Valley. After all, if Española is the supposed geographic locus that marks the eruption of the haunting inverse of the northern New Mexican myth, there is a little bit of Española in every northern New Mexican community. Rodríguez's comments would seem to allow for this. Drawing on the work of Sherry Ortner (1998) and Karen Brodtkin (1998), Rodríguez said that in New Mexico, like the rest of the United States, discourses of ethnicity, race, and gender displace, submerge, and simultaneously fuse with those of class. In this vein, Rodríguez says that in the upper Rio Grande Valley, normative discourses of traditional Nuevomexicano culture such

¹³ Alfredo Jiménez Núñez comments translate as "on those first visits the city appeared ugly, impersonal, lacking in all harmony. The comparison with Santa Fe and those small villages nearby Española made it even less attractive" 1974:71.

¹⁴ Sylvia Rodríguez made the comments cited in this dissertation at a session titled Postmodern Mexicano at the 2002 American Anthropological Association Meetings. The comments were made in reference to a my paper, "A Northern New Mexican 'Fix': Shooting Up and Coming Down in the Greater Española Valley" (Trujillo 2002). This paper formed the basis for this dissertation's chapter 4.

as honor-*respeto*, religion, family, and nation are not merely traditional Hispanic values. Instead, she says they are also middle-class values. She contends that multiple social foils set the parameters for this construct. The specific foils she cites are the "*surumato*" or "undocumented Mexican worker," the "*tecato*" or "drug addict," the "*borracho perdido*" or "hopeless drunk," and the "gang-banger" represent lower-class embodiments.¹⁵ Thus New Mexican Hispanics are discursively divided into two groups: the normative (often corresponding to the emergent middle class) and the deviant (often corresponding to the emerging working-underemployed-unemployed class).

Española Jokes

Community leaders such as Alex Valdez continue to assert a vision that deploys the imagery of the Land of Enchantment and tricultural harmony. It is the anxiety of this social contradiction that makes Española jokes so effective for both Anglos and a surprising number of Nuevomexicano joke tellers alike. In other words, it is the unmasking of the discursive overlay that makes Española jokes both amusing and, if told by working-class Chicanos themselves, potentially subversive. A 1984 *New York Times* story chronicled the nonironic form of the phenomenon and explicitly referenced the art of lowriding:

These are always question-and-answer jokes. Few of them are nice and fewer still are free of an obvious anti-Hispanic bias. A printable sample: "How can you tell when it's winter in Española? When the fur on low rider dashboards grows longer," Printable, but ethnically hostile: "Why are low rider steering wheels so small? So you can drive them handcuffed" (Peterson 1984:A14).

¹⁵ Sylvia Rodríguez's comments also provocatively described the middle-class values as a strategic claim to whiteness and the lower class foils as implicitly non-white embodiments. I find this contention particularly interesting and believe this analysis deserves a full-scale development in its own right.

In a 1985 paper, Museum of New Mexico curator Charlene Cerny developed a typology of the jokes that included the following categories: sexual mores, the Española girl, stupidity/ignorance/lack of sophistication or education, Española the town, crime in Española, and car culture/lowriders (Cerny 1985). By the 1980s, Española mayor Richard Lucero launched a crusade against the jokes that was eventually picked up by the national media including the *New York Times*.

Córdova's telling of the Marco Cholo joke has an ironic twist, and both he and the Española Valley High School students whom he credited with contributing to his book seemingly valorized the supposedly "half" culture that, according to the joke, discovered Española. In the best parts of *The 3 ½ Cultures of Española*, Córdova deftly deploys negativity like a jujitsu fighter, and he thus tells the Marco Cholo joke as an ironic assertion of his community's strength. In the introduction to Córdova's book, writer and intellectual Juan Estevan Arellano states we will observe in Córdova's text "how intelligent, observant and astute these [Española Valley High School] students are. Nothing escapes their probing minds" (Córdova 1990:iv). But, as noted above, Córdova's claims for Española are wider:

The youngest, the weakest, and the ugliest of ducklings is always held in contempt, such as you, Española, are today being laughed at and held up to ridicule. And why is that so? Is it that like all underdogs, you Española, represent something that those who seek to keep you down lack? Do they fear that one day, Española, as king of the mountain, will expose them for what they are? (Córdova 1990:79).

Córdova tells us that people from Española can and do laugh at themselves. But he states they are not the fools or *pendejos* that outsiders make them out to be. Perhaps most provocatively, Córdova asserts the centrality of Española's experience in his epigraph to the body of the book. He asks, "Have you ever wondered why the



Figure 2. Don Juan de Oñate on Riverside Drive. Oñate rides in the Española Fiesta parade in the summer of 2004.



Figure 3. Española Parade Spectators. A family watches the 2004 Española Fiesta parade.

Messiah appeared at a backward, country town such as Española, and not at an enlightened, scientific center like Los Alamos?"

Returning to Córdova's telling of the Marco Cholo joke, if we know anything of this subversive founding figure, we know that he is not Santa Fe's mythic conquistador Don Diego de Vargas, or Los Alamos's physicist Oppenheimer. Neither is he the figure with which some historians and most of Española's civic boosters would want us to identify as Española's founder, the conquistador Don Juan de Oñate. Nor is the Española that Marco Cholo discovered located within the "Land of Enchantment," and, here, there is little or no "tricultural harmony." Rather, Marco Cholo and his Española subvert and threaten all of the above.

Mary Douglas outlines a notion of jokes drawn from Sigmund Freud's *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* that is highly pertinent to this discussion of Española jokes (Freud 1960, Douglas 1968:361–376). Within this model, a joke is an image of the relaxation of conscious control in favor of the subconscious. More specifically, for Douglas, a joke is a play upon form that brings into relation disparate elements and subverts them by presenting a second that was hidden in the first. Douglas states:

As I see it, all jokes are expressive of the social situations in which they occur. The one social condition necessary for a joke to be enjoyed is that the social group in which it is received should develop the formal characteristics of a "told" joke: that is, a dominant pattern of relations is challenged by another. (Douglas 1968:366).

In this sense, Marco Cholo suggests negation, resistance and transgression, absence and lack, and thus an opposition that is political in more than simply a linguistic sense. This is the source of the subversive nudge and wink I imagine in Córdova's telling of the joke. Specifically, each neighborhood in the Española Valley and throughout northern New Mexico exists on a continuum between Española and the more traditional villages that anthropologists and tourists so admire. But, in the

popular conceptualization of Española, negativity emerges and saturates the landscape and—if we believe the theorists of negativity—disrupts the stabilizing, classifying logic of the positive.

Tarrying with the Negative

Among the great theorists of negativity are Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Karl Marx, Georg Lukács, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Theodor Adorno. More recently, a number of intellectuals have tarried with the negative; among them, Slavoj Žižek, Judith Butler, and Michael Taussig.¹⁶ In *Negativity and Politics*, Diana Coole argues that critical modern and poststructuralist discourses are all motivated by an ambiguous political opposition to the positive (Coole 2000). In this sense, the positive here refers to those institutions that have become reified, ossified, and totalized. Examples include language, subjectivity, metaphysics, positive knowledge, as well as mode of production, state structures, social stratification and modern culture (Coole 2000:10). To this I would add the particular vision of a Nuevomexicano culture understood in terms of, among other things, "Spanish foods," adobe construction, a particular agro-pastoral economy, and the Spanish language.

Like all negativities, Española's are located in the spacings, intervals, differences, gaps, and coincidences with which the positive is riven. According to Diana Poole's reasoning (2000), in such places the positive and negative, form and excess, reason and its other, are imbricated. They meet, clash, and incite one another. Here, negativity is a creative—destructive force that engenders as well as ruins positive forms and is implicated in the positive. For Hegel, positive and negative are interwoven: a thing is affirmed as what it is through denial of what that thing is not. It is articulated rather than defined, and it is not simply given but moves toward its

¹⁶ Diana Coole also chronicles another genealogy of negativity that is descended from the work of Friedrich Nietzsche. Because Nietzsche, himself, rarely uses the word *negativity* and his concept seems significantly different, I forego this conceptualization of negativity in this dissertation. Rather, I follow the genealogy of negativity that passes more directly from Hegel, through Hegelian Marxism, to more contemporary cultural critics such as Žižek.

potential as its relationships expand. That which it negates becomes an integral part of its identity. The other is thus other and not other. The thing is self and not-self. In the negation of the negation, the alterity of the other is taken into the thing as of its relational identity for itself. Identity thereby emerges as a complex and dynamic unity, a differentiated mediated phenomenon contingent on negativity.

The most sustained and perhaps the most confounding examination of negativity within the disciplinary boundaries of socio-cultural anthropology is the work of Michael Taussig. Indeed, negativity may be considered central — if you may use such words as *central* in reference to Taussig's writings — to nearly all of Taussig's texts from 1983's *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America* to 2004's *My Cocaine Museum* (Taussig 1983, 2004). Perhaps most convincingly, in his second book, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man*, Taussig explores and textually performs a form of wildness that "white" or mestizo Colombians see in indigenous Colombians.¹⁷ This wildness is, at once, liberating and horrible and is most definitely opposed to order and positivity (Taussig 1987). It is the spirit of the unknown and the disorderly that is loose in the forest encircling the city and the agricultural lands, and disrupts the conventions upon which meaning and the shaping function of images rest. In the first half of the book, Taussig convincingly elaborates how white Colombians' vision of indigenous wildness was created in terrible and genocidal forms of oppression. In the second, healing section of this ethnography, Taussig shows that in colonizing myths of wild Indians, white Colombians project an antiself and uncover a healing power. In other words, Taussig finds that the colonizer reifies his or her myths about the savage, becomes subject to their power, and thus seeks salvation from the civilization that torments him or her as much as the "savage." Thus Hegel's dialectic churns onward.

University of New Mexico folklorist Enrique Lamadrid's *Hermanitos Comanchitos: Indo-Hispano Rituals of Captivity and Redemption* explores Nuevomexicanos' confrontation with native ancestry and neighbors in similar terms

¹⁷ Following Colombia's racial structure, Taussig describes people of mixed European and indigenous ancestry as "white."

(Lamadrid 2003). He approaches these topics through a "ritual complex" of historic and present New Mexican and Pueblo folkloric forms, including ceremonial dances, nativity plays, and folk dramas. The strongest moments in Lamadrid's text mark New Mexican Hispanics' confrontations with their own Native American ancestry, understood here as Comanche others and Comanche selves. In the context of the nativity plays, he states that paying homage to the Christ child is commonplace for a Christian whether Indian, mestizo, or European. But when a Comanche expresses similar homage, a special power and even more intense sanctity is evoked. Lamadrid states that this spiritual power of the savage stems from the redemption that emanates from defeat. He cites Taussig's contention that wildness is incessantly recruited and tamed to the needs of order so that it may serve as order's counterimage. But in this same process of taming, wildness is infused with the difference, force, and autonomy that it requires to serve as order's opposition (Lamadrid 2003:102; Taussig 1987:220). Lamadrid shows that this power of negativity lends strength and blessings to the spirit and is particularly efficacious in restoring health.

Taussig's most concentrated focus on negativity, *Defacement: Public Secrecy and the Labor of the Negative*, is perhaps even more pertinent to my dissertation (Taussig 1999). Relying on a notion of negativity that owes as much to Friedrich Nietzsche as the Frankfurt School, Taussig explores what happens when something sacred is defaced. He finds that defacement imbues the sacred with its power. He shows us that defacement works on objects the way jokes work on language, bringing out their inherent magic nowhere more so than when those objects have become routinized and social, like money or the nation's flag in secular societies (Taussig 1999:5). Taussig found that when the human body, a nation's flag, or public state is defaced, a surplus of negative energy is aroused within the defaced thing itself. He said that the resulting desecration is the closest thing that many of us will come to sacred in the modern world (Taussig 1999:1). In passages such as these, Taussig tells the reader that defacement is like enlightenment because it brings insides outside, unearths knowledge, and reveals mystery. As it does this, defacement also spoils

and tears, it animates the thing defaced, and the mystery revealed may become more powerful (Taussig 1999:3–4).

In this dissertation, I will similarly explore negativity, although I will deploy a somewhat more traditional essay format than does Taussig. The starting point that I wish to convey in this introduction is that I am more interested in Marco Cholo's Española than Don Juan de Oñate's, and when I discuss Oñate it will always be in reference to Marco Cholo and the other forms of negativity that he implies. This is a difficult task as I cannot explicitly dissect negativity. To ask what something "is" or what something "means" is already to find oneself implicated in the questions and paradoxes negativity provokes. In this sense, negativity bears connotations of alterity, the nonrational and unrepresentable. To name negativity renders it positive, ideal, and thus destroys it at the very moment of its apparent success. Rather, my dual strategy is to evoke negativity through the choice of topics, and in the discursive and performative aspects of this dissertation. In this task, I am encouraged by Diana Coole's admission of similar difficulty. She states, "I have found myself groping for words or phrases where none is adequate, yet persevering because negativity is not nothing" (Coole 2000:2). Throughout my research and writing, I found myself similarly groping.

My Research

I moved to Española in the summer of 2000 and spent 2000–01 as a reporter for the newspaper, *The Rio Grande Sun*. This locally owned newspaper is well known for its gritty reporting, has a paid circulation of over 11,000, and is closely monitored by the state's larger news outlets. Under the tutorship of then–News Editor Beth Velasquez and General Editor Robert Braiden Trapp, I gained a strong knowledge of Española's political order and social issues. Supported by UT's Thematic Fellowship, I spent 2001–02 working full time on my dissertation research. At this time, I also formulated the chapters of the dissertation, and I conducted most of my research into the chapters' subjects: the work of embroiderer Policarpio Valencia, the previous ethnography of Española and other area communities, the oeuvre of local author Jim

Sagel, and the 1998 vandalism of a statue of supposed city founder and conquistador Don Juan de Oñate. In addition, I spent parts of 2002 and 2003 working for a University of New Mexico research study focused on drug treatment in the Española Valley (Willging et al. 2003), a subject that also appears in this dissertation. The treatment study received widespread attention including articles in the *Albuquerque Journal* and *Santa Fe New Mexican* (Davis 2003, Lenderman 2003).

In the course of that study, many people told me that they were pleased by my interest in the communities' social problems. Others worried about the potential "negative" depictions of their hometown. Such issues of representation, identity, and nonidentity are not new to academic and popular works concerned with New Mexicans. For the most part, this conflicted history has taken the form of disagreement over terms of racial/ethnic identity and assignment for the people descendant from New Mexico's pre-1848 Spanish-speaking population. Indeed, nearly any academic work focused on northern New Mexican communities must begin with a justification for the author's chosen racial/ethnic term for this population. My dissertation is no exception.

New Mexican Identity and Nonidentity

The terms for New Mexican "Hispanics" are fraught with tension and difficulty and have been argued over extensively by academics and the popular media for well over one hundred years. Their exploration reveals the complexities of Nuevomexicano self-conceptions and ethnic/racial assignment as they each positively identify what New Mexicans *are* and negatively *are not*. The more recent academic debates are waged over claims to an exceptional and isolated New Mexican Hispanic culture and gene pool and another vision that finds greater continuity with Mexico and the indigenous Southwest in terms of descent and culture. In popular terms, this debate is framed in battles over terms of identification: *Spanish* or *Spanish American* versus *Chicano* and *Mexican* or *Mexican American*.

For those interested in the academic battles, two examinations of New Mexican ethnic/racial identity/assignment resulted in particularly enlightening

discussions. The first erupted over an article in the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* and eventual book by University of Oklahoma geographer Richard Nostrand, who contended that northern New Mexicans view themselves as culturally separate from "Mexicans" (Blaut and Rios-Bustamante 1984, Chávez 1984, Gonzáles 1997b, Hall 1984, Hansen 1981, Meinig 1984, Nostrand 1980, 1981, 1992, Rodríguez 1992). The second followed a study by of working mothers by Louis Lamphere, Patricia Zavella, Felipe Gonzáles, and Peter B. Evans that included Hispanic women in Albuquerque who largely identified themselves to social scientists as "Spanish" (Lamphere et al. 1993). In the wake of this study, Gonzáles published multiple articles exploring New Mexican identity and Zavella wrote an extraordinarily interesting article describing the conflict between her own expectations and those of her informants over the terms *Chicana/o* and *Spanish* (Gonzáles 1993, 1997a, 1997b, Zavella 1997).

Suggesting the complexities of the issue, University of New Mexico anthropologist and Taos native Sylvia Rodríguez used the term *Hispano* in much of her earlier work and more recently seems to favor the term *Nuevomexicano* (compare Rodríguez 1987 to Rodríguez 2001). Similarly, Charles Briggs, who worked in the Española Valley bordering community of Cordóva moved from *Spanish American* and *Hispano* to the Spanish-language identifier *mexicano* (compare Briggs 1974 and 1978 to Briggs 1987).

Much of the seeming confusion results from the fact New Mexicans themselves deploy multiple terms depending on the context of the discussion and socio-political orientation of the speaker. In Española alone, I have heard people use the terms *Chicana/o*, *Spanish*, *Latina/o*, *Mexican*, *mexicano*, *raza*, and *la plebe*. In formal situations, most northern New Mexicans self-identify as *Hispanic*, *Chicano*, or *Spanish/Spanish American*. In contrast, when speaking Spanish, many use terms such as *mexicanos de aqui* (*mexicanos* from here). My experience with a diversity of terms was further confirmed by the ethnic/racial identifications given by individuals in interviews conducted in our treatment study. Most responded that they were *Hispanic*, while others responded, in the following order of frequency, that they were

Chicana/o, *Latina/o*, or *Spanish*. Often the same person will state a different term of self-identification depending on the context. For example, I have heard people that would be clearly prefer the term *Spanish* in ethnically/racially mixed group settings, call themselves, *Mexican* in in-group situations. Perhaps epitomizing the complexities of these terms is the entry for "Mejicano" in Rubén Cobos's venerable dictionary of New Mexico and Southern Colorado Spanish. Cobos writes:

mejicano,-na adj. [<Sp. Mexicano, Mexican] Col. and Terr. N.M. Sp., a New Mexican of Indo Hispanic descent; a Mexican national; the Indian language of the Valley of Mexico (Aztec or Náhuatl); the Spanish language in New Mexico and Southern Colorado; *hablar en mejicano*, to speak Spanish (Cobos 1983:109).

It, therefore, seems to me, that in both popular and academic usage there is no single proper popular term for this population's racial/ethnic assignment and identity.¹⁸

For previous academics working in the Española Valley proper, similar confusion prevails. For example, volume 2 of the 1935 Tewa Basin Study originally described *Spanish American* villages (Weigle 1975). However, when edited and reprinted with supplementary material by well-known New Mexico anthropologist Marta Weigle, these communities was rechristened *Hispanic Villages of Northern New Mexico* (Weigle 1975). Spanish anthropologist Alfredo Jiménez Núñez termed Española's residents *hispanos* in his monograph *Los Hispanos de Nuevo México* (Jiménez 1974). Focusing on a the ritual Matachines dance in the Española Valley's San Juan Pueblo and village of Alcalde, ethnomusicologist Brenda Romero termed Weigle's *Hispanic villages* as *Mejicano villages* (Romero 1993). Anthropologist

¹⁸ Although not as contested as the terms for northern New Mexican Hispanics, terms for the group the U.S. census describes as "Non-Hispanic Whites" are also problematic. In local usage, this group is also often called *Anglo*. Many members of this group, particularly those that don't identify with descent from England object to the term *Anglo*. For example, when asked of his ethnic identity, a man of Italian descent informed me that he was Sicilian and most definitely not *Anglo*.

Brenda Bright seemed undecided about which term best described the cultural artifacts she found in the Española area. She titled her 1998 *American Ethnologist* article about area lowriders "'Heart Like a Car': Hispano/Chicano Culture in Northern New Mexico" (Bright 1983). Finally, Enrique Lamadrid did not settle on one specific term in his descriptions of currently practiced rituals based in captivity narratives. In describing these folkloric events, many of which take place in the Española Valley, he switched between *Hispano* and *Mexicano* and, judging from the title of his book, seems to prefer *Indo-Hispano* (Lamadrid 2003).¹⁹ In other words, as there is no single correct popular term, there is no exclusively correct academic term either.

Therefore, like the northern New Mexicans that deploy multiple terms of self-identification, I will follow suit and use the term that seems to best fit the particular sentence and its context. As a result, I will deploy terms such as *Chicano*, *Hispanic*, *New Mexican*, and *northern New Mexican* to refer to the same population. In contexts where other terms do not seem to be a better fit, I will tend to use the Spanish-language regional identifier *nuevomexicano* that parallels the Texas Mexican identification *tejano*. I choose this term simply because, I believe, all members of the population it describes know and understand the term, and I have never heard

¹⁹ In the following example, witness Enrique Lamadrid's movement between multiple terms in an effort to apparently describe the same population. He chose the term *Indo-Hispano* for the title of his text, *Hermanitos Comanchitos: Indo-Hispano Rituals of Captivity and Redemption*, but in the first sentence of the same text Lamadrid's deploys two other terms:

Village and urban festivals are part of living and coming of age in New Mexico, from the multitudinous State Fair and Santa Fe Fiestas, to the small-town rodeos and cook-offs, sports events, and the *Funciones*, or patron saint's day feasts, in *Hispano* or *Mexicano* barrios, towns, and Indian pueblos (Lamadrid 2003).

In a footnote to this section, Lamadrid defines *Hispano*, *Nuevomexicano*, *Chicano* and the term *Espanoles mexicanos* (Spanish-Mexicans). Interestingly, he notes that the term *Espanoles Mexicanos* is used extensively in colonial documents and could help resolve the "contemporary dilemma and controversy" surrounding Spanish versus Mexican origins (Lamadrid 2003:240).

anybody object to being called Nuevomexicano. I will also tend to avoid some terms like *Spanish*, *Spanish American* or *Hispano*. I believe, in common usage, the self-identification of *Spanish* and *Spanish American* is in decline and largely being replaced by the less controversial term *Hispanic* that also fits better with national identification/assignment. Similarly, I tend to eschew this term *Hispano*, although many anthropologists have favored this term, as I rarely hear it in conversation and I have found that some members of the population are actually unfamiliar with it. In sum, I argue that no term fully captures New Mexican identity and non-identity and I will not attempt to simply assert a more perfect description in positive terms. I will also express this exploration of both positive and negative forms in an appropriate textual style.

Modernist Ethnography

This dissertation is written as a series of essays, a form designed to address such complex and often indefinable subjects. George Marcus and Michael Fischer have termed this once radical and now reasonably common style "modernist ethnography" (Marcus 1998, Marcus and Fischer 1986). Indeed, such ethnography has become a hallmark of much of the work done by University of Texas socio-cultural anthropologists, including, to varying degrees, members of my dissertation committee (Flores 2002, Limón 1994, 1998, Stewart 1996, Strong 1999). Modernist ethnography remakes and re-presents other representations rather than pretending to discover untouched worlds of primitive peoples. Much of the experimentation of this writing and ethnographic method lies in the revealing of the intertextual nature of contemporary ethnography (Marcus 1998:197). An intertextuality that includes reference to views of both the so-called observed and supposed observers. This sort of ethnography is aware of the historical and contemporary connections that link it to the objects of its gaze and both makes revisions of the ethnographic archive and remains conscious of its complex intertextuality. George Marcus writes:

Such ethnography is a comment on, a remaking of, a more standard, realist account. Therefore, the best subjects for modernist ethnography are those which have been heavily represented, narrated, and made mythic by the conventions of previous discourse (Marcus 1998:197).

These prior representations are an integral part of modernist ethnographic writing and fieldwork.

Marcus prescribes the "modern essay" as the appropriate textual mode for writing modernist ethnography (Limón 1994:9–11, Marcus 1986:191–192). Such a form opposes systematic analysis and addresses broader implications while absolving the writers from writing an exhaustive review of them. According to Marcus, the essayist writes from a rhetorical position of profound half understanding and half bewilderment with the world in which both the ethnographer and his or her subject live. Thus the essayist may mystify the world and leave actions open-ended as to their global implications (Marcus 1986:192). He suggests that this form of ethnographic writing is well suited to a time and place when paradigms are in disarray, problems intractable, and phenomena are only partly understood. However, such a form also possesses dangers for those attempting to pose a transformative politics. José Limón argues that such a style must be conscious of its own stance in the world if it is not to blur into a postmodern pastiche and thus simply reproduce the socially fragmenting effects of the late capitalism (Limón 1994:11). Following this model but heeding Limón's warning with care, this dissertation will juxtapose divergent but integrated essays, each focused on a strategically chosen topic.

This Dissertation

In this introduction, I have provided a description of the Española Valley and theoretical insights that will be useful for understanding this dissertation and the spirit in which it is written. The first chapter explores the ethnographic writings of two cohorts of anthropologists who both conducted fieldwork in the Española area in the 1960s and 1970s. This chapter first focuses on the ethnography of Paul Kutsche, John

R. Van Ness, and Charles Briggs in the Rio Arriba County villages of Cañones and Córdova and, second, the largely overlooked work of University of Oklahoma anthropologist Joseph Whitecotton, his student Stewart Ellis, and Spaniard Alfredo Jiménez Núñez in the semi-urban Española Valley proper. In this chapter I contend that the village ethnographers' focus on positive forms, in both the Hegelian and popular sense, elided the more complex and often emergent forms of Nuevomexicano identity—forms that may be characterized in terms of negativity.

The second chapter of this dissertation will reach back into time and explore the embroidery of Española Valley native, Policarpio Valencia. This artist worked at the time of the city of Española's consolidation as the area's commercial center. Indeed, born shortly after the end of the Mexican American War and living until the Great Depression, Valencia experienced both the incorporation of New Mexico into the national economic and social infrastructure of the United States and the rise of the railroad town and commercial center of Española. This chapter will argue that Valencia's work simultaneously represents two opposed but mutually haunting forms in a single piece of embroidery.

The third chapter explores both the life and writings of author Jim Sagel and his love for a New Mexican woman, artist Teresa Archuleta. Throughout Sagel's work, one sees a repetition of positive and negative oppositions such as Anglo versus Chicano, masculine versus feminine, and wholeness versus alienation. Moreover, in the landscape that surrounded him, Sagel experienced moments where these dialectical oppositions were momentarily unified and others where their contradictions were laid bare.

In the fourth and fifth chapters, I explore the notion of negativity in earnest through two acts of dismemberment that deconstructed positive visions of the Valley. In the fourth chapter, I explore an act of monumental vandalism that was of enormous symbolic importance in the Española Valley and captured the imagination of the national media: the 1998 desecration of a statue devoted to Don Juan de Oñate near the Española Valley village of Alcalde. In the fifth chapter, I will examine the 2000 murder of two area youths as they walked in an annual pilgrimage that is a

symbol of New Mexican identity and piety. Both these acts clearly evoked the surplus of negative energy that Taussig so cleverly explored and performed in *defacement*.

In the final chapter of this dissertation, I examine current drug use in the Española Valley. I argue that the high of heroin or crack cocaine may itself be understood as a visceral embodied form of negativity. In Española drug users' descriptions of their experiences I find a powerful, open, and sometimes terrifying overcoming of social and economic contradictions, an overcoming that embraces the most horrible power of negativity.

Ultimately, I intend for these chapters, each written in the form of an essay, to constitute a social and anthropological commentary on Española. As I have said before, I intend to paint a picture of Española that is somehow more whole than previous ethnographies, as it will juxtapose both the positive and the negative. Moreover, as will also probably become apparent, this appeals to my somewhat modernist, Marxist or at least Neo-Marxist, perhaps Catholic aesthetic: I find something sublime and fulfilling in their juxtaposition.

So here I will begin. In the first chapter I will explore the efforts of a cohort of anthropologists who wrote about the Española Valley in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s to overcome and even find a resolution to the Valley's contradictions. Ultimately, I will suggest that their efforts to describe New Mexican identity are incomplete and the most popular works often produced a stifling positivity. But, as you will see, they still have much to teach us.

ONE
A Time for Bitterness



Figure 4. A View of Valley and Mountains. This picture was taken in Española's West Side neighborhood with the Sangre de Cristo Mountains to the east, fall of 2002.

ONE

A Time for Bitterness

Española no tiene ningún atractivo que no sea el impresionante fondo de la Sangre de Cristo que dominante sobre el Valle (Jiménez 1974:70–71).²⁰

This chapter reconsiders the work of a cohort of anthropologists who conducted field work in Española's Rio Arriba County in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. They did so in the wake of the area residents' political mobilization in the Chicano-era Land Grant Movement that sought to regain and enforce rights to land and resources (Knowlton 1976, Swadesh 1968). This chapter first focuses on the ethnographic work of anthropologists Paul Kutsche, John R. Van Ness, and Charles Briggs in the Rio Arriba County villages of Cañones and Córdova, and, second, on the largely overlooked work of Joseph Whitecotton, Richard Stewart Ellis and Alfredo Jiménez Núñez in the semi-urban Española Valley proper. In their ethnographic work, all of these anthropologist were confronted by Nuevomexicanos' complex subjectivities and the ever-present negativity that seems to proliferate in the efforts to describe New Mexican cultures. Ultimately, the heart of this chapter is the argument that the village ethnographers' focus on residual culture forms ultimately "contained," in Fredric Jameson's sense of the term, the more complex, contradictory, and often negative identity formations. In the process, this chapter describes the unintended consequences of even the savviest and best intentioned ethnography.

²⁰ Española has no attraction except the impressive foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains that dominate the Valley.

Village Ethnography

As I have already suggested, the rural villages that surround the Española Valley occupy a special place in both the anthropological as well as popular imaginations. In the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, Paul Kutsche, John R. Van Ness, Charles Briggs, and others published a collective body of ethnographic literature. These anthropologists conceptualized these communities as vital social organizations that utilize and adapt a traditional village culture as an organizing force for resisting broader economic and social transformations (Briggs 1988, 1981, 1980, Briggs and Van Ness 1987, Knowlton 1976, 1969, 1961, Kutsche 1983, 1979, 1976, Kutsche and Van Ness 1988 [1981], Quintana 1991, Van Ness 1979, Reich 1977, Swadesh 1974). As will become clear later in this chapter, Kutsche, Van Ness, and especially Briggs viewed the villages as residual elements of a prior socioeconomic order that remain active organizing principles for addressing current socioeconomic circumstances²¹ (Raymond Williams 1977:121–127).

Furthermore, both Kutsche and Briggs chose particularly "intact" villages that were almost exclusively inhabited by families tracing their occupancy back for many generations and containing clear geographic centers of adobe homes clustered around a historic Roman Catholic church. Kutsche stated that he selected Cañones with the goal of finding a small, isolated, subsistence village that would be a baseline to serve as a measure for change elsewhere (Kutsche and Van Ness 1988 [1981]:2). Cañones remains today a small and fairly remote village located in central Rio Arriba County and just beyond the borders of the Española Valley School District. In 1967, the time of Kutsche's first research stint in Cañones, the village consisted of 30 households and 173 people and was entirely Nuevomexicano. Charles Briggs's field site, Córdova, is located just within the Española Valley School District and in the

²¹ The intellectual genealogy of Paul Kutsche, Charles Briggs, and John R. Van Ness is even closer than it first appears. Both Briggs and Van Ness were undergraduate students of Kutsche at Colorado College in Colorado Springs. Additionally, Charles Briggs is the grandson of University of New Mexico folklorist John Donald Robb, for whom Briggs's definitive work in New Mexico *Competence in Performance: The Creativity of Tradition in Mexican Verbal Art* is dedicated (1988).

southeast corner of Rio Arriba County, and is nationally known for its *santero* woodcarving tradition (Briggs 1980). At the time of Briggs's fieldwork, the village consisted of 700 people, that population entirely Nuevomexicano with the exception of one Mexican immigrant, several Anglo Americans who had married residents, and a few transient Anglo American youth (Briggs 1986:31). Nevertheless, despite both Briggs's and Kutsche's field site's rural character, they and a substantial literature agree that the traditional village economy of subsistence agriculture was superseded long ago²² (Deutsch 1987, Forrest 1989, 1987, Hamon 1970, Weber 1979, Weigle 1975, Gerry Williams 1985).

In addition to the physical setting, their ethnographic choices were shaped by a discursive field rife with tremendous and sometimes contradictory pressures. First, Kutsche and Briggs were confronted by a formidable body of previous anthropological and sociological Spanish American village literature that viewed village culture as dysfunctional and as a barrier to villagers' positive adjustment to their assimilation to the dominant society (Edmonson 1957, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck 1961, Saunders 1954, Walter 1938). Kutsche described the previous social scientists as focused on the following negative qualities of village culture: atomistic social structure, factionalism, *patron-peón* economic and interpersonal relations, personalism, fatalism, "present-time-ism," inefficient land use, and unwillingness to be melted down in the great pot of assimilation²³ (Kutsche 1979:7). Even more

²² In a detailed study of previous ethnographic works (including among others, Calkins 1935, 1937, Hurt 1941, Johansen 1948, Saunders 1954, Moore 1947, Waggoner 1941, Walter 1938), Joseph Whitecotton's student Gerry Williams described the destruction of the villages land base as just one of a number of processes that impoverished Nuevomexicanos. Among those processes he included the creation of a capitalist economy, shifts in the nature of production, the establishment of a new political order, and finally, a restructuring of land rights and ownership patterns. He stated that each of these factors contributed, in varying degrees, to the creation of a population that could be described as living in poverty and, in many ways, representing the lowest level of the American socio-economic system (Gerry Williams 1985:262).

²³ Kutsche describes his generation of village ethnographers' divergence from their predecessors in terms of Robert Redfield and Oscar Lewis's paradigmatic disagreement over the

aggressively, Briggs specifically criticized the same prior generation as uncomfortably close to providing an intellectual tool and *raison d'être* for maintenance of Anglo American domination²⁴ (Briggs 1981:59).

Second, many researchers and, more importantly, many Nuevomexicanos consider the alienation of the Spanish- and Mexican-era land grants from villagers by the illegal and extra-legal actions of government officials and land speculators as the chief cause of the destruction of the resource base for the area's traditional economy (Briggs and Van Ness 1987, Ebright 1994, Van Ness and Van Ness 1980, Westphall 1983). As a result, for many Nuevomexicanos, the loss of the land grants and the transformation of village socio-cultural structure has come to symbolize the expropriation of Nuevomexicano labor and natural resources and the marginalization of the villages in the regional and national economy. University of New Mexico anthropologist Sylvia Rodríguez said, "Nuevomexicanos' sense of ethnic and cultural identity is tied explicitly to their land base and to the memory of a subsistence pattern, long superseded by the wage economy, which once embodied and now symbolizes that tie" (Rodríguez 1992:110).

Third, simultaneously with the displacement of northern New Mexico's traditional subsistence-agriculture economy, the region was incorporated in the national imagination as the antithesis of the rapidly urbanizing and industrializing East. For Eastern intellectuals who witnessed the onslaught of the industrial revolution, northern New Mexico seemed an exotic, pristine world that assumed shape and meaning in contrast to the urban industrial world that they escaped

cohesion–dysfunction in the Mexican village of Tepoztlán (Lewis 1951, Redfield 1930). But in a chronological twist, Kutsche casts his generation of New Mexico village ethnographers in the role of empathetic Redfield while their interlocutors such as Edmonson, Kluckhohn, and Saunders take the role of dysfunction-centric Lewis.

²⁴ There is a notable absence in Charles Briggs's review of the previous literature. Neither his dissertation nor his most ambitious work, *Competence in Performance*, addresses or even cites George I. Sánchez's 1940 study, *Forgotten People*. This work describes the conquest, marginalization, and impoverishment of Spanish-speaking population in Taos County and cannot be understood in the same terms as the sociological works Briggs described.

(Rodríguez 1994:110). This discourse of nostalgia idealized "Indians" and occasionally also New Mexico's folkloric "Spanish" or "Mexican" peasants (Dilworth 1996, Martin 1998, Rodríguez 1998, 1994, 1989, Weigle and Fiore 1994, Wilson 1997). Soon Santa Fe, twenty five-miles south of Española, and Taos, forty miles to the north, were transformed into art colonies and, later, centers of tourism and recreation.

I argue that the village ethnographers' writings cannot be understood without their contextualization within a discursive landscape permeated by a precursor social science literature, land movement politics, and Anglo modernist longing. Moreover, this cohort of anthropologists entered the field during the peak years of the political activism that sought the return of Mexican- and Spanish-era land grants to grant heirs and their communities and increased Anglo American immigration (Nabokov 1969, Swadesh 1968, Tijerina 2000, 1978). Indeed, Nuevomexicanos' smoldering anger and frustration exploded in 1967 when land activists "raided" Rio Arriba County's courthouse in Tierra Amarilla. Sensationalist stories of the raid made the national press complete with images of the National Guard's deployment and tanks rolling through Rio Arriba County villages.²⁵ Also in 1967, at Kutsche and Van Ness's field site, Cañones, residents' fight against their elementary school's closure and then the busing of their children down unsafe roads played a role in the state governor's race (Kutsche and Van Ness 1988 [1981]:153–197). In the following discussion of Kutsche's, Van Ness's, and Briggs's work, I will attempt to show that these anthropologists threw their lot in with the villagers' positive vision of their communities and against the negativity or disorganization described by the previous

²⁵ The very real political ramifications of anthropological work in northern New Mexico in 1960s and 1970s is highlighted by the participation of anthropologists in government forums. For instance, anthropologist Francis Swadesh (she later became Francis Quintana) was called as a defense witness in a criminal trial against land grant activist Reies Lopez Tijerina, Clark Knowlton was called to testify at a congressional subcommittee hearing immediately after the 1967 courthouse raid, and Kutsche himself represented Cañones residents at a state board of education meeting (Kutsche 1988:192–196, Nabokov 1969:140, Quintana 1991:4).



Figure 5. Córdoba in November 2004.



Figure 6. Cañones in November 2004.

social science literature. In addition, I suspect that, although unknowingly, their choices reflected their own modernist longing. Ultimately, they reshaped village ethnography with a vision that focused on the continued relevance of residual cultural forms and village society. Informed by their larger oeuvres, my analysis now turns to their most weighty and mature ethnographic descriptions of their respective field sites: (1) Kutsche and Van Ness's monograph *Cañones: Values, Crisis, and Survival in a Northern New Mexico Village* (Kutsche and Van Ness 1988 [1981]) and (2) Briggs's theoretically ambitious and, in my estimation, most important statement on Nuevomexicano ethnography, *Competence in Performance: The Creativity of Tradition in Mexicano Verbal Art* (Briggs 1988).

In the style of the classic ethnographic monograph, Kutsche and Van Ness find cultural patterns, institutions, and quasi-institutions that order and shape all aspects of village life in the village of Cañones. The ethnographic heart of the book described the village as a cultural-ecological adaptation to the surrounding environment. They write, "We also try to show that Spanish-Mexican land tenure, law and custom, as well as systems of land utilization, fit the microbasins of northern New Mexico particularly well," (1988 [1981]:2). Chapters 1 through 7 include in-depth description of the community's history; material, and economic life; social institutions; beliefs; and the rituals of daily life. Still, in the final chapters, Kutsche and Van Ness move beyond the classic monograph model and leave the use of the ethnographic present behind. Rather, they concretely narrate in historical time the community's unification in the face of the 1967 closing of their elementary school and the busing of children down dangerous roads to the faraway village of Coyote.

Kutsche and Van Ness argued that despite the village's economic dependence on a broader system of production, most Cañoneros continued to see themselves as "*rancheros*," even though only 12 of 30 households owned cattle and only five of those households had more than ten head (Kutsche and Van Ness 1988 [1981]:44–45). Kutsche and Van Ness believe this perception fits the "self-image of the Hispano as *caballero* (which means both *horseman* and *gentleman*), an unbroken tradition since the Reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula in the late middle ages" (Kutsche and

Van Ness 1988 [1981]:45). Nevertheless, they note the economic base for this self-identification has been largely disrupted. They wrote, "That is the ideal. The reality for many is that they have no grazing permits and thus are effectively landless. The discrepancy between ideal and real drives a number of Cañoneros away from home for long periods of time, or forces them to emigrate entirely" (Kutsche and Van Ness 1988 [1981]: 45).

Despite these socio-economic contradictions, Kutsche and Van Ness's description and ethnographic evidence documents the unifying institutions and is an argument for the reality of village cohesion. In the monograph's final paragraph, they summed up their conceptualization of village culture as a vital and adaptive force, "Cañones changes within the Hispanic tradition, not away from it. It takes the materials of its change from any sources that give promise of enhancing its survival, and uses them to weave freshly every day the fabric of the village" (Kutsche and Van Ness 1988 [1981]:222). Kutsche and Van Ness wrote, "one of our goals is to present our description of Cañones in such a way that the strengths of Hispanic culture under stress are as clear as the tensed muscles of a boxer" (1988 [1981]:3–4). Ultimately, this vision of village culture as an ideal adaptation to the communities' socio-material circumstances supported land politics. Within this vision village communities were perfectly suited to their environment before the socio-cultural and economic disruption produced by the alienation of their land base.

While Kutsche and Van Ness's goals are primarily ethnographic, Briggs's *Competence in Performance* is more ambitious, befitting a work that would be Briggs's major statement concerning his New Mexico research.²⁶ In his book's introduction, Briggs positions the work as a synthesis and step forward in the then cutting-edge debates concerning ethnopoetics and performance theory, and in the body of the text he catalogues his long-term research into the elders' verbal art genres that collectively make up the elders' "talk of bygone days." In particular, the text of *Competence in Performance* includes chapters on historical discourse, proverbs,

²⁶ Charles Briggs wrote the preface to *Competence in Performance* from the site of his current research, Venezuela (Briggs 1988:xix).

scriptural allusions, jests, anecdotes and humorous tales, legends and treasure tales and, finally, hymns and prayers.

Of greatest concern to me are the final pages of the text where Briggs describes elders' "talk of bygone days" within a Western Marxist framework where he makes some of his most impassioned and strongest statements about Córdova (Briggs 1988:358–376). These last pages are the first place Briggs explicitly valorized the elders' verbal art genres as counterhegemonic, or in other words, as resistance against AngloAmerican domination and industrial capitalism. In particular, he argues the prior system's view of production as social and spiritual as well as material provided an excellent organizing principle for a counterhegemony because it contrasts profoundly with the dominant view of production. Briggs writes, "The Mexicano conception of production is doubly alien to us, both in its emphasis on non-industrial (primarily agricultural, pastoral, and 'handicraft' production) and its refusal to isolate the purely material components from the production process," (Briggs 1988:366). He states that land expropriation deprived most of Córdova's residents of the right to articulate a counter-hegemonic position through their labor, and, therefore the view of production and social life that is articulated by the elders might simply have become archaic, treated as a way of life that is the object of romantic evocation but lacking relevance to the present. However, by virtue of its incorporation into the elders' verbal art, their residual view of production reinterprets the past in keeping with its relevance to the present and future.

In accordance with the notion of a counterhegemony, Briggs states the elders' goal is to enhance their juniors' awareness of the dangers posed by the dominant hegemony to the political-economic and cultural survival of Nuevomexicanos (1988:366). The centrality of the pedagogical aspects of the elders' verbal art to Briggs' thesis is described in a scenario in the first paragraphs of *Competence in Performance's* introduction. Briggs writes:

Imagine that a number of individuals are sitting in a kitchen, crossing a field, or driving to town. Their talk is unfocused, touching on recent events or tasks

to be accomplished. When one of the participants, an older person, begins to speak, the tone shifts. Her voice rises suddenly then falls. Her eyes become fixed on a younger person, her grandson, who has just spoken, and he responds in kind. Her words break the hold of the here and now, drawing the group through the window of the community's past She continues more slowly now, with a relaxed and even tone; the family members laugh or smile, and their gazes become unfocused. As she finishes speaking, most murmur words of assent. The grandson is the last to respond, nodding and replying, *sí, es cierto* "yes, it's true" (Briggs 1988:1).

In this way, Briggs reconceptualizes the village elders as verbal guerillas from an idealized past fighting the destruction of their communities and the onslaught of the dominant culture.

Still, neither Briggs nor Kutsche denies the existence of individualistic, atomistic or factionalistic aspects of village social structure that previous ethnographers documented. But where the negatively valued structures and other evidence of un- or dis-organization existed, Kutsche attributed them to outside domination rather than inherent characteristics of village culture (Kutsche 1979:10). Similarly, in his dissertation, Briggs deftly turned the tables on those who attributed oppressive *patron-peon* relations to traditional Hispanic culture. He argues the balance of Nuevomexicano cultural structure along the hierarchical/egalitarian axis was upset by industrial capitalism and Anglo American individualism, and therefore, the grossest excesses of unmitigated hierarchy in village society are not the result of traditional New Mexican culture but instead Anglo American domination. However, the village ethnographers leave the evidence of un- or dis-organization largely unexamined. I suspect that in the face of the previous anthropological focus on these negatively valued structures, they chose to refocus their work on the positively valued structures that had been overlooked. In this manner, they stood in allegiance with villagers' ongoing political-economic struggle to retain control of their village communities and (re)assert their rights over their traditional land and resource base.

Indeed, both Kutsche and Briggs's empathy for the people that they studied is palpable in their writing. Kutsche explicitly states with a note of sadness that it took him several years after the end of his intensive fieldwork in 1968 to accept the fact that he would never be "Hispano" (Kutsche and Van Ness 1988 [1981]:xii). Furthermore, his empathy for Cañones has a strong quality of romance. After adult Cañoneros began to accept him in their homes; after the teenagers began to take delight in teaching him dirty words and how to drink Cañones style; and after the children found him a source of amusement on demand, he "began to discover that Cañones did not have a culture of 'rural poverty,' but one of powerful grace, style, beauty, richness, and amazingly open and warm human relations" (Kutsche and Van Ness 1988 [1981]:xii). He states he "was seduced by these qualities, which are largely absent from Germanic and New England patterns" (Kutsche and Van Ness 1988 [1981]:xii).

Briggs's text suggests a more subtle, but perhaps even more intense identification. In an interesting caveat to his chapter outlining the social history of Córdoba, Briggs describes himself in the early days of his fieldwork as a sociolinguistic child, and this identification inserts him in an analogous position to the grandson who mutters *sí, es cierto*. But by the time he conducted his doctoral fieldwork six years later, he wrote:

After several years of such involvement [in community life] and much additional work on *la plática de los viejitos de antes*, elders became aware of my knowledge of the subject; this prompted some individuals to believe that I was in fact twenty to thirty years older than I was at the time, a perception that surprised and somewhat disconcerted me (1988:52).

In other words, the older, dissertation-writing Briggs has learned well and become, at least in terms of cultural knowledge, the equivalent of a middle-aged Córdovan.

In sum, Kutsche and Briggs recast village culture as a current, albeit residual, adaptation to those communities' socio-cultural circumstances. In so doing they

dismantled the previous ethnographic descriptions of the villages as dysfunctional by showing (1) how village culture functions as an adaptation against the destructive forces of the dominant society and (2) that previous ethnographers ignored equally salient and positive aspects of village culture. In particular, Kutsche described village culture as a vital cultural-ecological adaptation that continues to provide the guiding force in villagers' lives, while Briggs conceptualized the Córdoba elders' talk of bygone days as a counterhegemony that resists that community's ongoing domination. In the context of previous ethnographic views of village cultures, their work was critical and stands in allegiance with villagers' own idealization of village culture. However, as will become clear in the next section of this chapter, this vision left out other emergent socio-cultural realities with profound ramifications for Kutsche and Briggs's vision. For that ethnography we must leave the "frying pan" of the rural villages for the "fire" in the semi-urban Española Valley proper.

Española Ethnography

As I have already noted, the town of Española first rose to prominence in the late 19th century as a stop on the Denver and Rio Grande Railway and was itself the engine of economic and social transformation that would engulf the valley and surrounding communities. Not surprisingly, anthropologists working in Española in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s produced a different sort of literature than those working the villages. Rather than residual cultural forms, University of Oklahoma anthropologist Joseph Whitecotton and his student, R. Stewart Ellis, as well as Spaniard and University of Chicago graduate student Alfredo Jiménez Núñez focused on the community's transformation. In particular, Whitecotton and Ellis described Valley communities' incorporation into the world economic system (Ellis 1980, Whitecotton 1996, 1976, 1970), while Jiménez tested theories of acculturation and structural assimilation in the course of producing the only scholarly book focused on Española, *Los Hispanos de Nuevo México* (Jiménez 1974).

Both Whitecotton and Jiménez chose to base their work in the Española Valley because that location promised to illustrate broader economic and

transformative processes. Whitecotton ran a field school in the Española area during the summers of 1969, 1970, and 1971 (personal communication 2003), and stated in his 1970 article, "The Social History of a New Mexican Region" that he chose the Española area rather than a remote or isolated location because he was less interested in the identification of residual culture traits than "Spanish-Americans'" involvement with the larger society (1970:2). Jiménez similarly choose Española as the site of his graduate fieldwork in 1964–65 because: (1) Española had a large and diverse Hispanic population that therefore offered an excellent opportunity for the analysis of contact between Nuevomexicano culture and the larger American society, (2) Española appeared to be a good placed for the study of Nuevomexicanos' adaptations in the context of their direct contact with Anglos and, on the other hand, (3) Española offered to show how Anglos react in contact with an "ethnic minority," that within the area, constitutes a clear numerical majority (Jiménez 1974:16–17).

Whitecotton and Ellis's interest in a location like Española was promoted by their theoretical interest in World Systems Theory as developed by Immanuel Wallerstein (1979, 1974). Accordingly, they viewed northern New Mexico as a peripheral region serving national centers first in Spain, later Mexico, and finally the United States. Ellis wrote, "[The Española Valley community of] Santa Cruz, like so many villages and small towns in marginal regions around the world, has become enmeshed within a complex national and even world, political and economic system over which it has very little objective control" (Ellis 1980:198). According to this model, modernization of the peripheral and semi-peripheral regions like northern New Mexico is accompanied by the persistence of elites who utilized noncorporate means for organizing power inputs in the region. Ellis argued that the concept of dependent modernization is extremely useful in understanding the seemingly traditional or transitional features of the social structure in New Mexico. His dissertation details how from the founding of Santa Cruz in 1695 until the time of his research, the history of that Española Valley community consisted of adaptation to a succession of events and circumstances emanating from some broader level.

Jiménez's primary theoretical interest was acculturation and structural assimilation as the processes by which minority groups adapt to and supposedly become part of the dominant society. Like many theorists who deploy these concepts, Jiménez seemed to conceptualize ethnicity in primordialist terms of culture as the causal source of ethnic-group formation. Accordingly, he was interested in documenting the replacement of Nuevomexicano cultural traits with Anglo traits and the eventual melting of Nuevomexicanos into the dominant society. In particular, he sought to test the relationship between the supposedly primary step of the minority group acculturation and the following step of assimilation into the structure of the dominant group. Still, perhaps of the greatest importance to our discussion are the specific findings of his measures of the supposed acculturation and structural assimilation of Española's residents.

In an effort to measure the retention or abandonment of Nuevomexicano culture, Jiménez conducted a survey of 300 students in area high schools and junior high schools.²⁷ Jiménez believed that language retention was an index of Nuevomexicanos' fidelity to their culture. Therefore, he designed his survey to discover, on the one hand, the retention of Spanish and rejection of English, or, on the other hand, the students' adoption of English and abandonment of Spanish. Jiménez found the dominant language of the students' grandparents was Spanish, the parents' generation occupied an intermediate position but still favored the use of Spanish in the home, and English clearly dominated with the students themselves (Jiménez 1974:127–128). Jiménez also found that more students, especially students from the city of Española and immediately surrounding communities, reported themselves to be more comfortable in English rather than Spanish (Jiménez 1974:130). With a similar goal of discovering the Nuevomexicanos' structural assimilation, (1) Jiménez

²⁷ Jiménez interviewed students at Española High School (EHS), Santa Cruz High School (SCHS), McCurdy Mission School, and at the Escuela Parroquial at Holy Cross Church in Santa Cruz. Today, EHS and SCHS have merged into Española Valley High School, and Escuela Parroquial exclusively serves elementary students. However, at least one additional high school affiliated with an evangelical church has been added, Victory Faith.

also asked the same students the ethnic affiliation of their three best friends (Jiménez 1974:154), and (2) he analyzed marriage data to find the number of mixed marriages (Jiménez 1974:157–158). He found that most Nuevomexicano students' best friends were also Nuevomexicanos and a rate of intermarriage below 10 percent.²⁸ He concluded that while Nuevomexicanos were acculturating, they were not assimilating into the structure of the dominant group (Jiménez 1974:213).

Whitecotton and Ellis conceptualized acculturation in more complex terms than Jiménez. In particular, they argued that dominated groups such as Nuevomexicanos not only adapt to cultural structures and forms emanating from metropolitan centers, but they also actively adapt features of metropolitan style to the regional patterns. Ellis wrote:

Thus northern New Mexico has Kentucky Fried Chicken, Dairy Queen, Tastee Freeze and McDonald's. But each of these mass influences has been adapted to some extent to regional food tastes: Colonel Sander's sells rolled chicken tacos, Dairy Queen and Tastee Freeze sell green chile hamburgers, tamales, and tacos, and McDonald's sells little cups of green chile to put on your Big Mac (Ellis 1980:200).

²⁸ The specifics of Jiménez's attempts to measure structural assimilation are interesting. First, of the 300 Nuevomexicano students Jiménez surveyed, he found that 63.47 percent of Hispano students best friends were Hispanos and only 36.53 percent were Anglo (Jiménez 1974:154). In particular, he found the highest percentage of Anglo friends, 57.03 percent, at the McCurdy Mission School and the lowest, 29.22 percent, at Española High School. He therefore believed there was some mixing across "ethnic" lines among school-age youth. Second, Jiménez found that during the years 1956–64 there were 520 marriages between Hispanos and only 56 were between Hispanos and Anglos (Jiménez 1974:157–158). Still, he noted an additional 23 marriages where either the bride or groom was "coyote" or in other terms the child of an Anglo and Hispano parent. He found that in 41 of the 56 marriages between a Hispano and Anglo, the bride was Hispana and the groom was Anglo. Because of the significantly lower rate of intermarriage than school-age friendships, Jiménez believed social mixing between Nuevomexicanos and Anglos largely ended after residents graduated from high school.



Figure 7. The City of Española's Historic Business District. This picture was taken in 2002.



Figure 8. San Juan Pueblo's Ohkay Casino. This casino and hotel is located just north of Española.

While conceptualizing cups of green chile for your fast-food hamburger as emergent cultural forms may at first seem facile, Ellis and Whitecotton saw these cultural adaptations as specific tangible examples similar to more widespread changes that ameliorate the impact of institutional arrangements on the local and regional society. In this vein, Ellis's dissertation convincingly described the ways in which Santa Cruz both adapted to and adapted local representations of broader socio-cultural structures like the Roman Catholic Church, education, livelihood, and politics over the past three centuries.

Still, Whitecotton goes further. As early as 1976, he was already envisioning a more complex theorization of Nuevomexicano ethnicity in situational terms that reflected his internalization of Fredrik Barth's notion of ethnic boundaries as processual and adaptive (Barth 1969). Along these lines, Whitecotton argued that society should be understood in terms of group situations, with power as central, and as an ever-moving process and from situation to situation, and context to context (Whitecotton 1976:132). Whitecotton expanded this notion of ethnicity in a 1996 article that compared ethnic groups in the Española Valley to those in his other major field site, Oaxaca, Mexico. Here, Whitecotton described the ongoing reconstitution and even intensification of Nuevomexicano identity as a creative act resulting from these communities' incorporation into the modern capitalist world-system. He specifically described this emergent ethnicity as "invented," "created," and situational and rejected primordialist notions of ethnicity as exclusively based in bundles of cultural traits that have been passed down from preceding generations.

Sylvia Rodríguez, informed by Michael Hannan's theorization of ethnic boundaries in modern states, described ethnic identity formation in Taos and in the northern Rio Arriba community of Tierra Amarilla in similar terms (Hannan 1979, Rodríguez 1991). In her work, Rodríguez shows how a dynamic and dialectical relationship between a variety of local, regional and national influences shaped the Nuevomexicano ethno-political mobilization that emerged in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. More specifically, she argues, following Hannan, ethnic identity formation is constituted in a dialectical process where opposition in the periphery, resulting from

penetration by the core, becomes organizationally isomorphic with the core. She writes:

Local level oppositional organization accordingly grows larger and more complex, in order to meet the external onslaught effectively. Hence the widely observed emergence or increasing salience of large-scale ethnic identities, at a stage at which an earlier generation of theorists would have expected assimilation to be near complete (Rodríguez 1991:105).

Building on Barth's work, later theorists have differentiated "ethnicity" from "race." Michael Omi and Howard Winant define race as a concept that signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies (Omi and Winant 1994:55). Their concept of race emphasizes the fact that race, unlike ethnicity, is specifically defined by certain phenotypic characteristics such as skin color, hair, and body shape — in popular language, to be labeled *White*, *Black*, *Red*, *Yellow*, or *Brown*, — and entails a flattening of diversity groups so that, for example, Japanese Americans and Hmong immigrants are all *Asians*.

I believe that notions of race often better fit how Nuevomexicano identity is experienced on the ground than do notions of ethnicity. I suspect that Whitecotton would be sympathetic to this argument as might other intellectuals that apply ethnicity theory to New Mexico. Whitecotton stated in his 1996 article that the reconstructed Nuevomexicano identity he saw in land activism was based on a language of more universalistic ethnic characteristics than more traditional community-based identities. Whitecotton believed these more universalistic characteristics could be easily subsumed under a Chicano or Latino ethnic movement (Whitecotton 1996:19). I believe such work suggests, in practice, an internally differentiated and complex subject position. He wrote:

The Chicano lowrider on the streets of Española, like his middle-class politician counterpart, faces in two directions. He can look to his Hispano

land-based community identity. He also can look toward a much broader horizon and consider himself to be a member of an enormous group that has tremendous potential political and economic clout (Whitecotton 1996:19).

In Taos, Rodríguez similarly noted that many people who were engaged in localized northern New Mexican forms of ethno-political mobilization such as ritual revivals of dance forms like the Matachines also participated in "Chicano innovations" such as Danza Azteca, lowriders, and local celebrations of Cinco de Mayo (Rodríguez 1992:106). Clearly, these forms of "ethnic" mobilization fit well within Omi and Winant's conceptualization of race and race conflict in the United States. Moreover, in the paragraph following Whitecotton's comments concerning the Chicano or Latino ethnic movement, he wrote that the older Chicano movement and more recent Hispanic or Latino ethnicities are similar to other "core ethnicities" such as that associated with the label *Black* or *African American* (Whitecotton 1996:19).

Further, this conceptualization of identity as complex and situational allows Whitecotton to consider different and potentially disturbing cultural forms that remain outside the purview of Kutsche, Van Ness or Briggs's work. Whitecotton states that during the course of his field school in 1969, 1970, and 1971 his students lived in a tenement where the majority of the barracks residents were Hispanics who were struggling to get by (Whitecotton personal communication 2003). In the course of her summer research, field school student Janice Harrison studied the tenement (Whitecotton personal communication 2003) and found many residents exhibited characteristics of the social problems associated with urbanization (Whitecotton 1970). He cited heavy drinking patterns, lack of employment and hopes of getting employment, brittle marriages, and the formation of matrifocal families.

In this context of Whitecotton and Ellis's complex conceptualization of Nuevomexicano ethnic/racial identity/assignment, I here return to Jiménez's conclusions concerning Nuevomexicanos' accelerating acculturation and lack of structural assimilation. Jiménez found that the American political system or the lack of an inclusion of Nuevomexicano concerns in the political system is partly

responsible for the slow acculturation of Nuevomexicanos and many of the practical problems derived from the "cultural abyss" that separates Nuevomexicanos and Anglos. However, he also stated that Nuevomexicanos have been very resistant to change owing to their extreme traditional orientation that has reduced their capacity and flexibility to realize new adaptations (Jiménez 1974:210). However, Jiménez stated that in the case of Española the influence of Anglos has produced changes in the mentality of the Nuevomexicano population causing a reduction of their conservatism and the degree of faithfulness to their culture (Jiménez 1974:132). Jiménez further stated that in Española these changes have reached the point where, for some, English has been converted into a status symbol.

After reading Whitecotton's description of the reconstitution and intensification of Nuevomexicano identity, I now understand Jiménez to describe a lack of retention of residual cultural traits such as the Spanish language and an agro-pastoral economy, and I would consider any reduction to be contingent and situational. Interestingly José Limón describes a similar transformation in south Texas. In contrast with the almost all-encompassing world of his parents' generation, Limón finds the young people of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s experienced "a kind of daily intercultural making-do, a social pastiche of everyday life, a growing depthlessness" (Limón 1994:112–113). In Española, the general replacement of Spanish with English among the younger generations is a particularly apt illustration of the actual complexity of such culture change. Although the large majority of Española youth are more comfortable in English than Spanish, many remain socio-linguistically marked by a sort of English that is denigrated by the dominant society and results in low scores on standardized tests.²⁹ Again, this linguistic condition

²⁹ In my time as a newspaper journalist for Española's *Rio Grande Sun*, I saw first-hand the constant pressure on Española Valley School District administrators and teachers to improve students' low scores on standardized tests. The district is notorious for its low scores as well as extremely high drop out rate. In that time I also learned that only a small minority of the district's students are classified as English as a Second Language students. The majority of these students are Mexican immigrants. However, a large majority of the students in the district are English dominant but

mirrors Limón's south Texas where the schools do not teach youth the middle-class English skills necessary for social achievement, yet teach enough to contribute to the displacement of Spanish (Limón 1994:112). In sum, Jiménez's work illustrated that Española residents are changing but many remain socio-linguistically marked as different from the dominant society's ideal. Furthermore, the parallels with south Texas suggest this is a wider condition common to many other Chicano locations.

In contrast to Jiménez conclusions concerning acculturation, his statements regarding structural assimilation require little qualification and still ring true. Jiménez believed that after finishing school Nuevomexicanos and Anglos rarely visited each others' homes or maintained friendships based on personal factors. Rather, he suspected members of the two groups only interacted in workplaces, some businesses, and public places and always in a limited way. He stated, "Los obstáculos que impiden una mayor o más profunda interacción son muchos y, generalmente, funcionan en doble sentido."³⁰ He continued, "El complejo constituido por la suma de todos los prejuicios dirigidos por un grupo contra el otro y desarrollado a lo largo de la historia es una causa muy importante de la evitación mutua"³¹ (Jiménez 1974:156).

Negativity

In sum, a review of Whitecotton's, Ellis's, and Jiménez's work allows us to conceptualize a Nuevomexicano identity that is both emergent and residual, both positive and negative. Jiménez's work in particular tells us that despite the dismantling of Nuevomexicanos' traditional economic base and their ongoing cultural transformation, Nuevomexicanos are not being structurally assimilated into the dominant society. In other words, a new and emergent sort of Nuevomexicano

classified as "Lacking English Proficiency." As a result the majority of funds for the District's bilingual education program are earmarked for maintenance of Spanish language skills.

³⁰ The obstacles that implied a greater and more profound interaction are many, and generally, function in a double sense.

³¹ A complex constituted in the sum of all the prejudice directed by one group against the other and developed in a long history is one very important cause of the mutual avoidance.

identity is being re-articulated and here to stay. This, at least partly, negative articulation is situational and constituted from a complex and internally differentiated subject position; I would also add: unpredictable, potentially messy and not the stuff of tourist brochures or anthropological seduction. Moreover, I suspect, current Española-Nuevomexicano subjectivities and their expressions may not exist as a counterhegemony or in opposition to the dominant society. Instead, we must also look for an emergent proliferating negativity that now also lives, at least some of the time, within the cracks and fissures of the hegemonic itself.

In this vein, Kutsche's language of romance with village culture is absent from Whitecotton's and Ellis's writings, while Jiménez himself is explicitly ambivalent. Indeed, Jiménez in particular was repelled by Española's modernity and Americanness. In comparison to the close knit community and accompanying geography of the Andalusian villages in his homeland, Española seemed fractured into individual pieces, and therefore, he initially thought, difficult to study. He wrote:

Una población sumamente dispersa, aislada en sus grandes casas tradicionales, en las modernas y típicas casas americanas de doble puerta con tela metálica que no deja entrar ni los mosquitos, o en los grandes trailers o remolques que agrupados en número variable reproducen la imagen del tradicional campamento de nómadas, no ofrece la situación más favorable para un estudio de comunidad y de relaciones interétnicas. Desde el primer día puedo observar que en almacenes, supermercados, cafeterías para consumir desde el coche, etc., impera la típica prisa americana. La gente acude a estos lugares simplemente como un fin: adquirir las provisiones para una semana, tomar un refrigerio sin bajar del coche si es posible, y volver a casa a continuar su camino. Debo confesar que esta situación ha sido para mí en un principio un motivo de grave preocupación tanto por las dificultades prácticas que podría suponer en mi investigación, como por esa extraña sensación de encontrarnos con un lugar que a pesar de su flamante título de ciudad, está tan lejos de nuestro concepto y nuestra experiencia de pueblo, de comunidad, de

lugares accesibles donde la gente se ve, se detiene a charlar en plena calle o se sienta a la puerta de sus casas para ver pasar a los demás mientras se charla con los vecinos. Nada de esto es posible en Española, como no lo es en muchas otras comunidades de cualquier parte del mundo, pero a mí esto no me consuela y, por otra parte, no es fácil evitar la comparación con el mundo que no es familiar (1974:73–74).³²

In this way, even though the Briggs's and Kutche's villages are geographically close to the Española Valley, Jiménez's Española appears worlds apart from the communities the village ethnographers describe. For the Spanish anthropologist, what set Española apart was the community's highly dispersed, modernity, and Americanness.

Village Ethnography Revisited

The preceding juxtaposition of village and Española Valley ethnography shows that the Española ethnographers conceptualized Nuevomexicano identity as complex and situationally contingent — a vision that allows for negativity. In

³² A highly dispersed population — isolated in its big traditional houses, in the modern and typically American houses with second doors made of metal screens that do not let even mosquitos enter, or in the big trailers or that are grouped in various numbers producing the image of the traditional camps of nomads — did not offer the most favorable situation for a study of community and interethnic relations. From the first day I could observe that in the grocery stores, supermarkets, cafes for eating in your car, etc., dominate the typical American rush. The people come to those places simply for an end: to acquire the provisions for the week, to eat without getting out of the car if possible or going home or continuing on their way. I should confess that at the beginning this situation had become for me a cause of grave worry, so much for the practical difficulties that could be assumed in my study. Such as the strange sensation of finding ourselves in a place that despite the splendid title of the city, is very far from our concept and our experience of town, of community, of accessible places where the people are seen, stop, and talk in the street, or sit in the door of their houses to see the others pass while chatting with the neighbors. None of that is possible in Española, like it is not in many other communities of whatever part of the world. But that did not console me. For the other part, it is not easy to avoid the comparison with the world that is familiar to us.

contrast, the village ethnographers conceptualized Nuevomexicano identity in terms of residual cultural forms or a village socio-cultural tradition — a vision that only speaks in positive terms. Still, Kutsche and Briggs did not argue that these positive forms of identity were the only legitimate expressions of Nuevomexicano ethnicity. Neither did they deny that Nuevomexicanos' subject position, especially in places like Española, may be too complex to be defined by an agricultural-pastoral past. Rather, for practical purposes, their ethnographic focus on village values, institutions and folkloric genres in practice constructed Nuevomexicano identity in solely positive and residual terms. In contrast, by virtue of their ethnographic location in the semi-urban Valley, the Española ethnographers produced work that had to present, if in a nascent and unarticulated form, a more complex concept of Nuevomexicano subjectivity.

What makes the village ethnographers' elision of negativity more remarkable is the village ethnographers' own works did not fully contain such expressions. In terms of Kutsche and Van Ness's work, the negatively may be glimpsed in some of the cultural phenomena that they describe but fail to address with depth. For instance, they struggled to contain the ethnographic evidence of the Cañones residents' drinking, travel, and sowing oats within the age and apparently male category of "joven," (Kutsche and Van Ness 1988 [1981]:120–121). In so doing, they contained the wildness of these "disintegrative beliefs" within an implicitly sanctioned age category for blowing off steam, "For the young Cañonero, this is the period of memorable drinking bouts, of extreme and fairly open sexual boasting, of sudden death in automobile accidents" (Kutsche and Van Ness 1988 [1981]:121). Nevertheless, in a telling caveat that preserved their field site's cohesion but implied another reality, Kutsche and Van Ness acknowledged that in other villages the disruptiveness of *los jóvenes* cannot always be contained. In a likely reference to nearby village of Coyote that has long been known for its toughness, Kutsche and Van Ness wrote that, "Some other villages of northern New Mexico, particularly those on highways, suffer from gangs of their own aimless jóvenes who rob and beat other villagers" (Kutsche and Van Ness 1988 [1981]:121). Moreover, Kutsche and Van Ness's classic monograph-style discernment of cultural patterns suppressed the

complexities of individuals' own subjectivities. For instance, they wrote, but did not elaborate, that even in Cañones this period can also, "be a time of bitterness, and some landless jóvenes turn to the Chicano movement for identity" (1981:121).

Meanwhile Briggs's theorization of the elder's verbal art as counterhegemonic necessarily posited the presence of a broader hegemony that is locked in a battle for the hearts and minds of Córdoba residents. Briggs wrote, "Performers do not focus simply on the way that others, Mexicanos or Americanos, have internalized the dominant hegemony — the performers also point their fingers at themselves and their communities," (Briggs 1988:368). For instance, he cited the example of an elders' attribution of a group of treasure hunters' failure to find the elusive wealth of 19th century *rico* Pedro Córdoba to one hunter's expression of his desire to profit. In other words, the treasure that originated in a prior socio-economic order would not be revealed to a person that expressed the hegemonic desire to amass individual wealth in commodities (Briggs 1988:368). Briggs expanded these treasure stories and their analysis in his last book focused on New Mexico (Briggs and Romero 1990).

The most significant gap in Briggs's work is the near complete absence of younger generations. This is particularly notable because, as Briggs describes it, a primary purpose of the verbal art is its pedagogical value for younger generations. In my reading of *Competence in Performance*, younger people only emerged as entities in their own right in one sentence in the entire book. In the first paragraph in chapter 2, Briggs described the experience that a generic "you" would see driving into Córdoba for the first time. Among the things the hypothetical visitor would see is, "A group of young men with longish hair and polished old cars will probably be studying you closely" (Briggs 1988:25). Yet, no where in his text did Briggs describe what they might be discussing before the stranger's arrival.

Nevertheless, Briggs must have seen the importance of these issues. While Briggs never published ethnographic work focused on younger people, at the beginning of his career he delivered a paper with the tantalizing title, "A functional analysis of youth gangs in a Spanish-American Village of North-Central New Mexico," as part of a Spanish and Mexican Land Grants in the Southwest Symposium

at the Rocky Mountain Social Science Association Meetings in El Paso (Briggs 1974). The other papers from the symposium were included in Clark Knowlton's edited volume of *The Social Science Journal* focused on the then emerging field of Land Grant Studies. Unfortunately, Briggs' article was not (Knowlton 1976).

Briggs's exclusive focus on the elders' art in his published work elided the question of how younger people or even less linguistically skilled older people may experience the social transformations that he describes so eloquently. Almost two decades after the publication of *Competence in Performance*, and after the passing away of perhaps the majority of Briggs' elders, and the passing into middle age of the "young men with longish hair," this question becomes even more poignant.

Unintended Consequences

When Kutsche, Van Ness, and Briggs arrived in Cañones and Córdova, they entered a discursive field fraught with contradictory pressures including (1) a hostile social science literature, (2) a Nuevomexicano land politics, and (3) an Anglo modernist longing for New Mexico as exotic and pristine. Representing the latter two tendencies, these three village ethnographers threw their lot in with the villagers and reshaped village ethnography as the antithesis of their disorganization-centric precursors. However, when their ethnography is juxtaposed with the writings of their Española contemporaries, the de facto containment of Nuevomexicanos' proliferating and increasingly complex subject position(s) is brought into high relief as an unintended consequence of their empathetic ethnography.

Today, we may add two additional components to the discursive field. First, just as the village ethnographers were confronted by their dysfunction-centric precursors, we now operate in a discursive landscape under the influence of the village ethnographers' preoccupation with the positive, residual cultural forms. This is, again, brought into high relief when the impact of the village ethnographies is compared to that of the Española ethnographies.³³ Most recent ethnographic research

³³ The fact that the work of the village ethnographers is far more widely known than the work of their Española contemporaries may be partly explained by the economy of publication. Kutsche and

in the Valley continue to concentrate on folkloric traditions or specific traditional arts (Lucero and Baizerman 1999, Romero 1993, and Usner 2001, 1995). Furthermore, researchers who work in Española area and otherwise demonstrate exhaustive bibliographies fail to demonstrate a knowledge of the Española ethnographers' work or cite them.³⁴ For instance, in the early 1990s, Brenda Jo Bright and Brenda Romero wrote dissertations focused on lowriding and the Matachines dance, respectively, in Española Valley communities. Both Bright and Romero cited Briggs, and Romero cited Kutsche and Van Ness, but neither cited the Española ethnographers (Bright 1994, Romero 1993).³⁵ Moreover, the "American Encounters" exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution described the Española Valley village of Chimayó in a manner seemingly copied directly from the pages of Kutsche's or Van Ness's work

Van Ness wrote a monograph that filled a gap in the ethnographic literature and was published in respected academic presses. Briggs work was similarly printed in major academic presses and continues to be widely read for its theoretical and methodological significance in addition to ethnographic information. Meanwhile, Jiménez Núñez's work was published in Spanish in Spain; two of Whitecotton's articles were published in the relatively obscure *University of Oklahoma Papers in Anthropology* and the third was published in an edited volume focusing on the politics of ethnicity in Southern Mexico. Finally, while Ellis did publish some of his preliminary work in *University of Oklahoma Papers in Anthropology*, he did not publish the more mature work reflected in his dissertation.

³⁴ Interestingly, Briggs himself lacks any reference to Jiménez's book in either *Competence in Performance* or his dissertation (Briggs 1981, 1988). What makes this particularly odd is that, although a decade apart, both Briggs and Jiménez were students at the University of Chicago. Moreover, the children from Briggs' field site, Córdova, attend middle school and high school in Española. Therefore, Jiménez's reporting of a generational decline in Spanish competency of students in Española Valley has direct significance for the continuity of Briggs's verbal art and the fitness of Córdova's youths as the pedagogical object of that verbal art.

³⁵ I was unaware of the Española ethnographies until Ronda Brulotte who works in Oaxaca, happened across Whitecotton's article "Ethnic Groups in Southern Mexico and Northern New Mexico: A Historical Comparison of the Valley of Oaxaca and the Española Valley" in Howard Campbell's edited volume, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Southern Mexico* (Whitecotton 1996). Subsequently, University of New Mexico anthropologist Sylvia Rodríguez urged me to a deeper reading of Whitecotton and his students' work. Later, Whitecotton himself suggested Jiménez's monograph.

and implicitly cited Briggs's dissertation "Our Strength is the Land." The curators wrote, "Chimayó's people struggle to retain their unique character and values. Residents have their share of problems common to every American community: from drunk driving to domestic violence. But they find strength in their land, their culture, and their association with each other" (Morrison et al. 1992:60).

At this juncture, I wonder how a more serious engagement of negativity would have reshaped the village ethnographers' already careful description and analysis. What would Kutsche and Van Ness have found if they had taken more care to explore the "time for bitterness" that pushed some marginal Cañones youth toward the Chicano Movement? How would Briggs's ethnographic description and theorizing have changed if he had spent more time describing the linguistic play—or lack of it—of the "young men with longish hair"? Moreover, Briggs is a scholar with keen insight into material culture. Why didn't he explore the profoundly playful implications of their "polished old cars"? If the village ethnographies had taken these sorts of questions more seriously, I suspect that their descriptions of their field sites would share much more with the Española Valley communities of Whitecotton, Ellis, and Jiménez. I suspect too that such a strategy would have lead to a richer if more fraught vision of both the Española Valley and Northern New Mexico.

Just as the Village and Española ethnographers confronted the riddle of Española's transformation, continuity, and negation, one Valley artist struggled with similar issues with particular success. In the first decades of the 20th century, Embroiderer Policarpio Valencia stitched these themes into bedspread size works of art that continue to inspire fascination.

TWO
Appearances Teach



Figure 9. Policarpio Valencia Embroidery, MNM A 9.54.28. Valencia created elaborate embroideries such as this one now housed at the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe.

TWO

Appearances Teach

Adajio que dies, no es el lion como lo pintan, mas que lo aga un buen pintor, el que lo pinto primero le puso has su color y asi es y sera.³⁶ (Text embroidered into a textile by Española Valley resident Policarpio Valencia sometime in the 1920s. MOIFA MNM A.9.54.28).

If subversion lies in negativity, the artwork of one early 20th century artist, the embroiderer Policarpio Valencia, insightfully evokes this same power in his confounding body of work. Valencia was born in the Española Valley village of Santo Niño, and his life (1856-1934) spanned the decade following the American annexation of the Southwest to the beginning of the Great Depression. In his old age, he created monumental and extraordinary embroideries unlike any others known in northern New Mexico.

Despite their now worn and faded state, his works remains striking and confounding, inviting the viewer into their often-swirling text to touch the figures seemingly haphazardly stitched onto their bedspread-size surfaces. One must strain and move around the embroidery to read the irregular text on his most abstract pieces. Within this new and radical form, Valencia simultaneously referenced traditional genres such as folk sayings and hymns as well as the area's traditional pastoral lifeways.

³⁶ Valencia's writing is characterized by his colloquial northern New Mexican Spanish and nonstandard spellings. The quotation translates as, "There is an adage that says, the lion is not as he is painted eve if he is painted by a good painter. He who painted it first did so even to the color and so it is and shall be"

I suspect that Valencia would be pleased by my exploration of his work. Allegory, pedagogy, and negativity appear to have been goals of his work, and sometimes the embroideries seem to be a riddle that the viewer must unravel. In one embroidery he states in colloquial New Mexican Spanish, "El que no parese ser. Y el que parese ser no es. Las aparencias enseñan. En eso se da entender"³⁷ (MOSCA SCAS L.54.40). In another embroidery, Valencia first directs us to examine, read, and enjoy his work, "No para llebar la conbersacion bea el numero lo ay el prencipio de su naracion y adicionales sin numero, escritos con palabras interesantes"³⁸ (MOIFA A 9.54.28) He next tells us that his embroideries have something to teach us and goads us, in the form of a joke, to read more deeply. He stitched, "No las letras en este cuadro son tambien de dar lecion a todo aquel las lean de rondon, a esto los causera risa, pero despues de la risa sie les lean de rondan, a etos los causera risa, pero despues de la ris sie les llaman su attencion, beran es cosas mas isa"³⁹ (MOIFA A.9.54.28).

In search of this something more, I intend to reconnect Valencia's embroidery with his social milieu and suggest Valencia's best work powerfully and simultaneously represents two opposing but mutually haunting forms. I will show that in his embroidery, Valencia (re)worked and transformed the contradictory experiences embodied by the Valley's traditional center in Santa Cruz and the emerging economic center in Española. Based on this assertion, this chapter will explore the specificity of residual and emergent socio-cultural forms manifest in Valencia's work and finally the implications of their juxtaposition. In other words, Valencia's embroidery is the allegorical working through of the contradictions that

³⁷ That which is does not seem to. And that which seems to be is. Appearances teach. In that they give understanding.

³⁸ Not to change the conversation, see the number (of animals) that are at the beginning of this story and numberless others written with interesting words.

³⁹ Note that the letters in the picture are also give a lesson to all who read them around about. These will be made to laugh but after the laughs have caught their attention they will see more things here.

transformed and reconstituted northern New Mexico in general and his own experience in particular. More specifically, their great and confounding power is their juxtaposition of negative and positive social forms that evoke, to borrow a term from Fredric Jameson, "dialectical shock" (Homer 1998:17, Jameson 1971:375).

Embroidering Santa Cruz and Española

If these embroideries evoke such shock, I find it, therefore, no surprise that Valencia created his works of art in a physical location that seems to epitomize these divergent and convergent socio-geographic locations. In Valencia's time, Santo Niño was a village that mostly consisted of families with roots in the area that often dated to the founding of the current village of Santa Cruz de la Cañada in 1695.⁴⁰ Indeed, Santo Niño is located just outside the Valley's longtime ecclesiastical center in Santa Cruz. Today, Valencia's former property is just off the road that now serves as the highway between the larger communities of Santa Fe and Taos. Valencia's village, Santo Niño, is a barrio within the boundaries of the city of Española and located just off of Española's central artery, Riverside Drive. Moreover, while Santo Niño continues to exist as a neighborhood of the expanded city of Española, the location of Valencia's residence is now considered to be part of the Española barrio, Riverside—a neighborhood named for the thoroughfare that runs through it and roughly parallel to the Rio Grande River.

In 2002, Valencia's descendants, including his grandson Paul Valencia, continued to live on his former property, and this area of the Española Valley remains overwhelmingly Hispanic. During Valencia's lifetime, Santo Niño was a somewhat isolated small village largely inhabited by the people descended from families that settled there during the Spanish and Mexican eras and was dominated by the area's

⁴⁰ While the Española Valley was originally settled by Oñate in 1598, the Spanish era colonists were ejected from New Mexico by the Pueblo Rebellion from 1680-1692. Santa Cruz was resettled shortly after New Mexico was reconquered by Don Diego DeVargas and along with Santa Fe and Albuquerque became one of New Mexico's three chief colonial centers.



Figure 10. Policarpio Valencia Embroidery, SCAS L5.1954.40. This embroidery measures 1.22 by 1.33 m. The piece is worked with white string or string dyed red and light blue. The design is almost solid animals with letters meandering between them in all directions. Museum of Spanish Colonial Arts in Santa Fe.

ecclesiastical center in the bordering village of Santa Cruz (Ellis 1980). However, by the late 1880s, the shadow that Santa Cruz cast over Santo Niño was already joined by that of the growing railroad town and emerging commercial center (Ellis 1980). The city of Española was then located just across the Rio Grande River.

Valencia probably created the ten identified examples of his work over the course of his final years.⁴¹ Like the Española Valley his embroidery has received a strange combination of notoriety and obscurity: Although not certain of how to explain the confounding embroideries' seemingly unpredictable form, over the past 60 years a cadre of folklorists, textile experts, and museum curators have taken interest in Valencia's work. Today, six of his pieces are located in Santa Fe's Museum of International Folk Art's (MOIFA) collections, three in Santa Fe's Museum of Spanish Colonial Art's (MOSCA) collections, and one in the Fred Harvey Collections of the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona. In particular, famed Museum of New Mexico curator E. Boyd maintained a file of materials related to Valencia's embroideries and was instrumental in the purchase of several embroideries for the Spanish Colonial Arts Society in Santa Fe. Some materials from the folder were published in their entirety in "E. Boyd's Working Notes on Policarpo Valencia and his Alabado Embroidery," (Weigle et al. 1983:128–134).⁴² The single most analytical exploration of his work was done by textile expert Irene Emery (1953). Emery established both the authorship of the embroideries and proved they were 20th century works rather than much older as previously suspected. Still, nearly all these scholars, outside of their clear appreciation of the embroideries' form, have attempted to understand these works in terms of positive and seemingly traditional content, rather than their confounding, indefinable—and negative—form. Following their example, I will leave

⁴¹ In two of the Valencia's ten pieces, Valencia states that he began the embroideries on specific dates. Those dates were in 1925 and 1926 (MOIFA MNM B 89/13 and MOIFA MNM A 5.54.3).

⁴² Boyd was instrumental in the Museum of New Mexico's purchase of several of Valencia's pieces. E. Boyd's collection of materials concerned with Valencia's embroideries may be found in the "Policarpo Valencia folder" in the E. Boyd collection at the New Mexico State Records Center.

this aspect of Valencia's work for the second half of this chapter. First, I will consider the efforts of intellectuals to unravel the elements of Valencia's work that fit within established genres.

A More Genuine Culture

In the postwar period, two locations within the United States became centers for intellectuals who sought a more genuine culture in the cultural geography of the United States and rejected the supposed cultural morass of mainstream or middle America (Stocking 1989a:217–218). New York's Greenwich Village arose as the metropolitan center for disaffected intellectuals who played a key role in the development of the critical modernism that I will describe in the second half of this essay. However, other intellectuals and free thinkers who would figure more prominently in New Mexico's social history possessed primitivist tendencies and crossed the supposed cultural desert of middle America. In the northern New Mexican landscape they found a modernist oasis of seemingly primitive cultures. In her recent text, *Culture in the Marketplace*, anthropologist Molly Mullin describes how these intellectuals were drawn to New Mexico as a world with distinctive local identities, histories, and aesthetic traditions (Mullin 2001). George Stocking writes similarly:

Against a backdrop of arid ochre scarps and arching crystal skies, the crisp adobe lines of Spanish churches and Indian pueblos—artifacts of cultural traditions more deeply rooted than colonial New England—provided the setting for a resonantly exotic cultural life in the present (Stocking 1989a:219).

Precursors to these post–First World War modernists reach back to at least the 1880s and the work of writers such as Charles Lummis (Gutiérrez 2002, Trujillo 2000). In New Mexico, Lummis found a primitive, unchanging place that compared to both the

Orient and "heart of Africa"⁴³ (Lummis 1893:4–5). Among the discoveries of these art colonists, folklorists, and anthropologists were the weaving and the *santero* traditions. (Briggs 1980, Lucero 1986, Lucero and Baizerman 1999).

The (re)emergence of both the *santero* woodcarving tradition and the Chimayó weaving tradition as both high and curio art were centered in nearby villages: Córdoba and Chimayó. Two texts, Helen R. Lucero and Suzanne Baizerman's *Chimayó Weaving: The Transformation of a Tradition* and Charles Briggs's *The Wood Carvers of Córdoba, New Mexico: The Social Dimensions of an Artistic "Revival,"* illustrate a profound contrast between Valencia's work and the genres of weaving and woodcarving (Lucero and Baizerman 1999, Briggs 1980). Both texts describe Santa Fe and Taos intellectuals' efforts to (re)create traditional craft economies as part of the larger national and international arts-and-crafts revival movement that flourished after the Second World War. Briggs describes the shaping of the emergence of the village of Córdoba's particular style of unpainted and wood chip carving style in the context of Anglo American elite tastes and patronage. Lucero and Baizerman elaborate a more complex push-and-pull between middle-brow blanket dealers and high-brow and supposedly "enlightened" Anglos who sought to promote their vision of traditional craft production.⁴⁴ Within this framework the

⁴³ Ramón Gutiérrez states that orientalism is not only a form of exoticism and escapism. Rather, orientalist themes offered an opposing configuration to European notions of morality, time, space, and personal identity. Therefore, it would seem, orientalist idealizations offered a potential critique of Enlightenment notions of reason and Western Capitalism. Gutiérrez states the sights, sounds, and smells that evoked Egypt for Charles Lummis were the women who carried clay water jars on their heads, adobe houses, donkey beasts of burden, two-wheeled *carretas* or transport carts, the desert sun, light, sedentary and nomadic "primitives," and ruins (Gutiérrez 2002:21).

⁴⁴ In terms of New Mexican Hispanic arts and crafts, the most influential local manifestation of this larger arts and crafts revival was the Spanish Colonial Arts Society. This society was incorporated in 1929 and emerged from the earlier Society for the Revival of Spanish Colonial Arts founded by writer Mary Austin and artist Frank Applegate. Helen R. Lucero, herself a weaver, has been a longtime participant in the Spanish Colonial Arts Society. Lucero was the curator of Hispanic folk art at the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe and is now the Director of Visual Arts at the National Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque.

woodcarvings of Cordovan santeros were celebrated while Chimayó-style weavings were sometimes denigrated as less authentic. Nevertheless, both genres reflect the desire of tourists and collectors alike to purchase the handiwork of folk artisans.

Embroidering Continuity

Like the woodcarvings and weavings, Valencia's work was understood by regional folk art experts, often living in Santa Fe, as an affirmation of a Nuevomexicano way of life organized around a system of subsistence agriculture, related social structure, and folk-Catholic beliefs. Similarly, in perhaps the most complex description of Valencia's work, Museum of New Mexico curators Charlene Cerny and Christine Mather described Valencia as a man living in the rural poverty of Santa Cruz, New Mexico, or more specifically Santo Niño (Cerny and Mather 1994:144–146). They stated that "small though Santa Cruz is, it boasts an elegant, large adobe church built in the eighteenth century with altar decorations imported from Mexico as well as altar screens made in the nineteenth century by New Mexican santeros" (Cerny and Mather 1994:145). They continue, "It is a church of great age and beauty, which one can easily imagine would dominate and fill the lives of the villagers. And so it seems with Policarpio Valencia" (Cerny and Mather 1994:145).

I, too, see elements of Valencia's work that may be understood as an affirmation of a Nuevomexicano way of life organized around a system of subsistence agriculture, related social structure, and folk-Catholic beliefs that inscribe a religious and traditional moral order. This aspect of Valencia's art would fit within Raymond Williams's notion of the residual cultural forms: "The residual, by definition, has been effectively formed in the past, but it is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present"⁴⁵ (Williams 1977:122).

⁴⁵ Several of Raymond Williams comments in this section of *Marxism and Literature* are pertinent to our discussion. Among them is the statement:

Aspects of Valencia's biography suggests that much of Valencia's subjectivity was formed in such a social order. E. Boyd purchased three Valencia embroideries for the Spanish Colonial Arts Society from Santa Cruz native Tomas Valdez with the stipulation that Valdez write down all his knowledge of Valencia. Valdez's description of Valencia's life describes his parents, Ijinio Valencia and Maria Antonia Montoya, as people of typical Spanish origin. They cultivated the land as farmers. . . Their son Policarpio followed the same trade" (Policarpio Valencia Folder n.d.) Moreover, Valdez reported that Valencia was the *mayordomo* or ditch-boss of the *acequia* or community irrigation ditch, and he also owned a traditional-style flour mill powered by the acequia's waters. In other words, Valencia was a participant in the traditional village economy of small-scale subsistence agriculture. According to Valencia's grandson, Paul Valencia, Policarpio Valencia was also a member of the Catholic lay brotherhood called the *trinitarios* that remains active in Santa Cruz until today. Valencia, therefore, was also a full participant in the folk Catholicism that traditionally permeated all aspects of northern New Mexican life. Another element of Valdez's biography suggests Valencia was a verbal virtuoso in the traditional verbal art genres richly described by anthropologist Charles Briggs in nearby Córdova. Valdez stated, "people from all around sought his advice. He held the attention of all who would come and chat with him. His wise sayings or maxims were frequent in his conversation" (Policarpio Valencia Folder n.d.)

In specific reference to his embroideries, Valencia employed the button-hole stitch which was the staple of regional *colcha* embroidery long practiced in northern New Mexico (albeit he employed industrial produced four-ply cotton rug warp as thread) and patched fabrics often constituted in part by traditional materials such as hand-woven blankets in the Rio Grande style. The importance of this simple stitch

The idea of rural community is predominantly residual, but is in some limited respects alternative or oppositional to urban industrial capitalism, though for the most part it is incorporated, as idealization or fantasy, or as an exotic—residential or escape—leisure function of the dominant order itself (Williams 1977:122).

cannot be overemphasized in conceptualizing the embroideries' creation as multiple layers of stitches that completely cover the ground cloth. Such stitching must have required great lengths of repetition. Valencia's grandson, Paul Valencia, told me that he remembered his grandfather embroidering late into the night.

Interestingly, Valencia's most critically discussed piece was both the easiest for folklorists and curators to understand via established genres and one of his least visually complex. The text of this piece was transcribed and published in its entirety in "E. Boyd's Working Notes on Policarpio Valencia and his Alabado Embroidery," (Weigle et al. 1983:128–134).⁴⁶ In a note to E. Boyd, New Mexico folklorist Rubén Cobos stated that this embroidery consists of a New Mexican *alabado* or hymn that serves as the performer's *despedimiento* or farewell to his family, friends, and the world in general (Policarpio Valencia Folder n.d.). Despedimientos were sung at traditional wakes for the dead. Cobos's description of the text as an alabado is attached to a transcription of Valencia's text into standard Spanish.⁴⁷ Cobos states that despedimientos such as this one affirm the laws of Catholicism and reminds the listener that on the day of judgement even a word said in jest will merit due punishment.

In another piece, Valencia lists the animals of the world but also pays attention to the animals commonly used or hunted in northern New Mexico. He also lists the tools of traditional agriculture, as if ordering and inscribing the traditional mode of production into the embroidery's cloth. Valencia wrote in the colloquial Spanish of his community, itself a signifier of a traditional and rural culture:

⁴⁶ E. Boyd was instrumental in the Museum of New Mexico's purchase of several of Valencia's pieces. Boyd's collection of materials concerned with Valencia's embroideries may be found in the Policarpio Valencia folder in the E. Boyd collection at the New Mexico State Records Center.

⁴⁷ Presumably, Rubén Cobos's interpretation was sought by E. Boyd and the standard Spanish transcription is signed by Cobos with the salutation "*Para mi amiga* E. Boyd," or "For my friend E. Boyd."

abril 2 del año de 1925 comense a poner hilo blanco en esta covija en la cual
berá ud sierta coleccion de animales de los cuales ya barios son raros en esta
epoca y otros existen aora en uso domestico pero llo he figurado ayi animales
para recuerdo que prestaron serbisio al hombre anteriormente fueron el sibolo
el caballo el buro la mula y el bueye y la borega y cabra el sibolo con su carne
surtia la nasion el buro la mula con carga en el espinaso cambiando objetos
comerciales de distancia muy larga y por sieras caminaban y manejados
tratados mal con garote y el buy jalando primero con un palo atado a los
cuernos era llugo dos prendian al llugo y les picaban con un topil era una bara
puntiada el hombre en el caballo con su balor y una lansa en su mano asia uso
del sibolo y la borega y la cabra con su pelo y cuero vestian a sus amos y con
su carne leche se alimenta la nasion (MOIFA MNM B 89/13).⁴⁸

In this (re)inscription of a prior socio-economic order into the embroidery's
unpredictable form, Valencia seems to be affirming the world as he knew it should
be.

⁴⁸ An undated translation by New Mexico folklorist F. M. Kercheville reads:

April 2 of the year 1925 I began to weave white wool thread in this blanket (bed cover) on
which you (will) see a certain collection of animals among which various ones are rare in
these here times and others till exist for domestic use, but I have sketched here (these) animals
(beasts) to be remembered (for service to man). Those that served mankind in times past were
the buffalo, the horse, the ass, the mule, and the ox, and the sheep and goat; the buffalo with
its flesh sustained (supplied) the people, the donkey and mule beasts of burden carrying loads
on their backs exchanging commercial goods over great distances and maintains, traveling
[sic] (slowly) and treated (manhandled) brutally with club, and the ox pulling with a stick
(heavy) tied to his horns. This was a yoke: two oxen were bound to the yoke and they poked
(stuck) them with a sharp pointed red (long pole). The man on horseback with valor and his
lance in his hand made use of the buffalo, sheep, and goat, whose hides and skins were
skillfully used to dress their masters. Their flesh and milk feed the people.

On the heels of such texts, several earlier accounts of Valencia's work and life focus their speculation almost exclusively on his supposed status as a traditional New Mexican villager. Interestingly, an unsigned early description of several of the Valencia pieces, probably written by New Mexico material culture scholar Hestor Jones sometime before 1953, misdated Valencia's work (Policarpio Valencia Folder n.d.).⁴⁹ The report's author mistook a nine for a seven in the above quoted statement, "abril 2 del ano de 1925 comense a poner hilo blanco en esta covija" and believed the embroideries were created in 1725. The report's author stated that he or she was unable to find out the origin of the embroideries' design. Instead, the author continued to elaborate the isolated and typically "folk" nature of social group that included their likely embroiderer:

They come from people who are farmers and cattle and sheep owners, who are poor in money but comfortable and content in their one-story adobe or wood houses; very religious and enjoying very much their local fiestas and their dances; with little desire for possessions or for change or speed. They are quick in their passions and live very close to the soil (Policarpio Valencia Folder n.d.).

Later critics lacked the condescending quality of this early report, but they retained the report author's focus on a folk tradition.

In her paper delivered at the 2000 Meetings of the Textile Society of America, Annin Barrett similarly focused on the traditional folkloric aspects of the work and Valencia's isolated and traditional milieu. She described the Española Valley's deep

⁴⁹ A four-page report on several of Valencia's embroideries is located in the Policarpio Valencia folder of the E. Boyd archives in the New Mexico State Records Center. The report is undated and unsigned. However, a description of the folder's contents is located in MOIFA library describes the report as "possibly by Hester Jones." The report also contradicts several points convincingly argued by Irene Emery in her 1953 article, suggesting the report was written before the publication of Emery's description of Valencia's work.

roots dating to Spanish colonization, the strong influence of the Catholic church in general and the specific regional influence of the Franciscan friars and Catholic lay brotherhood popularly known as the "Penitentes." The Penitentes themselves are a common object of folkloric fascination and are much studied by folklorists and anthropologists (Briggs 1988, López Pulido 2000, Weigle 1976). Barrett wrote:

Policarpo Valencia may well have been a Penitente since during his lifetime most prominent members of New Mexico Spanish communities belonged to the Brotherhood, and Santa Cruz de la Cañada was a center of Penitente activity. Whether or not he actually was one, there existed a general cultural aesthetic that valued self-denial and religious devotion. They coexisted with the frontier traits of self-sufficiency, reinventing traditions from the "old" country, and a keen awareness of death (Barrett 2000:153).

The point of my exegesis of these descriptions is not to quibble over the fact that Valencia was Trinitario rather than a Penitente. Rather, I have shown that these earlier critics have focused almost entirely on aspects of Valencia's work that are easiest to assimilate to the traditional folk paradigms and genres. I have further shown this view is supported by much of the text of Valencia's work. But as we already know, this narrative only tells half of the story. Indeed, in the transgressive form of Valencia's embroidery, the conceptualization of his embroideries as the pure affirmation of tradition unravels into something more ineffable and complex.

Embroidering Transformation

So, here, I return to the other prominent avenue of modernist critique that was also emerging in the early 20th century. As I mentioned earlier, for many alienated intellectuals, New York's Greenwich Village served as a geographic locus of heterodox ideas, new aesthetic modes, and alternative life styles (Stocking 1989a, 1989b). A chief characteristic of this intellectual milieu was an aesthetic form that valorized a radical inconsistency and self contradiction (DeKoven 1992). Art works

produced with this style present a both/and which imagines an alternative to hierarchical dualism. Marianne DeKoven writes of Critical Modernism, "I am arguing that modernist writing offers, constructs, in fact defines itself as radically inconsistent—literally, self contradictory—though not incoherent" (DeKoven 1992:685). For textual evidence of this style, DeKoven offers Conrad, Eliot, and Proust. In the remainder of this chapter, I will show that this critical modernism more accurately describes Valencia's work than do the inadequate efforts of earlier critics to understand Valencia's oeuvre within the established folk genres that were at least partly defined by the needs of modernist intellectuals' paradoxically primitivist desires.

The social geography that surrounded Valencia was far more complicated than these earlier critics suggested, and by the second decade of the 20th century, New Mexico in general was facing a demographic shift that was transforming Nuevomexicanos into a minority within New Mexico. The area of northern New Mexico within a 60-mile radius of Española, in particular, was experiencing the influx of Anglos often interested in the region's Native American and, to a lesser extent, Hispanic populations. At this time, the Española Valley was converted into both a stronghold of Nuevomexicano demographic dominance and the remnants of northern New Mexican political power and simultaneously a reservoir of cheap labor for the region's burgeoning economy.⁵⁰ Moreover, the social and economic forces centered in the railroad town and commercial center of the city of Española had already begun to compete and even eclipse the power that Cerny and Mather saw in Santa Cruz's "large adobe church." Based on data gathered in 1935, the Tewa Basin Study described the Española area as already enmeshed in a wider market economy

⁵⁰ Northern New Mexicans provided labor for the region's agricultural economy. Numerous heads of households traveled to Colorado and other Southwestern locations to work as agricultural laborers and shearers. Prior to the 1930, out of 592 families in the Santa Cruz complex of villages, 140 to 200 heads of families, on an average, traveled to other communities for seasonal work for 5 to 7 months each year. At the time of the study, in the 1930s, 15 heads of families continued work at a smelter in Leadville, Colorado (Weigle 1975:72).

and stated that by the First World War, wages had replaced agriculture as most residents' primary source of livelihood (Weigle 1975:35).

Three intertwined area developments became the local engines of social and economic change: (1) the railroad town and commercial center of Española; (2) the Española-based sheep empire of businessman Frank Bond; and (3) the mid-twenties establishment of an irrigation district. The Tewa Basin Study's authors compared the local sheep raising system as comparable to sharecropping in the deep South. This system ultimately concentrated nearly all the area's pastoral wealth in the hands of Bond. Finally, the formation of the irrigation district was a source of great anxiety and economic hardship. Beginning in 1926, the irrigation district initiated a process of taxation and debt that ruined many farmers. These economic conditions were resulting in residents' ever-increasing impoverishment. The Tewa Basin Study states:

It is only since the forming of the irrigation district that radical change has overtaken the town [The Santa Cruz complex of villages], and this has probably taken place without the full realization of the inhabitants, and to their huge discomfort. Because of its location at the head of the irrigation district, where the lands are of a magnitude to appeal to Anglo farmers, Santa Cruz has had the most direct contact with the newcomers. There the fear of land loss is most common, and every conversation brings it up (Weigle 1975:68).

The study specifically described Santa Cruz's houses as old, dilapidated, overcrowded, and "with evidence of squalor." Perhaps most ominously, the study states that many of the school children are underweight and suffering from malnutrition (Weigle 1975:78).

Valencia himself appears to have been a participant in the Valley's transformation wrought by this new economic and social order. While in his description, Tomas Valdez cast Valencia's parents as farmers "of typical Spanish blood," Valdez described Valencia himself as a merchant of sorts (Policarpio Valencia Folder n.d.). As a young man, Valencia would take farm produce to Santa

Fe where he would trade with a merchant "by the name of Mr Solomon Weist, with whom he became very intimate." Then, with a load of merchandise, mostly salt, he would proceed to Taos and there do business. Valdez states that Valencia became attached to his family and therefore curtailed his commercial trips. Still, one wonders if the increasing penetrations of the railroad and Anglo business into northern New Mexico did not play a role in his eventual cessation of this money-earning strategy. Finally, as a longtime mayorodomo of the Acequia de las Herreras that passed near his home, Valencia must have been intimately aware of the economic trauma developing around the irrigation district beginning in the mid-1920s. In those final years of his life, Valencia was elected to the position of justice of the peace. Valencia's prominent roles in the community and commerce suggest that Valencia was an active agent who manipulated the social geography that lay before him, and he must have been fully aware of his community's social circumstances.

In the context of his community's transformation and increasing fragmentation, Valencia's embroidery took on a form that was likely never seen before, and I suspect, reflected an emerging tension that even Valencia could only fully articulate in his endlessly repeated buttonhole stitch. Furthermore, his work certainly did not fit comfortably within the traditional colcha style of embroidery long common in northern New Mexico.

The folklore literature, popular memory, and current practice tells us that colcha embroidery was woman's craft. According to Nora Fisher, there were two types of New Mexican colcha embroidery: wool-on-wool colcha and wool-on-cotton colcha embroidery (Fisher 1979:119–131). In the first and older form, a handwoven, handspun, plain weave, woolen ground is covered with a button-hole stitch embroidery. In the second and mostly U.S.-era form, a cotton ground is covered with wool colcha motifs. Fisher states that for the most part, wool-on-wool colcha embroideries are characterized by elaborate curvilinear floral patterns. According to Fisher, the wool-on-cotton style is made up of design embroidered in wool on a background of plain white cloth, usually cotton. She states that almost all wool-on-cotton pieces are framed by an outer floral border. The introduction of an animal

motif is frequent and a number of these embroideries have a central motif or a small circular motif placed at the very center of the textile.

When compared to the traditional genre forms as described by Fisher, Valencia's works transgress their boundaries. As previously mentioned, the colors of Valencia's materials have faded, but it is clear he used a variety of hues: orange, red, yellow, purple, blue, brown and white (Barrett 2000:154). Most of Valencia's stitchery is worked on, pieced, and patched clothing or household textiles. After he patched together enough materials for a base, he would cover the surface with a solid layer of stitches. If there was a hole or missing corner, he would fill the empty space with needle lace, which is done the same way as a buttonhole stitch, but without piercing the cloth. Finally, he'd stitch another layer of design: plants animals or text. In his most playful pieces, multiple layers of stitches completely cover the ground cloth in an obsessive working and reworking of the surface (Barrett 2000:154). Turning his embroideries upside down to examine their base often reveals patchwork of traditional and/or industrial materials such as faded blue denim or old hand-woven blankets that in turn complement the embroidery surfaces' industrial-produced cotton string.

This innovative form defies earlier critics' abilities to assimilate his work and simultaneously makes it so attractive. Writing in the early 1950s, textile expert Irene Emery commented on three of his works. She was clearly intrigued and puzzled by the embroiderer's combination of innovation and his apparent lack of technical proficiency. Not yet knowing much of the embroiderer, she said, "The animal figures in two of the pieces suggest a pastoral life. The materials used all indicate a definite lack of affluence," and, "the size of the pieces, the actual weight and bulkiness, as well as the magnitude of the task involved, suggest an adult and determined approach." (Emery 1953:36).⁵¹ Emery described the form of Valencia's embroideries

⁵¹ At the time Emery wrote her article, the identity of the embroiderer was not yet established. Indeed, her article first identified the embroiderer as Policarpo Valencia and established him as the creator of stylistically similar but unsigned pieces. Her article describes three pieces in depth and gives a cursory description of a fourth that was then only recently acquired. While she did not identify these

in precise and great detail, and for this aspect of Valencia's work, I defer to her lengthy description of three of Valencia's works:

The colors of the string of this embroidery seem to have been white, gray-blue (which originally may have been a deeper blue), red (now faded to a rosy shade), and orange. There are also a few apparently random bits of grayed brown and lemony yellow. With the exception of the rectangular space in the upper center, which seems to be somewhat padded with wool yarn held down by embroidery stitching of no discernible design, the face of the piece gives the impression of having some sort of plan and intention in the arrangement of color blocks. But what the intention may have been is puzzling to the extreme (Emery 1953:38).

Describing a similar piece, Emery states:

The design, in its present state, is quite incomprehensible. There is lettering across either end and some suggestions of a border design. A few small roughly drawn and executed animal figures are discernable in line with the lettering and also down the sides. There may be other forms that could have been recognized before the colors faded. There is a hint of patchwork effect, but for the most part, seeking an idea behind the work is rather like trading out forms on a stained plaster wall—you can see practically anything if you look for it hard enough. One form which did not appear at all in the first piece described comes to seem almost the theme of this one. It is a small circle worked round and round so that the embroidery produces something like the effect of crochet (Emery 1953:42).

pieces by their accession numbers, they correspond to pieces MOIFA MNMA 9.54 28 M, MOIFA MNM B89/13, MOIFA MNM B89/48.



Figure 11. Policarpio Valencia Embroidery, MNM A 9.54.28. 1.5 m. by 1.40 m. Embroidery in cotton string dyed various colors and white. The embroidery's ground is a patchwork of fabric patches including old clothes. Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe. MNM A 9.54.28.

Moreover, both Emery's article and the conference paper by textile-expert Annin Barrett, as well as materials collected by E. Boyd suggest their awe upon viewing the embroideries, as well as their inability to assimilate Valencia's work (Emery 1953, Barrett 2000). Despite the fact that Boyd was a prime mover in both the categorization of New Mexico folk genres and the popularization of "Spanish Colonial Arts" for Anglo collectors, she never explicitly published any work on Valencia's embroideries. Meanwhile, Emery described one Valencia embroidery as "unlikely" and "even unbelievable" (Emery 1953:42).

Unable to assimilate Valencia's embroideries to established genres, Cerny and Mather described Valencia's embroidery as a personal statement or artistic vision and as "isolates" that "are clearly out of the mainstream and for which there is no easy explanation" (Cerny and Mather 1994:144, 145). I would prefer to conceptualize the transgressive elements of Valencia's works as "emergent" or perhaps "pre-emergent," in Raymond Williams sense of the terms. For Williams, such forms are in the process of their constitution in ongoing social relations and often are active and pressing but not yet fully articulated and cannot be confidently named (Williams 1977:121–127). One suspects their form would appear incomprehensible to those expert in traditional genres but not subject to the pressures of the emergent and premergent forms. This may explain why, in 2002, as a museum volunteer unrolled one of Valencia's embroideries for me to view, she speculated that the embroiderer might have been mentally ill.

Rather than insanity, I suggest that just like the social landscape that surrounded Valencia's home, Valencia's embroideries embody dialectical tension. In particular, (1) a transgressive style is manifest in a collage of industrial and traditional materials and an aesthetic that seems to defy design. In contrast, (2) the text of his messages often assert a world vision defined in a prior and distinctly Nuevomexicano order typified by Valencia's folk Catholicism and the villages' traditional agro-pastoral organization. In this way, Valencia deploys the most traditional of New Mexican folk genres such as the alabado and folk sayings. In other words, Valencia's work, manifests both halves of the dialectic evident in the New Mexican experience. In this sense, on one analytical horizon, Valencia's work exhibits something akin to

critical modernism. Valencia deploys two narratives that simultaneously conflict and strangely move in concert. Indeed, his embroideries' transgressive form has fueled the interests of generations of experts, and the assertion of traditional moral order provided the text that gave those same individuals a handle onto which they hold. Williams's identification of the creative, critical unification of two narratives is consistent with Richard Ellman and Charles Feidelson's sense of critical modernism.⁵² The modern

finds its character by confronting the past and including this confrontation within itself as part of a single total experience. It is more than a cultivation of immediacy, of free or fragmented awareness; it is the embodiment in current imagery of a situation always larger than the present, and as such it is also a containment of the resources and perils of the present by rediscovery of a relevant past. In this sense, modernism is synthetic in its very indeterminacy. Modern writers, working often without established models and bent on originality, have at the same time been classicists, custodians of language, communicators, traditionalists in their fashion (Ellman and Feidelson 1965: vii).

Similarly in Valencia's most dynamic work, narratives of tradition and modernity chatter and swirl with equal ferocity and verve. While still unable to articulate this aspect of Valencia's vision, Cerny and Mather's enjoyment of Valencia's playful and unpredictable form is palpable and here, I suspect, arises their actual admiration of his work. They write that there is nothing structured about the Valencia embroideries and marvel at how the lines of Spanish words come in at various angles and animal forms may punctuate a line. They state:

⁵² My use of Ellman and Feidelson's definition of critical modernism follows José Limón's application of this definition to a popular form of Mexican-American Dance in South Texas (Limón 1994:166).

The play of the visual and the literary woven together successfully imparts not only great visual stimulation but a sense that an unanswered riddle is about to be solved. The answer of the riddle seems to depend not only upon an understanding of the words embroidered in cheap household string, but also upon their relationship with the other forms of the textile: The animals and the larger shapes emerge as patches. Animals and words move together as the viewer distances himself from the textile. Valencia's textiles require active involvement from the viewer. There is a compulsion to circle the textile to go around and round it, viewing it from every angle to an effort to get at its inner meaning (Cerny and Mather 1994:146)

I submit that the riddle that these embroideries pose is that of an internally differentiated subjectivity that both (1) splits and merge and (2) harmonizes and argues among itself. The dialectical tension of these two narratives seems to be the source of these works' confounding power.

This synergetic juxtaposition expresses an emerging, to borrow another term from Raymond Williams, structure of feeling that reflects the social pressures evidenced in the northern New Mexican landscape. Such structures are the affective elements of consciousness and relationships such as characteristics of impulse, restraint and tone that cannot be simply reduced to a signifier. The notion of a structure of feeling is not intended to be an impermeable category that has only a causal relationship with fixed forms; rather it is thought as felt and feeling as thought (Williams 1977:132). At moments where the interlocking and tension between structures of feeling and the formal system of signs is explicit, we are still within the dimension of relatively fixed form, however at other moments, an explicit articulation of tension may not come or may never come. At these moments, the relation between the already articulate and the affective elements of consciousness are complex. Valencia, a creative subject firmly engaged in the world around him, would have felt such pressures. Moreover, this positing of a tension and interlocking brings the theory of culture into the space between the signifier and meaning (Stewart 1996:5). Williams says:

There are experiences to which the fixed forms do not speak at all, which indeed they do not recognize. There are mixed experiences, where the available meaning would convert part to all, or all to part. And even where form and response can be found to agree, without apparent difficulty, there can be qualifications, reservations, indications elsewhere: what the agreement seemed to settle but still sounding elsewhere (Williams 1977:130).

Such tension may manifest as an unease, a stress, a displacement, or a latency. Williams writes, "It is a kind of feeling and thinking which is indeed social and material, but each in an embryonic phase before it can become fully articulate and defined exchange" (Williams 1977:131). We may describe the form of Valencia's embroideries as emergent and expressive of not yet fully articulated structures of feeling.

For those that idealize traditional genres seemingly untouched by American culture and industrial society, this juxtaposition appears at a traditional genre's contamination by foreign elements. In her most influential work, *Popular Arts of Spanish New Mexico*, E. Boyd states that in the 20th century New Mexican colcha work declined in quality of design and color because of Anglo economic, social, and cultural penetration. She writes, "The decline of fine embroidery and good design and color in the colcha . . . coincided with the introduction of new materials and techniques by the so-called Anglo newcomers" (Boyd 1974:214). She complains of the introduction of Saxony and Germantown yarn, aniline dyes, new breeds of sheep that produced inferior wool as well as design elements borrowed from trade yardage, wallpaper, and oil cloth. Specifically, she describes three disappointing pieces that I suspect are the same Valencia embroideries described by Irene Emery. Boyd writes:

Three other specimens made use of salvaged materials. The first has a support pieced scraps of a Rio Grande blanket, and is crudely stitched all over with colored squares. The others are also of multicolored check or tile designs

worked on flour sacks. All three of these are course and asymmetrical in design, but exhibit the true colcha stitch (Boyd 1974:214).

Interestingly, if Boyd is here describing Valencia's work, her disappointment contrasts with the evidence of fascination that may be found in the Policarpio Valencia folder in the E. Boyd Collection of the New Mexico State Records Center and Archives (Policarpio Valencia Folder n.d.). In this folder are multiple sheets of notebook paper that show clear efforts and great time spent to decipher Valencia's handiwork.

Negating the Negation

In contrast with Boyd's decline thesis, I want to offer a more generous reading of Valencia's work. At the beginning of this chapter, I described Valencia's embroidery as the allegorical working through of the contradictions that transformed and reconstituted northern New Mexican experience over the course of Valencia's lifetime. I suggest that this dialectical shock is Valencia's pedagogical tool. Moreover, the power of dialectical shock is eloquently described in Fredric Jameson's description of a passage from Theodor W. Adorno's *philosophie de neuen Musik* (Homer 1998:18). Jameson writes:

What happens. . . for a fleeting instant we catch a glimpse of a unified world, of a universe in which discontinuous realities are nonetheless somehow implicated with each other and intertwined, no matter how remote they may at first have seemed; in which the reign of chance briefly refocuses into a network of cross relationships wherever the eye can reach, contingency temporarily transmuted into necessity. (Jameson 1971:8).

However, for Valencia, this reconstitution may owe more to an aesthetic system far older than Adorno's or Jameson's: the Catholic notion of mystery.

Influential Catholic theologians from Augustine to Thomas Aquinas argue that the internal truth of the mysteries of Christian faith can never be demonstrated

but miracles and prophecies show that faith is not without support or credibility within the created and visible reality (McBrien 1980:39, 41–42). In other words, God is knowable through history but also always remains hidden. In the 20th century, grappling with many of the same historical issues that faced Valencia, Catholic theologians explored such mysterious aspects of God's supposed power in an effort to recreate a sort of Christianity for a century of crises, poverty, war, and increased secularism. Following in the wake of influential theologian Catholic Karl Rahner, diverse theologians such as Gustavo Gutiérrez, Johannes Metz, and David Tracy each developed increasingly negative theologies.⁵³ Within this framework, God is to be approached in those concrete experiences that somehow represent God's seeming failure. According to the theologians, this God is the "underside" God, the "fool" God, the "irrational" God, the "malformed" God (Martinez 1997:365). Such a God appears in all those that have been rejected by society (Martinez 1997:365). Gaspar Martinez writes:

[Gutiérrez's, Metz's, and Tracy's] theologies, finally, come like Rahner's to focus and to recapitulate their enterprise around the question of God. Their retrieval of God as mystery is original first as concerns their approach from the experiences of non-identity encountered in concrete histories of concrete societies. Secondly, they are original in their mystical-prophetic language, anchoring their talk about God in the meditative-practical talk to God. Finally they are original in their being negative in their way of talking about God: through the "weak" categories of the memory of suffering, though "empty" gratuitousness, through the "fragments" of sheer excess and otherness (Martinez 1997:367).

⁵³ These three post-Karl Rahner theologies reflect the reach and difficulties of the Catholic Church. Gustavo Gutiérrez is the central figure in Latin America's liberation theology, Johannes Metz in Germany's political theology, and David Tracy is the United State's public theology. The three could be said to reflect and engage the particular circumstances of their homelands: Postcolonial Peru, postwar Germany, and postmodern America.

Gaspar Martinez describes this turn as a journey of intensification down the *via negatonis* toward the mystery of God and a progressive theological self-emptying (Martinez 1997:333).⁵⁴ In this model, God's apparent powerlessness is simultaneously proof of his power. In other words, people's seemingly contradictory experiences are finally reunited in an ultimate horizon defined by an all-encompassing God. Indeed, the ultimate example of this seemingly contradictory mystery is the bloody, humiliated and horribly human Christ crucified who is simultaneously divine and an expression of God's love.⁵⁵

Is it then a surprise that Policarpio Valencia could have been responding to the same pressures with a similar conversation with God, albeit stitched in household string? In a world that seemed to be spinning out of control and defied containment within traditional patterns of thought—where God seemed absent—Valencia's embroideries are an allegorical working through that (re)inscribed God power. In other words, in human pain and God's apparent absence is the redemptive power of Christ's resurrection and proof of God's love. In this sense, Christ's death and resurrection can be understood as Hegel's negation of the negation. Still, just as many have found solace in the contemplation of Christ's wounds, this *aufhebung*, or sublation, resists a simple closure. Rather, here, in dialectical shock, both positive and negative are present and here resides their power.

Thus, in the Summer of 2002, as I viewed his embroideries now housed at the MOIFA and later those housed at the MOSCA, I imagined Valencia in the twilight of his life sitting in his Española Valley home obsessively repeating the buttonhole stitch

⁵⁴ It is not a coincidence that Karl Rahner and post-Rahner theologians sometimes shares Hegel's language of negativity. Rahner was heavily influenced by Hegel's notions of matter and spirit (McBrien 1980:473) and presumably the related notions of positivity and negativity, and identity and non-identity.

⁵⁵ According to Gaspar Martinez, the Christian message is about one mystery, the mystery of God. In turn, God is revealed in Jesus Christ, the order of nature, historical events, prophets, the Apostles, the early Church, and through all the events, objects, and persons that constitute and shape human experience and history.

into the night and somehow making sense of a world that no longer appeared as he knew it was. I imagined the night he embroidered the text:

Isa y no allan contradiction pero quedan conbensidos que les dan buena lecion y a d(e) bera. Tanbien beran escriptos muy debertidos y de muy bien contenido. El que las lla no hay duda que quedar a conbensido. No del mundo figurabola dejarlo siempre rodar como abenido rodando que el tiempo se llegara ⁵⁶ (MOIFA MNM A.9.54.28).

Just as embroiderer Policarpio Valencia confronted the riddle of his community's transformation, continuity, and negation, in the 1970s fiction writer, poet, and essayist Jim Sagel struggled with similar themes in his literary efforts. Sagel, an Anglo American from Colorado, wrote about the Española Valley with an ethnographer's ear, a writer's sense of irony, and a damaged man's desire.

⁵⁶ There being no contradiction they will be convinced that they give good lessons as to be seen. Also are seen very diverting writings of very good contents. There is no doubt that he who heeds these will be convinced. The world, spinning like a ball, turns as it has revolved since time began.

THREE

Cuando Hablan los Enamorados



Figure 12. Divorce. A digital art piece by Teresa Archuleta.

THREE

Cuando Hablan los Enamorados

Conversan como si estuvieran
cambiando regalos,
cada palabra un obsequio de luz⁵⁷ (Sagel n.d.b:11).

In the spring of 2002, artist Teresa Archuleta and I spent days going through the 60-plus boxes of papers her husband, author Jim Sagel, left behind when he died. One afternoon, our discussion veered to issues of marriage. As a lesson to me—I had not yet been married a year—she offered to show me the love poems and notes of daily life that Sagel had written during their 28 years together.⁵⁸ She led me to her living room closet, and she asked me to reach for the small cardboard box on the top shelf and place it on her coffee table. As we sat on her living room couch, she lifted three bundles from the box. Each was wrapped in torn white cloth.

During their last years together, Archuleta and Sagel had grown distant, and Sagel's depression grew increasingly self-destructive. Shortly before Sagel's 1998 suicide, he asked Archuleta for a divorce. In pain and anger she tore up her wedding

⁵⁷ I borrowed the title of this short poem, "Cuando Hablan los Enamorados" for the title of this chapter. This title means, "When those in love talk."

They Converse as if they were
exchanging gifts,
each word a present of light.

⁵⁸ During the time of their marriage, Teresa Archuleta used the hyphenated name Teresa Archuleta-Sagel. However, she now uses the name Teresa Archuleta and I will refer to her as Teresa Archuleta.

dress. Decades of his poetic accounts of their promise to each other as well as the notes of daily life were carefully wrapped and stored in the shreds of a romance that ended tragically.

This chapter may be understood as a second effort to unpack that box—a box that contains the remnants of a failed love affair and successful creative partnership. However, I also view their romance in wider and more abstract terms. Sagel, an Anglo American from Colorado, moved to the Española Valley as a young adult and chose to live there for the remainder of his life. While living there, Sagel became one of the New Mexico's preeminent writers and was particularly well known for his bilingual short stories filled with local color and virtuosity in New Mexican Spanish. In the context of this body of work, I explore Sagel and Archuleta's relationship as part of Jim Sagel's wider New Mexico romance.

The research for this chapter included interviews with Archuleta that took place in the spring and summer of 2002, a comprehensive review of Sagel's published work, and short survey of his unpublished papers then in the possession of Teresa Archuleta.⁵⁹ This chapter examines Sagel's literary attempt to find spiritual wholeness and to ward off an experience of fragmentation that was too often embodied in the landscape that surrounded him. I situate his work in the social geography of the Española Valley; examine the themes of desire, wholeness, and fragmentation that marked his life and work; and unpack a personal mythology that provided him, for a time, an explicit and unifying resolution. In particular, I pay close attention to his unpublished and lesser known writings such as his UNM master's thesis "Rebuilt," a University of New Mexico at Los Alamos convocation speech titled "My Real Education," and the unpublished manuscripts "Corazonazos" and "Bisbee" (n.d.a, n.d.b, Sagel 1997c, 1976).

Throughout Sagel's work, one sees a repetition of oppositions that he saw in the landscape that surrounded his New Mexico home: Anglo versus Chicano, masculine versus feminine, and connection versus alienation. In that landscape, Sagel

⁵⁹ This collection of materials is now located at the Benson Latin American Collection at the University of Texas at Austin.

experienced moments where these oppositions were unified and others where their contradictions were laid bare. I suspect that Sagel's simultaneous focus on pain and beauty expressed his own visceral and embodied experiences. As a sufferer of depression since early childhood, Sagel had experienced periods of great productivity and periods of incapacity. A few years after Sagel and Archuleta were married, Sagel was hospitalized twice for his mental condition and once taken to the Española Emergency room for a suicide attempt. At that time, he was diagnosed and received intensive drug and electroshock therapy. Archuleta said Sagel was increasingly gripped by these swings in the 1990s.⁶⁰

Sagel's Oeuvre

Despite Sagel's depression, in the two decades that preceded his 1998 death, the author's literary production was immense. He published four collections of short stories, seven collections of poetry, two nonfiction books, three children's books, and one play. In particular, two literary awards served to bookend his career: Sagel's reputation was established when he was awarded the 1981 Premio Casa de las Américas for his short story collection *Tunomás Honey* and his life ended shortly after he won the 1997 Premio Literario Ciudad de San Sebastián for his play *Doña Refugio y su comadre*. He was also a columnist for the *Albuquerque Journal's* Santa Fe bureau, *New Mexico Magazine*, and other freelance regional, national, and international venues. He spent much of his time teaching at the University of New Mexico at Los Alamos and Northern New Mexico Community College. Included in his papers are several unpublished novels and numerous other manuscripts. His work joined that of a large number of intellectuals, both Nuevomexicano and Anglo American.

Hispanic New Mexicans have produced a long list of literature focused on their experience (Lomelí 2002). As you will see in the next chapter, a poet traveled with Don Juan de Oñate in the course of founding New Mexico that produced an epic

⁶⁰ Included among Sagel's papers are notebooks written while he was hospitalized.

poem Gaspar de Pérez de Villagr a's epic poem *Historia de la Nueva M xico* (Villagr a 1992). Following the American annexation and into the 20th century, this literary tradition was chiefly carried forward in a vibrant Spanish language press (Mel ndez 2002, 1997). In the second half of the 20th century Nuevomexicano literature joined a burgeoning national Chicano/a literature and many New Mexicans rose to prominence, including Fray Ang lico Ch vez, Sabine Ulibarr , Rudolfo Anaya, Orlando Romero, E. A. Mares, and Denise Ch vez. Meanwhile, Nuevomexicano intellectuals such as Francisco Lomel , Genaro M. Padilla, Tey Diana Rebolledo, A. Gabriel Mel ndez, Erlinda Gonz les-Berry, Enrique Lamadrid, Sylvia Rodr guez, and Ram n Guti rrez sought to develop a particular form of cultural studies that expressed the New Mexican experience (Lomel  et al. 2002).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, beginning in the 1880s with the work of writers such as Charles Lummis, an Anglo American fascination with New Mexico and New Mexicans arose in another popular literature (Guti rrez 2002, Mullin 2001, Trujillo 2000). The work of anthropologists outlined in the first chapter of this dissertation may be understood in this context. The most influential Anglo American writer concerned with Hispanic New Mexicans would be John Nichols and his New Mexico Trilogy including the fabulously popular *The Milagro Beanfield War* which reached a broad and national audience and was made into a major motion picture (Nichols 1981, 1978, 1974).⁶¹

As a popular writer, Sagel is perhaps best known for his celebration of the traditional culture of New Mexico's Hispanic elders. This aspect is particularly well illustrated by the essay collections *Dancing to Pay the Light Bill* (1992) and *Straight from the Heart* (Parsons and Sagel 1990). However, his best work, in my estimation, also deploys a complex and ambivalent analysis of younger Chicanos who live in a hybrid culture. These works include the short story collections *Tunom s Honey*, *Sabelotodo entiendelonada*, *El Santo queso/The Holy Cheese* (1983, 1988, 1990). For Sagel, this ambivalence divided culturally-whole *viejitos* from younger generations,

⁶¹ Sagel appeared in the film version of *The Milagro Beanfield War* as doctor and Archuleta appeared as a nurse (Archuleta personal communication 2005)

which were characterized by a distance from the Spanish language and Nuevomexicano culture as well as disproportionate rates of addiction and violence. For the Anglo American who first came to northern New Mexico as a young adult, both thematic concentrations required a profound ability to understand the issues of the community that surrounded him.

Of all the writers focused on New Mexico, Nichols parallels and contrasts with Sagel the most. Just as Sagel moved to Española, Nichols moved to Taos in search of an alternative to mainstream U.S. society. However, unlike Nichols, Sagel would spend the next 30 years submerged in New Mexican culture. In comparison, Chicanos almost entirely disappear from Nichols's New Mexico Trilogy by its third installment. Further, Nichols sometimes positions himself as a writer only incidentally concerned with New Mexicans. He stated in a 1982 interview that the *The Milagro Beanfield War* was universal and he already knew 85 to 90 percent of what the novel was about before he moved to Taos. (McIlvoy 1998:75).⁶² In contrast, Sagel was a student of New Mexican ways and his works always remained chiefly focused on New Mexican Hispanics. Along these lines, Sagel's colleague, Enrique Lamadrid, wrote in Sagel's obituary, "His finely tuned ethnographic ear captured the nuance and the complex subtleties of folk say and folk humor. His inspiration was the voice of others. He often said that his true talent was transcription, writing down what he heard all around him" (Lamadrid 1998).

⁶² While few criticize Sagel's literary oriented work as lacking a feel for New Mexican culture, I have heard people state that Nichols's characters sometimes do not act or talk like Northern New Mexicans. Nichols uses his claim to being a universal writer to disarm such criticism. He states:

One of the questions that people would often ask me and I keep trying to defeat is this — is people come up to me and say, "How could you know so much about our culture?" — this is often Spanish-speaking Chicano people — "if you only lived here for two and a half years?" There's other Chicanos that say, "Nichols don't know nothing, or he's full of shit, or he don't know nothing about Chicano culture" (McIlvoy 1998:75).

You Must Get Out

At the time of Sagel's and Nichol's move to the Española area, northern New Mexico was experiencing another influx of disaffected Anglo Americans in search of a rural lifestyle far from urban and industrial America—this time they were usually called "hippies." Like these other members of his generation, Sagel moved to northern New Mexico in search of salve for his alienation and the personal demons that left him dissatisfied with his life. The son of an eastern Colorado farming family of Prussian descent, Sagel grew up in the rural farming community of Fort Morgan. In the late 1960s, Sagel received an undergraduate degree in English from the University of Colorado. He first visited New Mexico in 1969 and moved to the Española Valley in 1970.⁶³

Initially, in the part of the Española Valley that is located just off the highway and away from the gaze of passing motorists, Sagel found a seemingly more whole way of life. Here are located the hearts of the centuries-old villages with their predominately adobe architecture. In the introduction to the collection of poems that was his 1976 thesis for a master's degree in English from the University of New Mexico, Sagel described his attempt to address the frustration and sense of powerlessness from the "intimate level of personal relationships to society's guilt over its ecological suicide" (Sagel 1976:iv). He writes:

The sense of magic and the supernatural which runs through the folktales of both the Spanish and Indians of northern New Mexico forms the basis for these poems. The material is not simply lifted from the sources but it is altered to shape "rebuilt" images that attempt to cope with the unreality of the late twentieth century (Sagel 1976:iv).

⁶³ Sagel's decision to come to New Mexico was based in part on a close friend's recently established residence in the northern New Mexican village of Nambe and receipt of a fellowship to enter graduate school at the University of New Mexico.

Perhaps the poem "It all begins when you draw lines" from his UNM thesis best describes this sense of alienation and suggests the proposed solution he would find in the culture of New Mexico's elders. He warns of the pending disaster of mainstream society; "the artifice will rain down on everyone here," and affirms, "you must get out" (Sagel 1976:6).

Still, Sagel's view is more complex than the simple idealization of New Mexico's traditional culture and turns to the problems he also saw in the landscape. Reflecting on this aspect of Sagel's work, Archuleta said Sagel loved Española's dual nature. She stated:

He liked the fact that this was an area that was fraught with problems. It was real. . . People put down Española, but you know what we are? We don't have the money to hide the problems that maybe Santa Fe does. We can't gentrify. Its right in your face and its ugly sometimes and its discouraging and you just want to scream. But you know what? It's humanity.

Ultimately, Sagel's work would find value in the condition of struggle and pain that he saw reflected in the social transformation and daily battle for economic survival that surrounded him.

Linda y Rara Brujería

Upon his arrival in New Mexico, Sagel's longing to "get out" would soon find an expressive focus in his love for an Española native, Teresa Archuleta. Shortly after his move, the 22-year-old Sagel began substitute teaching at Española High School where he met Archuleta, then an 18-year-old high school student. She was the youngest sibling in a close-knit family of six sisters and three brothers. Archuleta's father, Jacobo Archuleta, was a carpenter and, at the time of Teresa Archuleta's birth, her mother, Matilde Archuleta, cleaned dorm rooms in Los Alamos. Both Archuleta and Sagel described an immediate and intense love for the other. Sagel would later

write in an unpublished manuscript, "Our eyes collided for an instant and everyone else in B-Hall vanished," (Sagel n.d.a:5).

Like most other Nuevomexicanos in the Española Valley, the Archuletas are descendants of people who lived in New Mexico prior to the American annexation of the Southwest following the Mexican American War. Jacobo and Matilde Archuleta, along with some of their other children, moved to Española in the early 1940s from the remote northern village of Coyote. Several more children, including Teresa, were born in Española in the coming years. But by the time she met Sagel, Archuleta was already exhibiting wider Bohemian tendencies that set her apart from most other Española youth. Indeed, in an era when divisions between locals and hippies were sharply drawn, Teresa was known as "Sunflower" by her high school friends, and upon graduation, she planned to move to Greenwich Village to become a poet. Moreover, Teresa had already suffered profoundly life altering experiences. At the age of 16, she fought a year-long and nearly deadly bout with hepatitis. During that time she was in a coma for six weeks and administered the last rites twice. Her illness resulted in further health problems that would plague Archuleta for the rest of her life. In short, Archuleta was both an Española native and a person who sought an escape of her own.

In each other, Sagel and Archuleta found love and, simultaneously, the answers to the forces that threatened to stifle them. For Sagel, an Anglo outsider with hippie tendencies, his marriage to Archuleta would provide his entry to the Chicano New Mexican world that he loved. But like in any good romance, Archuleta would return Sagel's gaze. At the same instant that Sagel's love for Archuleta paralleled his love for her New Mexican ancestry, Archuleta wanted to escape the oppressive elements of her position as a Nuevomexicana. Sagel would later write in a poem with seeming reference to Archuleta:

¿Como que me pescaste
con una sóla mirada?
¡Qué ojos tan fuertes

que me hechizaron con su linda y rara
brujería (Sagel 1990:60)!⁶⁴

Archuleta and Sagel eloped only a month before she was to graduate from high school and a scant two weeks after their first conversation. They took a trip together to Mexico's Pacific coast and subsequently moved in together.⁶⁵ Sagel writes of the first days of their union:

There we lay as one body in a single sleeping bag as the Pacific lapped at our toes and cosigned our lifetime loan on the sand. The papers we drew up were the poems we wrote down with our eyes. And the letters—not letters home, for that was where we already were, but letters across time, cartas a nuestro niño, the baby we believed we had conceived under the comet that continued to glow over our heads. Our dinner was hard beans, cooked over a driftwood fire in the black clay pot your great-grandmother made in the previous century (Sagel n.d.b).

Thus began a romance that would provide them both with creative fodder for decades to come.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Archuleta emerged as one of the central figures in the renaissance of Rio Grande–style weaving.⁶⁶ Archuleta's maternal ancestors were

⁶⁴ How did you catch me
with only one look?
What strong eyes
bewitched with your beautiful and strange
magic.

⁶⁵ Sagel and Archuleta were married through the Catholic Church four years later. At that time, Sagel, raised a Lutheran, converted to Catholicism.

⁶⁶ Several scholars have studied Rio Grande and Chimayó weaving. In the Española area, Helen Lucero's and Suzanne Baizerman's work represents the most thorough and analyses (Baizerman 1987, Lucero 1986).

weavers and she grew up surrounded by weavings, but she did not learn to weave until the 1970s when she studied under the tutelage of the famed weaver, Doña Agueda Martinez, and Martinez's student, Ruth Vigil. She spent most of the early 1970s studying diverse weaving styles, but found her voice in her exploration of traditional Rio Grande weaving style and method. Nevertheless, she soon became bored of the limited traditional motifs and patterns and began to push the limits of the genre with high art aspirations and innovations inspired by the environment, her experiences, and her own poetry. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s she developed a weaving style that both paid homage to the conventions of the genre and innovated with new sensibilities in color and design. By 1990, with the possible exception of Chimayó weaver Irvin Trujillo, Archuleta was the most sought after New Mexican Hispanic weaver. Her mature style is perhaps best illustrated by her weaving "Too Many Paths and None Cross Yours" which combines desert colors, blue accents, and mountain symbols in a lyrical style inspired by her poetry. However, in this period, she maintained an alternative expression that seems to echo the modernist aesthetic of Policarpio Valencia. This critical edge is already evident in some of her experimental works. For instance, in a scathing feminist critique, Archuleta wove a woman with no mouth nailed to a cross in the manner of Christ. She titled the 1978 piece "Crista."

Sagel's love for Teresa Archuleta would open the doors for another relationship that would profoundly shape Sagel's life. After Jacobo Archuleta overcame the fact that the young stranger had eloped with his 18-year-old daughter, the two's relationship blossomed into almost that of a father and a son. Archuleta describes her father's love for the young man. In return, Sagel saw the strength and self reliance that he envisioned as a characteristic of New Mexico's elders. While participating in dominant regional economy through his work in Los Alamos, Jacobo Archuleta retained his foothold in the older, small-scale agricultural economy. Throughout his life, he maintained a small ranch near Coyote, as well as several Española-area land holdings which he farmed using both a tractor and a horse-drawn plow. Both Teresa Archuleta and her father Jacobo Archuleta would become particularly influential in Sagel's life. Indeed, in a University of New Mexico at Los

Alamos convocation speech delivered in the year before his death, Sagel described Jacobo Archuleta's mentorship—and not Sagel's years at the University of Colorado at Boulder or in graduate school at the University of New Mexico—as the source of Sagel's real education. Sagel said that among the lessons Jacobo Archuleta taught him were respect, the ability to adapt, a connection to the land, humor, and a sense of one's place in history. But most importantly, Sagel stated that his father-in-law taught him that "*hombres no se rajan*—A real man never gives up" (Sagel 1997c:3). Still, Sagel's admiration for Jacobo Archuleta and, in part, Archuleta's masculine strength must be understood as a product of both the old man's qualities and Sagel's desire.

Archuleta describes a more complex vision of her father. With Sagel, Archuleta shares an admiration for her father and she describes their relationship with great warmth. Archuleta attributes her strength and drive to assert herself to her father. She states, "It was my father who taught me to stand up and say what I needed and respect myself and to excel in that way." Still, some of her statements suggest a darker side to his strength — a side visited on her siblings rather than Archuleta herself. She states:

My father was the Law. My father was one strong son of a bitch that you did not dare, excuse my language, fuck around with. You know? I would not have dared disobey my father but I did it because I loved and respected him. I think some of my older brothers and sisters feared him because he was harsh.

In this way, Archuleta's vision of her father's strength is more ambivalent.

Sagel saw Jacobo Archuleta's strength expressed in the wider ways of northern New Mexico's elders. This vision has been most popularly described in the essays collected in *Dancing to Pay the Light Bill*.⁶⁷ With admiration, and with an

⁶⁷ For these essay portraits, Sagel states he interviewed the "*ancianos*" or elders of Hispanic, Native American, Anglo American, and Black cultures of New Mexico. Nevertheless, as suggested by the Spanish term *ancianos*, Sagel's paradigmatic elder seems to be Hispanic like his father-in-law (Sagel 1992:ix). Here, Sagel's career seems to echo the career of anthropologist Charles Briggs.

optimism absent from other works, Sagel writes that a sense of history permeates the everyday life of even the most assimilated Nuevomexicano. He writes, "Memories are long in this place where oral tradition is still alive in the stories swapped at the local post office and passed down through the generations over the kitchen table" (Sagel 1992:ix).

The personal element of Sagel's admiration for the older generation is perhaps better shown in much of his more serious literary works. The first poem, "Cuando el zacate crecía silvestre en los llanos" from his unpublished manuscript "Corazonazos" describes both Sagel's relationship with his father-in-law as well as his hunger for wholeness:

Dejo la fiesta para dirigirme a una milpa de alfalfa cortada.
Yo vendo unos ojos negros
la voz de la cantora retumba a lo lejos,
pero no estoy dispuesto a comprar.
Todo lo que quiero hacer es oler la fragante tristeza
de la alfalfa cortada,
el olor al final del verano que me lleva en la memoria
a un agosto hace veinte años
cuando el zacate ondulaba en el viento
como un maremoto amarillo
y encerramos mil *biles* bajo un sol abrasador —
usted, el viejo poderoso,
y yo, el escolar con una pipa in la boca.
Esa noche, mientras que usted afilaba su navaja
a la luz de una lámpara de aceite
y me platicaba de los tiempos
cuando el zacate crecía silvestre en los llanos,
me hundí en un sueño prehistórico.
En la mañana, me dolían todos los músculos del cuerpo

menos el corazón.

Al hacer café con el agua del riachuelo
y freír papas en una sartén negra,
usted despertó en mí un apetito tan profundo
que yo necesitaba dos lenguas sólo para expresarlo.

Al fin entendí lo que sacaría mi hambre (Sagel n.d.b:3–4).⁶⁸

Thus, according to Sagel, Jacobo Archuleta taught him that for which Sagel
hungered.

Sagel widened his admiration for Jacobo Archuleta to a larger vision of
transcendence that he saw as the strength of the New Mexican Chicano worldview. In

⁶⁸ An English version of "Cuando el zacate crecía en los llanos," under the title "When the
Zacate Grew Wild in the Llanos" is included in Sagel's English collection of poetry *Unexpected Turn*
(Sagel 1997d). The English text roughly parallels the Spanish version.

Leaving the fiesta, I walked through a field of freshly cut alfalfa. *Yo vendo unos ojos negros*,
the singer's voice reverberates in a distant box: "Black eyes for sale," but I'm not buying. All I
want to do is smell the brittle fragrance of the cut hay, the end of the summer smell of the last
cut that takes me twenty Augusts back to a time when the timothy hay undulated like a yellow
tidal wave in the wind and we stacked a thousand bales under the sweltering sun, and I—
powerful *viejo* and college refugee.

That evening as you sharpened your pocketknife in the glow of a kerosene lamp and told talks
in the tongue of your *abuelos* of the days when the *zacate* grew wild in the *llanos*, I collapsed
into a primitive sleep on a dusty *colchón*. When I awoke the following morning, you were
already boiling fresh coffee in the water you had carried up from the stream.

As you fried eggs and potatoes over the wood fire, I felt an appetite grow so big inside me, I
needed two languages to express it. *Al fin sabía lo que era el hambre*. At last I had found
what I was hungering for (Sagel 1997:4).

a passage describing his admiration for his father-in-law Jacobo Archuleta, Sagel wrote:

It is a way of being that is simultaneously independent and connected to family, community and the natural world. It's a sense of self-reliance that relies on the enigma of faith. It's the quintessentially New Mexican way of living with one's feet planted in two cultures and two times (Sagel 1997c:2).

In this way, Sagel's greatest admiration and hope is in his description of prior generations. He offers a vision of an explicitly masculine strength to confront the pain of modernity.

The Cultural Dynamics of Spanglish

Sagel's collection of essays *Dancing to Pay the Light Bill* also fiercely defends younger generations' hybrid and seemingly more fragmented way of being. His essays "¿Como se dice 'Big Mac' en español?: The Cultural Dynamics of 'Spanglish,'" and "Lowdown Laughs: The Española Joke," are particularly topical and defend area residents in the face of regional discourses that often disparage them (Sagel 1990). Many of his more literary-focused works are analyses of the complexities, ironies, and contributions of social and cultural transformation. For example, his short story collections, like *Tunomás Honey*, *Doña Refugio y su comadre*, *El santo queso*, *Sabelotodo entiendolenada*, explore, often with black humor, the hurt of social transformation (Sagel 1983, 1984, 1988, 1996)

This aspect of Sagel's writing is most clearly represented by his short story "El Americano," from *Tunomás Honey* (1983). This story focuses on a single character, Darryl Francis Galván, who embodies social transformation through his transgressive tendencies. Daryl was born feet first, he enjoyed wearing his mother's shoes, and suffered a number of humiliations that resulted from his own ineptitude and the ridicule of his family and community members. For instance, he capsizes a truck while he helps his grandfather and uncle bale hay and speaks mangled Spanish to the

amusement of his extended family. For his efforts, Darryl is nicknamed "El Americano."

The central issue narrated in Sagel's story is the push and pull between Darryl and his rural relatives, a tension that is indicative of Darryl's wider circumstances in the world. Sagel wrote, "el Darryl se preguntó por qué estaba aquí, cómo podía ser pariente de esta criatura embolada charlando sin cesar en mexicano, y por qué pasaba una gran parte de su vida sintiéndose perdida" (Sagel 1983:29).⁶⁹ Darryl's father cannot stand his son's predilection for books, education, and, in general, feminization. He sends Darryl to live on a ranch with his more rural relatives in order to harvest hay and, more importantly, teach Darryl to be a real man. Moreover, the ridicule of Darryl's relatives only fosters his own sense of superiority, which in turn further invites his relatives' punishment and ridicule: "Pero el Darryl era un muchacho tan travieso y tan malcriado (rodando en el suelo y chillando como un marrano lastimado cuando no le cumplían sus deseos), que casi no podía uno resistir la tentación de darle una buena en su cabeza de hueso" (Sagel 1983:29).⁷⁰

Yet, in this short story, Sagel is not ready to give up on this hybrid youth and the upcoming generation for which he stands. The last moments of the narrative are devoted to Darryl's realization of his own strength—a twisted strength that his relatives cannot understand. Taking a walk amidst the rural poverty and decay characteristic of his rural landscape, Darryl sees models for strength in both nature and the social detritus of consumer society. Sagel writes:

Andando por la basura, espantando a las gallinas y dando una patuda a una llanta gastada en su camino, fue hasta la puente que pasa por arriba del Rito de

⁶⁹ Darryl retreated inside his head and wondered. Why in the hell was he here anyway? How in the world could he possibly be related to this drunken creature chattering away in Spanish? And why ... why did he have to spend such a large part of his life feeling lost? (Sagel 1983:28).

⁷⁰ But Darryl was such a mischievous and difficult child (rolling on the floor and squealing like a wounded pig when he didn't get his way) that one could hardly resist the temptation to give him a good bop on his hard head (Sagel 1983:28).

los Cañones. Mirando pa'bajo, vido a los carros "requendos" y tirados y comenzó a gozaren las formas curiosas del metal arrunendo y mojososo.
 —Como yo—pensó—Torcido, pero allí siempre.
 Y levantando los ojos pa'rriba, miró el Cerro Perdenal con su cima lisa brillando en el sol.
 —Diferente, pero sólido—pensó (Sagel 1983 39–41).⁷¹

In this short story, Sagel struggles to find an alternative, if feminized, and negative strength within the hybridity of emerging New Mexico culture. This vision stands in stark contrast with the less complicated admiration (almost adulation) of community elders. Nevertheless, as we shall see later in this essay, Sagel's own identification may have fit more strongly with the more painful tales of hybridity and negativity

Jaime Sagel (Sah HELL) aka Jim Sagel (Say Guell)

Sagel's literary reputation is largely based on his short stories, especially his collection *Túnomas Honey* which won the 1981 Premio Casa de las Américas in Havana, Cuba. The prestigious honor catapulted him to the enviable position of a literary force to be reckoned with at the same time that it harmed Sagel's reputation beyond repair. Chicano writer Rolando Hinojosa won the award for his novel *Klail City y sus Alrededores* in 1976, and the judges believed that in awarding Sagel, they were recognizing another Chicano writer. In a subsequent interview Sagel stated that the judges simply assumed his was Chicano, and Archuleta similarly insists he never made false claims to a Chicano identity. I have found little evidence to suggest Sagel,

⁷¹ Tramping through the garbage, spooking the chickens, and kicking a worn tire in his path, Darryl made his way to the bridge that spans the Rito de los Cañones. Gazing down, he saw the wrecked junk cars and took pleasure in the unusual forms the rusted metal created.

"Just like me," he thought, "Twisted but tough."

And, lifting his eyes, he looked up to the Cerro Perdenal with its flattened summit sparkling in the sun.

"Different but solid," he reflected (Sagel 1983:38–40).

unlike some Anglo contemporaries, was explicitly engaged in a deliberate attempt to mask his actual ethnic/racial background.⁷²

For the remainder of his career, as Enrique Lamadrid wrote in Sagel's obituary, much of the buzz around Sagel in Chicano literary circles was a debate between whether he deserved a place in the Chicano canon or was an interloper cashing in on Chicano chic (Lamadrid 1998). Many would insist he does deserve such a place. For instance, in her documentary film *The Unexpected Turn of Jim Sagel*, filmmaker Pilar Rodríguez Aranda shows a litany of writers, including E. A. Mares, describing their admiration of Sagel's work.⁷³ Lamadrid, the Director of Chicano Studies at the University of New Mexico, assigns Sagel to his students and defends Sagel's work. Others are less certain of his place in Chicano literature. The leading Chicano literary critic of the 1980s, Juan Bruce-Novoa noted the incident as an interesting conundrum in an article that explores notion of a Chicano literary canon. He wrote:

Our inability to submit authors to a *prueba de sangre* before nominating them for canonization can lead to embarrassing *faux pas*. La Casa de las Américas

⁷² Perhaps the virulence of literary critics' distrust of Sagel result from the fact they had been burned before. Several Anglo authors who were Sagel's contemporaries deployed Spanish *nomes des plumes* in efforts to masquerade as Mexican American. For instance, as "Amado Muro," the Anglo American Chestor Seltzer, won fame as an early Chicano writer and his deception extended to false biographic statements. To add insult to injury, his work was included in an anthology of "Chicano" writers edited by influential scholar Americo Paredes and literary critic Raymund Paredes (Paredes and Paredes 1976). Seltzer's actual identity was only discovered after he died (Ortego y Gasca 1984). Similarly, as "Danny Santiago," Daniel James received fame for his *Famous All Over Town* (Santiago 1983). James was unmasked in an article by John Gregory Dunne in the *New York Review of Books* (Dunne 1984).

⁷³ Pilar Rodríguez Aranda's *Unexpected Turn of Jim Sagel* was screened at the 2003 Santa Fe Film Festival. Rodríguez knew Sagel since 1991, and the press kit for the film characterizes it as a "homage to a lost friend, a visual and aural play with Jim's poetry, and an interpretative retelling of his life."

thought it was honoring another Chicano when it granted an award to Jaime Sagel (Sah HELL) aka Jim Sagel (Say Guell). . . (Bruce-Novoa 1990:140).

Similarly, his status seems to be controversial in Española proper even though he was largely admired for his nuanced knowledge of the community and sometimes fierce defense of the Valley's residents. At the same time he was occasionally reviled as an Anglo interloper. Even Sagel's defenders, such as Puerto Rican scholar Virginia Dessus Colón cast the debate in similar terms. She argued that he deserved Chicano status because he was acculturated to Chicano culture and that his stories are representative in form and content of Chicano narrative (Dessus Colón 1987:1). In an attempt to resolve the problem, other Sagel supporters, such as Rodríguez Aranda place his work in the rather clumsy category of "Chicanesque" literature—works done about Chicanos but written by non-Chicanos.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, Sagel's own question of identity was framed in more complex terms than has been elaborated by either Dessus or Rodríguez Aranda.

I Am Somewhere Inside

In the course of their elopement, Sagel and Archuleta experienced a personal mythology that manifested a profound exchange. In Bisbee, Arizona, on their way to Mexico's Pacific coast, Sagel and Archuleta encountered visions of a 19th century incarnation of Sagel. These visions took on the form of a person that Sagel and Archuleta could see and hear. In those visions they learned that in a previous lifetime Sagel and Archuleta were lovers. Unable to accept their love, the father of Archuleta's

⁷⁴ According to Juan Bruce-Novoa, the category of Chicanesque literature was first coined by influential Chicano literary critics Francisco Lomelí and Donaldo Urioste for their 1976 annotated bibliography (Bruce-Novoa 1990:141, Lomelí and Urioste 1976). In an effort to illustrate the inadequacy of this term, Bruce-Novoa points out this category is not based on a thematic or cultural criteria through which real Chicano works could be distinguished from Chicanesque works, but instead on the blood of the author. He writes somewhat caustically that we need another category of "casi-casi" or "almost-almost" for those authors who cannot pass the blood test, but whose writing is culturally and ethnically Chicano (Bruce-Novoa 1990, 1983).

antecedent opposed their union and ultimately was killed by Sagel's prior incarnation.⁷⁵ The following account of their vision was drawn from interviews with Archuleta, an unpublished manuscript by Sagel titled "Bisbee," and a poem from Sagel's thesis similarly also entitled "Bisbee" (Sagel n.d.a, 1976).

Walking down a street in Bisbee they heard a noise coming from inside an abandoned building. Looking between the boards that covered the windows, Archuleta said, they saw a man crying, and both Archuleta and Sagel knew that man was Sagel. Sagel writes similarly:

Peering through the decaying facade of the building, we hear a moan and I am somewhere inside. I am dying while you weep beyond these iron bars. An ache older than the night writhes between us like a dark fish (n.d.a:25)

Archuleta said, "I looked at him and I said, 'Did you see that?' and he said, 'Yeah that was me in there.'" After walking for several more hours, they arrived at an old two- or three-story Victorian home. Sagel wrote:

But our walk is not over, not until I find your house. If I don't climb those steps again, we will never be able to go on. I know your father is waiting for me. The fish knife in my right hand, I slowly ascend the wooden steps that are attached to the rear of the white Victorian house. There is no other way to that room on the second floor, no longer any way out. I climb to the top, my spine creaking and my tongue thickening in my coppery mouth. There is the door. This time, I must open it. As you watch from below, I pull the door toward me and glimpse inside (Sagel n.d.a:25).

Archuleta narrated similarly:

⁷⁵ Archuleta considers herself to be psychic. As a child, she said she has had numerous other psychic experiences. Since the early 1990s, in addition to her artwork, Archuleta has done psychic readings.

I wouldn't go close to [the house]. I was trembling and I was saying let's leave and he was compelled to go up there. It was an outdoor staircase. He went up . . . and I can't tell you how long he was gone but when he came back, he said that he had killed my father from that lifetime with a fish knife. With a knife that had a fish or a fish knife. I don't remember. And consequently that's why he landed up in jail. . . . And he was hung in that lifetime.

Moreover, Archuleta told me that Sagel experienced a vision that evoked the murder of Archuleta's father. Sagel writes:

Later, I cannot tell you what I saw. Neither can I tell you at this moment what I am seeing, something blacker in the blackness of my own pupils regarding themselves in an instant outside of time that I will never be able to describe in the next instant that this instant has already become. All I can do is embrace you at the bottom of the steps as we start all over again (Sagel n.d.a:25).

Thus, Archuleta and Sagel saw that in a previous lifetime the two were lovers. In that lifetime Sagel both killed Archuleta's father and suffered. Archuleta attributes Sagel's ability to express Nuevomexicano pain in his writing to this prior suffering.

As if some uncanny structuralist allegory, in Bisbee, Sagel and Archuleta experienced a profound mimetic exchange that seemingly brought a resolution to their lives. Sagel envisioned a sense of magic and the supernatural in the New Mexican landscape (Sagel 1976:iv), a "*linda y rara brujería*" in the eyes of his wife (1990:60), and used both to face his personal demons and modernity. In Sagel, Teresa saw an escape that embodied her desire for something other than the working-class and irrevocably New Mexican lives of her parents. Nevertheless, Sagel and Archuleta's mutual romance was an act of transgression that served as a rejection of their parent's visions of social order. Within Sagel and Archuleta's mythology, Sagel murdered Archuleta's father. In this way, their past and present predicaments attained

a symmetry or resolution that affirmed the aspirations of their present lives. As Sagel wrote, "All I can do is embrace you at the bottom of the steps as we start all over again."

The Road Deadends

In the early 1990s, Jacobo Archuleta died and Sagel's bouts with bipolar disorder became more intense. He increasingly threw himself into his work, and his poetry took on an especially mournful quality. Archuleta said that he was in a chronic depression from 1991 or 1992 until his death. As time passed, and *los viejitos* died, Sagel was left only with the landscape and the doublewides that he found so distressing. His adopted home could no longer sustain the affirmative elements of his ambivalence. In a poem published in 1997, he wrote:

The old apple orchards are ripening with doublewides, their windows digitally lit by the Shopping Channel. How quickly I have come to live too long, I think, as I drive through the night like a man turning the pages of a family album filling up with pictures of the dead (Sagel 1997d:52).

The creative synergy that supported Sagel's New Mexico romance grew unbalanced as the traditional world of *los viejitos* faded to memory. The Española Valley's younger generation seemed ever more alienated from its ancestral lifestyle. In such a landscape negativity proliferated and the bargain struck in Sagel and Archuleta's elopement was overcome.

Meanwhile Archuleta was confronting her own visceral rejection of modernity: She became incapacitated by chemical and environmental illness from the early to mid-nineties. She said, "I couldn't leave the house too much because if I went out and someone was smoking or women had perfume on or there were fumes from a gas pump or a carpet that was new, it would affect me terribly." Moreover, Archuleta increasingly moved toward computer prints that now depicted a much harsher and more ambivalent world than her weavings. Even more that her early critical work

such as the weaving "Crista," the computer prints from this period express a modernist aesthetic with a critical—and often tortured—edge. In many pieces she deploys Catholic imagery, images that appear to be Archuleta herself, and a play with color and light that comment on both. For example, her piece, *A Little Pierced Heart*, an image is half filled by blending of redish-brown, blue, and white colors. In the other half of the piece, this form lyrically blends into a woman with a serene expression holding a *malacate* or spindle that pierces a sacred heart.

Like many artists and bohemians of his generation, Sagel came to New Mexico to find answers to what he believed to be wrong with the world and himself, but unlike many others, Sagel lived in a predominately Chicano New Mexico for the rest of his life. His writings were characterized by a vision of a culturally-whole and sensuously spiritual New Mexico haunted by the community's ever increasing incorporation into modernity and vice versa. But as the reality of community fragmentation, poverty, and negation attained irrefutable reality and idealized visions of New Mexico as a traditional culture outside modernity became increasingly tenuous the results were tragic and painful. He wrote:

The road deadends at our Lady of Sorrows Church
where a blue-robed Virgin beckons me to surrender
to the amnesia inside. Shifting at the last moment,
I turn toward the hills and search for your smile in
the rocks (1997d:37).

Whatever resolution Sagel had found had come undone. Similarly, a short poem that matches the love poem that opens this chapter is, perhaps, even more bleak:

Tu indiferencia es ensordecedora
Tu silencio ha roto los tímpanos
de me corazón (Sagel n.d.b:18)⁷⁶

In February of 1998, Sagel asked Archuleta for a divorce and said he was seeing another woman. On April 4, 1998, a Game and Fish Department officer found Sagel's body hanging from a tree. He hanged himself with his belt.

Commenting on the pain of this time, Archuleta created a digital piece of art titled "Divorce." Like many of her other computer art creations, this piece combines a deft use of color and form with an image of a woman that likely represents Archuleta and evokes a profound sense of isolation and sadness. With her back to the viewer and a hand against her cheek hiding her face, the woman stares at piece of paper that contains a heart broken in two. The isolated figure is surrounded in by primarily blue colors that are also a heart pierced with swords.

As understandings of negativity and Archuleta's art would suggest, Sagel's presence would continue to be felt in his absence. While I lived in Española, I met many people who knew Sagel and greatly missed him. Moreover, I often used Sagel's former office while working part time for the Adult Basic Education program at the University of New Mexico, Los Alamos. The custodian, an Española Valley man, told me that he sometimes felt drafts that they believed to be Sagel's presence. After years of similarly experiencing Sagel's continued presence and absence, in 2002, Archuleta would remarry and move to Colorado.

Sagel and Archuleta's story of life and death is not the only such story the Valley has to offer. In the next two chapters, I describe additional events where negativity proliferates: The symbolic and actual deconstruction of a statue devoted to

⁷⁶ This short poem translates:

Your indifference is deafening.
Your silence has broken the eardrums
of my heart.

the community's supposed founder, Don Juan de Oñate, and the horribly real murder of two area youths as they walked in the Valley's most revered ritual, the annual Good Friday pilgrimage to Chimayó.

FOUR
Remembering and Dismembering



Figure 13. The Statue of Oñate. Located at the Oñate Monument and Visitors Center near the Española Valley village of Alcalde, 1999.

FOUR

Remembering and Dismembering

Viva Oñate. ¡Viva!

Viva la historia de ese gran señor⁷⁷ (Espinoza and Espinoza 1996).

We cut his foot off on the darkest, coldest night of the year ("The Friends of Acoma" in a message to the *Albuquerque Journal* 1998).

The Life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself (Hegel 1977:19).

In this chapter, I contend that in dismembering a monumental equestrian statue of Don Juan de Oñate located in the Española Valley the statue cutters severed New Mexican identity into dialectical parts. However, when these pieces were put back together again, something new—something greater than the sum of its parts—burst disruptively forth. The following account of the statue's dismemberment relies primarily on the public representations surrounding these acts and are therefore drawn from news media accounts, as well as two messages mysteriously sent to the *Albuquerque Journal* and one sent to the *Santa Fe Reporter* (Calloway 1998,

⁷⁷ This quotation from Angel Espinoza's "El Corrido de Don Juan de Oñate" translates as:

Long live Oñate. Long Live!

Long live the history of this great man.

Calloway personal communication 1999, *Santa Fe Reporter* 1998).⁷⁸ When I examined these often divergent accounts surrounding this act of vandalism, one thing became clear; with the cutting of Oñate, irreconcilable contradictions within the icon poured out and could not be mastered. This chapter will explore the proliferating force that emerged from the empty space where Oñate's foot should have been.

The Cuartocentenario

The larger-than-life bronze statue of Don Juan de Oñate at the Oñate Monument and Visitors Center reinscribes the founding event of the Spanish colonization into the New Mexican landscape. As I stated in the introduction to this dissertation, in 1598, Oñate led a group of approximately 500 colonists, including 129 soldiers, into what would become the Española Valley. His expedition included Spaniards, other Europeans, mestizos, and Indians from what was then New Spain. Upon their arrival, the colonists occupied the current pueblo of San Juan and then founded a capital called San Gabriel across the Rio Grande River. San Gabriel was located at another pueblo called Yunque (Barrett 2002:47, Simmons 1993:111,117). Four hundred years later, San Juan Pueblo is located several miles north of Española, several miles across Highway 285 from the Oñate Monument and Visitors Center.

In 1998, the commemoration of the founding of the Spanish colony of Nuevo Mexico aroused great excitement and often focused on the conquistador. A man dressed in colonial-era Spanish costume emulated Oñate's expedition by walking from Zacatecas, Mexico to Española, and the song "Corrido de Juan de Oñate," by Española-based musician Angel Espinoza, was prominently featured on radio stations

⁷⁸ Journalist Larry Calloway of the *Journal's* Santa Fe Bureau sent me photocopies of the two notes sent to the *Journal*. The note to the *Reporter* was a response to their August 26, 1998 editorial "Where's the Foot?" that requested an interview with those who severed the statue's foot. While the *Albuquerque Journal* received a photo of the severed foot with the first note, no such proof was sent to the *Reporter*. However, this note is similar in style and tone and I strongly suspect it was written by the same person or people who wrote the first note. An editor's note accompanies the *Reporter's* publication of the note that also states the message was edited for space and to remove personal references (Calloway 1998, Calloway personal communication 1998, *Santa Fe Reporter* 1998).

such as Española's bilingual KDCE (pronounced ¿*Qué dice?*). Riding the wave of her Oñate corrido, Espinoza had a good year. She won eight awards at the 1998 Hispano Music Awards, held about 15 miles to the south of Española at Tesuque Pueblo's Camel Rock Casino. Among her awards, Espinoza received both Songwriter of the Year and Original Song of the Year for the Oñate ballad. With reference to Española's annual fiestas or festival that crowns a community member "Oñate," Espinoza sang:

Y cada año celebramos nuestra herencia
Y recordamos todos a Don Juan
Y dedicamos nuestras fiestas en su nombre
Y conservamos esta bella tradición⁷⁹
(Espinoza and Espinoza 1996).

Thus, Espinoza exhorted her listeners to remember the conquistador and his *caballeros*. Statues such as the one near Española also played a central role in the *cuartocentenario*, the 400th anniversary of Oñate's arrival in New Mexico and the advent of Spanish colonization. Further south, a similar statue was planned in Albuquerque. A lawyer and Oñate descendent from Madrid, Spain, by the name of Manuel Gullón de Oñate, was flown in to unveil yet another bronze statue in Madrid, New Mexico. Finally, inspired by the anniversary, a massive three-story statue of Oñate was planned for El Paso, Texas.

Partly in anticipation of the anniversary, the Oñate Monument and Visitors Center opened in the early 1990s near San Juan Pueblo and San Gabriel. The center's chief attraction is the monumental equestrian statue of Oñate. Longtime state senator and New Mexico power broker Emilio Naranjo introduced a bill into the state

⁷⁹ And every year we celebrate our heritage
And everybody remembers Don Juan
And we dedicate our fiestas in his name
And conserve this beautiful tradition.

legislature that proposed the center and statue.⁸⁰ The legislature approved the bill, the county donated the land, and funding was appropriated through tax bonds, grants, and the Small Business Bureau (García 1998:3). The center is now largely funded by the Rio Arriba County Commission, and in 1998, Estevan Arellano, a Nuevomexicano intellectual and artist served as its director. In coordination with the county commissioners, he planned a series of events to commemorate the cuartocentenario. However, the founding of the Spanish colony of New Mexico was soon commemorated in a way neither Arellano nor the commissioners intended.

During the final days of 1997 or first days of 1998, some people—it required more than one—drove to the Oñate Monument and Visitors Center, where they intentionally enacted a symbolic deconstruction of New Mexican Spanish identity. The chilling air of a northern New Mexican winter night must have bit them as they removed the power equipment from their vehicle somewhere along the side of State Highway 285. Their plan was well thought out. The state trooper who lived in the neighboring mobile home was out of town, and there was no one watching over the seemingly deserted center. They must have stood among the timbers that serve as pillars for the monument and looked at the larger-than-life bronze statue. Perhaps after a few moments of hesitation—if any—they began to cut off Oñate's right foot. They sent a message and a photo of the amputated foot to the *Albuquerque Journal's* northern bureau in Santa Fe. And as you will see later in this chapter, their decision to cut off the statue's foot was both strategic and metaphorically, as well as literally, cutting. The statue cutters were never caught and the foot was never found.

⁸⁰ Rio Arriba County and Española city politics have been decided at the Democratic party level because the vast majority of county and city voters are registered Democrats. No Republican has been elected to county or city office for nearly half of a century. Emilio Naranjo controlled Rio Arriba County politics from the 1950s to the early 1990s, and his ability to deliver votes earned him the respect of state and national Democrats. Since he was unseated from his the state senate in the early 1990s, no politician has unified Rio Arriba County politics or wielded comparable influence.

Dismembering Oñate

During the first week of January, a reporter from the *Albuquerque Journal* called Arellano at the Oñate Center and asked if somebody had cut off the statue's foot. Arellano replied with a pun, "I think somebody is pulling your leg," because he had seen the statue intact the previous day.⁸¹ Arellano told me, "When I looked from the building, believe me, it looked like nothing was wrong, but I might as well go all the way around to look at the sculpture. When I went, I saw right away [the foot] was missing!" That morning Larry Calloway of *the Albuquerque Journal's* northern bureau in Santa Fe received a message in the mail, along with a photo of the amputated foot. The first message they sent to the *Albuquerque Journal* read:

We invite you to visit the Oñate Distortion Museum and Visitor Center. Located eight miles north of Española. We took the liberty of removing Oñate's right foot on behalf of our brothers and sisters of Acoma Pueblo. This was done in commemoration of his 400th year anniversary acknowledging his unasked for exploration of our land. We will be melting his foot down and casting small medallions to be sold to those who are historically ignorant.

With cutting wit, the repressed memory of the Native Americans killed and oppressed in the process of colonization returned to haunt the monument. Indeed, the cutting-off of the statue's foot caused great excitement and captured the most coverage of any cuartocentenario event. Arellano was soon fielding calls from the *Dallas Morning News*, *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *People*

⁸¹ Disputing Estevan Arellano's statement that the statue was intact the day before he received a call from the *Albuquerque Journal*, the "Friends of Acoma" wrote that they cut the foot off days before anybody noticed. In their note to the *Santa Fe Reporter*, they stated, "Oñate came off Dec. 29—a full week before anybody noticed." In their second note to the *Albuquerque Journal* they stated that they made a previous effort to sever the foot but failed. In this note, they addressed Arellano personally, "Finally, to you who are so smug in your jobs at the Oñate center—this was our 2nd attempt. Had you looked at your beloved statue last spring you would have seen our effort."

magazine, and Mexican and Spanish newspapers. Arellano says he even was interviewed live by a radio station in Madrid, Spain.

Yet the wit of the statue's dismemberment demands further explanation, and this essay seeks to meet the exhortations of the statue cutters themselves. In their second message to the *Albuquerque Journal*, the "friends of Acoma" wrote, "We see no glory in celebrating Oñate's fourth centennial and we do not want our faces rubbed in it. If you must speak of his expedition, speak the truth in all its entirety [underline included in the original]." In particular, they are referring to events that occurred in December and January of 1598.

During the first cold day of December, a nephew of Oñate named Juan de Zaldívar and a small force of 31 men arrived at the base of the 357-foot-tall mesa that is the site of Acoma Pueblo (Knaut 1995:38–40, Simmons 1991:135). On a search for the sea, the colonists had fallen short of the stores they would need for the trip. Eight men lead by Captain Gerónimo Márquez visited the Acoma Pueblo and demanded supplies (Knaut 1995:39–40, McGeagh 1990:34, Simmons 1993:135–136, Villagrà 1992:199–208). At one point, the colonists took several of the pueblo's leaders hostage. Although the Pueblos had judged the Spaniards' demands too great, the colonists nevertheless decided to enter the village.

Leaving three men to guard the horses, Zaldívar and fourteen other colonists and several indigenous servants climbed the difficult trail to the village and eventually dispersed. When they were separated from one another, the villagers attacked, and the large majority of the Spaniards, including Zaldívar, were killed. At the end of the brief battle, Zaldívar, two of his captains, eight soldiers, and two servants were dead.

Fearing the possibility of a widespread "revolt," Oñate conducted judicial proceedings to decide the "just" course of action. Citing the Spanish documents, Andrew L. Knaut writes, "The junta concluded unanimously that 'if the Indians were not punished . . . they would form a league, rebel, and destroy us easily'" (Knaut 1995:42). Upon the court's verdict against the Pueblos' village, Oñate declared a "war by blood and fire" against the Pueblos at Acoma (McGeagh 1990:35). On January 21,

1599, Juan de Zaldívar's young brother, Vicente Zaldívar, led a force of 70 men armed with two cannons in an attack on the pueblo. At this time, the outcome of the upcoming battle was in great doubt for the Spanish, as they were well outnumbered and Acoma Pueblo occupied an extremely defensible position. In 1610, the battle was glorified as the finale of Gaspar de Pérez de Villagrà's epic poem *Historia de la Nueva México* (Villagrà 1992:215–302). In somewhat archaic Spanish, Villagrà painted a grisly scene:

No tienden, apañando, con más ayre
La corba hoz los diestros segadores
Quando apriessa añudan sobre el brazo
Vna y otra manada y assí, juntos
Lebantan por mil partes sus gavillas,
Como estos bravos y altos combatientes,
Que, en vn grande ribazo tropezando
De cuerpos ya difuntos, no cessaban
De derramar apriessa grande suma
De fresca y roja sangre, con que estaba
Por vna y otra parte todo el muro
Bañado y sangrentado, sin que cosa
Quedase que teñida no estuviesse⁸² (Villagrà 1992:267).

⁸² Miguel Encinias, Alfred Rodríguez, and Joseph P Sánchez translate Pérez de Villagrà as saying:

No skillful reapers do more swiftly wield.
Their curving sickles, flashing rapidly,
Then they do quickly knot within their arms
One handful after other and do so
Set up their sheaves in a thousand places,
As these brave, haughty combatants
Who, stumbling upon a lofty mound

In the hard fought battle (some would call it a massacre), 800 Pueblos were killed, no colonists died, and only a few colonists were wounded (Knaut 1995:45). The approximately 500 surviving Pueblos were taken prisoner and sent to San Juan, where they arrived on February 9, 1599 (Knaut 1995:45).

At San Juan, Oñate presided over a trial of the survivors; his sentences for their supposed crime of rebellion and murder of Juan de Zaldívar, ten Spaniards, and two servants were stiff (Knaut 1995:46, McGeagh 1990:37, Simmons 1993:144–146). Oñate ruled the children under 12 to be free of guilt. He placed the girls in the charge of Fray Alonso Martínez and the boys under the charge of Vicente de Zaldívar for a Christian upbringing. Sixty of the small girls were later sent to Mexico City for parceling among the convents. Women over the age of 12 were condemned to 20 years of personal servitude. Young men between 12 and 25 years were sentenced to 25 years of personal servitude. Two Hopis captured in the fight were sentenced to have their right hands cut off and to be set free to take home news of their punishment. Finally, the men over the age of 25 were sentenced to 25 years of servitude and *to have a foot cut off*. According to Simmons, 24 people suffered this punishment. For maximum effect and as an example of the dangers of rebellion this sentence was carried out over several days in nearby pueblos. Simmons wrote, "Oñate wanted to nail down a message—that resisting the Spaniards by arms brought swift and iron-fisted retaliation" (Simmons 1991:146). However, in Simmons's words the Acomas proved more resilient and slippery than Oñate imagined. Within a year or two most of them escaped their servitude, fled back to the rock, and rebuilt the pueblo (Simmons 1991:146).

Of bodies now dead, never ceased
To shed apace a might sum
Of fresh red blood, by which the wall
Was everywhere, upon all sides,
Bathed and ensanguined, and nothing
Remained that was not sprent with it

Today, the village of Acoma endures and this fact is a powerful counterpoint to positive assertions of colonization and progress. Acoma's presence evokes the absence of so many other pueblos. Between 1598 and 1680, Pueblo settlements declined from 81 to 31. Similarly, between 1598 and 1660 the numbers of Pueblos declined from 60,000 to around 17,000 (Barrett 2002:64–64).⁸³ With reference to Acoma, the statue of Oñate exemplifies San Juan native and anthropologist Alfonso Ortiz's criticism of mainstream history. He states that history often enshrines the worst images ever visited on native peoples and, in this sense, has been the handmaiden of conquest and assimilation (Ortiz 1988:9). Echoing such criticism, the foot-cutters wrote in their second message to the *Albuquerque Journal*, "This land was ours long ago before the Conquistadors, Mexicans, or Anglos came here. We know the history of this place before their time and we have not forgotten it since their arrival." They proclaimed that, unlike the Oñate Center's director, they "are not taken in by Eurocentric history/thinking." They further elaborated on the ongoing significance of Oñate and used this icon to illustrate the wider brutality of colonization. They wrote:

From the beginning our goal has been about acknowledging the truth. We visited the museum three years ago. No one attempted to talk to us or show us around. The one brochure about Oñate said only to look at the positive aspects of his expedition. What about our culture, our way of life? His expedition destroyed it. Catholicism is not the end all of all religions. Who was forced to work the mines, forced to plant the crops, and forced to build the missions?

In another message to the *Santa Fe Reporter*, the Friends of Acoma wrote:

⁸³ Elinore Barrett's figure of 17,000 refers to baptized residents of a total of 46 pueblos and includes Zuni and Hopi populations. While this number refers to baptized Pueblos, it likely counts the vast majority of Pueblos.

New Mexico was poised for a grand celebration of the cuatrocenenario and we could not let that happen without voicing our existence. Outside of "Indian art" and "gaming," we have become an invisible people, even to ourselves. Our Hispanic brothers have forgotten on whose land they dwell. We have been here for thousands of years and there was plenty to share, but they claimed it all in the name of some faceless King or God, claiming it as theirs. Our people had learned not to overpopulate, not to overuse the land. We lived within our needs, Since then, all newcomers have taken from us and told us what to believe and how to think. Many of our people have forgotten how to live. Our actions were to redirect the thinking of those who have forgotten us (*Santa Fe Reporter* 1998).

In this way, the present act of vandalism evokes Oñate's brutal sentence and a wider history, and the icon of a heroic Oñate is deconstructed by both the statue cutters and the Native Americans his soldiers long ago punished and killed.

From their statements, it would seem that the statue cutters believed the statue's supporters to be mere dupes deluded by a Eurocentric vision. However, below, I will attempt to show, at least on one horizon, that the significance of the Oñate icon for many Nuevomexicano supporters may be found in Nuevomexicanos' own subjugation to the most powerful of the three major ethnic/racial groups in New Mexico, Anglos.

Commemorating Oñate

Richard Flores's *Remembering the Alamo: Memory, Modernity, and the Master Symbol* explores the significance and meaning of San Antonio's Alamo as a symbol (Flores 2002). His analysis offers several lessons that are useful for our examination of the Oñate icon. On the one hand, the Alamo is both the location of an 1836 siege of Texan rebels by Mexican government army regulars and the site of the Texan defenders' deaths and the deaths of a much larger number of Mexican troops. However, Flores is more concerned with the way "the Alamo" grew in significance in

the late 19th century and early 20th century into an icon that both shaped and shapes social relations between Anglos and Mexican Americans. Engaging the work of James Fernandez, Terrence Turner, and Clifford Geertz, Flores shows that the symbolic is not merely reflective or passive. Rather it is also assertive, and symbols through practice and their association with metaphor, produce meaning and therefore shape social identities. Citing Geertz, Flores states that symbols are both "models of" and "models for" a social order (Flores 2002:156, Geertz 1973).

Strongly influenced by critical theory, Flores finds support for his views in a work that precedes the writings of anthropologists. He cites Karl Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (Marx 1978). In this text Marx notes that 19th century revolutionaries and demagogues used Roman costume and Roman phrases to set up modern bourgeois society (Marx 1978:595). Here Marx uses the famous and apt metaphor that the tradition of dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. Similarly, symbols such as the Alamo and Oñate have more to do with current struggles than the times of their referent. Marx wrote:

The awakening of the dead in those revolutions therefore served the purpose of glorifying the new struggles, not of parodying the old, of magnifying the given task in imagination, not of taking flight from their solution in reality, of finding once more the spirit of revolution, not of making its ghost walk again (Marx 1978:596).

Along these lines, Flores shows that the Alamo was enshrined as a monument late in the 19th century and early 20th century rather than its 1836.

A parallel analysis of the Oñate statue may be made. The Oñate icon is also shaped by social relations and has more to do with the 20th century than the colonial period. Oñate, like the Alamo, did not immediately emerge as a full-blown icon. Rather, he is the cumulative effect of multiple representations that have etched him into cultural memory. To highlight this point, conquistadors such as Oñate are rarely viewed as symbols of national identity in Mexico, nor are there monuments to them.

As a result of New Mexico's contrasting conquistador fixation, a large number of New Mexican scholars are preoccupied with many New Mexicans' Spanish identification and often explain it in the special context of the Southwest and New Mexicans' residence in an Anglo American nation.

Recent works such as A. Gabriel Meléndez's *So All Is Not Lost: The Poetics and Print in Nuevomexicano Communities, 1834–1958* and Charles Montgomery's *Spanish Redemption: Heritage, Power, and Loss on New Mexico's Upper Rio Grande* powerfully historicize the creation of New Mexican Spanish identifications (Meléndez 1997, Montgomery 2002). In the social sciences, the work of sociologist Phillip B. Gonzáles offers the most sustained analysis. Along these lines, over a series of articles and books that span the 1980s and 1990s, Gonzáles argues that New Mexican "Spanish" or "Spanish-American" identity has two chief manifestations (Gonzáles 2001, 1997a, 1997b, 1993, 1986). Moreover, identifications are constituted in a discursive field long dominated by Anglo America and thus both opposes and mimics Anglo American nationalist narratives.

The first Spanish identification that Gonzáles described rose to prominence in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He views it as a protest-oriented identity that confronted Anglo American prejudice by providing the ideological ammunition to argue that no one had the right to subjugate Nuevomexicanos in a homeland they, as Spaniards, colonized first (Gonzáles 2001, 1997, 1993, 1986). A second more conservative version of Spanish American identity arose during the Great Depression and in the course of the New Deal. Gonzáles wrote:

Rather than confront prejudice and discrimination, [the more conservative form of Spanish identification's] interest lay more in emphasizing the core commonalities between Spanish American culture and American culture. Both, for example, were conquering cultures. Thus, in places of a poverty-stricken people, the icons now favored elite conquistadors (Gonzáles 1997b:125).

This is the aspect of the statue—"both were conquering cultures"—that so many find disturbing.

In this context, it seems that both forms of Spanish identification and the desire for an Oñate statue follows from Nuevomexicanos' incorporation into the regional/national economy at the bottom rungs and their struggle to retain their community's integrity against the forces that seem intent on erasing this long-term Hispanic history in the American Southwest. Moreover, this nostalgia is constituted in a discursive field long dominated by Anglo America and thus both opposes and mimics Anglo American nationalist narratives. Most Nuevomexicanos are painfully aware that the United States is imagined as an Anglo American nation and that the American nation's history "began with the Mayflower," and that "Mexicans" are people located to the south of the border. In this way, the dominant American iconography of the American West (for example, cowboys and Indians) represses the reality of "Mexicans" or "Spaniards" claims to the Southwest. Thus, in revering Oñate and the other Spanish- and Mexican-era colonists and settlers, these Nuevomexicanos transgress the dominant political imagining of the United States as an Anglo (not Hispanic) nation.

This oppositional aspect of Spanish American identity is deployed in one New Mexican intellectual's assertions. Historian Joseph P. Sánchez traces the negative stereotypes of U.S. Latinos to the colonial-era depictions of Spaniards as blood thirsty and morally deficient (Sánchez 1990). Sánchez wrote, "The main premise upon which the Black Legend rested was the fear, envy, and dislike—or even hatred—of Spain by those nation-states that clashed with Spanish power shortly after Columbus's New World discoveries" (Sánchez 1990:1). Thus in revering Oñate and the other Spanish- and Mexican-era colonists and settlers, these Nuevomexicanos assert a claim to the Southwest that preceded that of the Anglo American "pioneers" who supposedly settled the West. They are also asserting an icon and view of history that flies in the face of at least one sort of Anglo American prejudice.

Referencing work by Marita Sturken, Richard Flores considers "cultural memory" as an aspect of memory that exists outside of official discourses yet is

entangled with them (Flores 2002:17, Sturken 1997:5). In his influential article "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," Pierre Nora asserted that memory is often located in specific sites such as monuments. These are sites where "memory crystallizes and secretes itself" (1989:7). Following Nora and Flores, for some Nuevomexicanos, statues of Oñate are sites where their Spanish past is (re)inscribed or (re)faced in the landscape and the reality of their own subjugation is momentarily repressed. Exhibiting this oppositional attitude, Arellano said, "All this statue represents is that this area—for good or bad, whatever—it was colonized by Spain and here is our reminder [he pounds the table as if slamming down evidence] that the colony was led by this man, Juan de Oñate." Thus the performance of this Spanish colonial past is constituted in Nuevomexicanos' displacement in the face of seemingly ever-increasing Anglo power.

In sum, in these statues many Nuevomexicanos preserve a sense of historical continuity with their past, and the troubled reality of the present is momentarily repressed. Nevertheless, as Flores stated, "Memory is not only forgetful, in attempting to preserve the past, it selectively silences those elements that attempt to rupture the quiet" (Flores 2002:20). In this way, Oñate momentarily represses the reality of a decidedly nonvictorious present. It seems that Arellano might acknowledge such an argument. He said, "We value [the Oñate statue] because we have very little left about us here. We have been here for such a long time. [The statue is] something we can at least identify and say that's ours." However, as we have already seen, remembering Spanish origins is not only an act of remembering, it is also an act of forgetting—an act of negation.

Shaking the Family Tree

Narratives of New Mexican identity are far more complex than simple assertions of Spanish ancestry. In both phenotype and genotype, most Nuevomexicanos are mestizo descendants of both Europeans and Native Americans, and this statue is haunted by the Native American ancestry that is elided by nostalgia for a Spanish past. The Friends of Acoma recognize this racial mixture or *mestizaje*.

They wrote in the last sentence of their note to the *Santa Fe Reporter*, "And, finally to those of you who delude yourselves into believing you are of pure Spanish blood, shake that family tree and you will find many limbs with pueblo roots" (*Santa Fe Reporter* 1998). Moreover, as the work of Flores and Marx suggests, any claims to Spanish identity or pure descent from conquistadors must be understood as identity claims that speak more to current circumstances than to some sort of historical or biological reality.

Two works, when deployed in conjunction, masterfully eliminate any claims to pure Spanish "blood" and heritage in a simple sense: Gonzáles's article "The Political Construction of Latino Nomenclatures in Twentieth-Century New Mexico" and historian Adrian Bustamante's "'The Matter Was Never Resolved': The *Casta* System in Colonial New Mexico, 1693–1823" (Bustamante 1991, Gonzáles 1993). Gonzáles's article reviews the rise and fall of terms such as Spanish, Chicano, Hispanic, and Mexicano over the course of the past century. His essay illustrates the social and historical construction of each of these terms and the politics of their claims to specific heritages. He describes the era when he wrote the article (the early 1990s) as a time to press specific claims and political perspectives.

While Gonzáles elaborates the social and historical construction of New Mexican identity/identities, Bustamante's article destroys the often heard claims to New Mexicans' supposedly pure Spanish ancestry. In his article, Bustamante illustrates New Mexicans' descent from a diverse, in both ethnic and racial terms, colonial population (Bustamante 1991). The article describes a colonial society of complex *castas*, where only a limited portion of the population called itself *español* or Spanish. However, others, eager to move up the prestige ladder, assumed the racial/ethnic status of those above them. According to Bustamante's description, only a very small portion of the population could legitimately belong to the higher rungs of the ethnic/racial ladder in interior Mexico, much less pass for Spanish in Spain. Deploying "scientific" racial categories, Bustamante stated:

The castas, and even some who were or called themselves españoles, practiced exogamy so that by the end of the Spanish period these inter-racial marriages and liaisons had formed a genetically homogenous population from the three great trunks of humanity—the Caucasoid, the Mongoloid, and the Negroid races" (Bustamante 1991:162).

In keeping with Gonzáles's notion of name pluralism, Bustamante concludes his article by relating a short quote by 90-year-old Seferina Quintana of Pecos that he believes may be an expression of the New Mexican collective unconscious's recognition of this complex history. She said, "The matter was never resolved. Some say we are Spanish, others that we are Indians, and others that we are Mexican" (Bustamante 1991:163).

Moreover, I find the presence of this Mexican and indigenous ancestry even in its absence in Joseph P. Sánchez's tracing of anti-Hispanic bias to the Black Legend. After all, "Spanish" is, historically, the polite term for U.S. Latinos—as in, "She is a nice Spanish girl" as opposed to "she is a dirty Mexican."⁸⁴ Only an extraordinary act of elision could cause Sánchez to ignore such widespread experience and find "the source" of anti-Hispanic stereotypes in U.S. Latinos' Spanish ancestry. Within Sánchez's own text one can find numerous examples of, at least equally, pejorative

⁸⁴ My assertion that "Spanish" is a polite term for U.S. Latinos is supported by my own experiences. First, this situation exists in New Mexico. In polite and racially/ethnically mixed circumstances, Anglos and Native Americans usually refer to Nuevomexicanos as "Spanish." I have heard that in private that often say "Mexican." Second, I have mentioned this tendency in courses I have taught at the University of New Mexico—Los Alamos, The University of Texas at Austin, and Colorado College. At each of these colleges, both Anglo and Hispanic students said they see a similar distinction. Third, this distinction certainly holds true for central Washington State, where I grew up. This area is a major agricultural area and the area agricultural industry has utilized Mexican and Mexican American labor on a large scale since the Second World War. Today, central Washington maintains a large and growing Mexican descent population that has reached a plurality and even a majority in some areas. Anglos in these areas, especially from older generations, refer to Hispanics as "Spanish" when intending to be polite.

descriptions of Nuevomexicanos based on their indigenous and Mexican blood. For example, Sánchez wrote:

In his most distinguished work *The Great Plains*, professor [Walter Prescott] Webb contributed more to the Black Legend's longevity. The Spanish "failure" on the Great Plains is attributed partly to the Spanish character on the frontiers of Texas and New Mexico. Webb wrote that the cause was miscegenation with the Mexican Indian "whose blood," when compared with that of the Plains Indian, was "ditch water" (Sánchez 1990:9).

Thus Spanish, Mexican, indigenous, and other sorts of Nuevomexicano identification are intertwined in a complimentary and contradictory web of mutual definition.

Indeed, whispers of inauthenticity of Spanish ancestry run back to the time before Oñate and his conquistadors journeyed north and indicted the colonists themselves. Martha Menchaca finds that Juan de Oñate recruited from different regions of Mexico and his colonists included *peninsulares* (Spaniards born in Spain), *criollos* (Spaniards born in the New World), mestizos, Indians, and approximately five Blacks (Menchaca 2002:83). Colonial authorities paid close attention to the sorts of men and women who filled Oñate's ranks and required him to register all people of mestizo blood. These authorities also barred him from taking "negro slaves, who mistreat the Indians and whom they fear for the harm they cause them," (quoted in Knaut 1995:32).

Even Oñate's own ethnic/racial ancestry was in doubt due to allegations that he was a mestizo assuming the position of a criollo. The poet Villagrà investigated these rumors and wrote that Oñate's mother could not have been the peninsular woman who was recorded as his mother because that woman lived in Spain, not Mexico, at the time of his birth (Cornish 1917, Menchaca 2002:82). Instead, Villagrà claimed that on Oñate's mother's side, Oñate was a descendant of Moctezuma II (Menchaca 2002:82, Villagrà 1933:73). Further, the conquistador had married into indigenous bloodlines. Oñate's wife, Doña Isabel de Tolosa Cortés Moctezuma was

granddaughter of both Hernán Cortés and Emperor Moctezuma II (Chipman 1977, Cornish 1917, Menchaca 2002:82). When we view Oñate as the product of European-indigenous intermingling, he becomes a far more complex figure. Such a complexity may be seen in the vandalized statue.

Remembering Oñate

In dismembering Oñate, the Friends of Acoma severed the statue into dialectical parts that cannot be simply put back together. In other words, from the empty space where Oñate's foot should have been emerged contradictions that could not be recuperated by a more transcendent system. Further, although the Friends of Acoma seemed proud with the result of their work, they also hinted at the potential for reconciliation. They wrote in the second note to the *Journal*, "In respect to the foot, dialogue is dangerous, but we feel a response is the proper thing to do. It must be admitted that we are proud of our actions, not so much the action itself, but the resulting education it caused."

Today, as Bustamante has shown, Nuevomexicanos are largely mestizo descendants of both European and Native Americans, and this statue is haunted by the Native American ancestry that is erased by nostalgia for a Spanish past. New Mexico community organizer and activist Maria Varela told me that her teenage daughter and her friends, Esther Archuleta and Raisa Morales, were approached by an Española organization that sought to make a film about Oñate. The film was intended to raise Hispanic youths' self esteem, but Varela's daughter as well as Archuleta and Morales told the film makers that "they saw little or nothing in Oñate's life that was relative to theirs. He was Spanish. They viewed themselves as Mexican." Furthermore, Varela and other women thought of an alternative way to respond to the food-cutting crises. She said:

What several of us women thought the boys should have done was made a cast of the cut off foot, put it on a velvet pillow, made a horseback pilgrimage to Laguna and Acoma, and presented it to the elders with apologies. Then we

realized that we were the ones who should have done it, because it probably would have been accepted much better from the women, as the women represent the *mestizo*-izing of *la raza* in New Mexico.

These women sought to confront and embrace the force that poured out of the dismembered statue.

Indeed, in New Mexico—like most other places—the dynamics of domination and subjugation continually haunt one another. This foot's amputation requires Nuevomexicanos to remember the complexities and ugliness of their own history as well as its beauty. Arellano, a man who is proud to be descended from both "Basques and Apaches," seems to open the door to this in his qualified support of the statue. He said:

Oñate wasn't the best role model, but at least we admit we are humans, and we make mistakes . . . I never heard anybody say that Oñate was God or make him into a saint. But, he probably represented the best and worst in all human beings, and that is probably why people say, "Well, let's have a statue about Oñate just to remind us who we are."

Varela is more explicit. She said:

[Nuevomexicanos] are all victims of internalized racism and colonialism. *La raza* also represents the fusion of the western and eastern, northern and southern worlds. The good, the bad, the beauty, and ugly of all that. When we can be accepting and forgive ourselves for our bad and ugly, we can be confident (and not defensive nor romantic) about our good and beauty.

A comment in their second note to the *Albuquerque Journal*, the Friends of Acoma suggest they might have accepted the gift of the foot on a velvet pillow. They further wrote, "It would have been a brave thing to have left the foot off as someone suggested!"

Yet, I would argue that the note writers analysis requires a further step. A shaking of the Pueblo family tree would reveal that Pueblos are also hybrid subjects that share mixed roots with the "Hispanic" communities that surround them.⁸⁵

Options for the Foot

The statue's foot was soon replaced, but the mystery aroused by Oñate's wound continues, and as I write these lines, the police investigation remains open. Indeed, the identity of the people who cut off the statue's foot is still unknown and the speculation proliferates. Some people believe that the statue cutters were Anglo newcomers to the region. More specifically, Arellano suspects the foot-cutting was done by the Anglo environmentalists who were embroiled in a long and bitter conflict with Nuevomexicano land activists in Rio Arriba County throughout the late 1990s. Others believe that the statue-cutting was committed by Native Americans, and some suspect the ritual Pueblo clowns have long used humor and wit to playfully ridicule and chastise Nuevomexicanos and now Anglos.⁸⁶

For certain, all we are left with is the Friends of Acoma's three notes. Still, these messages leave us with much to contemplate. In their message to the *Santa Fe Reporter* they included a bulleted list of points they wished to make (*Santa Fe Reporter* 1998). Among these assertions, they stated that the Oñate Monument and Visitors Center is a waste of money and effort. However, they added that the center has done a good job of representing their act of vandalism. They maintained that they had no sympathy for Nuevomexicanos' assertions that Anglo Americans unjustly took

⁸⁵ The cultural borrowings of Pueblos from European sources has been well documented by anthropologists and historians including the work of Santa Clara native Edward Dozier (Dozier 1970:65–71, Spicer 1962). Although Dozier and other anthropologists often insist that that Pueblo "core culture" such as religion remained essentially indigenous, they state that less central aspects of traditional Pueblo culture such as food, dress, government, and material culture are hybrids of colonial and indigenous origins and even indigenous languages show Spanish- and Mexican-era transformation.

⁸⁶ In her book *The Matachines Dance*, Sylvia Rodríguez richly shows the ways that Pueblo clowns enact a "hidden transcript" that shows how Pueblos have defended their communities and negotiated with Spanish and Anglo American dominance (Rodríguez 1996).

their land because Nuevomexicanos themselves took land from Native peoples. They told the Catholic church that "God is not some white guy sitting in judgment of us all. It's about spirit, you dolts, spirit!" Finally, they stated that monuments should be created for the Spanish who came to New Mexico as human beings rather than conquerors.

They followed these points with a list of options for the captured foot's fate. Among the more flippant and self explanatory answers were "cut it up and send it back to Spain" and "melt it into medallions." However, I find two other options suggested by the Friends of Acoma more powerful. In reference to the 24 men who lost their friends at Acoma, they stated, "The foot only has to come off 23 more times." They also asked, "Do you know where Starvation Peak is?" Here, I believe they are referring to a hill where, according to one version of the legend, a group of "Spaniards" retreated in a battle with native peoples. This story strangely parallels the events at Acoma.⁸⁷ But rather than attack the Spaniards' extremely defensible position, the native peoples simply camped below. Outsmarted, the Spaniards died of starvation on the top of the mesa. Presumably, the foot would be left there for a similar fate.

Among their other options for the foot were, "make a nice new stamp," and "Popé gets a statue." The "new stamp" refers to the U.S. postal stamp issued to commemorate the cuatrocenenario that featured a picture of Española's mission/convent—a recreation of the Spanish church and mission located in Oñate's capital in San Gabriel. Popé refers to the San Juan Pueblo religious leader that led the rebellion that ejected the Spanish colonial government from New Mexico for the years 1680 to 1692 (Knaut 1995:167–170). New Mexico's then governor estimated 389 settlers and 21 Franciscan friars died as a result of the revolt (Knaut 1995:14).

In addition to showcasing the wit of the Friends of Acoma, such powerful and cutting points and options clearly deconstruct Oñate as an icon and reveal him as a far

⁸⁷ The legend surrounding Starvation Peak also speaks to another period of domination. According to a second version of the legend, the native peoples surrounded a group of "Americans"

less powerful figure than he first appears. The Alamo is a master symbol emanating from a position of power that, at least through the 1950s, was tied to an ever more increasing and all-encompassing structure of Anglo American domination. As such, the Alamo and exhortations to "remember the Alamo" held an almost absolute power to assert a worldview and silence alternatives. In contrast, this New Mexican icon is almost exclusively honored at the limited locations of Hispanic control, and, I suspect, of little significance for New Mexican Anglos. In other words, he is not an icon that can compete with the likes of the Alamo. Rather, the New Mexican icon emanates from a position of weakness — sometimes in protest against Anglo power and sometimes in capitulation to it. Therefore, I find it as no surprise that whenever Oñate statues are proposed, a mixture of enthusiastic support, indifference, and ferocious opposition often meets them.⁸⁸

At the beginning of this chapter, as proof of the widespread importance of Oñate, I stated that multiple locations, including Albuquerque and El Paso, planned to erect Oñate statues. However, there is more to this story. In Albuquerque, plans to erect the statue were dropped. The El Paso statue also met stiff opposition and the city council has agreed to change the statue's name from Oñate to simply "The Equestrian" (Blumenthal 2004). Oñate is not even safe in Española. In 2001 a group of young activists who called themselves "La Verdad," or "The Truth," were given control of Española's annual fiesta and immediately set out to transform the festival's patriarchs, Oñate and *la reina* or queen. They took away Oñate's sword and armor

crossing the Santa Fe Trail. Similar to the Spanish in the other version of the legend, these Americans starved to death on the peak.

⁸⁸ The deconstruction of Oñate began in the conquistador's own time. Under pressure, Oñate sent a letter of resignation which was accepted by the Viceroy in Mexico City in 1608 and he left New Mexico in 1610 (Simmons 1991:184–185). In 1614, Oñate was tried by Viceroy Diego Fernández de Córdoba for the excesses and abuses of his leadership. Among the crimes that he was found guilty of were unjustly hanging two Indians and using excessive force in putting down the Acoma rebellion (Simmons 1991:188). The viceroy fined Oñate and condemned him to perpetual exile from New Mexico and to exile from Mexico City for a period of four years.

and, in acknowledgement of indigenous ancestry, the queen was renamed *la mestiza*.⁸⁹

In the context of such contestation, I read Oñate as a contender that must constantly battle other, often more powerful, symbolic forms. Sylvia Rodríguez has noted the ambiguous power and weakness of the conquistador icon (Rodríguez 2001:205). She wrote:

On the one hand, the conquistador, like other New Mexican Spanish imagery, remains part of the official cavalcade of enchantment insofar as it is deemed exotic, other, ethnic, and thus not white. On the other hand, from the internal standpoint, it constitutes nothing less than a claim to whiteness (Rodríguez 2001:205).

She explained that Spanish in some moments means not-Indian and not-Mexican (from Mexico) and thus a relatively superior position on the whiteness scale (Rodríguez 2001:206). However, she stated that Spanish whiteness loses altitude on such a scale as soon as Anglo Americans enter the picture. Further, she asserted that Spanish American whiteness's fragility was exposed when a coalition of Native Americans, Chicanos, and a few Anglos obstructed the commemoration of the cuartocentenario with an Oñate statue in Albuquerque (Rodríguez 2001:206).

⁸⁹ Interestingly, the members of La Verdad originally envisioned a different and even more radical transformation of the fiesta's queen. They intended to name her "La Malinche" after Hernán Cortés's indigenous consort and even voiced this intention at city council meetings. La Malinche, was a woman whose Nahuatl birth name was Malinal and Christian baptismal name was Marina (Cypress 1991:2). In choosing her name, that year's fiesta council planned to rename the fiesta queen in honor of "the mother of mestizos." They were probably influenced by northern New Mexican traditions reflected in the Matachines dance. In this dance, "La Malinche" is a young girl dressed in white signifies the Virgin Mary's power and love (Rodríguez 1996, Romero 1993). They, however, did not realize that as the mistress of Cortés, she is seen as the great betrayer of the Mexican nation and that "*malinchista*" is a synonym for traitor. Moreover, I suspect they were also unaware of the Chicana feminist position that reclaims and celebrates La Malinche as a strong woman unbound by the patriarchal social mores of her time (Cypress 1991:138–152).

In reference to such statues, one of the Friends of Acoma's options for the foot came, at least partially, to pass. San Juan's Popé received a statue (Gisick 2005). While, as far as I know, Oñate's foot was not melted down for the statue of Popé, the statue does speak to the specifics of rebellion against Spanish rule. Sculptor and Jemez Pueblo native Cliff Fragua depicted Popé as a traditional pueblo dweller, wearing a deerskin and holding a bear fetish in one hand. More importantly for this essay, he holds a knotted maguey fiber that was used to coordinate the uprising (Knaut 1995:169–170). While Oñate must be content at the Oñate Monument and Visitors Center, Popé's statue will reside in a far more prestigious location. He will be one of New Mexico's two statues housed at the National Statuary Hall in the nation's capitol. The placement of the statue may also be seen as a victory for San Juan. Former San Juan governor Herman Agoyo was the driving force behind the statue. In other words, at least in terms of statues, Pueblos rather than Spaniards seem to have been the victors. Indeed, Española mayor Richard Lucero and other city officials attended a ceremony at San Juan that honored that statue before it was transported east (Gisick 2005).

While Popé makes an excellent addition to National Statuary Hall, I prefer the dismembered statue of Oñate.⁹⁰ In *Defacement*, the text that marks anthropologist

⁹⁰ If Nuevomexicanos and Native Americans were to choose a positive icon, in the Hegelian sense, there is not a want of options. There is of course, Mexican Governor José Gonzáles. This man was briefly installed as New Mexico's governor in an 1837 insurrection by both Mexicans and Pueblos against the perceived threat of increased taxation and excesses of the previous Governor Albino Pérez (Lecompte 1985). Gonzáles would be a particularly apt choice as he has been described as a *vecino* from the village of Taos and, therefore, likely Mexican mestizo; a native from Taos Pueblo; and as a *Genízaro* or detribalized Indian from Ranchos de Taos. The rebellion that installed him as governor was centered in Santa Cruz and Chimayó (Lecompte 1985:36, 4, 19–21). A second choice for such an icon could be either Pablo Montoya of Taos or Manuel Cortés of Mora. These men were central figures in the 1847 Río Arriba revolt against the occupying American army and the government it installed. Their revolt united New Mexicans, Pueblos, and nomadic Indians against the American government. In this fight, New Mexicans and Pueblo Indians lost battles to U.S. army regulars in the areas of Santa Cruz and Embudo. In the final battle of this conflict, 150 Pueblos and New Mexicans were massacred

Michael Taussig's most explicit exploration of negativity, he wrote that such acts cut into the circle of understanding, and out of the breach spills a contagious proliferating force (Taussig 1999). Both Anglos and Native Americans were momentarily glimpsed in the empty space left by the foot. In that gap, the wound and pains of enslaved Native American ancestors beckon, and the United State's colonized "Mexicans" haunt the heroic Spanish colonizer. Here, gruesome death and dismemberment is manifest, confronted, and understood so Nuevomexicanos may also feel their good and beauty. "Y cada año celebramos nuestra herencia"⁹¹ (Espinoza 1996). Indeed, only in absolute dismemberment may Don Juan de Oñate be fully remembered, "¡Viva la historia de ese gran señor"⁹² (Espinoza 1996). I think the Friends of Acoma would agree. As they said, it would have been a brave thing to have left the foot off. In Taussig's words, "A mystery has been reinvigorated, not dissipated, and the new face has properties of an allegorical emblem, complete with its recent history of death, which gives it this strange property of 'opening out'" (Taussig 1999:253). Cutting off the statue's foot evokes (but does not reconcile) the contradiction of Nuevomexicanos' mestizo heritage as both colonizer and colonized.

In the next chapter, I will explore the murder of two Valley teens by another Valley teen as the two participated in one of the most powerful symbols of New Mexican culture. I contend that when the narrative of the statue's symbolic dismemberment is told alongside this far more real act of destruction, the story of Nuevomexicano identity becomes yet more complex. As the vandalized statue broaches, such dismemberment can be both beautiful and truly horrible.

in Taos Pueblo's church. Indeed, Estevan Arellano is known to take people to the site of the Embudo battle to see crosses markings that memorialize the dead.

⁹¹ This quotation from *El Corrido de Don Juan de Oñate* translates as "Every year we celebrate our inheritance" (Espinoza 1996).

⁹² This quotation from *El Corrido de Don Juan de Oñate* translates as "Long Live the history of this great lord" (Espinoza 1996).

FIVE
The Passion of
Ricky Martinez

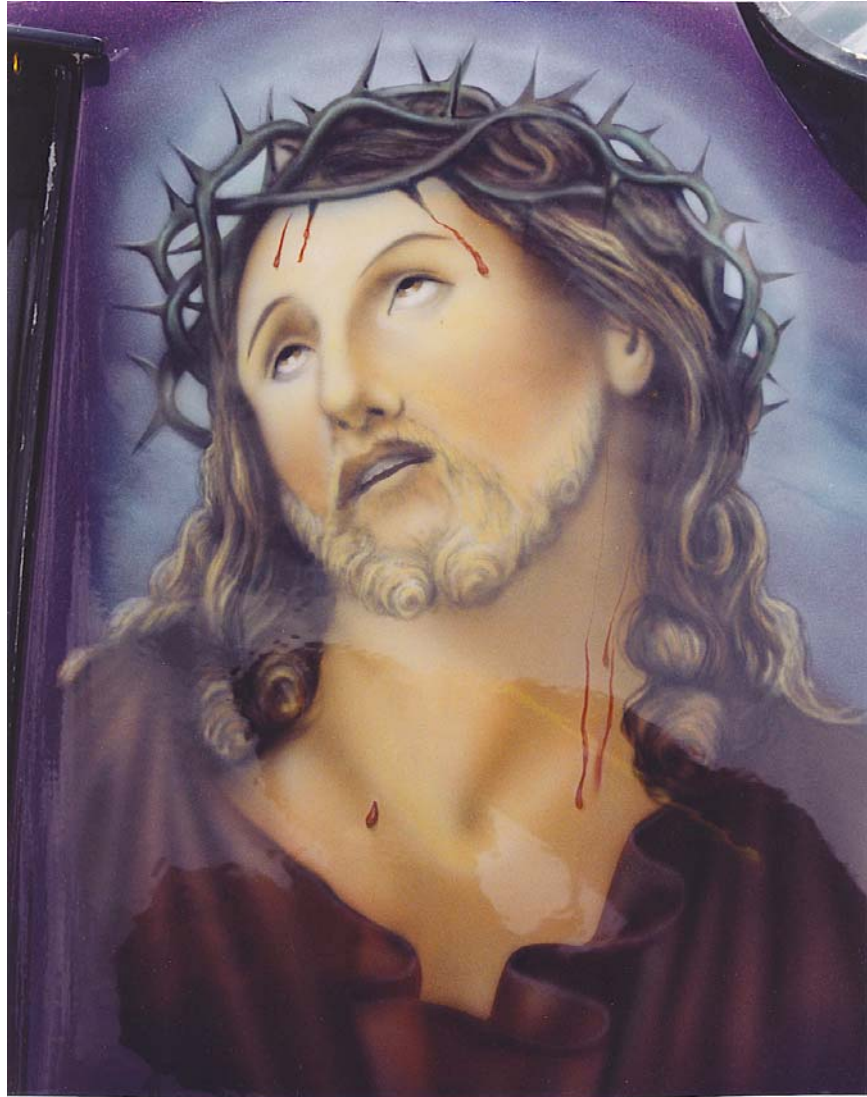


Figure 14. The Passion. Christ painted on the side of a car at the 2001 Española car show at the Ohkay Casino in San Juan.

FIVE
The Passion of
Ricky Martinez

When the human body . . . or a public statue is *defaced*, a surplus of negative energy is likely to be aroused from within the defaced thing itself. It is now in a state of *deseccation*, the closest many of us are going to get to the sacred in this modern world [emphasis in the original] (Taussig 1999:1).

New Mexican folk Catholicism places a special emphasis on Holy Week, which commemorates the events surrounding Christ's passion, crucifixion, and resurrection on Easter Sunday. During this time, tens of thousands of mostly Hispanic New Mexicans walk to Chimayó and, there, a chapel called the Santuario de Chimayó. The Santuario has long be the destination of pilgrims seeking the healing dirt found within its walls. Good Friday, in particular, marks the date of Christ's terrible suffering on the cross and the height of the annual pilgrimage. The tens of thousands who travel to Chimayó often walk great distances themselves and find penance in the trip. The pilgrimage has come to symbolize New Mexican identity, tradition and piety.

Early Good Friday morning in 2000, a young couple experienced their own terrible suffering on their way to Chimayó, and two years after the dismemberment of Oñate, the Española Valley achieved renewed notoriety in the regional and national press. A 19-year-old Valley youth named Carlos Herrera, murdered the teenage couple, Ricky Martinez and Karen Castañón. These events would reverberate throughout the Valley for years, and the murders cut open this sacred symbol of New Mexican identity.

Like the previous chapter's account of the statue's vandalism, this chapter's description of Martinez and Castañon's murder by Herrera relies primarily on the public representations and is therefore drawn from news media accounts, a documentary film, a transcript of Herrera's interrogation by the police, and court testimony. In the final section of this chapter, I will also describe another ethnographic experience that comments on Christ's passion, Don Juan de Oñate, and New Mexican identity. Like the dismembered statue, I ultimately argue that the painful and tortured moment of sacrilege — such as the pilgrimage path blocked by a corpse — provides a more whole, if horrible, expression of the New Mexican experience.

Sacred Geography

In his text, *Pilgrimage to Chimayó*, University of New Mexico folklorist Enrique Lamadrid describes Chimayó's pilgrims as reaffirming their place in tradition and geography in the annual pilgrimage. Lamadrid writes, "Voices rise in prayer, song, and conversation from the silent landscape" (Howarth et al. 1999:9). Indeed, the New Mexican lay Catholic order formally titled in English the Brotherhood of Our Father Jesus the Nazarene and popularly known as the Penitentes often spends the entire week commemorating Christ's suffering and resurrection. Charles Briggs offers an in depth reading of New Mexican Catholic rituals in folk performances of the Brotherhood in chapter 8 of *Competence and Performance* (Briggs 1988). Speaking to the importance of the dates of Holy Week in the Roman Catholic calendar and linking them to the specifics of the Chimayó's pilgrimage, Lamadrid describes the road to Chimayó as spokes on a wheel whose sacred center is the earth itself and a crucified Christ. He states that in the journey of the life of the Santo Niño de Atocha joins the people on their spiritual quest to find divinity within humanity. The Santo Niño is an image of the Christ Child as a pilgrim with a staff and cloak.

Still such stories do not ring *entirely* true to me. I have visited the santuario many times and occasionally collected dirt for sick relatives and friends. Similarly, I have walked in the Good Friday pilgrimage on three separate occasions, but I find Lamadrid's tales of spiritual communion to be only partially representative of my

experiences. Absent from Lamadrid's narratives are the hypodermic needles over which I stepped each of the three times that I walked to the santuario on Good Friday. Absent is the public knowledge that Chimayó is a central location in the Valley's drug trafficking and the irate young man who stood behind my wife and me in 2002 as we waited to enter the santuario. When asked by an older woman if he had been drinking, he told all within earshot that he would not change himself for anybody including God. Below I will show that a more whole, if horrible, experience is evoked in events that blocked the pilgrimage one Good Friday.

The pilgrimage's destination is a picturesque adobe chapel that houses a crucifix dedicated to El Señor de Esquipulas (Our Lord of Esquipulas). This depiction of Christ is directly associated with the similarly syncretic cult of Our Lord of Esquipulas of Guatemala (DeLoach 1999:55). Art Historian Dana Engstrom DeLoach states that the crucifix is said to have been discovered buried in the sand at the present site of the chapel in Chimayó by Bernardo Abeyta on Good Friday in 1810 (DeLoach 1999). From the Chimayó location where it arose, the crucifix was taken to the large church in Santa Cruz, but disappeared and was soon found again in its original location. According to the story, after the crucifix disappeared from Santa Cruz and reappeared in Chimayó twice more, Abeyta petitioned the Church to build a chapel at the site of the crucifix's discovery. The santuario was completed in 1816.

In the 1850s Chimayó also became associated with the Santo Niño de Atocha. At that time a small chapel devoted to the Santo Niño was built by the Medina family near the santuario. The Santo Niño is known as a miraculous healer and is the patron saint of children and captives, and the santuario's sacristy also contains a Santo Niño *bulto* or statue. Miraculous stories of Medina's Santo Niño's discovery are similar to El Señor de Esquipulas. The Medina chapel is still owned by the family and still receives pilgrims, however, it no longer rivals the santuario in reputation, importance, or atmosphere.

Today, the santuario is best known for its healing dirt collected from the *pozito* or small hole located where Abeyta is said to have found the Señor de Esquipulas crucifix. Just as native peoples consume sacred earth at the shrine to El Señor de Esquipulas in Guatemala, in Chimayó the dirt is either rubbed on the body,



Figure 15. The Santuario de Chimayó.



Figure 16. The Santuario on Good Friday of 2002.

eaten directly, or mixed with water and drunk. Crutches, eyeglasses, photographs, newspaper articles and other mementos left by the healed decorate the sacristy.⁹³ This healing aspect of the site has a significance that reaches further back in time than the finding of El Señor de Esquipulas.

For the Tewa-speaking people of the Española Valley pueblos of Santa Clara and San Juan, Chimayó is one of the cardinal cosmological sites and the scene of a key event in their world's creation (DeLoach 1999:76, Ortiz 1969:19, 142). Indeed, the name of Chimayó is the Hispanization of a Tewa place name *Tsi May oh* (DeLoach 1999:76, Ortiz 1969:142). According to DeLoach, *tzimmayo*, or "place where big stones stand" describes one prominent physical feature of the area, while *tsimajo* has been interpreted to mean "flaking stone of superior quality." DeLoach states that Tewa belief notes that during the time of the Ancient Ones, great geysers of hot water were located in Chimayó. When the Tewa war gods killed a giant, fire erupted and dried the healing springs at several locations, including Chimayó, into mud (DeLoach 1999:2). San Juan native and anthropologist Alfonso Ortiz describes Tsi May Oh as one of the sacred *Tsin* or flat-topped hills created by two of the six primal brothers called *Towa é* and explains that each of these hills is sacred because it is particularly dark and foreboding and has a cave and/or tunnels running through it (Ortiz 1969:14, 19). The *Towa é* watch over the pueblos from these hills. The mud surrounding the sacred Indian Shrines was thought to have healing qualities and to have been used in native rituals (DeLoach 1999:2, Kay 1987:17). Moreover, I would add, the area's colonists intermarried with Native Americans from surrounding communities, and many are descendants from and related to the Pueblos who have visited the area since before the village of Chimayó's founding.

Following the quote from Michael Taussig that serves as this chapter's epigraph, such a sacred geography sets the stage for desecration.

⁹³ The area around the Guatemalan church that contains the original Nuestro Señor de Esquipulas is also known for healing properties of a nearby hot springs. Pilgrims come to the area and also consume dirt from the surrounding area that is similarly said to have healing powers.

Good Friday

Shortly after 5:00 in the morning of April 21, 2000, Carlos Herrera drove past Ricky Martinez and Karen Castañon as the couple walked between Española and Chimayó near an area called La Puebla. On the road, Herrera shot and killed Martinez. He later killed Castañon in an arroyo north of Chimayó. Media accounts and court testimony made much of the fact that Herrera was both high on cocaine and drunk at the time of the murders.

The aftermath of Martinez's murder is captured remarkably by documentary filmmakers Joe Day and Manuel Machuca in the film *Rio Arriba: Tragedy and Hope* (Day and Machuca 2000). Protecting the crime scene, police created a detour through a field and hung blue and yellow vinyl tarps over the barbed wire fences that separated the field from the road, but Martinez's lifeless form remained unavoidable as it lay in the pilgrim's intended path. Standing in the field that is the detour, Day and Machuca filmed pilgrims' reactions to the detour and the covered body. The pilgrims would ask the filmmakers why the road was blocked. When told of the "drive-by" murder of a young man, the pilgrims reacted with inarticulate shock: A middle-aged woman covered her mouth and said, "I don't know how somebody could do that." A man in his thirties paused as if digesting the information and then simply nodded his head.

The power of this story was not missed by the regional or national media. The story of the murders was followed closely by Española's *Rio Grande Sun*, the *Albuquerque Journal*, *Santa Fe New Mexican*, and Albuquerque's television stations such as CBS affiliate KRQE-TV 13 and NBC affiliate KQB-TV 4. The news also made headlines in the national media including papers such as the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Houston Chronicle*, *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, *Denver Post*, and the *Montreal Gazette* among other papers.

Ricky's Passion

Despite onlookers' first reactions of inarticulate shock, a group of community leaders, as well as the members of the murdered teens' families, almost immediately

captured the deaths in the narrative of Christ's passion. In this way, the murder of the two teenage pilgrims became allegories of the New Mexican experience. When Herrera shot Martinez and Castañon on the pilgrimage path to Chimayó, he cut open New Mexican identity. Archbishop and pilgrim Michael Sheehan, San Juan Priest Paco Vallejos, and Ricky's father, Ray Martinez, quickly knit the hole closed with a powerful allegory that reinforced tradition, piety, and the murdered teenagers' purity. In Father Vallejos's telling of the murders, a passion play is acted out, and this carries a strong moral lesson addressed to the current struggles of his flock: On that Good Friday morning, Martinez and Castañon were the Lamb of God and Herrera played the role of Christ's killer.

This work of recapturing was already in progress at the murder scene and even before community leaders probably knew the identities of the victims. At the detour, archbishop and pilgrim Sheehan told the filmmakers Day and Machuca, "The first Good Friday there was an incident too, Jesus dying on the cross, so we shouldn't be surprised that violence and the power of evil to be part of our world" (Day and Machuca 2000). Sheehan immediately went about the work of assimilating the murders into his vision of Catholic moral order:

But despite [the reality of violence and power of evil], look at the many people, the thousands of people that honor God by their pilgrimage. Giving people an alternative to life of drugs and alcohol. Giving them something good to do with their lives rather than to burn their lives up with sinful things (Day and Machuca 2000).

In Sheehan's narrative, the two deaths are overcome by the power of the thousands of living who honor God.

This Catholic narrative would only become further elaborated as the teenagers' identities became known. The victims, Martinez and Castañon, were portrayed by their families and media accounts as innocents. Indeed, very real evidence of their upstanding lives was abundant. Both were good students, and they attended Los Alamos High School where Martinez played basketball and Castañon

was a cheerleader. Each year, many parents in the school districts that border the Los Alamos School District, such as the Española Valley and Pojoaque school districts apply to send students to Los Alamos. The Los Alamos School District is far wealthier than the surrounding districts and has a much better reputation. Newspaper reports stated that Martinez and Castañon walked so early in the morning so that they could attend class that day. Martinez walked the pilgrimage in preparation for receiving the sacrament of Confirmation later that year, and Castañon walked with the hope of healing a back injury she sustained while cheerleading. An Associated Press article states:

The slain boy's father, Ray Martinez, told the Associated Press that his son was a good student, active in sports and very religious.

"He was a beautiful kid, now he's gone. I'm still in shock," he said while sitting in his son's bedroom at the family home in La Villita, northwest of Chimayó.

The teen's room was adorned by sports jerseys, football helmets and photographs of Castañon. One photo showed the high school sweethearts kissing. The engraved wooden frame read, "this moment will last forever" (Baker 2000).

Indeed, the murders seemed to fit neatly within stories of good and evil. The murdered Martinez was set to play Jesus that evening in a passion play at the Catholic church at San Juan Pueblo. Interestingly, most media accounts of the murders concentrated on the death of Martinez rather than Castañon, and, for that reason, the title of this chapter is the Passion of Ricky Martinez. Perhaps, the emphasis on Martinez arose from the fact that Martinez was to play Jesus or the vocal quality of his father and thus better fit the role that media accounts and church leaders elected for the murdered teenagers to play. Moreover, as a man, Martinez better fit the role of Christ.

At their joint funeral mass at San Juan parish, the teenagers' deaths became an allegory for New Mexico's social problems. Father Paco Vallejos told his parishioners that the teenagers were with Jesus that Good Friday and "They were crucified with him. They felt our Lord's passion. They felt his death." Vallejos said the bullets that pierced their bodies and killed them were also the vials of crack cocaine and heroin consumed by northern New Mexicans. He said, "We called ourselves *la buena gente* (the good people). We learned to live together. Our culture grew, and our traditions grew. But lately, something has happened to *la buena gente*." He said, "It's sad to hear the reports of our Northern New Mexico . . . and how we've become more and more violent with one another," Vallejos described Chimayó as a holy place, a sanctuary, a place of refuge, a place of safety, and a place that is filled with God's love, but said, "It's become one of the most violent places as well." Ricky's father made this narrative more personal. He told Karl Moffat of the *Rio Grande Sun*, "I have to believe the devil was out that morning," and, "Anybody who is cruising high on cocaine and whiskey on Good Friday looking to kill someone has got to have the devil in him" (Moffat 2000:1). Ray Martinez told Moffat that the devil shot his son and Castañon, and that God then took them away (Moffat 2000:1).

But another largely unheard story resists capture by these grand narratives. This story is told in a transcript of Herrera's interrogation by police. Interestingly, one aspect of this interrogation is given the name of a sacrament, confession. In the specifics of the events that Herrera describes, a more ordinary and ineffable story emerges; a narrative that is truer to that inarticulate moment when pilgrims discovered that their path was blocked by a corpse.

Flipping out

The winding two-lane highway from Española would have been dark at 5:00 in the morning, and relatively few pilgrims would have yet ventured out on the road. Herrera, a 19-year-old dropout from Española Valley High School had been up all night partying on cocaine, alcohol, and other drugs and was, as the teenagers walked, then driving back and forth between Española and Chimayó. On his final pass through the area known as La Puebla, Herrera saw Martinez and Castañon. Herrera

stopped his truck and fatally shot Martinez in the shoulder with a .22 rifle that he carried in the vehicle.

Shortly after 5:00 in the morning, while Herrera was still likely driving with Castañon at his side, another pilgrim, Fidel Maestas found Martinez, bleeding to death. Shortly thereafter a patrolman came upon Maestas as he administered cardiopulmonary resuscitation to the teenager, but Martinez later died at the scene. Minutes earlier, as Martinez lay in the road, Herrera told Castañon to get in his truck. He drove with Castañon on the road to Chimayó and later up the arroyos to the north of the road from Española. After the pavement ended, Herrera told Castañon to get out of the pickup and as she walked away he shot her in the back of the shoulder. Autopsy reports state that Martinez died of blood loss injuries and Castañon died of blood loss and internal injuries caused by a small caliber wound in her left rear shoulder.

Two days after the murders and on Easter Sunday, an arrest warrant was issued for Herrera. He was soon apprehended with the help of his stepfather, then an Española police lieutenant, Leo Montoya.⁹⁴ In the morning hours after his arrest, Herrera was interrogated by state police seeking to gain his confession and an explanation for the murders. State police officers Randy Trujillo and Billy Martinez interviewed Herrera, and the transcripts of the interrogation show two state troopers repeatedly attempting to extract a reason or motive from Herrera for the killings. Trooper Trujillo told Herrera that they needed to find out "why did it happen," and asked Herrera if he was a serial killer, if he did this "all the time," if he was "crazy," or if the murders were a "one time deal." Trooper Martinez told Herrera that Ricky's family had already forgive him but wanted to face him and ask him why. Herrera immediately admitted to the murders but could not supply a reason that satisfied the troopers. In a typical exchange Trooper Martinez asked, "Did you single them out or did they just get in your way?" and Herrera replied, "I don't know. I just, I don't know what the hell was going through my head."

⁹⁴ Lt. Leo Montoya and Herrera's mother, Joann Montoya, were later divorced.

Instead of supplying a reason, Herrera told the state troopers that he was up all night partying on cocaine and repeatedly said he was "flipping out." A defense witness and neuropsychologist Thomas Thompson testified at Herrera's sentencing that Herrera claimed to have consumed a half ounce of cocaine during the day previous to the murders and to have split a quarter ounce of cocaine with friends the night before the murders. Thompson also stated that Herrera said he drank several fifths of vodka and shared several cases of beer with friends. At this time, Herrera was said to have weighed about 130 pounds, and this amount of cocaine seems excessive. Nevertheless, he likely consumed a very large amount of cocaine and alcohol that night. He said he remembered driving his truck back and forth between the town of Española and Chimayó. He said, "I just remember driving and turning and turning around again and I seen them and that's all." He said he saw "some guy," and then when asked why he shot him, Herrera responded, I "probably just pointed the gun out the window for the dumbest fuckin' reason. I don't know why."

As Martinez lay dying in the street, Herrera told Castañon to get in his truck and she, inexplicably and according to Herrera, complied without resistance. Once in his truck, she said she asked him if he planned to hurt her and complained of her cheerleading back injury. At first Herrera said he did not plan to kill her and instead intended to leave her somewhere distant in order to give himself time to get away. But as he drove to Chimayó and later up the arroyos to the north of State Road 76, he realized that he had to finish what he started because, "I figured if I let her go she was going to say shit." He told her to get out of the truck and as she walked away, he shot her in the back with his only remaining bullet. He describe what was going through his mind at the moment, "I didn't even look to see if she had fallen or anything. I just took off. I was fuckin' freaked."

After the completion of Herrera's interrogation, later that morning, Herrera returned with a different story. Law enforcement and expert witnesses would later conclude this second explanation of the murder expressed Herrera's anger and frustration more than anything Martinez had done. In any case, the story would prove to be too horrible to believe. Herrera told the troopers that he killed Martinez over a drug debt. He said that Martinez and a cousin of Martinez owed Herrera over \$400

for an ounce of cocaine, and described the newspapers descriptions of Martinez as "bullshit." He said, "The way his parents are saying that they knew that he was a good kid and he never gave anybody shit. That's a lie. They don't know half the shit. Everybody was all making it sound like he was art . . . and everything. But I knew him." At Carlos Herrera's February 26, 2001, sentencing, Ray Martinez told Santa Fe Judge Stephen Pfeffer, "My son was drug free, alcohol free. He never smoked cigarettes. He never drank coffee. The only alcohol he consumed was wine on Sunday for Communion." Herrera's defense team chose not to pursue Herrera's claim that Martinez owed Herrera a drug debt.⁹⁵ Herrera also later claimed that another individual participated in the murder but his defense team also did not pursue this in their defense. In his police interrogation, Herrera simply insisted that he knew Martinez better than his parents. He said, "I knew [Ricky Martinez] better than his mom and dad . . . I knew the shit he did because I partied with him."

I do not know if Herrera partied with Martinez. But I do know, Herrera's narrative remains outside the allegory told by community leaders. Nevertheless, for many, the Passion narrative retained its explanatory force. Indeed, for many, it retains its redemptive power.

Oñate's Passion

Just as Archbishop Sheehan, Father Paco Vallejos, and Ray Martinez found power in the story of Christ's crucifixion, I have heard other insurgent passion plays — even ones that might serve to cast Herrera in redemptive terms. Here, I will move to another narrative that brings together the seemingly divergent strands of this

⁹⁵ Relying on information leaked to him concerning Herrera's confession, the *Rio Grande Sun's* Crime Reporter Karl Moffat reported the supposed drug debt. Of all the reporters covering the murders, only Moffat explored the alternative explanation that questioned the victim's reported virtues. The victim's family reacted in anger at Herrera's claim and Moffat's coverage, and no other reporter delved into Herrera's claim, except to report that no drugs were found in the murdered teen's systems. Nor did Herrera's attorneys explore this explanation in court hearings. Nevertheless, in subsequent communications, Moffat, who went on to become an employee of an area drug treatment program, expressed skepticism of Martinez's innocence (Moffat Personal Communication 2002).

chapter and the previous discussion of Oñate's foot. I also intend to show that locals too have conceptualized that more complex juxtaposition of positivity and negativity.

In the summer of 2004, I stood and watched the parade that marks the high point of Española's annual festival, La Fiesta de Española. This event is just one of the similar festivals held in Santa Fe, Taos, and Las Vegas, New Mexico. Like the Taos and Las Vegas fiestas, Española's is attended almost entirely by area Hispanics and, now, Mexican immigrants. These events are rarely promoted as tourist events and tourists seem to stay away from them. To ensure a decent vantage point, I arrived several hours early and waited in the Big Rock Casino's parking lot on Riverside Drive. Soon a crowd of fellow parade-goers began to gather in the lot and along Riverside Drive. A quick survey of the crowd confirmed that nearly everyone around me was Nuevomexicano, Mexican immigrants, or perhaps Native Americans from nearby pueblos.⁹⁶ Many even set out lawn chairs, others sat in the back of pickups and many carried coolers full of food and drink. For the several hours before the parade began, I sat in the back of a pickup with new-found friends and enjoyed beers with them. The pickup occupants were locals of both genders ranging from middle age to young children. The adults shared beers, covering them when police would pass by. The fiesta itself was delayed for over an hour because of a motorcycle accident and a serious injury along the route.

When the parade finally began, I left the pickup truck and began to circulate among the crowd in an effort to find the best spot to see the parade and take photos. As usual, the parade entries included a large collection of politicians, area businesses, sheriffs' posses, and the festival royalty of nearby communities. Like every other year, Española's fiesta was presided over by a local man crowned Oñate and his consort, the fiesta queen. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, in 2001 an area

⁹⁶ I do not know if any of the onlookers were Native Americans as I know many Native Americans are offended by the celebration of the festival's connection to the founding of the Spanish colony of New Mexico. Still, I cannot say that no Native Americans were present as some Pueblos and Nuevomexicanos are difficult to distinguish by looks alone. In an off hand remark, a Navajo man I met in Española told me that, there, everything was mixed up and that many of the "Indians" appear "Spanish" and the "Spanish" appear "Indian."

group of youth that called themselves "La Verdad" took away Oñate's armor and renamed the fiesta queen "La Mestiza." In 2004, the festival's administration had been returned to civic leaders and Oñate had been returned to his full grandeur: He wore his sword and armor and his consort was again a queen.

However, what made this fiesta unusual, for me, was the final entry in the parade. As this float neared, I could hear the amplified, forceful, and staccato preaching of an evangelical preacher telling onlookers to return to Christ because only he could heal their community. The float consisted of a white truck with placards pulling a flatbed trailer. Signs on the side of the truck read "THE ESPAÑOLA CHRISTIAN CENTER" and "JESUS GAVE HIS LIFE FOR YOUR FREEDOM." The preacher, a Hispanic man with short black hair, wore a short-sleeved shirt and pleated pants and stood under a blue canopy on the black flatbed trailer. He held the microphone close to his mouth as he faced the spectators and preached to them in Chicano inflected English. Festive green-silver tinsel fringed the side of the trailer, nearly touching the ground to hide the trailers wheels. Raised above the speakers that broadcast the preacher's voice rested a blue-gray casket that seems intended to evoke the Valley's social problems. On a canopy over the preacher's head a sign read, "JESUS SAVES FAMILIES • HEALS COMMUNITY • CHANGES CULTURE." On the end of the trailer, underneath another sign read "THE ESPAÑOLA CHRISTIAN CENTER," and beneath two large speakers, a man clearly intended to represent the crucified Christ wore a long black wig, false beard, flowing white robe, and white tennis shoes, stood with his arms tied to a large wooden cross. Still, what made this Christian group's parade entry most remarkable and pertinent to both this chapter and the previous one are the two figures that followed the float and brought home the preacher's message. In this parade entry, members of this evangelical church reconfigured Christ's narrative as told by community members and created a new powerful narrative of their own. In the manner of Christ bearing the weight of his cross to Calvary, the man carried a giant hypodermic needle made from what looked to be an extraordinarily large muffler. The bearer of the needle wore, in addition to khaki shorts and black Chuck Martin basketball shoes, a conquistador's helmet and a medieval style smock emblazoned with a gold lion, likely



Figure 17. Oñate Bearing a Hypodermic Needle. A man dressed as Oñate carries a giant hypodermic needle down Riverside Drive, Española 2004 Fiesta parade.



Figure 18. Oñate's Passion. Oñate is whipped by a woman dressed as the devil as part of a Española Christian Center's entry in 2004 Española Fiesta parade. Their float was the last one in the parade.

taken from the Spanish royal seal. In the parade's context, this man clearly represented the festival's patriarch and New Mexico's founding figure, Don Juan de Oñate. Spurring the conquistador onward, a young woman dressed as a devil — she wore red makeup, plastic wings, horns, black clothes, and a cape — whipped the hypodermic-needle-bearing icon. Thus, Christ's suffering and crucifixion and New Mexico's founder were brought together in what can only be described as Oñate's Passion. Such narratives powerfully harness the power of negativity and point the way to a new form.

Descansos

In the course of the year following Martinez's and Castañon's murders, the victims' families and friends erected two crosses near the location of Martinez's murder and where Castañon was told to get in Herrera's truck. Similar memorials called *descansos* dot New Mexico's highways, and mark the spots where loved one's souls left their bodies. Martinez's and Castañon's crosses are particularly large, remain well tended, and often hold mementos left by family and friends. In a more sordid update, Raymond Martinez, Ricky Martinez's father and the most public advocate for the innocence of the victims, is currently on probation for statutory rape. Herrera pleaded guilty on July 26, 2000, in Santa Fe District Court, to two counts of first degree murder in order to avoid a death sentence trial. The chief question of Herrera's February 26, 2002 sentencing was whether he would serve his life sentences consecutively or concurrently. As each term carries 30 years before Herrera is eligible for parole, Defense Attorney Buckles asked Judge Stephen Pfeffer to temper justice with mercy and to sentence Herrera to concurrent sentences. After a parade of expert witnesses testified to an extraordinarily difficult life and neglect of Herrera at the hands of his family and the schools, Herrera muttered almost inaudibly into the microphone, "I would like to tell the Castañon family and the Martinez family, I'm sorry and I'd like to tell my family, I'm sorry for what I put them through. That's it." Pfeffer sentenced Herrera to serve to consecutive life sentences. He is now serving his time in prison and will likely leave prison as an old man.



Figure 19. Descansos. Crosses on State Road 76 from Española to Chimayó mark the place Ricky Martinez and Karen Castañon encountered Carlos Herrera and where Martinez died.

In Oñate's passion and Herrera's own story a more complete narrative that juxtaposes both the positive and negative may be glimpsed. Taussig states that when the human body or a statue is defaced, a surplus of negative energy is aroused within the defaced thing itself. He adds, the desecrated object is the closest that most of us will come to the sacred in the modern world (1999:1). In such places the positive and negative are imbricated, a thing is affirmed in what it is not, and there is movement to a fuller and more profound understand. Viewing my photograph of Oñate wearily carrying a giant hypodermic needle down Riverside Drive, I remember the lyrics of Angel Espinoza's song celebrating the 400th anniversary of the Spanish colony's founding. She sang, "Y cada año celebramos nuestra herencia."⁹⁷ (Espinoza 1996).

In the next and final chapter of the body of this dissertation, I will explore this cross that Oñate bore; a cross of heroin and other illicit drugs that evokes the most horrible and liberating power of the negative.

⁹⁷ This quotation from *El Corrido de Don Juan de Oñate* translates as "Every year we celebrate our inheritance" (Espinoza 1998).

SIX
A Northern New Mexican "Fix"



Figure 20. Mementos. In the course of my time in Española, for me the 2001 death of Albino Salinas came to symbolize the most painful and destructive aspects if they Valley's problems. Pictured are mementos from his life and death; photographs, diplomas, sympathy cards, and religious items arranged on a table in his parents home. Salinas was killed by his "friends" Randy Maestas and Zac Sánchez served prison time for his death.

SIX

A Northern New Mexican "Fix"

"It's like the girls say, I need crack for my back, tokes to joke . . . and chiva in my vida." (Dolores Montoya).⁹⁸

I was not prepared for what Joey Jaramillo told me that afternoon in the Winter of 2002.⁹⁹ I had spent much of the day sitting at a kitchen table with him and other drug users. Jaramillo, a New Mexican man in his mid-forties, elaborated a profound difference between the discourses that described the traditional culture of Hispanic northern New Mexico and his own experience. About a week before his interview Jaramillo had overdosed and stopped breathing twice. Nevertheless, that early afternoon, Jaramillo was high on both speed and cocaine and looked forward to using heroin. Not surprisingly, his mind seemed to race faster than his words. He said, "What happened to the life of simplicity, man? What happened to the life where our ancestors used to grow the wheat and share it with the Indians, man?" He continued, "Now it's the casinos and everybody's wanting everybody else's money. It's a money thing. The devil's got his trip going man." In an effort to draw some direct relationship between Jaramillo's drug use and the community transformation he described, I asked Jaramillo why he used drugs and if the high rates of drug use had some relationship to the valley's transformation. Rather, his comments disrupted my effort to find a causal explanation. He told me that he used drugs because he liked it.

⁹⁸ Montoya's statement obviously contains both Spanish and English slang. I did not translate the Spanish terms or define the English slang in the chapter's text because I did not want to disrupt the phrase's rhythm and word play. The statement means, "It's like the girls say, I need crack for my back, tokes [inhalations of marijuana] to joke . . . and chiva [heroin] in my *vida* [life]."

⁹⁹ The names of illicit drug users in this chapter, such as "Dolores Montoya" and "Joey Jaramillo" are pseudonyms.

To my chagrin, when I pressed the point with additional questions Jaramillo said, "You know what brother? Believe nothing you hear and half of what you see. Okay? That's how I look at it around here."

In the late 1990s, a series of articles and reports in the regional and national media described with shock how Española's putatively idyllic and bucolic Rio Arriba County statistically had the highest rate of illicit drug overdoses of any county in New Mexico. New Mexico, in turn, was reported to have the highest rate of illicit drug overdoses of any state (Morgan and Morgan 2002:172, 176, 184–185, 187–188). In the course of my ethnographic research in Española, I found that the disjuncture between the traditional and contemporary worlds on which these mediatized discourses focused resonated with the perceptions of Española drug users regarding their own lived experiences. This chapter draws on research done in 2002 during the course of a University of New Mexico drug treatment study funded by the New Mexico Department of Health that was conceived in the wake of the media revelations.¹⁰⁰

Following on Jaramillo's comments, this chapter eschews attempts to attribute drug use to a specific societal "cause," and instead focuses on a topic that, judging from current and former drug users' comments, has greater currency in their lived experience: What does drug use do for drug users? In pursuing this line of inquiry, I want to develop two distinct but overlapping arguments. The first follows Georg

¹⁰⁰ The University of New Mexico study, entitled "Tailoring Treatment Services to Drug Users' Needs," was conceived by Cathleen E. Willging, then a member of UNM's Department of Family and Community Medicine, who also served as the study's principle investigator. I worked as an ethnographic researcher on this project along with UNM sociology student Azul La Luz. The study resulted in a report submitted to the State of New Mexico Department of Health and Health Policy Commission and articles (Willging et al. 2003, Willging et al. 2004, Willging et al. 2005). In this project, we combined (1) participant observation in treatment, harm reduction, and drug use locales; (2) unstructured interviews; and (3) semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews included 47 interviews and eight "pilot test" interviews. Twenty-eight of the 47 interviewees were male and 19 female. Nineteen were classified as current drug users and 28 were classified as former drug users. While my fifth chapter is informed by Willging and Azul W. La Luz's research, Unless otherwise stated, I collected the ethnographic materials related in this chapter.

Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit*. Before all else, Hegel argued that human existence can be formed and maintained only within a biological reality that requires that desires be fulfilled (Hegel 1977, Kojève 1980 [1969]). He argued that desire disquiets the person and moves him to action, and born of desire, action therefore tends to satisfy desire. Action does so by the negation, the destruction, or at least the transformation of the desired object. In this vein, I argue that drug use is a visceral, embodied practice that confronts and momentarily negates, transforms, or displaces the drug users' multiple and proliferating desires.

However it is also worthwhile to point out that I am not positing that drug use is resistance or counter-hegemonic, although at some times and some places it may have these qualities. Rather, I posit and will attempt to demonstrate that for some Española Valley residents, drug use momentarily transforms experience—an experience now largely lived within modernity and more specifically framed by the service-sector socioeconomic structure of northern New Mexico. The second argument I want to develop in my discussion of drug use and users in Española unpacks the premise of the discourse that sees culture as a cure for the problems that affect the community. I show how these claims emanate from authorized public representatives situated in New Mexico. I then describe the reactions of several drug users—the subjects of these interpolations—demonstrating some of the ways in which they respond to these characterizations, ranging from grudging acceptance, disdain and disagreement.

Within a Quarter Mile of Here

Since the mid-nineties, the prevalence of drug use has come to symbolize the contradictions between discourses of tradition and a reputation for extreme social problems. This perception of widespread drug use has some reality on the ground. Heroin and cocaine use as well as the abuse of prescription drugs are widespread among the Valley's Nuevomexicanos. The statistics themselves are shocking. As previously noted, according to figures presented to the Rio Arriba County Commission by New Mexico Department of Health epidemiologists, in 1995–97 Rio Arriba County had the highest rate of illicit drug overdose deaths in New Mexico—a

rate more than three times the state average. In turn, New Mexico had the highest rate of illicit drug overdose deaths in the United States—a rate several times the national average (Halasan et al. 2001). Rio Arriba County has an overdose death rate more than 10 times the national rate (Winn 2005:41). Such rates translate into a terrible toll in human lives. Statewide, Office of the Medical Investigator data shows an increase in overdose deaths from 121 to 307 in 2003 (Landen 2005:7) and between 1995 and 2003 there were about 300 overdoses in Santa Fe and Rio Arriba counties (Scharmen et al. 2005:7).¹⁰¹ A Department of Health map clearly shows that nearly all Rio Arriba County overdoses occurred among residents living in the Española Valley. There was a similar death toll in the Valley's Santa Fe county census tracts (Halasan et al. 2001).

Even more graphic is heroin user Lonnie Martinez's description of the availability of drugs near his home in the same government subsidized apartment complex where I interviewed Joey Jaramillo. Martinez said:

Look at this small town Look at this, within a quarter of a mile of here, a quarter mile, there's three crank labs, six people selling heroin, fourteen selling coke. Pot is just like going to the liquor store. Pharmaceutical drugs, lortabs, valiums, percs, xanax, the barbiturate family. It's just like going to the grocery store, putting a quarter in the machine and pulling out bubble gum.

Another current user said, "It's everywhere. It's everywhere. It's everywhere . . . It's just all around me. I don't have to look for it."

The area's drug use also seems to coincide with the popular perception of drug use as disproportionately common among Nuevomexicanos as opposed to other racial-ethnic groups. Observation in treatment programs and harm-reduction sites

¹⁰¹ New Mexico Department of Health epidemiologists state that, between 1995 and 2003, 397 people died of overdose deaths in New Mexico's Department of Health District Two. District Two includes Rio Arriba, Santa Fe, Taos, Los Alamos, Mora, San Miguel, Colfax, Harding and Union counties. These epidemiologists state that 34 percent and 41 percent of those 397 deaths occurred in Rio Arriba and Santa Fe counties respectively (Scharman et al. 2005:7).

bore out that drug addiction was most common among Nuevomexicanos rather than among Native Americans, Anglos, or Mexican immigrants. This view is further supported by statistics provided by a needle exchange program that operates in Española. Between October 2001 and March 2002, 631 "Hispanics" and only seven "Anglos" participated in one such program. Their numbers do not differentiate between Nuevomexicanos and Mexican immigrants, but ethnographic evidence suggests few of the participants were immigrants. For instance, as I rode along on a needle exchange trip, an exchange staffer and Mexican immigrant who lives in Santa Fe told me that he did not like Española because it was "*puro cholo*" (all cholo). The needle exchange program cited no statistics for Native Americans probably because virtually no Native Americans utilize their services.

Drug(s) of Choice

While media accounts usually focus on heroin use, area drug users consume a variety of drugs. Still, most picked among heroin (*chiva*), cocaine (usually smoked in crack form) or prescription drugs as their "drugs of choice."¹⁰² In Española, the most common form of heroin is the "black tar" or "mud" variety that is purchased in a black or brown, hard or gummy form and is imported from Mexico. Relatively uncommon just a decade ago crack-cocaine seems to be the emerging preferred drug of choice among many younger users. The large majority of cocaine users smoked cocaine, although a few said they injected it or snorted. Most purchased cocaine powder and cooked, or transformed, it into a cocaine freebase or smokable form by heating it in water with baking soda. This method creates an impure form of cocaine freebase that is popularly known as crack. A few used the older and more dangerous form that employs ether and produces the more pure form popularly known as

¹⁰² "Drug of choice" is a treatment concept referring to what treatment providers would consider the drug user's preferred drug or "core addiction." Perhaps because so many area drug users have had contact with treatment institutions, this concept has entered the vernacular and is understood by drug users even if they have never been in treatment.

freebase.¹⁰³ However, in conversation, some Española users that employed the baking soda method differentiated their cocaine-freebase from crack as they viewed their home-cooked freebase as purer. Nevertheless, others failed to differentiate between home cooked freebase and crack purchased in "ready rock" form. Former drug user Lisa Chávez said, "I've noticed that it's like everywhere I go; everybody is smoking crack. Everybody."

In addition, many current and former drug users consumed prescription drugs, sometimes prescribed by their doctors or sometimes bought illicitly, often from the same dealers that sell heroin and cocaine. Among the prescription drugs most commonly used by informants were opioids such as Hydrocodone Bitartrate or Acetaminophen (Vicodin, Lorcet, Lortab), Oxycodone or Acetaminophen (Percocet), Oxycodone or Aspirin (Percodan), Oxycodone Hydrochloride (Oxycotin), tranquilizers such as Benzodiazepine (Diazepam, Valium, Zentrab), barbituates (Amobarbital or Secobarbital, Seconol, Tuinol), and Alprazolam (Xanax). Interestingly, one woman's entrance into narcotic addiction was through methadone—a medically controlled substance distributed by two area programs as a substitute for narcotics such as heroin. This woman had never been in a methadone program and purchased her methadone on the streets. Current and former drug users also reported a wide variety of illicit drugs such as cannabis (usually marijuana, although some cited hashish), mushrooms, peyote, opium (heroin), lysergic acid diethylamide or LSD, methamphetamine (including "speed," "crank," and "crystal") and phencyclidine or PCP. Finally, the majority of users also drank alcohol and a minority described alcohol as either their "drug of choice" or a greater problem than substances such as hard drugs.

Most users and ex-users mixed a variety of drugs and alcohol, often in a manner that balanced or intensified their highs. For instance, many often combined the "up" high of cocaine with the "smoothing out" high of heroin in a single injection

¹⁰³ Until the 1980s, most cocaine users produced a more pure form of cocaine freebase through a method that used ether. Ether is a notoriously unstable chemical, and transforming powder cocaine into freebase this way is dangerous and potentially explosive. This method is perhaps best known for producing the fire that extensively burned comedian Richard Pryor.

known as a "speedball." Dolores Valdez remarked, "[I used] alcohol, oh baby, 24–7. Marijuana, 24–7. My pills, 24–7. My narcotics. Twenty-four–seven pretty much in everything, except the coke. That was when I had the money." Echoing Valdez's experience, Charlie Lucero stated:

I drank alcohol, I smoked pot, heroin, and coke. And then the prescription pills; Valiums, Percocets, Xanax, Lorecets. There's these other pills that we'd call *colorados* [reds]. They looked like a little bullet. We fixed those, too. Take'em and what do you call'em fender benders 'cause you'd get all fucked like you're a car or something. You know? Let's see, what else? I huffed gas. That's pretty much it.

Within the twenty-four-hour period preceding his interview, Joey Jaramillo told me he consumed half a gram of speed, a gram of coke and half a "*gorra*" of heroin.¹⁰⁴ Jaramillo said, "I don't have no drug of choice, bro. I just do this and that and all of it." The mixture of heroin, in particular, with this smorgasbord of other drugs is likely responsible for the area's extraordinarily high rate of fatal overdoses. For instance, Lucero reported overdosing several times when he took prescription drugs shortly before he injected heroin. And as stated in the chapter's introduction, Jaramillo overdosed and stopped breathing twice only slightly over a week before he made this statement.

You Feel this Intense Rush

As previously noted, I intend to address the question: What does drug use do for drug users? Here, Marxist critic Walter Benjamin's description of the "trance" or high he experienced in Marseilles, France is informative. He said, "I was incapable of fearing future misfortune, future solitude, for hashish would always remain" (Benjamin 1978:143). Along these lines, this exegesis returns to Hegel's

¹⁰⁴ Heroin is sold in units locally often called *gorras* or *papeles*. Residents are also familiar with the more general and national equivalent slang terms *BB* or *paper*. Ten BBs, papers, papeles or gorras are equivalent to one gram (Willing et al. 2003).

Phenomenology of the Spirit and his notions of desire and negation (Hegel 1977, Kojève 1980 [1969]). I argue that drug use is a visceral, embodied practice that confronts drug users' multiple and proliferating desires, and provides a moment not entirely defined by socio-material contradictions or residents' own increasingly complex and internally differentiated subjectivities. However, this is not to say that drug users are explicitly rethinking their place in the world. Rather, in Española, most describe getting high in terms of the momentary feeling of well-being their fix provides, the forgetting of life's troubles, the relief of physical pain, and, especially for heroin users, the relief from the physical sickness of withdrawal. *Malias*, as heroin withdrawal symptoms are called in northern New Mexico, may be described as extremely horrible flu symptoms. People suffering from withdrawals often describe themselves as "sick" and therefore require a "fix." Symptoms include, but are not limited to, diarrhea and vomiting.¹⁰⁵

In their stories of drug use, users and ex-users reported, often wistfully, moments of intense pleasure no longer dominated by metaphorical and physical pain. When I asked a 30-something Nuevomexicana named Irene Goodnight to describe the feeling that smoking cocaine provides, she said, "It takes away your problems for that five, ten seconds. You don't even care about your problems. You could care less about anything after that hit." Feliz Chacon described smoking crack:

You feel this intense rush. Almost like you are lifted outside of yourself. You're just up in the clouds somewhere. You're way above yourself, and almost sounds nuts, almost spiritual feeling and like I say. . . this feeling of a total being, of you're with yourself. You're lifted to this place that you don't want to come down from.

¹⁰⁵ A heroin addict attempting to detox without tapering off or using medications may experience diarrhea, cramps, vomiting, aches, restlessness, chills and insomnia, among other things. In contrast, cocaine freebase smokers describe their addiction to cocaine smoking as an intense desire to recapture the intense feeling of their first cocaine rush, and therefore more psychological than physical.

Similarly, 23-year-old Charlie Lucero told me how he felt pursuing his fix and then shooting up. In his description, his words fail, but the intense and distant look in his eyes indicated he knew well the feeling he could only partially articulate. He said:

You're just trying to score that fix, let's say all morning, you're just stressing and stressing and sweating, anxious. You know? You're driving up wherever you're going to score this stuff and you're just, it's just every time, you know? It's just like a trip. I don't know. It's hard to say. You get like this real like, your stomach cramps up and you just feel like using the restroom and you're anxious, real anxious . . . to make it and you're wanting to throw up and just feeling awful but you know you're going to get your fix. Until, finally you're like in a rush and boom you fix. And once you pull that syringe out you just, you're like, you're the king. You know? Right away, you just start talking to people and it's just completely different. It's like if you [pause] you feel at home with everything or something. I don't know. You just feel more powerful and more relaxed. You get that rush like pins and needles. You know? Just like a nice cramp. I don't know. It's weird. Through you whole body, you just get like a chill but it feels good. You know? You just don't have no worries.

Finally, 30-something Lisa Chávez described the first time she used heroin with fondness:

We were sitting around the table and my girlfriend that was there, my friend she was, she would snort it and the other two were shooting it up. We were just sitting around the table drinking, partying and when it got to me, [my boyfriend] told me, "Do you want some? Try it." So I said okay. So we did it on a little tiny spoon. I snorted and after a while I was throwing up like a dog. It makes you throw up, but yet it made me feel good. I was just sitting there and my eyes were shut and I could hear everybody. They were standing there and talking and I know they kept saying, "Make sure she's okay. Are you

okay?" "Yeah I'm okay." But it was just peaceful. I don't know. I was like, I was just calm, mellow and nothing hurt. Everything was nice, just a good feeling and then I was, I stayed with them for a while. We all stayed in there and he'd go in the room and he'd be all "Here's your morning thing." He would go in there in the bedroom and he'd already have it in a syringe and he would squirt it up my nose and it was everyday, everyday.

In other words, in the moments of a cocaine rush, users feel a moment of almost spiritual transcendence. Similarly, in the hours of a heroin high, users feel "at home" and a sense of peacefulness.

For some, drug use not only blessed the users with a general feeling of well-being, it also removed the pain from injuries received in the course of wage labor, their daily activities, and sickness sometimes exacerbated by inadequate medical care. Already a drug and alcohol user, construction worker Dolores Valdez became addicted to prescription pills because of preexisting health problems, work accidents, and allegedly incompetent health care. She said that in a work accident she crushed her ankle and was subsequently prescribed morphine for two weeks and painkillers such as Percocets. Current user Lisa Marie Martinez said she became addicted to heroin because it eased her pain from pre-existing hepatitis C symptoms:

I was real sick. Sick, sick and I couldn't even move or nothing and I, the medication wasn't helping me and one day my husband came and told [me], "I know what will help you. I don't want to give it to you but I know what will help you feel better." So I tried it and I didn't like it at first but then afterwards, I tried it again and then it just got to be everyday of that. And it did take away the pain, you know? All your pain gone. It got took away.

In other words, in the minutes of a crack-cocaine rush and hours of a heroin high, the metaphorical pain of the users' daily lives and the specific physical pain of their injuries and illnesses were negated, transformed, or displaced.

Furthermore, as suggested by Charlie Lucero's description of shooting up, the psychobiological reactions of heroin and cocaine use are supplemented by the complex and embodied process of drug use. Both are profoundly visceral activities that require skilled preparation and result in intense psychophysical reactions that set them apart from other daily activities. Indeed, drug users and ex-users described drug consumption in almost ritualistic terms. Heroin injection practices, such as mainlining, in which a small amount of heroin is typically placed on a spoon, dissolved in water and then heated, were often discussed in this way. Star Fresquez said:

I think I was addicted to the needle itself. You're addicted to the ritual of putting it in a spoon, of lighting it and smelling and picking it up and seeing the blood register and, you're like addicted to that. I think I was more addicted to that than anything else, than the actual high.

Similarly, Feets Ortiz description of heroin use evokes his own intense feelings and longing for the experience (Willging et al. 2003). Despite his preference for mainlining, Ortiz told ethnographer Azul La Luz that he turned to "skin popping" because he had "no veins left." La Luz noted he had visible, open wounds and thick scar tissue caused by abscesses. Ortiz described the delight of finding a vein appropriate for injection. He said, "For a guy that don't have no veins, sometimes I can find one." Ortiz then made a motion that mimicked the act of sticking a needle in his arm. With growing excitement, he continued, "And I see the blood, it's like a rush feeling that you could . . . actually! No!" Ortiz closed his eyes and turned up his face to the ceiling in pleasure. "You actually know it's going to go into you!" His eyes still closed, tears coming down his face, he commented, "Instead of something cutting you! I don't know." He finished wiping his eyes; his shoulders slumped. "I done it to myself quite a bit of times, you know" (Willging et al. 2003:31-32).

In a similarly complex process, cocaine is typically cooked in water on a stove top with baking soda in a process that takes some skill and time. In this way cocaine freebase is "rocked up" or formed as a precipitate in the cooking process. The

process of smoking crack also includes its own special smells ("burning plastic") and sounds (the "crackling" that is the source of its crack's name) and intense psychophysical reactions. Feliz described smoking crack for the first time:

So she put this boulder about the size of a marble in it and I still remember lighting and the sound it made. It's almost like a log in a fire, this cracking noise and she said, "inhale it and hold it as long as you can." So being the pig that I am, I thought this was all mine, this was for the three of us. So I lit it and I remember my lungs felt like they were on fire and it smelled like burned plastic and I still remember it. So I held it in and they're talking and I'm waiting for her to tell me to let it out. She just assumed I knew it and she is like "Let it out!" I let it out and immediately just got this head rush that was, I couldn't even describe it. And I immediately, I got sick, and thank God we were in the bathroom. I mean I just started to vomit and I heard people do that with heroin sometimes, but then I wanted that feeling again. About twenty minutes later, like I say, it was downhill from there, uh we did it again and then it was like it wasn't enough. I just wanted more and more and more and we stayed there at her house doing it.

Statements such as these suggest that in the act of drug use, people performed a labor set apart from other activities that had immediate and profound visceral impact.

In their stories of drug use, these people described contradictory and internally differentiated subject positions as wage earners, family members, participants in an underground and illicit economy and drug users (Willging et al. 2003). Women in particular described contradictions between their identities as mothers, romantic-sexual partners and family members. Many related difficult economic and material and social relations as major stressors in their lives. Finally, some described physical and physiological pain that was often both the result and embodiment of these contradictions. But in the act of their drug use these feelings found a "fix," or, momentarily negated, transformed, or displaced the metaphorical pain of life's struggles as well as the specific physical pain of injuries and illness. They recreated

the work day, removed their labor from the complete control of their employers, transformed their desires, and achieved immediate and visceral rewards. Here again, Benjamin's statements on his hashish "trance" or high are instructive, if perhaps naive, when compared to the actual payback of harder addictions. He wrote:

When I recall that state I should like to believe that hashish persuades nature to permit us—for less egoistic purposes—that squandering of our own existence that we know in love. For if, when we love, our existence runs through nature's fingers like golden coins that she cannot hold and lets fall to purchase new birth thereby, she now throws us, without hoping or expecting anything, in ample handfuls to existence (Benjamin 1978:145)

In other words, for Benjamin hashish provided a momentary sense of wholeness that contrasted with the fragmentation and (self) destruction of the 1930s and 1940s that would ultimately result in his death fleeing Hitler's Third Reich. For Española's drug users, these desires were often basic needs such as hunger and absence of pain. Others dealt with more complex frustrations at their socioeconomic position in life, torn families, and inability to maintain romantic love. Lonnie Martinez explained, "Oh *sí* it's not that alcohol or heroin, it's not the high that gets me. It what it does for me. It takes me out of the realities of society. I can create my own world in my head and still live over here or wherever, but I'm living in my own world. My own world."

Culture as Cure

Nevertheless, the question, "What does drug use do for drug users?" is not the most widely asked question in professional and political debates concerning drug and alcohol addiction in the Valley. Rather most are looking for a "cause" of the Valley's high rates of addiction and many find the answer within the loss of traditional culture. In particular, many area leaders—a group now largely drawn from the region's emergent middle class—appear to be attempting to (re)assert their vision of tradition and community. They draw implicitly and explicitly on the concept of culture to explain the conundrum of a perceived extreme social malaise in a place defined by its

strong cultural heritage, and conceptualize a growing cultural deficit, especially among the young, and its material underpinnings as the cause of illicit drug use. In the process, they reproduce a cultural logic that conceptualizes modernity and culture in opposing terms.

In northern New Mexico, the trope of culture is particularly powerful and loaded. As I have noted in previous chapters, in the United States, few non-Native American populations of comparable size have been the objects of such tremendous discursive production as northern New Mexican Hispanics, a group that here, in contrast to neighboring communities, continues to constitute the vast majority of the population. This vision of continuity with a traditional culture is evident and lends support to the homegrown political movement. In Española's Rio Arriba County, community-based political mobilization efforts that seek to reassert and enforce Nuevomexicano rights to land and resources are longstanding and suffuse local political discourse. Moreover, Española's current inhabitants are situated within a complex historical matrix of already existing representations that deploy a concept of Nuevomexicano culture as a functioning holistic system of traditional beliefs tied to an agrarian economy.

In the Española area, the general notion of modernity and Nuevomexicano culture as oppositional is perhaps most fully articulated in the final pages of Charles Briggs's formidable *Competence in Performance* (1988:358–376). Here, with a liberal peppering of citations from Marxist theoreticians such as Antonio Gramsci and Raymond Williams, Briggs persuasively argues that the Nuevomexicano folkloric speech genres that he collectively called "*la plática de los viejitos de antes*" [The talk of the elders of bygone days] constitute a counter-hegemony opposed to both Anglo American domination and industrial capitalism. Furthermore, Briggs argues that this counterhegemony is embodied in the traditional Nuevomexicano views of production as practiced in the now largely superseded and displaced subsistence agriculture-ranching economy. Briggs's contention is given added credence and lends support to the area's long-term Land Grant Movement that seeks the return of lands and resources alienated from local communities.

These theoretical conceptualizations, as well as the views of land grant activists, are based on the empirical reality of the community's economic and social transformation. In the past century, the large part of the Valley's residents were transformed from self-employed rancher-farmers to a peripheral labor source for a regional economy dominated by the technological center of Los Alamos and the art-tourism-recreation economies of Santa Fe and Taos. Drawing on José E. Limón's parallel analysis of rural Mexican Americans in South Texas, I argue that the Española Valley's Nuevomexicanos now form an emergent middle class and a numerically larger marginal mass that has a relatively high structural unemployment (Limón 1994:106). At best, members of this marginal mass are members of the region's secondary labor market by virtue of their ethnic-racial status and relative lack of appropriate skills.

These changes have transformed the major axes of ascribed identity from membership in a residual folk culture to something more akin to a blurred combination of class and race. Not surprisingly then, much popular community discourse reproduces and deploys the cultural logic of loss elaborated by land grant activists in praxis and by Briggs in theory. This notion of culture loss fits with common interpretations of the etiology of drug and alcohol use and modalities for the treatment of addiction among Native Americans, other indigenous peoples, and Hispanics (Brady 1995, Santiago-Irizarry 1996). Maggie Brady writes, "Drug and alcohol abuse, and ill-health too, are said by many indigenous people to have arisen from, or been exacerbated by, deprivation and the erosion of their cultural integrity as a result of colonization" (Brady 1995:1489). Harry Montoya, the Santa Fe County Commissioner that represents much of the southern part of the Greater Española Valley and director of a nonprofit called Hands Across Cultures, states:

The whole emphasis of what we are trying to do is based on the concept that I've defined . . . and that is *la cultura cura*, the culture cures. Our belief is that a lot of what's happening in our communities here in northern New Mexico has to do with somewhat with a loss of culture (Lowe 1997).

This framework often produces a definition of ethnicity, language habits and culture presumed to constitute the identity categorized as an authentic lifeway. The referential contents of culture are identified as art, food, and tradition (Santiago-Irizarry 1996). In the same video where, Montoya cited culture as the cure, he said:

The food, the music, I mean that is a beautiful thing of who we are as a people. The dance, the traditions we have within the Hispano and Indian cultures. The things we have done for thousands of years that have been passed from generation to generations. And we need to see those as curative factors, resilient factors in terms of this is who we are (Lowe 1997).

Culture has become a reified object that you either have, or that you have lost. Finally, in the particular context of northern New Mexico, this definition of culture is often specifically tied to a traditional agricultural economy and the alienation of that economy's land base. This etiology of culture loss is often directly transposed onto the Española Valley by community leaders in their confrontation of the Valley's problems. Montoya's organization offers educational services intended to both prevent substance abuse and promote cultural activities.

Members of the area's emergent middle class as well as sympathetic Anglos have increasingly taken up this rhetoric of culture loss. Community leaders' specific responses to these issues tend to take three forms: (1) denial of the problem and assertion of the continuity of tradition; (2) the assertion of cultural disintegration; or (3) the advocating of a return to traditional culture. Española mayor and Democrat Richard Lucero steered me clear of negative portrayals of the community to discussions of traditional culture, regional roots, and the community's impoverishment at the hands of external forces. State Senator Richard Martinez went even further. At a traditional healing conference sponsored by a local treatment provider, Martinez attributed the area's reputation as a drug Mecca to sensationalist stories from the local newspaper, the *Rio Grande Sun*.

In contrast, comments by Anglo residents such as Bruce Richardson of the Chimayó Crime Prevention organization and Suellen Strale of the Chimayó Youth Conservation Corp, often represent the community as culturally bankrupt. For example, Strale stated in a front page article in the Dallas Morning News, "I suppose that there's no place like it on earth" and continued, "You live in this beautifully pure place and a low rider passes you slowly on the road and the driver pretends to shoot you. You look in his eyes and see pure evil" (Weyerman 2000:A1).

More thoughtfully, a report published by Rio Arriba Department of Health and Human Services attempted to account for and recapture drug use within the traditional culture paradigm. The study's author, Laureen Reichelt, County Director of Health and Human Services, attributed the area's high rates of drug use to "culturally specific issues such as land loss and disintegration of Española's agricultural economy and related social institutions" (Reichelt 2001). She further recommended efforts to promote local culture and return traditional lands now in the hands of the Forest Service to village communities. Harry Montoya even more explicitly attributes substance abuse to colonialism and an accompanying Americanization that causes tremendous social and psychic pain. Interestingly, Santa Cruz parish priest Fr. Ron Carrillo is a driving force in Montoya's nonprofit organization, Hands Across Culture. Similarly, Montoya is a Eucharistic minister at Carrillo's parish. Further, Hands Across Cultures's efforts to reinvigorate traditional cultural forms seems to complement Carrillo's own vision for parish youth. Following this logic, social problems are characterized by culture's perceived absence, and therefore, a logical solution is to inoculate people with culture.

Chellis Glendinning's popularly oriented book *Chiva: A Village Takes on the Global Heroin Trade* fully elaborates this conceptualization of drug use and community efforts to combat it (Glendinning 2005). Glendinning connects global problems to the suffering and intimate details of her life and the lives of people close to her. However, at the local level, her description of the area residents' mobilization elides the tremendous visionary and practical conflicts that sometimes tear the groups apart and often sets participants against one another. Furthermore, when the greater Española Valley is understood as a whole, Chimayó's partial success combating

endemic drug use must be understood in the context of an increase on other Valley communities and the Valley's overall lack of decline in fatal overdoses.

In this way, these area residents— a disproportionate number being members of Española's emerging middle class and Anglo immigrants—attempt to quarantine the disruptive and ineffable negativity of drug use within the narratives of traditional culture. In the context of the complex and internally differentiated subjectivities described by drug users and their often precarious but thoroughly modern economic and social positions, the notion of cultural renewal becomes a panacea for social problems. Here again, Rodríguez's comments that I cited in the introduction are insightful. In reference to her own ethnographic research in Taos and other New Mexican locations, she says that in New Mexico, like the rest of the United States, discourses of ethnicity, race, and gender displace, submerge, and simultaneously fuse with those of class. In the upper Rio Grande Valley, she said normative discourses of traditional culture such as honor-*respeto*, religion, family, and nation are not merely Nuevomexicano traditional values. Instead, she said they are also middle class values. She contended that multiple social foils set the parameters for this construct and represent lower class embodiments. Indeed, the effort to use traditional culture as the cure for addiction is an acrobatic and concise fusion a middle class strategy for achieving and maintaining middle class status and return to "traditional" Nuevomexicano values.

Let's Get Real

While providing a useful explanation for drug use, the logic of culture loss fails to understand drug use on its own terms. In this chapter, I instead try to understand what drug use does for drug users in the Española Valley. I found that drug use momentarily negates, transforms, or displaces the drug users' multiple and proliferating desires. I also suggest that, following on the comments by Joey Jaramillo that are cited in this chapter's introduction, these community leaders' idealized vision of cultural tradition and its divergence from many area residents' experience has become a painful contradiction in its own right. While this contention is largely my interpretation of drug users' acts and statements, one drug user makes this argument

explicit. Facing community leaders' assertions of tradition head on, Lonnie Martinez describes his drug use as a remaking of the world and negation of the past. Indeed, for him the contradictions between his experience and those envisioned by community leaders may be part of what makes drug use so attractive to him in the first place. Moreover, in the context of Rodríguez's comments, Martinez's shared aim at "the elders" and "society" that I will outline below becomes an intuitive grasping and aggressive play on Española's homegrown and emerging middle class's pretensions.

Down a potholed road, past an Española supermarket, stands a newly rebuilt, multistoried, government subsidized apartment building. Inside, on an early October afternoon, I sat on Lonnie Martinez's couch and chain smoked cigarettes as he and a young woman found the correct spot to insert their respective hypodermic needles. As I sat and smoked, the woman, careful not to leave track marks in a visible spot, disappeared into the bathroom and perhaps stuck the needle between her toes or some other hidden location. Martinez inserted the needle in his arm. Before his fix, Martinez and I matter-of-factly discussed money and health issues, but afterwards he was in a much better mood and he was no longer talking business. He insisted that in shooting up he both alleviated the physical pain caused by the fresh beatings evidenced on his face and a lifelong lack of proper medical care. Perhaps even more importantly, he explained, "Why we do it? To me, it's just a medication, a product that I use in order to live the way I want, how I like to create and build what I want, if I want, where I want." Martinez said:

Being in this part of the country, New Mexico, we relate to the elders, the traditions and that doesn't work no more. That's not what's happening no more. . . . You see the grandchildren selling an acre of land for two grams of heroin because they sign the signatures. You see the little old man over here across the street in the old age home. All they talk about, "Oh I had two hundred and forty acres of land" and they're telling the truth, and then you see their children that sold all their land asking for dimes and quarters to get their bag of heroin right down the block.

He continued, "I can't use grandpa to teach 'eeh *hijito*[my child] over here is how to use a needle to plow the land.' [A young person] ain't got no fucking interest in plowing land. Put grandpa out to pasture. Let's get real." Nevertheless, the more frequent target of Martinez's criticism was directed at what he saw as mainstream society. Martinez said:

They'd rather put me in a cave than have me in society. Little do they know we have our own society. They know, but they'd rather have us out of their society. They couldn't function to begin with. They're barely able to function in their own society. They other day my psych [psychologist] said, "Well that's crazy?" I said, Oh well everybody in the world's crazy in one way or the other. The only thing that divides is those of us that knows it, deals with it, work with it, accept it and are comfortable with it. But look at those that pilot planes, drive trains, educate our children, rolling and running our government that are crazy and don't even know it. My God, why do they think we're going through what we're going through in the world today? You know?

After fixing, Martinez opened his apartment's front door and friends and neighbors began to stop in and some took beers from his refrigerator. An older woman offered swigs from a pint bottle. In pleasant anticipation, they discussed the food Martinez and several of the women had prepared earlier and that now simmered upstairs. In sum, Martinez told me that via heroin, cocaine, alcohol, prescription drugs, and other substances, he could create his own world while sitting in the physical surroundings of his government-subsidized apartment, and he could move on from the past. For a moment at least, in the act of using, Martinez felt good and his problems were forgotten.

Martinez's personal description of intergenerational drug use and dissatisfaction with both tradition and modernity had resonance for some other addicts and seemed more generally applicable to the experience of other users. When asked why he used drugs, Joey Jaramillo said he enjoyed the high and feeling of power that "holding the bag" or controlling the drugs supplied. He said, "I just liked

it, you know?" His comments are similar to those I heard from other current and former drug users in the Española Valley. Jaramillo concluded, "Everybody just likes it around here. That's all." On another occasion as I sat at a table with both Martinez and Jaramillo, Jaramillo said, "Yeah, it's a tradition, a generation man! It's tradition. That's right," and Martinez responded, "And it's a ritual of tradition for four generations."

Bulletproof

I began this chapter by describing how Joey Jaramillo rejected a simple causal explanation for his addiction and the Valley's high rate of addiction. Rather, Jaramillo insisted that he used because he "liked it." I posited that part of what he liked about drug use is that drug use is a visceral, embodied practice that overcomes the contradictions of their lives. In this transcendence, for many, emerges a tremendous feeling of power. Jaramillo said:

I could shoot myself in the chest and who cares you know what I mean? That kind of stuff. Bulletproof . . . Man! Do you know what I mean? And I never ever got busted. Never in my whole my life. No and I used to bring it in. I used pick it off of planes. I've always had plenty. I've never held a job more than a couple of paychecks when I was really hurting. Get a couple of paychecks and that was it. I'd quit. Just like go to those rehabs somewhere. You know what I mean?

This creative power of drug use cannot be grasped by a culture loss model. Rather, getting high is somehow regenerative as well as destructive and Feliz Chacon, Lonnie Martinez, and Charlie Lucero are "fixing" the contradictions of an emerging Nuevomexicano condition. This regenerative power suggests why drug use is so widespread. Further anecdotal and state Department of Health statistics for Rio Arriba County indicate many Valley residents are experiencing great pain and loss. A recent study of 286 people arrested in Rio Arriba County, New Mexico State University Public Administration Professor Russell Winn found very high rates of drugs and

alcohol use and his preliminary results suggest widespread depression and traumatic experiences (Winn 2005:41–46). Substance use has become participant in a synergetic death spiral that promises to relieve the pain it has simultaneously come to create. Certainly, this synergy plays a role in the following statistics: In Rio Arriba County, cirrhosis mortality death rates are more than four times the national average, homicide rates are over twice the national average, suicide rates are more than three times the national average. Motor vehicle death rates are nearly four times the national average (Halasan et al. 2001).

In this sense, drug use cannot be dismissed as merely social pathology. Consider that, for the moment following his fix, 23-year-old Charlie Lucero experienced a profound, if illusory, reversal of fortune. Without drastically changing his life circumstances or returning to the land, he left behind the relatively downtrodden position of a working-class Española youth. Instead, Lucero felt great power, became a "king," and his worries were forgotten. Similarly, Jaramillo became, for a while, an important man who "held the bag," and Lisa Marie Martinez could forget her pain. Drawing on Walter Benjamin, we might say that this transcendence is experienced as a feeling that is beyond or prior to culture. Benjamin described it as thrown "in ample handfuls to existence."

In this context, drug use may be seen as motivated by a utopian impulse that seeks to render whole the fragmentation of drug users daily lives. In shooting up, "smoking crack," or popping pills, as if in some sublime, momentary and horrible Hegelian overcoming, the most painful contradictions of late capitalism are confronted, negated, transformed, or displaced through symbolic violence. An Española Valley heroin addict named Michael Trujillo made this point in both poetic and terrible terms.¹⁰⁶ He said, "Electrified paralyzed look in my eyes. Illusion, confusion without compromise. Consolation, segregation, darkness and meditation.

¹⁰⁶ Although we share the same name, the poet and heroin user Michael Trujillo is in no way related to the author of this paper. While I have used pseudonyms for the names of all other illicit drug users, I use Trujillo's actual name because he has appeared in public forums. Indeed, while he also told me the poetic line footnoted here, he also recited it on a Nightline segment aired January 29, 2001. The segment cited his actual name and featured footage of him using heroin.

Dying will I rise." Another current user, whose father was murdered and whose mother died from cirrhosis of the liver, described his overdose experiences in terms that suggest a similarly transcendence that simultaneously burrows into an embodied misery. He told La Luz:

I got in the habit of playing Russian Roulette . . . Like when you fill up your syringe full of cocaine, say that much [holding his thumb and index fingers about two inches apart] and shoot in your neck, and you don't know if you're going to make it to the dark side or the light side . . . [I did it] for entertainment. I didn't have anything better do (Willging et al. 2003:51–52).

Joey Jaramillo also speaks of drugs and death:

I've never wanted to quit. I've always liked it. I've always loved drugs. Even, even after a friend dies, what did we do? We'd . . . go throw a party. That's what we'd do. Instead of talking and watching the funeral cars come up the hill. We were already drinking and pounding and, already did it man. And that's the reason our friends die.

In a moment of reflection on his description of partying after the death of a friend, Joey Jaramillo said in a manner that suggests both his anguish and the strength of drug use to momentarily overcome irreconcilable contradictions. He said, "It makes no sense man. You know what I mean? It makes no fucking sense." This, I submit, is what makes drug use so seductive and why "everybody just likes it around here."

CONCLUSION
Of Jokes and Redemption

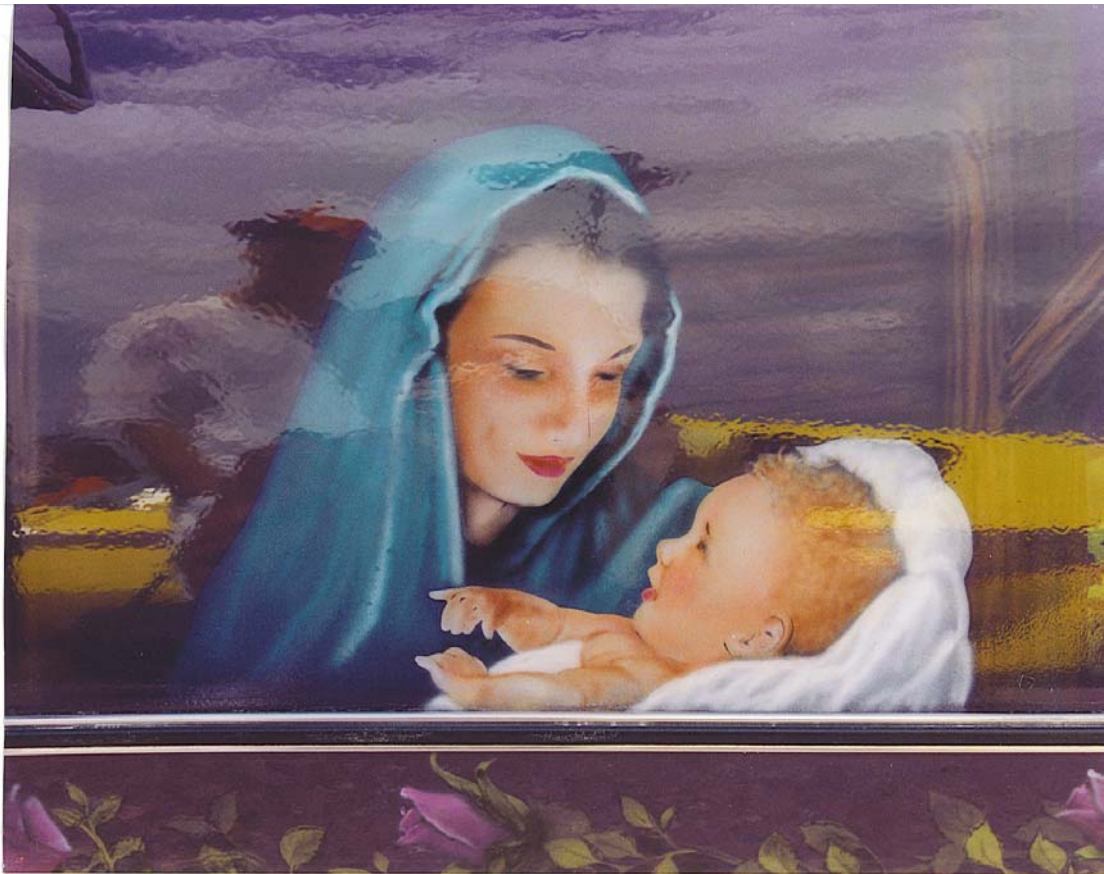


Figure 21. Reflecting Icons. A painting on a car at the 2001 San Juan car show at the Ohkay Casino. An onlooker and another car may be seen reflected in the painting.

CONCLUSION

Of Jokes and Redemption

If there is no joke in the social structure, no other can appear (Douglas 1968: 366).

Colorado College folklorist Mario Montaña describes an encounter that required him to reconceptualize northern New Mexico. Montaña is a good storyteller and the frequency with which he describes this event suggests he treasures the experience. In the mid-1990s, Montaña brought a group of Colorado College students to northern New Mexico with the objective of learning about New Mexican Hispanic culture. While stopped at a grocery store/gas station in Española, Montaña was approached by a middle-aged man who wanted to know what the professor and his students were doing in his town. After being told of the purpose of the trip, the man challenged the professor:

Yes, everybody comes to New Mexico to see the Land of Enchantment, but look around at all these problems we have, it's no enchantment. Santa Fe is enchantment. Albuquerque is enchantment, but here, check it out, there are serious problems (Montaña personal communication 2004).

According to Montaña's narrative, the folklorist was first taken aback and not sure what the man meant. But as a good social scientist should, he engaged the man in conversation. Clearly proud of his hometown and seeking to teach Montaña and his students, the man became their guide for the day. A generous host, he even brought Montaña, a specialist in foodways, and his students to his home where they cooked a meal together. As a good story should, this narrative has a moral at the end. Despite

these "serious problems" or, perhaps, because of them, the man privileged Española as a more genuine or authentic social geography than the "enchantment" of neighboring communities.

Like the man that approached Montañño and challenged neighboring communities' narratives of New Mexico with a guided tour, I have taken the reader on a journey through the area's social geography. Like all tours, mine was selective and remains incomplete, but, in the trip, I hope the reader has found something useful. Like the local man, I believe we explored something more "real" than the Land of Enchantment. Here, facing tourist industry discourses that commodify local landscapes and identities and homegrown narratives that ossify Nuevomexicano culture in terms of adobe construction, a particular agro-pastoral economy, and the Spanish language is something else: the community that Marco Cholo founded. In such a place, negativity erupts and challenges, often stifling positive narratives, and produces the embroideries of Policarpio Valencia, the poetry and prose of Jim Sagel, weavings of Teresa Archuleta, and also Oñate's Passion and disproportionate fatal overdose rates. In other words, in Española, the utopic Land of Enchantment is faced by the gross injustices of the real world.

A Mad Medley

In his essay "The Forms of Wildness," historian Hayden White deploys a conceptualization of wildness that is relevant to our exploration of negativity in Española (1978:150–182). For White, wildness belongs to a set of culturally authenticating devices that includes the ideas of "madness" and "heresy." These devices serve primarily to confirm the value of their positive dialectical antitheses "civilization," "sanity," and "orthodoxy."

White tells us that in times of socio-cultural stress and the need for positive self-identification, people and social groups may prove their own felt humanity through the negation of what they are not. He describes the process of ostensive self-definition by negation. He writes:

If we are unsure of what sanity is, we can at least identify madness when we see it. Similarly, in the past, when men were uncertain as to the precise quality of their sensed humanity, they appealed to the concept of wildness to designate an area of subhumanity that was characterized by everything that they hoped they were not (1978:152).

His essay thus traces the trope of wildness and its classical, Judeo-Christian, and modern forms and explores the manner that Wild Man has been both an ideal (the noble savage) and nightmare (the just plain savage) for Western thought.

White tells us that in previous times, wildness and the Wild Man were "others" that inhabited an existence that was supposedly closer to nature and more primal, but White argues that in the present era the predominant conceptualization of wildness has been despatialized and attended by a compensatory process of psychic interiorization. In this way, according to White, wildness is now no longer primarily located in "other" wilderness inhabiting peoples. Rather, in modern times, the concept of wildness tends to be conflated with the popular notions of psychosis and is therefore understood as a form of sickness and to reflect a personality malfunction in the individual's relation to society. Thus, wildness is now most often seen lurking within every person and is "clamoring for release within us all." Wildness and the Wild Man are thus projections of repressed desires and anxieties (negativity) that are made necessary by ideals of ordered civilization (positivity) and simultaneously define, emerge and contest their antitheses.

In a more confounding and ultimately more powerful work, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing*, Michael Taussig explores and performs through his text a similar sense of negative (Taussig 1987). However, he is more concerned with the power of taking wildness and order into oneself. As I stated in this dissertation's introduction, Taussig's negativity is the spirit of the unknown and the disorderly that is loose in the forest encircling the city and the agricultural lands and disrupts the conventions upon which meaning and the shaping function of images rest. Taussig states that in their myths of wild Indians, colonizing

Colombians find a healing power. In other words, Taussig finds that the colonizer reifies his or her myths about the savage, becomes subject to their power, and in so doing seeks salvation from the civilization that torments him or her as much as the savage on whom he or she has projected an antiself.

Hegel, himself, has something to say about such moments (Hegel 1977:317–318). In them, the symbolic order—in Hegel's language the "Spirit"—comments on itself, Hegel says is the perversion of every notion and reality. But more importantly he states the shamelessness gives utterance to this self commentary is for that reason the greatest truth. Citing Diderot's *Nephew of Rameau*, he writes that this kind of talk is the madness of the musician that mixed together thirty arias, Italian, French, tragic, and comic. The musician sings in turn a frantic and soothed and imperious and mocking manner. Singing in a deep bass he or she descends into hell, and then in a falsetto tone rends the vaults of heaven (Hegel 1977:317–318).

According to Hegel, such mad singing will appear to the tranquil subject as, on the one hand, a rigmarole of wisdom and folly, skill and baseness, correct and false ideas; and, on the other hand, a mixture compounded by a perversion of sentiment, absolute shamefulness, and of perfect frankness and truth (Hegel 1977:317–318). The tranquil subject will be unable to refrain from entering into all the music without running up and down the entire scale of feelings, from the depths of contempt to the highest pitch of admiration and emotion. But blended with the tranquil subject's admiration, will be a tinge of ridicule that spoils it. However, the musician and others that revel in such a mad medley "will find in their very frankness a strain of reconciliation, will find in their subversive depths the all-powerful note which restores Spirit to itself" (Hegel 1977:317–318).

Something Inherently Comic

In medleys and journeys such as this dissertation's, we find a slippery, shifting subject who lacks stable support in the fully articulated discourses. This shifty subject is sustained by a relationship to the pure remainder or excess—to negativity. According to influential cultural critic Slavoj Žižek, another way of thinking of this

negativity is as something undignified or inherently comic. Žižek would call a little bit of the Real (Žižek 2000:43). Moreover, this suggests the subversive potential of Española joke when told by G. Benito Córdova. This subversion is prompted by the even more disturbing joke in the social structure.¹⁰⁷ Žižek writes, "such an identification with the leftover, of course, introduces the mocking-comic mode of existence, the parodic process of the constant subversion of all firm symbolic identifications" (Žižek 2000:43). As weaver Teresa Archuleta said, "Its right in your face and it's ugly sometimes and its discouraging and you just want to scream. But you know what? It's humanity."

Before I go further, I also feel compelled to add two caveats to the subversive potential of the comic element of this subversion. First, most tellers of Española jokes are not telling these jokes with irony, and to simply revel in their humor would implicate the teller in the joke's explicit racism. Moreover, in this dissertation the disproportionate suffering of people in the Española Valley must be described with empathy and never reduced to a laughing matter. Second, the actions such as drug use and suicide, of people described in this dissertation, are profoundly painful and destructive. Indeed, several days before I wrote these paragraphs, I learned that the husband of a woman I met in the course of my fieldwork was stabbed to death. Both she and her 13-year-old daughter were brutally killed. The bodies of the woman and young girl were then burned.¹⁰⁸ No writing strategy can alter this suffering and pain.

Still, I am certain there is value in exploring the negative, and its dark and subversive humor. Ultimately, in writing this dissertation, my goal is to challenge New Mexican ethnography. I argue that Española and places like it—places that

¹⁰⁷ As I also noted in this dissertation's introduction, Española is also the object of jokes because of the "-isms" such as racism and classism that pervade US society. But more importantly, for me, Española also possesses a subversive humor.

¹⁰⁸ As I write this, the police are investigating with the theory that nobody "outside" the household was involved in the murder. Rather, the household members seem to have engaged in a deadly fight and the husband burned his wife and daughters bodies before his own death from his wounds.

plainly retain their alterity in the face of the "City Different"—are the tests and measures for the ethnography of Chicanos in northern New Mexico.¹⁰⁹ Because, after all, the complex and internally differentiated subject positions epitomized in the negative by Córdova's stereotypical cholo that discovered Española have long been and are ever more increasingly part of the Nuevomexicano condition. Moreover, the implications of Española's condition are wide. If Española is the supposed geographic locus that marks the eruption of the haunting inverse of the positive, there is a little bit of Española in every northern New Mexican community, and perhaps any community anywhere.

For a brief time in the 1980s, even the Española Valley Chamber of Commerce seemed to agree and also took a joking attitude. The chamber produced an ad campaign that sought to turn the Valley's reputation to their commercial advantage. An ad from *New Mexico* magazine features a tourist trumpeting Española's lowriders and references the common practice of modifying these cars with "hydraulics" so they can bounce and thus "dance." Dressed in denim and a cowboy hat, the fictional (and definitely "Anglo") tourist states: "I've seen the Taj Mahal, a pacific sunset, and the northern lights, but not 'til I visited the Española Valley had I seen a '55 Chevy do a mating dance.' L-B (Formerly of New York.)" According to the *New York Times* article, the chamber of commerce intended to follow the first ad with a second that would depict a conquistador eyeing a low rider and its driver and saying, "The natives seem friendly enough but they do ride strange mounts." Similarly, Chamber of Commerce bumper stickers from the period state, "Española, when you're through kidding around," "Española, a great place, all joking aside," and, "Española, a great story. Have you heard it?"

In this way, Española is a location where negativity often overwhelms positive assertions such as the New Mexico myths of enchantment and tricultural harmony. Here, complex subjectivities saturate the landscape and provide derisive jokes with a potentially subversive humor that give hope to the writer of this dissertation and

¹⁰⁹ Santa Fe has been nicknamed "The City Different" by civic boosters that seek to both highlight its multicultural history and the special influence of artists in the community.

perhaps the reader, too. As I have shown in this dissertation, such stories have continue into the present. On April 11, 2005, a group of men from Chimayó broke the world record for truck hopping at a car show in California. Jennifer L. Greff of the *Rio Grande Sun* writes:

When it hops 82 inches in the air—almost seven feet from the ground to the front tire—the yellow Ford Ranger is practically perpendicular to the pavement. The truck, created by Ray's Auto shop in Chimayó, impressed onlookers from all over the word (Greff 2005).

A Strain of Redemption

Hegel comments that the musician that will revel in mad medleys will find a powerful note that restores spirit to itself and, I suspect, he would agree that cars that move vertically as well as horizontally evoke the same feelings. In this dissertation and the accompanying journey, I too am searching for such notes and I believe that I have found a few. Indeed, this dissertation may be read as a search for such notes of reconciliation and redemption. However, for Hegel or current critics such as Žižek, it is a mistake to believe the specific acts along the way, such as Hegel's musician's thirty arias, the specifics of hopping cars, Policarpio Valencia's embroidery, Sagel and Archuleta's visions, Oñate's passion, or drug use provide the lessons to be learned. Bearing the cruel weight of such experience, cultural critic Walter Benjamin cautions:

It is a cardinal error to believe that, of "surrealist experiences," we know only the religious ecstasies or the ecstasies of drugs. . . . But the true, creative overcoming of religious illumination certainly does not lie in narcotics. It resides in a profane illumination, a materialistic, anthropological inspiration to which hashish, opium or whatever else can give a preliminary lesson (Benjamin 1978:179).

Similarly, I would argue the lesson does not lie in positive forms such as "culture" or the specifics of that something beyond culture that is expressed negatively — that something that Benjamin calls being thrown into ample handfuls to existence. Rather, this is a lesson in form rather than content. In such medleys and journeys we enter into history and find the significance in the transformation itself. The lesson lies in positivity and negativity's juxtaposition, mutual recreation, and overcoming. As Jean-Luc Nancy has stated, "It is thus not a point; it is the passage, the negativity in which the cutting edge of sense gets experienced as never before" (Nancy 2002:6–7).

Such stories of embodied negativity and wildness are not limited to the Española Valley. Pauline Turner Strong has shown that narratives of capture by Native Americans were fundamental to the historical creation of Anglo American identity and the American nation. In these stories, "struggles of collective Self surrounded by a threatening but enticing wilderness, a Self that seeks to domesticate this wilderness as well as the savagery within itself, and that opposes itself to Others portrayed as savage, bestial, demonic, and seductive" (Strong 1999:1). In reference to more current times, Kathleen Stewart has described negativity as a central component of the redemptive violence that she calls a surge in the America dream (Stewart n.d.) and also warns us that American dreams can be nightmares (Stewart 2000). Of particular relevance to this dissertation, she writes that the redemptive violence is "working-class men standing like bulkheads against evil and disaster and overprotective parents whipped into violent deeds to protect their children and drug addicts slashing at social ideals as they drift through the tortured downward spiral of the American Dream" (Stewart n.d.: 1).

If American dreams have such antitheses, it is little surprise that the Land of Enchantment does too. Here again the work of Enrique Lamadrid is relevant. In the course of a short conversation where I described my research, Lamadrid directed me to one of his essays. In a book of photographs by Lamadrid's colleague and collaborator Miguel Gandert, Lamadrid draws explicit connections to the negative powers of inebriation (Gandert et al. 2000, Lamadrid 2000). Up the Chama river, to the north of Española, in the village of Abiquiú, an annual celebration is held to honor

the village's mestizo and *genízaro* heritage (Lamadrid 2000:57). In the colonial times, *genízaros* were both indigenous people who were captured in raids on native peoples or ransomed from other native groups and thus detribalized and incorporated into colonial society, and the *genízaro* ancestry of many people in Abiquiú has been well documented as well as remembered (Córdova 1979). Each November at the time of the feast of Santo Tomás the Apostle this memory is enacted by village children dressed in bright red cloth, buckskin, scarves, ribbons, feathers, and Tewa-style face paint. Moreover, these dances call to memory the fact that many New Mexican villagers were also the victims of raids and themselves then incorporated into native societies.

Among the songs and dances that speak to these origins is a particularly apt acting-out of captivity and redemption. Lamadrid states that the dancers take a prisoner from the crowd. The captives represent either indigenous people being sold or a former village resident whose relatives must pay a ransom. But of most concern for us here is that after the ransom is paid, community members perform *El Boracho* (The Drunkard). In this dance, dancers circle around each other as though falling down drunk and one waves a nearly empty whisky bottle. Lamadrid writes, "There is something strangely triumphant in these ironic antics and gestures. The people achieve communion and victory through sharing alcohol. Both women and men make ululations or 'war cries' during the dance" (Lamadrid 2000:58). Lamadrid concludes that Indo-Hispano heritage has a dark side that he says stems from the historical struggle. He states the satire and burlesque of the dance minimize the pain of such memories. I would add that the pain of such memories infuses a sort of humor into the satire and burlesque. Moreover, such burlesque and pain speak to redemptive, if often destructive, forms.

Along these lines, in the wake of seeing Oñate's passion, I began to listen with more empathy to other insurgent tellings of Christ's suffering. Perhaps influenced by their Catholic milieu and the upsurge of evangelical churches such as The Española Christian Center, Victory Faith, and Rock Christian Outreach, I have heard drug users and sellers describe their own bible meetings and claim Christ's suffering as their

own. Michael Trujillo, the addict and poet, finds redemption in his own, at least partially self-inflicted, suffering. He wrote the prayer on a yellow sheet of steno-pad paper and gave it to me over a year before I saw the hypodermic-needle-bearing Oñate. Trujillo saw divinity in the deaths of his friends and his own pain and claims a place for himself and other illicit drug users in Christ's suffering. He signed the prayer, "Micho Sicko." In such a prayer Hegel's dialectic remains open. And we are witness to the world's entry into a history in which the point is transformation itself. He wrote:

Brother Christ. Forgive me.
Lord, grant me all the grace
to rejoice with you and
my brothers and sisters and loved
ones that have left this world
for death in this world is
only the beginning of eternal joy
and happiness made possible
by the death and resurrection
of your son in Jesus Christ
I claim the blood of the lamb
I am on my way.¹¹⁰

One suspects that Trujillo, a man that has spent much of his life in prison and other institutions, would include both Carlos Herrera and his victims in this prayer. Perhaps, this prayer would also include Don Juan de Oñate, Policarpio Valencia, Darryl Francis Galván (a.k.a. "El Americano"), Jim Sagel and Teresa Archuleta, the friends of Acoma and the Director of the Oñate Center, Charles Briggs, Paul Kutsche, the Española ethnographers, and, maybe, even you and me.

¹¹⁰ I have standardized the spelling in Trujillo's prayer.

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VITA

Michael Leon Trujillo was born in Ellensburg, Washington on March 22, 1971. He is the son of Gregory Trujillo and Gladiola Eleanor Trujillo. Michael Trujillo graduated from Ellensburg High School in 1989 and entered Central Washington University (CWU) in 1990. In 1995, he received both a Bachelors of Science in Anthropology and a Bachelors of Arts in Spanish from CWU. In September of 1996, Trujillo entered the Graduate School of the University of Texas. In 1998, he received a Masters of Arts in Anthropology. Trujillo has taught courses at Colorado College, the University of Texas at Austin, and the University of New Mexico at Los Alamos.

Permanent Address: 1213 Custer Ave, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80903.

This dissertation was typed by the author.