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Chicana Ghosts:

An Interdisciplinary Examination of Epistemic Hauntings in Academia

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts
in Chicana and Chicano Studies

by

Brenda Selena Lara

2019

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Chicana Ghosts:

An Interdisciplinary Examination of Epistemic Hauntings in Academia

by

Brenda Selena Lara

Master of Arts in Chicana and Chicano Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2019

Professor Alicia Gaspar de Alba, Chair

In this thesis, I examine Chicana English Professor Lora Romero's life and death as a Stanford University haunting. A haunting that, I argue, has both epistemic and deadly consequences. These consequences include *epistemic unconfidence* and *epistemic haunting*. What I term *epistemic unconfidence* leads Chicanas/Latinas to deny not only their own knowledge or lose knowledge but subsequently also deny their own humanity. *Epistemic haunting* is both a methodology and a theoretical framework for understanding knowledge and ontology. I coin epistemic haunting as knowledge that continues to lurk and highlight a continuous, unsolved social violence.

I demonstrate that Stanford's epistemic haunting is a collective construction that impacts Chicana academics' lives. In this thesis, I expand on studies in hauntology, building on sociologist Avery Gordon's interpretation of "haunting." I contend that white heteropatriarchal epistemes continue to haunt Chicana academics. Through a comparative analysis of Lora Romero's life and

death, alongside the Mexican and Chicana folkloric icon La Llorona (Weeping Woman), I demonstrate how the negation of queer Chicanas knowledge can lead to gendered, queered, and racialized violence in academia. As I interpret Romero's narrative, I show how she is a Llorona that the academy framed, but who nonetheless resisted these academic boundaries.

The thesis of Brenda Selena Lara is approved.

Sherene Razack

Karina Alma

Alicia Gaspar de Alba, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2019

DEDICATION

Para Las Lloronas
Para Mi Mama Tavy
Para Lora

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INTRODUCTION

La Llorona at Stanford

On October 10th, 1997, Stanford University was missing a queer woman of color from its campus. Thirty-three miles away from Palo Alto's academic streets, the small coastal city of Pacifica, CA, had temporarily gained an occupant.¹ This woman had checked into one of the city's motels, with no intention of checking out. That Friday, in this unknown coastal motel room, she committed suicide. Her name was Lora Romero. An assistant professor at Stanford University's English department, who decided she could no longer live, let alone be an assistant professor at the university. On Thursday, October 14th, Romero's physical body was still absent from the campus, but her presence was no longer missing. Stanford's campus community had become aware of her death,² a community that she had been actively involved in since she was an undergraduate student at the university, and who as a professor, colleague, mentor, and friend continuously supported Chicana/o students and their knowledge. By Friday, October 15th, Lora Romero's name and story jumped out of the front cover of every issue of *The Stanford Daily*, the student-run newspaper, and Palo Alto's various newspapers' memorial sections.³ A queer Chicana who had been very present at Stanford for years was finally being noticed inside the university, but now, as a ghost.

In this thesis, I explore this Stanford University haunting. A haunting that, I argue, has both epistemic and deadly consequences. I demonstrate that this haunting—both a methodology and a theoretical framework for understanding knowledge and ontology—is a collective construction that impacts Chicana academics' lives. I expand on studies in hauntology, especially sociologist Avery Gordon's interpretation of "haunting" to contend that Chicana academics, like Lora Romero,

¹ Marcella Bernhard, "Former RF Romero Dies," *The Stanford Daily*, Vol. 212 no. 19, October 15, 1997.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.* The article is shown on page 3 of the introduction as Figure 1.

continue to be haunted by the repetitive "unsolved violence"⁴ caused by white heteropatriarchal epistememes. Through a comparative analysis of former Stanford University English professor Lora Romero's life and death, alongside the Mexican and Chicana folkloric icon La Llorona (Weeping Woman), I demonstrate how the negation of queer Chicanas knowledge can lead to gendered, queered, and racialized violence in academia. This negation emulates the queer feminist symbolism in mythical hauntings. This folkloric symbolism is not exclusive to Chicana scholars, as it is present in women of color scholar's work globally, as seen in the work of U.S. Central American theorist Karina Alma's "cigua resistance" that utilizes the Salvadoran folkloric figure as a symbol for Latina resistance to cultural machismo.⁵ I chose to examine La Llorona because, as a folkloric figure, she has been used as a metaphor by Chicana scholars to symbolize a queer Chicana feminist repression and oppression within heteropatriarchy. La Llorona's folktale is retold as that of a marginalized woman and victim of violence under Spanish colonial rule who, as an act of resistance and defiance murders her children and commits suicide in a river. After her death, she returns to haunt that location, screaming for her children at night as she wanders the riverbank. Her narrative exemplifies the voiceless woman finding a voice, even if it only occurs in the afterlife. Lora Romero's life and death are significant to demonstrating this violence in several ways, including through tenure denial, disproportional policies for faculty, and a lack of consideration for her non-academic involvements at Stanford University. Her death as suicide shows the consequences of institutional oppression and academic depression. Lora Romero is a Chicana

⁴ The phrase "unsolved violence" is referencing haunting in Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, xvi.

⁵ Karina Oliva Alvarado, "A Gynealogy of Cigua Resistance: La Ciguanaba, Prudencia Ayala, and Leticia Hernandez-Linares in Conversation" in *U.S. Central Americans: Reconstructing Memories, Struggles, and Communities of Resistance*, Edited by Karina O. Alvarado, Alicia Ivonne Estrada, and Ester E. Hernandez, Tuscan: University of Arizona Press, 2017, 101.

ghost that lives in the margins of academia. She is a Llorona figure within Stanford University's walls.

VOLUME 212 NUMBER 19

Former RF Romero dies

By Marcella Bernhard
Editorial staff

Students, faculty and staff are grieving today after learning of the death of Lora Romero, an assistant English professor and former resident fellow in Casa Zapata.

Romero was Zapata's resident fellow from 1995 to 1997.

According to the San Mateo County coroner's office, Romero committed suicide on Friday after checking in to a motel in Pacifica.

Most of the Stanford community, however, did not find out about Romero's death until yesterday.

Students yesterday praised Romero's openness and the guidance she provided as both a professor and resident fellow.



"She really cared about Zapata," said Edyelina Burciaga, a junior who was a Zapata theme associate last year. "It was important to her to make Zapata feel like a family."

Burciaga, who was recently married, recalled when Romero hosted a bachelorette party for Burciaga, friends and the house staff at her RF cottage last year.

"She opened her house to us. She was really open. We'll miss her," Burciaga said. "So many people cared about her."

Celia Garcia, a junior who lived in Zapata during her freshman and sophomore years, said that Romero was a role model and inspiration.

"She was loved by our community," Garcia said. "A lot of us Latinas looked up to her. She broke a lot of barriers, her work showed that."

Romero taught classes on Chicano literature and culture in the English Department, and also taught a class held at Zapata last year on videotaping Chicano culture.

Alan Acosta, the current resident fellow at Casa Zapata, hosted a gathering of about 40 students last night in his cottage to remember Romero.

A memorial service will be held in the coming weeks to remember Romero. The date and time will be announced.

Lora Romero

Figure 1 The Stanford Daily's article on Lora Romero's Death⁶

As a bisexual Chicana, aiming for a career in academia, this story is close to home. The theories I conceived, *epistemic unconfidence* and *epistemic haunting*, both derive from my

⁶ Marcella Bernhard, "Former RF Romero Dies," *The Stanford Daily*, Vol. 212 no. 19, October 15, 1997.

experiential experiences as a Philosophy B.A. and a Chicana/o Studies doctoral student at UCLA. I began to theorize about epistemic unconfidence when as an undergraduate queer Latina at a predominantly white private university I became aware of this feeling of discomfort and exclusion, as though the experiential knowledge I brought to my classrooms were not a valid or legitimate epistemology, which led to self-doubt. Expanding on feminist hauntology, death studies, and epistemic oppression, I came up with the terms epistemic unconfidence and epistemic haunting to depict a social and intellectual violence on queer of color academics', whose contributions to the literature have yet to be valued as legitimate academic or feminist discourse. Drawing on sociologist Avery Gordon's interpretation of "haunting," literary theorist Sharon Holland's "killing abstraction," alongside discussions on epistemology such as, Miranda Fricker's "epistemic injustice," I posit that the denial of knowledge also leads to a denial of humanity. This phenomenon is what I call epistemic unconfidence. While epistemic unconfidence occurs to the living, the concept of epistemic haunting pertains to both the living and the dead.

Epistemic unconfidence occurs when white heteropatriarchal subjects Chicanas/Latinas to exclusion, erasure, and marginalization. Within this phenomenon, agents that enact white heteropatriarchy, are unwilling to acknowledge Chicanas/Latinas as intellectual beings because their experiential knowledge does not square within the frames of "objective truth." What is objective truth? Does it even exist? What is objective truth, other than a self-proclaimed authority, based on Eurocentric colonial values?⁷ Consequently, the validation of Chicana and Latina knowledge corresponds to a validation of their humanity. Knowledge frames humanity, a knowledge that is associated with Eurocentrism.⁸ Epistemic unconfidence differs from the more

⁷ Walter D. Mignolo, "The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101 no. 1 (Winter 2002): 57-96, 67.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 80.

well-known imposter syndrome as it establishes a more insidious consequence. Philosopher Miranda Fricker's asserts the necessity of "epistemic confidence," establishing that a lack of "epistemic confidence" creates a loss of knowledge and an inability to be intellectually courageous.⁹ Fricker elaborates that an epistemic injustice occurs when an individual is "wronged as a giver of knowledge"¹⁰ or delegitimized.¹¹ I expand on Fricker's views, asserting that the internalization of epistemic unconfidence leads Chicanas/Latinas to deny not only their own knowledge or lose knowledge, but subsequently also deny their own humanity. Literary theorist Sharon Holland's "killing abstraction" also offers a stepping-stone to understanding how the denial of knowledge can lead to a denial of humanity. She asserts, "When 'living' is something to be *achieved* and not *experienced*, and figurative and literal death are very much a part of the social landscape, how do people of color gain a sense of empowerment?"¹² Holland's theory also applies to an intellectual death that disrupts people of color's subjectivity. For people that cannot "achieve" or "experience," Eurocentric knowledge they are cast off as non-intellectuals and subhuman. The inability to pursue knowledge is a factor that leads to the incapacity to pursue life.

It is important to note that I am not the first to theorize on the denial of humanity and knowledge, philosopher Frantz Fanon spoke of the denial of Black men's humanity in colonialism.¹³ Chicana historian, Emma Perez's literature shows how colonizers use theory to delegitimize Chicanas' experiential knowledge.¹⁴ Infamously, Gayatri Spivak's "Can the Subaltern

⁹ Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, 49.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 7.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 16.

¹² Sharon Holland, *Raising The Dead: Readings of Death and (Black) Subjectivity*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2000, 16.

¹³ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Trans. Constance Farrington, New York: Grove Atlantic Press, 1968.

¹⁴ Emma Perez, "Sexuality Discourse: Notes on a Chicana Survivor" in *Chicana Lesbians: The Girls Our Mothers Warned Us About*, Evanston: 3rd Woman Press, (1991): 159-84.

Speak?" relayed the epistemic violence, the "female intellectual" as the subaltern has endured.¹⁵ What distinguishes epistemic unconfidence, from past thought on knowledge and humanity, is the direct connection between Chicana's internalization of white heteropatriarchy that acts both as a negation of knowledge, but also a denial of subjectivity. A denial that enacts a dialectic as it occurs in a Chicana's life, but also denies her life.

Epistemic haunting also centers death. I coin *epistemic haunting*, as knowledge that continues to lurk and highlight a continuous, unsolved social violence.¹⁶ Sociologist Avery Gordon's definition of haunting establishes how haunting functions as a past trauma coming to light.¹⁷ I term epistemic haunting to determine a particular type of haunting rooted in knowledge denial. Having defined epistemic unconfidence it is essential to note its connection to epistemic haunting. While, epistemic unconfidence, is a phenomenon that only impacts the living, *epistemic haunting* is a reminder of the epistemic unconfidence that people endured. An epistemic haunting brings to light the many ways agents of white heteropatriarchy denied a ghost's knowledge. I utilize epistemic unconfidence and epistemic haunting with Lora Romero's narrative to establish the oppression she faced in the academy. As I shall note in the section "A Contemporary Chicana Haunting," Romero's death highlighted an epistemic haunting rooted in resolving the racial, gendered, and sexual oppression experienced by queer women of color in academia. Lora experienced persecution in several forms that haunted the university's episteme— this epistemic haunting, including delegitimizing her knowledge and led the institution to deny her tenure.

¹⁵ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Cary eds. Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, London: Macmillan Press, 1988, 66-111.

¹⁶ The phrase "continuous, unsolved social violence" draws on "unresolved social violence" mentioned in the work of Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, xvi.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

My goal in writing this thesis is to understand how Romero, both as a scholar and then as a ghostly figure, attempted to create home within Stanford's white heteropatriarchal epistemes, as well as to highlight the haunting consequences of her attempts to make a home. As I interpret her narrative, I demonstrate how the academy framed her and how in life she resisted this "frame." By centering her narrative, I am asserting that she is a Llorona. She is a woman whose cries were unheard in her life, but who did scream, a woman who faced the academy's oppression and did not survive it, a woman whose screams were heard only after she died, but as a queer Chicana ghost who can shed light on the hardship of other women of color in the academy who are in her position and may feel as she did.

In the following chapters, I utilize Latina feminist philosophy, hauntology, queer archival theory, and U.S. Central American and Chicana Feminisms to place Romero's lived experiences and knowledge in focus. The first chapter "Framing Home" brings together several feminist theories including philosopher Marianna Ortega's "hometactics," historian Emma Perez's "sitio y lengua," literary theorist Ann Cvetkovich's "archive of feelings," and cultural theorist Alicia Gaspar de Alba's concept of "[un]framing" to understand the boundaries of home. The following chapter, "The Ghost," highlights interpretations of "haunting," including sociologist Avery Gordon's "haunting," literary theorist Carla Freccero's cultural ghost, and Ethnic Studies scholar Karina Alma's "cigua resistance" to interpret the ghost. In this section, I also include past folkloric interpretations and metaphorical uses of La Llorona. Next, I establish the methodologies and methods that I use to find Lora Romero's traces within physical and digital archives. Once my methodologies are demonstrated, in "A Contemporary Chicana Haunting," I use these traces to convey Lora Romero and Stanford University's haunting.

CHAPTER I

[Un]Framing Home

In 1994, Lora Romero was on the front lines of student protests lecturing at Aztlan University. It is not common knowledge that Chicanas created Aztlan University amid screams for Chicana inclusion at Stanford. Aztlan University was an unofficial university inside an elite institution, a home inside an unhomey landscape. In the years to come, Romero was still inside an unhomey home. As a faculty-in-residence at Casa Zapata, Romero continued to create a home by subverting maternal and traditional actions. Through gendered material activities and affect like baking cookies, and hospital visits, Romero contributed to the notion of home. In this section, I examine theories that speak to home and the unhomey epistemic and physical boundaries academia has for Chicanas and Latinas.

I utilize theoretical frameworks that center the self as a knowledge producer—a knowledge that is rooted in and influenced by a physical body, a body that is relational and can leave behind knowledge after it no longer exists. By asserting that the body and mind are connected, I follow prior Chicana and Latina feminist scholars that disrupt notions that knowledge is objective. On the contrary to objectivity theory, the frameworks I use in this thesis demonstrate that lived experiences produce knowledge. The theories also show that the body and an individual's intersecting identities, even after death, can influence whether white heteropatriarchy¹⁸ acknowledges their knowledge or ignores it. To articulate Lora Romero's epistemic unconfidence and epistemic haunting I use the following theories: Latina feminist philosopher Mariana Ortega's "Latina feminist phenomenology" and literary theorist Ann Cvetkovich's "archive of feelings," Chicana feminist theorists Emma Perez's "sitio y lengua" (or space and language), and Alicia Gaspar de Alba's "[un]framing." I utilize these theories with the concepts of the specter and home. While Latina feminist phenomenology focuses on the lived experience, I expand the concept of

¹⁸ Here I am speaking to white heteropatriarchy enacted through the actions of academics (white male or otherwise) that privilege the Western cisgender male-centered episteme.

hometactics, as tactics for creating home, to understand Lora Romero's life and death, to deconstruct how the specter attempts to build a home in the afterlife. As I explain more in-depth later in this section, home is an essential theme within all of the theories. Within the Chicana feminist theories "sitio y lengua" and "[un]framing," the Chicana's attempt to make home is present through resistance against hostile colonial boundaries. Home in these theories is about establishing your identity and narrative. For queer women of color, who have now passed, the archive becomes a space for preserving their stories. Cvetkovich's "archive of feelings" provides a framework for understanding how the archive functions as a home that preserves queer women's narratives across time. I utilize here theory to deconstruct institutional archives and reveal the hidden ghosts' homes within the artifacts.

Home as Latina Feminist Phenomenology

Stanford University's institutional archives offer a glimpse at Lora Romero's phenomenological accounts and those of her colleagues and students. Feminist phenomenology is "a voyage to into our own bodies and self-relations, into our tenuous relations with each other."¹⁹ Latina feminist phenomenology also centers gendered bodies and self-examination. It also fills gaps in feminist phenomenology to incorporate the various intersectional identities Latinas occupy. Latina Feminist Phenomenology, a term coined by philosopher Marianna Ortega, has its roots in Chicana and Latina theorists. She expands on Maria Lugones' literature that discusses the self's multiplicity and Gloria Anzaldúa whose theorizes the "borderlands," or space "created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary" where the self and the different worlds Latinas inhabit clash.²⁰ Latina feminist phenomenology allows Latinas the ability to map out our lived experiences

¹⁹ Jennifer McWeeny, "The feminist phenomenology of excess: Ontological multiplicity, auto-jealousy, and suicide in Beauvoir's L'Invité e," *Continental Philosophy Rev* 45, 2012, 73.

²⁰ Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, San Francisco: aunt lute books, 25.

and relationships as both in "one's life as a person and one's life as a thinker."²¹ By acknowledging Chicana/Latina personhood and knowledge, Latina Feminist Phenomenology radically humanizes Latinas and acknowledges and legitimizes their experiences and knowledge.

Ortega breaks down the six tenets in Latina Feminist Phenomenology that assert and critically examine experience, intersectionality, and power structures. Ortega states the methodology includes,

(2) emphasis on concrete, embodied everyday experience; (3) attention to the intersection or, as Lugones describes it, intermeshedness of race, sex, gender, class, sexual orientation, ability, age, ethnicity and so on; (4) disclosure of the way in which the gendered or racialized (mestizaje/mulataje) aspect of Latina/o experience is covered up in traditional philosophical discussions that take white male experience as the norm. (5) attunement to historical and cultural processes that recognizes the heterogeneity of Latino/as; and (6) critical deployment of experiential knowledge in order to contest or reimagine established notions of Latinidad.²²

I apply the tenets above throughout my research.²³ These tenets leave room to investigate Romero's racial, ethnic, gendered, and sexualized identities. As a queer Chicana feminist, it is vital to highlight how Romero's queerness and lesbianism framed (and continue to frame) her womanhood, Chicanidad, socioeconomic class, and hierarchical academic standing. Through Latina feminist phenomenology, I analyze Romero's life based on the self and her knowledge. Moreover, I focus on how her life is interrelated with others' lives and knowledge, specifically, how she attempted to create a home in a space that undermines her knowledge.

²¹ Jacqueline Martinez, "Culture, Communication, and Latina Feminist Philosophy: Toward a Critical Phenomenology of Culture," *Hypatia* 29 no. 1, Winter 2014, 222.

²² Mariana Ortega, *In-Between: Latina Feminist Phenomenology, Multiplicity, and the Self*, New York: SUNY Press, 2016, 10.

²³ While tenets five and six offer the ability to highlight and complicate the concept Latinidad, I focus on the prior tenets to highlight the Romero's individual experiences.

Mariana Ortega's hometactics is a praxis in which Latinas and Chicanas can create a sense of belonging or familiarity in exclusive spaces.²⁴ To establish a home, individuals participate in “self-mapping” to understand one’s location in life; this includes their positionality, history, power relations, and imagination.²⁵ Hometactics center the personal and every day to make a space a home.²⁶ It occurs in several ways, including code-switching— shifting from one language to another—improvising ingredients to make a family recipe when cultural ingredients are not present at stores, or painting in your favorite color to bring you happiness. Marianna Ortega’s *In-Between* is in itself an example of hometactic as she attempts to carve out space for herself and create home within the philosophy's exclusive spatial imaginary. However, hometactics take place, their purpose is to develop a sense of comfort in a life dictated by in-betweenness and multiple exclusive worlds.²⁷ Influenced by the theme of home and Chicana epistemology throughout the sections, I ask: As ghostly beings-between-time, what world and time do Chicanas and Latinas call home? When will Chicanas/Latinas no longer exist in colonized academic spaces? So the ghost lurks through the home, existing with the living, but the living only hears her whispers. When the specter asserts her voice, white heteropatriarchy deems her a horrifying figure like the Llorona.

Material & Embodied Chicana Epistemologies

The Chicana epistemologies I highlight in this section focus on finding home in academia, even when you are not welcome. Like in Emma Perez's *sitio y lengua*, they are attempting to create their own space and language amid an occupied (read colonial patriarchal) space. As I will demonstrate in the following section, Chicanas' existence as ghosts is found in the in-between,

²⁴ Ortega, *In-Between*, 203-5.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 193.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 204-5.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 207.

existing as either hyper-visible or invisible.²⁸ The Chicana ghost's epistemologies are not separate from her material existence. It exists in the spatial imaginary and the material world. Chicanas' epistemologies help them survive and carve out intellectual homes, especially in spaces where the colonial psyche chooses to lock its doors. This exclusion attempts to keep Chicanas out of academic spatial imaginaries.

Chicana Feminists establish home through participation through their epistemologies. Not only are their epistemologies a form of "making meaning" like La Llorona,²⁹ they are a way to resist the colonial psychic space they exist in, particularly the white heteropatriarchal academy. In this section, I articulate a handful of Chicana epistemologies that demonstrate their ability to survive and transform the academy. These epistemologies include Chicana Historian Emma Perez's "Sexuality and Discourse: Notes From a Chicana Survivor." In this essay, she argues that male "theoretical imbeciles," like psychoanalytic theorist Sigmund Freud and Mexican literary theorist Octavio Paz, have discursively violated women.³⁰ Meaning that in speaking against these heteropatriarchal men, and their misogynist claims that have been accepted as dogma in the American and Mexican academies, she also voices women's narratives that men have silenced. Part of voicing these narratives involves releasing memories from the shadows. Perez's memory of molestation, theorizes on women's traumatic memories, distinctively, through the sexual violence that has occurred to them.³¹ The memory of molestation resurrects the gendered and sexual violence hauntings. Addressing these hauntings allows an individual to affirm their sitio y

²⁸ I will further elaborate memory and visibility in the methodology section, when referring to the archive through the work of Kimberly Juanita Brown, *The Repeating Body: Slavery's Visual Resonance in the Contemporary*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2015, 2.

²⁹ Elaborated further in the next section "making meaning" refers to using the Llorona as methodology in Domino Renee Perez, *There Was a Woman: La Llorona from Folklore to Popular Culture*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008, 11.

³⁰ Emma Perez, "Sexuality Discourse: Notes on a Chicana Survivor" in *Chicana Lesbians: The Girls Our Mothers Warned Us About*, Evanston: 3rd Woman Press, (1991): 159-84.

³¹ *Ibid*, 173.

lengua or place and language. Sitio y lengua works as an epistemology that resists the patriarchal discursive violation of women through literature. Perez proposes that Chicanas affirm their sitio y lengua that rejects colonialism, racism, patriarchy, and homophobia.³² Sitio y lengua establishes Chicanas' rights to create their space, boundaries, and voice.³³ By carving out their discursive space and language, they can build a form of knowledge production that separates itself from the patriarchal discourse.

Chicana Lesbian Feminist historian Deena Gonzalez demonstrates the patriarchal haunting and "unhomeliness" present in the academy in her essay "Speaking Secrets." In this essay, she exposes, Chicanos' misogynist harassment in academia. This harassment is present from the very beginning of her essay in which she reiterates one of her Chicano colleague's proclamations that "What makes Chicanas lesbian feminists 'unattractive... is that they keep talking too damn much about who they are, what they want, and how they want it. Enough!'"³⁴ Gonzalez's colleague's statement acts as an example of the first instances of epistemic unconfidence and an unsafe academic environment. Through his words, he marks the frame in which Chicanas can exist in academia. One in which they should not exceed space, and voice "who they are, what they want, and how they want it."³⁵ In other words, they should not speak about their positionality and experiential knowledge. Chicana's intelligence, placed within patriarchal standards. And Chicana knowledge is measured on our ability to stay agree with the machismo. Or remain silent if this knowledge does not agree with the patriarchy's "objective truth," or beliefs that are interpreted and self-appointed as universal statements. A truth that differs from men's heteropatriarchal

³² *Ibid*, 175.

³³ *Ibid*, 178.

³⁴ Deena J. Gonzalez, "Speaking Secrets: Living Chicana Theory" in *Living Chicana Theory*, ed. Carla Trujillo, Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 1998, 46.

³⁵ Gonzalez, "Speaking Secrets," 46.

expectations is thus considered "unattractive." These views reduce Chicana's intellect and subjectivity to a bodily characteristic that objectifies them. Consequently this enacts an epistemic unconfidence, a denial of knowledge that leads to a denial of humanity.

In "Toward an Epistemology of a Brown Body," Education scholar Cynthia Cruz pushes the connection between the body and epistemology further. She argues that Chicana epistemology is rooted in female ancestors' bodies.³⁶ Acknowledging her standpoint as a queer Chicana, she notes the significance of legitimizing queer narratives and bodily desires. She asserts that Chicana research is a social act that allows queer and lesbian Chicanas to voices their subjectivities.³⁷ Reiterating Perez's argument, she indicates that knowledge is denied in the academy when it is connected to a particular subjectivity or standpoint, and when it asserts a connection to the body. Building on Anzaldúa's mestiza consciousness, Cruz contends that the Mestiza body is a dialectical "transcultural space" that negotiates between several spaces, including race, gender, and sexuality.³⁸ As a critical component of knowledge production, the body is a way of establishing the self's location and charting epistemologies.³⁹ Cruz's article is particularly fascinating because it acknowledges the epistemological significance of the body, partially queer Chicana bodies, has within academia. When epistemic unconfidence occurs, individuals deny bodily epistemology.

[Un]Framing Lloronas

Chicana theorist Alicia Gaspar de Alba's *[Un]Framing the Bad Woman: Sor Juana, Malinche, Coyolxauhqui and Other Rebels with a Cause* offers a significant contribution to understanding "bad women," their social punishment, death, and the "frame" that leads to these

³⁶ Cruz, Cindy. "Toward an Epistemology of a Brown Body." *Qualitative Studies in Education* 14, no. 5 (2001): 658.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 660.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 668.

consequences. Expanding on critical theory on "framing," Gaspar de Alba establishes that these "bad women" have been framed or "bordered/demarcated, conceived/imagined, isolated/focused, constructed/interpreted, stereotyped/fixed, structured/fastened, blamed/accused, persecuted/punished."⁴⁰ The "frame," like Latina Feminist Phenomenology, highlights the everyday experience.⁴¹ The ability to highlight is the frames' most precarious quality. Sociologists John Noakes and Hank Johnston assert that "framing" functions as a picture frame in that the frame places our focus on "the relevant and important" aspects such as the photograph or art piece in the middle.⁴² While the frame hides entities at the margins.⁴³ Gaspar de Alba argues that "bad women" are women that have confronted patriarchy and consequently have been stereotyped and socially punished by patriarchy and other systems of oppression. In other words, the "bad women" have not abided by the societal frame and as a result, have faced social punishment. Among the so-called bad women that have faced social punishment and death is La Llorona.⁴⁴ To disrupt the frame or "[un]frame," it is vital to rewrite the stories of "bad women."⁴⁵ Unframing involves deconstructing the structures of power (i.e., white heteropatriarchal capitalism) that punishes "bad women."⁴⁶ Perez's *sitio y lengua* and Ortega's *hometactics* are two ideologies that disrupt the frame and, as such, "[un]frame" Latinas in the process.

⁴⁰ Alicia Gaspar de Alba, *[Un]Framing the Bad Woman: Sor Juana, Malinche, Coyolxauhqui and Other Rebels with a Cause*, Austin: University of Texas, 2014, 25.

⁴¹ Gaspar de Alba, *[Un]Framing the Bad Woman*, 22 .

⁴² Hank Johnston and John Noakes, *Frames of Protest: Social Movements and the Framing Perspective*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Inc., 2.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁴⁵ Alicia Gaspar de Alba, *[Un]Framing the Bad Woman: Sor Juana, Malinche, Coyolxauhqui and Other Rebels with a Cause*. Austin: University of Texas, 2014, 19.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

If I apply framing theory to "haunting," it can be said the ghost is in the frame.⁴⁷ By suggesting the ghost is in the frame, I highlight the influence the environment and the being have on one another. "Bad women" have endured a "haunting" from patriarchy and have left behind legacies that make their presence known. Because "bad women," also enact haunting, they can be labeled ghosts. Inside the home, the specter lives in the margins created by the frame. The living constructs and interprets the ghost, but they also push the ghost into the margins, dominant frameworks like Eurocentrism and heteropatriarchy attempt to persecute the specter. As these ideologies assert the ghost, in this case, Chicanas, should not inhabit the academic home. Although, as I will specify in the next chapter, the ghost resists the frame and disrupts notions about the home.

Lora Romero is a Llorona-like ghost that lives in the academic frame's margins. Her life in the academy consisted of constant survival tactics, including negotiation of home. Through *sitios y lenguas*, she consistently asserts her subjectivity amid epistemic unconfidence. As I decipher her story, I demonstrate how, like La Llorona and other "bad women" in Gaspar de Alba's book, Lora has been framed within the academy, a frame that she resisted in her lifetime and continues to resistance in her haunting.

⁴⁷ Here I reference philosopher Gilbert Ryle's arguments against the "dogma of the ghost in the machine" the theory that asserts that the mind and body are separate entities. See *The Concept of the Mind*, New York: Routledge, 2009, 11.

CHAPTER II

The Ghost

Psychic Space and The Ghost

In the 1990s, a woman named Lora walked through the oak tree pathways along Palo Alto that led to Stanford University. Centuries before another woman, now known as La Llorona, walked a riverbank somewhere in Mexico. Both women lived in colonial spaces, La Llorona in New Spain and Lora in academia. Both women had stories to tell and desire to yell. Lora hoped for an inclusive academy and La Llorona, an escape for her children. Both women's screams went unheard until it was too late; both women did not survive.

The ghost is a figure that haunts the living. In epistemic hauntings, the ghost's haunting exposes the living to knowledge. As Gordon notes in her infamous book *Ghostly Matters*, ghosts "appear when the trouble they represent and symptomize is no longer being contained or repressed or blocked from view."⁴⁸ It occurs when violence can no longer hide in the shadows. The ghost is a feared figure because its haunting alludes to "a repressed or unsolved social violence [that] is [repetitively] making itself known."⁴⁹ It exists as a dialectic being. As a dialectic being, the ghost is in-between the living and dead; its existence embodies opposites. Although ghosts may not exist as physical manifestations in our bedtime stories, they exist metaphorically in society's psyche. Although the psyche is associated with Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theories, its etymology derives from the Greek word *psykhē*. Among *psykhē*'s definitions is "the soul, mind, spirit, life," "the ghost, spirit of the dead," "departed soul, spirit, ghost," and "breathe."⁵⁰ I bring up these definitions to establish the relationship between the psyche and the ghost. As well as to assert that this relationship precedes the field of psychoanalysis. The psyche has its roots directly with the ghost.

⁴⁸ Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, xvi.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ "Psyche," Online Etymology Dictionary, www.etymonline.com/word/psyche.

Psychic space, as Feminist Philosopher Kelly Oliver suggests, is the space where movement, meaning, language, and drive meet.⁵¹ She establishes that the "colonization of psychic space" occurs when values, institutions, and ideals limit and challenge bodily drives⁵² or noncategorizable impulses.⁵³ The colonization of psychic space leads to several consequences, including "alienation, melancholy, shame, sublimation, idealization, forgiveness, and affect."⁵⁴ I expand on Oliver's theory by arguing that the ghost is a crucial aspect of psychic space for women of color. By analyzing the ghost and psychic space together, as I will with Latina mythology and death as hauntings, I integrate the racist, sexist, homophobic hauntings that lead to the "colonization of psychic space." Additionally, Oliver's "colonization of psychic space" offers an entryway into demonstrating how epistemic unconfidence caused by institutions, i.e., higher education can have psychological effects on Chicanas and Latinas.

Oliver's colonization of psychic space offers a starting point to understanding oppression, but she frames this oppression within white women's experiences as such, being and psyche are examined solely for the white women. She draws from philosopher Frantz Fanon as her leading theorist of color, but Fanon centers his theories and critiques on black men's experiences. Fanon's critique of philosopher Martin Heidegger's Dasein establishes the difference in being between white men and black men's being and experiences. Heidegger's Dasein is a human being, a manipulative being, a "being-in-the-world" and "being-toward-the-future"⁵⁵ that focuses on using equipment (beings who have no meaning without Dasein) to achieve future goals.⁵⁶ The future

⁵¹ Kelly Oliver, *The Colonization of Psychic Space: A Psychoanalytic Social Theory of Oppression*, Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota, 2004, 127.

⁵² *Ibid*, 43.

⁵³ *Ibid*, xix.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, xiii.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 18.

⁵⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Trans. Joan Stanbaugh, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010, 68.

marks Dasein's individuality, death, and their ability to create meaning. Additionally, as a "being-in-the-world" Dasein is, to use Schuller's terminology in *The Biopolitics of Feeling*, "imprinted" by its environment and the other beings that surround him.⁵⁷ As Fanon argues, Heidegger's Dasein cannot articulate black men's being. According to Fanon, the black man is "always one of coming too late"⁵⁸ to create meaning in their lives. By "too late," Fanon means that black men's identities are already pre-determined by the colonial logic present in society.⁵⁹ As such, the black man does not have access to Dasein's individuality.

But what of the women of color, particularly Latina and Chicana academics? Does she have access to Dasein's individuality? Is she Dasein? Expanding on Heidegger and through her own experience, Philosopher Marianna Ortega's *In-Between: Latina, Phenomenology, Multiplicity, and the Self* argues that Latinas are more than just "beings-in-the-world," but are also "beings-in-worlds" and "being-between-worlds."⁶⁰ Drawing from Chicana Lesbian Feminist Gloria Anzaldúa and Latina philosopher Maria Lugones, she establishes that Latinas navigate several worlds at once, many times simultaneously living in different borderlands. It is crucial to acknowledge Ortega's "being-between-worlds" because this concept establishes how Latinas can spatially navigate the psyche. Mariana Ortega creates the hybrid theory she coins the "multiplicitous selfhood" or the being-between-world that illustrates the multiple identities and the various locations Latina and Chicana Feminists inhabit.⁶¹

Ortega takes Heidegger's notion and expands it. Dasein is "thrown" into the world⁶² and as a result, is a being-in-the-world; similarly, the new Mestiza is "thrown" into the borderlands.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 56.

⁵⁸ Oliver, *Colonization of Psychic Space*, 19.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*. This is not to say there is a universal Black man, but that colonialism effects Black men's subjectivity.

⁶⁰ Mariana Ortega, *In-Between: Latina Feminist Phenomenology, Multiplicity, and the Self*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2016, 12.

⁶¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 68.

⁶² *Ibid*.

The concept of "ghosts" and "hauntings" allows me to consider how Chicana academics can navigate different times and spaces that are part of the borderlands. Like Heidegger's Dasein, various environments also mark Chicana academics. Like Fanon's interpretation of being, colonial logic also frames the psychic spaces Chicanas navigate.⁶³ In contrast to both Heidegger's Dasein and Fanon's interpretation of Black men's beings, Chicana academics travel through several worlds and times. In the afterlife—notably, the difference in their being is noted as they navigate the world as ghosts. Ghosts with the ability to travel through several times and with it highlight the social violence that marks them.

Haunting and Cultural Specters

Haunting has several interpretations, but this thesis primarily focuses on the work of sociologist Avery Gordon, alongside the intersections made by feminist hauntologists such as literary scholars Carla Freccero and Karina Alma. For sociologist Avery Gordon, ghosts, "appear when the trouble they represent and symptomize is no longer being contained or repressed or blocked from view."⁶⁴ Gordon asserts that the ghost has three characteristics: (1) The ghost "imports strangeness" and unsettles the limits of knowledge, (2) the specter is a consequence of lo desaparecido (or the missing and disappeared), and (3) "the ghost is alive" or in other words is relational to our environment and memory.⁶⁵ To be haunted is to live with the ghost in the imaginary even if only briefly.⁶⁶ Gordon defines "haunting" as "a repressed or unsolved social violence [that] is [repetitively] making itself known."⁶⁷ Haunting is a reoccurring event that alludes to violence that occurred in the past and continues to occur. Additionally, haunting involves the

⁶³ Oliver, *Colonization of Psychic Space*, 19.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, xvi.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 63-64.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 201.

⁶⁷ Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, xvi.

ghosts' presence. In the haunting, the ghost lives in what Latina Feminist Phenomenology calls the "in-between." The haunting merges the invisible and visible, the living and the dead, and the past and present.⁶⁸ The dialectics in hauntings bring marginalized individuals out of the shadows.⁶⁹

The goal of haunting is to unpack the knowledge ghosts bring forth. Not only is this knowledge examined, but it also helps rewrite historical events and narratives to expose and deconstruct modern structures' power and their abusive consequences.⁷⁰ Like the "archive of feeling," haunting as a framework draws from affect as a form of knowledge.⁷¹ During hauntings, ghosts act as evidence, and as a sign that action has to be taken to remedy past and at times, present social violence. Gordon calls this action the "something-to-be-done."⁷² Lora Romero's ghostly characteristics parallel not only La Llorona but also the concept of haunting. I utilize "haunting" as a theoretical framework to establish that Romero is a ghost that is making social violence against Chicana academics visible. While Romero's life and death made an impact on her students, she also now lives in Chicana Studies and the Chicana/o imaginary's margins, even if she is not acknowledged in the dominant Eurocentric imagination. By using "haunting" as a lens, I assert that there is "something-to-be-done" to push Lora Romero's narrative out of the academic margins. Moreover, as noted earlier in the introduction, I expand the notion of haunting to an epistemic haunting, in which repressed knowledge is at the center of haunting.

Latina academics, as ghostly beings, including Romero, exist in the past, but also travel through the present and future. Although people view the ghost as a figure of the past, it also exists in the present and future. The ghost inhabits the current environment, and individuals fear the

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 11.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, xvii.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 200.

⁷² *Ibid*, xvii.

specter will haunt them. In particular, the colonizer fears the ghost of the oppressed will haunt him.⁷³ It is through their ability to haunt the present and the future that the specter gains the ability to create meaning or at the very least, allows women of color to create meaning. Her duality and in-betweenness characterize her ghostly being, as she embodies what Chicana Lesbian Feminist Emma Perez calls a “dialectics of doubling” and “the decolonial imaginary.” *The Decolonial Imaginary* Perez moves beyond the linear Eurocentric boundaries white men place on history. The decolonial imaginary is a “time lag” between the colonial and postcolonial.⁷⁴ Acknowledging the interstitial space between the colonial and the imagined postcolonial disrupts the historical “logic” that time is linear. Perez transforms traditional history that posits that coloniality is in the past, and as a society, we now exist in postcolonial. The ghost embodies the decolonial imaginary by living in-between, not only in life and death but also in-between a “time lag.” A haunting, as a “time lag,” highlights social violence in the past, that continues to occur, and will happen in the future if something does not disrupt the violence. French philosopher Jacques Derrida also establishes the time's relationship with the specter ghost reminds us that “time is out of joint;”⁷⁵ in other words, it is not linear or organized. A haunting's repetitive nature establishes, the livings' “inheritance,” that the present “inherits” traces from the past.⁷⁶ Through traces, people inherit memories, archives, representations, and photographs.⁷⁷ Derrida asserts that the traces show the specter is not a passive being, but instead, can watch the living.⁷⁸

⁷³ Sherene Razack, GS 203 Lecture, “The Biopolitics of Feeling & The Colonization of Psychic Space,” 1/23/2019.

⁷⁴ Emma Perez, *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas Into History*, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999, 6.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 20-21.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*.

⁷⁷ Derrida, “Spectrographies,” 47-48.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 41.

Several women of color feminist scholars have noted that the ghost's haunting, as well as the "traces" connection to their intersectional identities during their lives. The decolonial imaginary offers a relevant theory that can position the ghost's existence within colonialism's timelines. Perez's "dialectics of doubling" is also a critical theory that establishes that Chicanas enact opposites within their actions and rhetoric as they develop their own "place and meaning" within a broader dominant nationalistic framework.⁷⁹ When applied to the ghost, it suggests that the Chicana ghost, in the afterlife, positions her subjectivity and resistance with the dominant framework. It is in examining this doubling that we begin to understand the complexity and "in-betweens" within people's beings, living or dead.⁸⁰ Consequently, these complexities include understanding that the ghostly being: (1) is a cultural specific entity whose intersectional identity frames the epistemic haunting in death and the epistemic unconfidence in their lives (2) the ghost is not only dependent on her individuality but as Oliver focuses on in her analysis of the colonization of psychic space, is also a part of society at large.⁸¹

Literary theorist Carla Freccerra's "Queer Spectrality: Haunting the Past," makes the call for scholars to theorize culturally specific ghosts, that move away from universal markers of haunting. She asserts that,

...it is no coincidence that the figures invoked in these archival memorials are racially and sexually marked, for just as ghostliness designates an ambiguous state of being, both present and not, past and not, so too in these accounts racial mixture and sexual – including sexuality – difference stand in fix, even as they mark the material place of, a critique of originary purity, simplicity, and unmixedness.⁸²

⁷⁹ Emma Perez, *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999, 59.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 110.

⁸¹ Oliver, *The Colonization of Psychic Space*, 19.

⁸² Carla Freccerra, "Queer Spectralities: Haunting of the Past" *The Spectralities Reader: Ghosts and Haunting Contemporary Cultural Theory*. Ed. Maria Del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren, London: Bloomsbury Press, 2013, 342.

By asserting that ghosts are ambiguous beings that have been "racially and sexually" marked in life, Freccero acknowledges the power dynamics that ghosts endured during their lives. Additionally, she makes the bold claim that ghosts and racialized and sexualized beings are both marked by difference. As racialized and sexualized beings, As racialized and sexualized beings, difference and ambiguity mark Chicanas. Freccero's assertion that specters are ambiguous beings relates to Latina feminist philosopher Mariana Ortega's "hometactics" theories on Latina's ambiguous being. Recall from the section "Framing Home," that Ortega coins "hometactics" to describe the many methods Latinas use to create home in the multiple hostile worlds they travel through. This theory applies to the ghost and complicates hauntings' relationship to history. Specters like Chicanas are world-travelers, as they like in an in-between state and travel between at least two worlds,⁸³ that of the living and the dead. While Agamben's claim that "it is always the living who invade their [specters'] homes"⁸⁴ may hold truth, specters' actions demonstrate that they are seeking a home. By trying to highlight repressed social violence or attempting to have their voices heard, ghosts enact hometactics. Women of color may be "too late" to create meaning and home in their own lives. However, because white supremacy and heteropatriarchy are still present in society, they are always on time to create meaning for the living. As ghosts, Chicanas and Latinas "breathe" life into the lifeless who currently inhabit the colonized psychic space.

U.S. Central American theorist Karina Alma offers a significant contribution to hauntology, as her theories demonstrate that it is not "too late" for the ghost's haunting to guide future women of color living through colonialism. While, she also demonstrates the importance of culturally specifying the ghost in her work on the mythical Salvadoran icon, La Ciguanaba. She utilizes this

⁸³ Ortega, *In-Between*, 12.

⁸⁴ Giorgio Agamben, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of Living among Spectre,," in Del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren, *The Spectralities Reader: Ghosts and Haunting Contemporary Cultural Theory*. London: Bloomsbury Press, 2013, 475.

folkloric icon as a methodology to understand gendered violence and Latina resistance, particularly, Central American women's resistance. Her concept of "cigua resistance" asserts that Latina's resistance parallels the resistance present in La Ciguanaba's folkloric haunting.⁸⁵ She states that cigua hauntings have four characteristics in common: exile, haunting, beauty, and terrifying men.⁸⁶ Her concept is a reminder that haunting's move across time, and that the haunting Latinas endure is cyclical and colonial. Colonialism's trauma continuously haunts, but Alma's concept establishes that Latina resistance is also continuous. In reviewing the literature on La Llorona in the next section, I utilize Alma's framework to understand the commonalities amongst Llorona literature, but also to see what themes connect her to Romero and other Chicana academic hauntings.

Myth and Death: The Many Lloronas

Feminist interpretations of haunting, including Alma's use of La Ciguanaba as a metaphor and methodology for understanding Salvadoran Latina resistance, offers up a foundation for understanding how La Llorona's haunting can translate into a Chicana academic epistemic haunting. Myth demonstrates how Latina ghosts "breathe" meaning into the colonization of psychic space. While being "too late" in their own lives, they create meaning in the present and future through their folklores. In my research, I focus on Latinas who embody ghostly beings in the lifeless. These ghostly beings include the Mexican/Chicana mythical icon La Llorona. This mythical woman is present in Mexicana and Chicana folklore that examines and resists heteropatriarchy in distinct methods, and also demonstrates the consequences and "hauntings" of women who resist colonial patriarchal desires. In La Llorona's, also known as the Wailing or

⁸⁵ Karina Oliva Alvarado, "A Gynealogy of Cigua Resistance: La Ciguanaba, Prudencia Ayala, and Leticia Hernandez-Linares in Conversation" in *U.S. Central Americans: Reconstructing Memories, Struggles, and Communities of Resistance*, Edited by Karina O. Alvarado, Alicia Ivonne Estrada, and Ester E. Hernandez, Tuscan: University of Arizona Press, 2017, 99.

⁸⁶*Ibid*, 99.

Weeping Woman, folklore she is an indigenous or Mestiza⁸⁷ woman who falls in love with a Spaniard, she has children with him. Still, he ultimately abandons her to marry into his caste. After he leaves her, she kills herself and her children. Some retellings assert the murder occurred to satisfy her jealousy, in the hopes that this act would win the Spaniard back. In other feminist narratives, the murder is reminiscent of Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*, in which she kills her children by drowning them so they will not suffer from colonialism. La Llorona ultimately is forced to wander the Earth and weep throughout the night for her children and haunt men as revenge against the Spaniard.

In “The Evolving legend of La Llorona,” writer Amy Fuller outlines some of the historical representations on La Llorona. In this essay, Fuller establishes that La Llorona’s earliest representation begins in Aztec mythology⁸⁸ as Chicana scholars placed La Llorona's origin as that of the goddess Coatlicue. In the Florentine Codex, Coatlicue weeps out loud as she waits for her sons to return from war.⁸⁹ This telling of the folklore differs significantly from the more dominant tale but still shows a mother crying for the death of her children. Centuries after the Coatlicue account, the Spaniard Francisco C. Neve creates the first written representation in the play called “La Llorona” that takes place in 16th century Spain.⁹⁰ This play is closer to the contemporary version of the folklore. In the play, protagonist Luisa is a working-class woman who has a son with her lover, a wealthy man named Ramiro, after six years of being in a relationship.⁹¹ Due to his wealth, Ramiro plans to marry a woman of his socioeconomic status and take away their son. As a result, Luisa is driven mad and kills their son, presenting him to Ramiro at his wedding. They

⁸⁷ La Llorona's race and ethnicity are dependent on particular retellings.

⁸⁸ Amy Fuller. "The evolving legend of La Llorona. (Cover story)." *History Today* 65, no. 11 (November 2015): 39.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 39.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*.

⁹¹ *Ibid*.

persecute Luisa and hang her as a witch, and after her death, she haunts Ramiro. In other plays, La Llorona crosses transnational borders, ideologies, and histories. In one retelling, she is La Malinche (the Aztec slave princess and translator), and the Spaniard is Spanish Conquistador Hernan Cortez. For instance, in Carmen Toscano's "La Llorona" that takes place in colonial Nueva España, Luisa (La Llorona) is a mestiza who has children with Nuño a Spaniard, who not interested in their children and leaves her for a Spanish woman.⁹² Luisa murders their children, stating that she would rather have their children die than have them work as slaves. Luisa is eventually executed but seeks revenge against Nuño after her death. Fuller's essay demonstrates the evolution of the folklore within written work, specifically plays. She shows how the tale has changed to adapt to the geographic region as it depicts themes of colonialism and indigeneity. "The Evolving legend of La Llorona," however, does not explore in-depth contemporary Chicana feminist representations on La Llorona.

Chicana scholars have also changed La Llorona legend. For instance, Perez's book explores the many frames that La Llorona exists in and how Chicanas have given La Llorona positive meanings and connotations. Through their retellings, Chicanas "[un]frame" La Llorona from her "bad woman" category. Cultural theorist Alicia Gaspar de Alba's *[Un]Framing the Bad Women* argues that "bad women" are women that have confronted patriarchy and consequently have been stereotyped and socially punished by patriarchy and other systems of oppression.⁹³ As Gaspar de Alba notes, categorization as a "bad woman" leads to social punishment that has deadly implications for women as they face psychological and physical abuse as well as "unjust death" for their rebellion against colonial and patriarchal power structures.⁹⁴ Among the so-called bad

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Alicia, Gaspar de Alba, *[Un]Framing the Bad Woman: Sor Juana, Malinche, Coyolxauhqui and Other Rebels with a Cause*. Austin: University of Texas, 2014, 19.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

women that have faced social punishment and death is La Llorona.⁹⁵ Chicanas have actively worked to [un]frame, or rewrite her to deconstruct her categorization, stereotypes, and persecution⁹⁶ as a "raced, classed, sexed" ghost in society.⁹⁷ Chicana cultural theorist Domino Perez, writer Sandra Cisneros, and Chicana Lesbian Feminist Gloria Anzaldúa are among the Chicanas and Latinas that have attempted to [un]frame La Llorona.

In "Haunting the Borderlands: La Llorona in Sandra Cisneros's 'Woman Hollering Creek,'" novelist Jacqueline Doyle asserts that Sandra Cisneros has changed La Llorona's negative connotations. Sandra Cisneros states that Mexicanas (and Chicanas) are "the daughters of La Llorona."⁹⁸ She argues that Sandra Cisneros' Llorona speaks for the voiceless women that cannot speak about their oppression.⁹⁹ Gloria Anzaldúa also recreates La Llorona in *Prietita and the Ghost Woman*. In "The Curandera of Conquest: Gloria Anzaldúa's Decolonial Remedy," English theorist George Hartley argues that Gloria Anzaldúa's novel transforms La Llorona from an evil spirit to a "cosmic healing force."¹⁰⁰ Hartley explains that individuals perceive La Llorona as evil because colonization racializes women of color and often casts them as "evil or seductive witches."¹⁰¹ Both Hartley and Doyle demonstrate that favorable variations in La Llorona folklore exist. They fill a gap that seems to associate La Llorona with evil or simplifies her murders. Additionally, they show the significance of the figure to Chicana feminist culture. An importance that is rooted in how the themes of colonization and gendered violence are still persistent in modern representations of La Llorona.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 25.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 18-19.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 25.

⁹⁸ Doyle, Jacqueline. "Haunting the Borderlands: La Llorona in Sandra Cisneros's 'Woman Hollering Creek,'" *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 16, no. 1 (1996): 53-70, 53.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*.

¹⁰⁰ George Hartley, "The Curandera of Conquest: Gloria Anzaldúa's Decolonial Remedy," *Aztlan: A Journal of Chicano Studies* no. 1 (Spring 2010): 135-161, 27.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 150.

These mythical woman's hauntings offer a framework for understanding Latina's real deaths, being, and psyche. Chicana scholar Domino Renee Perez asserts that La Llorona is a mechanism to "make meaning."¹⁰² La Llorona's narratives show how colonial desire impacts psychic space. The myth and the ghost demonstrate the colonization of psychic space's limits and boundaries as well as how these women exist as beings-between-time. Colonial New Spain's caste system haunt La Llorona and the psychic space. As Perez suggests, La Llorona is more than just a folklore icon; she is also a metaphor for understanding her Chicana "daughter's" oppression.¹⁰³ Although La Llorona is a myth, the lessons and morals in her narrative demonstrate themes of white heteropatriarchy and a colonial psyche that is present in current society through Chicana and Latinas academics' deaths.

Folkloric representations (or "ghosts of representation," as I will illustrate in the following section offer) give us the ability to decipher Latina's haunting. It offers an ability to understand the culturally specific ghost and the Eurocentric knowledge that has continuously haunted Chicanas. As Cisneros asserts, Chicanas are the Llorona's daughters. To be a ghost, specifically, a Llorona means more than being a traumatic figure; it means "making meaning." As I will demonstrate in the last section, to "make meaning" takes several forms. In this thesis, "making meaning" and scream like the Llorona means that Chicanas have enacted frameworks like hometactics and "sitio y lengua," that parallel La Llorona's resistance.

¹⁰² Domino Renee Perez, *There Was a Woman: La Llorona from Folklore to Popular Culture*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008, 11.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER IV

Archival Methodologies

I began to research Lora Romero in 2018. I first dug into her life virtually. Through preliminary data searches, I found my first artifact, the English Department's news release for her memorial. As I read the memorial, the phrase "the fact that we now know that she had so much sadness"¹⁰⁴ stayed in my mind. This phrase still haunts me. In the summer of 2019, I visited Stanford University, I walked through the same oak trees, and into the same Romanesque buildings, Romero had decades prior. I came searching for traces of truth within these Romanesque walls, and I wanted to see if the sadness was truly unknown. This section elaborates on my methods and methodologies during my digital and archival research at Stanford. It is in this section I develop how I found and examine Romero's traces in the academy.

To understand and demonstrate the epistemic haunting and epistemic unconfidence present in Chicana academics, I utilize a mixed-methods approach. I examine queer Chicana literary scholar Lora Romero with the mythical Chicana and Mexican icon La Llorona to show how Romero's life, death, and knowledge are instances of epistemic haunting. Specifically, I conduct a visual and textual analysis of La Llorona's cultural archive (literature and folklore) alongside Lora Romero's physical and digital archives and her published literary works. Each archive holds essays, correspondence, newspapers, notes, multimedia, and art that have preserved primary sources that highlight the Chicana scholar's knowledge and feelings, as well as her Chicana/o students and colleagues' reactions to her death.

Examining Affect in the Archive

The archive (in this case, a physical and digital institutional archive) is the subject of my analysis. To conduct an archival methodology means to highlight the remembered and forgotten.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Diane Manuel, Stanford University News Release: Memorial scheduled for English Professor, 10/20/1997.

¹⁰⁵ Aleida Assmann, "Canon and Archive" in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, Edited by Astrid Erll and Ansfar Nunning, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co., 97.

The archival "space," both physical and digital, is an area where personal, collective, and cultural memory is stored. Archeologist and literary theorist Aleida Assmann assert, that "The archive is the basis of what can be said in the future about the present when it will have become the past."¹⁰⁶ Thus, the archive is a space where time collides. Like memory, the archive is consistently intersecting the concepts of remembering and forgetting.¹⁰⁷ Romero's archives, including the explicit and that in the shadows, demonstrate how she is a haunting figure.

This methodology section's purpose is to demonstrate how I came to examine Romero, the artifacts examined, and how I analyzed the artifacts. As historian Barbara L'Eplattenier establishes, "It [historical methods] allows us to more clearly point out our blind spots, our areas we didn't realize we could research, our awareness of the fragmentary nature of archival work. If all histories are constructions, then a methods section allows us to see the building blocks of that construction."¹⁰⁸ As such, it is vital to ask: how do the archives illustrate Lora Romero's haunting? Literary scholar Maria Del Pilar Blanco also offers a methodology to search for ghostly traces and fragments within the archive through "ghost-watching." Del Pilar Blanco notes that "Ghost-watching is a particular way of reading perceptions of space within a given text" that includes a "vigilant perception of the landscapes."¹⁰⁹ By ghost-watching, I make myself aware of the academic landscape. I read the archival artifacts with the understanding that ghosts hide in the materials, specters that connect to the unhomely home of academia. Drawing on geographer Jake Hodder, this study also utilizes biography as an archival method. While, I noted earlier that the archive houses several shadows, silences, ghosts, and "traces," Hodder argues that the archive is

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹⁰⁷ Assmann, "Canon and Archive," 97.

¹⁰⁸ Barbara L'Eplattenier, "Opinion: An Argument for Archival Research Methods: Thinking Beyond Methodology," *College English Journal* 72 no. 1. 2009: 74.

¹⁰⁹ Maria del Pilar Blanco, *Ghost-Watching American Modernity: Haunting, Landscape, and the Hemispheric Imagination*, New York: Fordham University Press, 2012, 1.

also a space of abundance. To understand this abundance, Hodder establishes that biography as method is "one that is less concerned with knowing a life [subjectivity] per se than how those experiences can cast light on the wider social and cultural worlds that a life inhabits."¹¹⁰ Utilizing his method, I not only highlight Romero's life but the power structures and worlds that influenced her life and death. With "ghost-watching" and "biography as archival method" in mind, during the archival process, I asked: What do Romero's life and haunting tell us about the academic environments for queer Latinas? How do I examine human experience and consciousness when Romero is no longer alive? In the following subsections, I give a brief yet detailed outline of the archives where memories of Romero are present. I also demonstrate how I categorize and analyze the artifacts present in the archives.

The archive, particularly the artifact in the archive, provides a glimpse into individuals' lives even after their passing. Cultural anthropologist Aleida Assmann asserts that the archive is a space of remembrance.¹¹¹ Additionally, American Studies scholar Anne Anlin Cheng reiterates archives' connection to memory as she elaborates that objects, hold "the memory of violence" for women and people of color.¹¹² Both Assmann and Cheng's views on the archive demonstrate that it preserves the past and affect. To better employ a Latina Feminist phenomenology that examines Chicanas' everyday experiences and relationships, I also use literary scholar Ann Cvetkovich's "archive of feeling" as both a methodology and theoretical framework.

¹¹⁰ Jake Hodder, "On Absence and Abundance: Biography as method in archival research," *Area* 49 no. 4, 2017: 453.

¹¹¹ Assmann, "Canon and Archive," 99.

¹¹² Anne Anlin Cheng, *Second Skin: Josephine Baker & The Modern Surface*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, 21.

Cvetkovich argues that queer artifacts, or as she calls them "lesbian sites of trauma," establish a different way of understanding trauma and everyday existence.¹¹³ These queer artifacts are objects that highlight the ghost's past first-hand experiences and emotions. Queer artifacts create what Cvetkovich defines as an "archive of feelings" as an exploration of feelings and emotion and "the practices that surround their production and reception."¹¹⁴ I utilize the "archive of feeling" as a theoretical framework that supplements the archival research for the comparative study of Lora Romero and La Llorona's lives and deaths. The queer archive and archive of feeling complement Latina feminist phenomenology and my theory of epistemic haunting. The queer archive and archive of feeling complement Latina feminist phenomenology and my theory of epistemic haunting. Cvetkovich asserts that "queer archive is about making connections with the deeply sedimented histories of violence and survival that form the social, political, and cultural environments we inhabit in the U.S."¹¹⁵ Specifically, "archive of feeling" enacts Latina feminist phenomenology's first and second tenet. For instance, the "archive of feeling" connects historical violence to the present and past lived experiences of queer individuals who interact amongst several mental, physical, and spiritual worlds, borderlands, and the people who inhabit those spaces. The archive of feeling differs from other archives, although any archive can become an archive of feeling. To designate an archive, an "archive of feelings" means to acknowledge and center the emotions and traumas present in the artifacts and materials. Each "archive of feelings" in this analysis holds primary sources that highlight and preserve Romero's knowledge and affect.

¹¹³ Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2003, 7.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Tammy Rae Carland and Ann Cvetkovich, "Sharing an Archive of Feelings: A Conversation," *Art Journal* 72, No. 2 (Summer 2013), 77.

Colonialism and patriarchy reveal their legacies in more subtle forms in Chicana academic deaths, but the material leaves behind clues that highlight these power structures. Colonialism and patriarchy reveal their legacies in more subtle forms in Chicana academic deaths, but the material leave behind clues that highlight these power structures. To understand colonialism's legacy, Latinas' experiences in the colonization of psychic space, and their trauma, it is necessary to insert the material object and body into the psyche. To do so, I draw from Literary theorist Ann Cvetkovich's *An Archive of Feeling* and Black Feminist scholar Kimberly Brown's concept of "ghosts of representation" and "re-memory." Cvetkovich argues that queer artifacts, or as she calls them lesbian sites of trauma, establish a different way of understanding trauma and everyday existence.¹¹⁶ The dead speak through queer artifacts. Their existence establishes what Cvetkovich calls an "archive of feelings" as an exploration of feelings and emotion and "the practices that surround their production and reception."¹¹⁷ The "archive of feeling" opens pathways to explore the affect and the voices that are attached to these feelings. While La Llorona's folklore has been primarily passed down through oral histories (although the literature explored in the section Myth and Death offers her literary depictions), modern-day Lloronas, Chicanas who haunt and those who haunt them, exist within the material. The objects they leave behind, including their epistemological production create an archive of feeling where their emotions and tales are present.

It is through the existence of the material that Chicanas and La Llorona become "ghosts of representation." Brown argues that black women are "ghosts of representation" or an afterimage, space where visuals and imagination unfold in black memory.¹¹⁸ I argue that La Llorona is a "ghost

¹¹⁶ Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2003, 7.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ Kimberly Juanita Brown, *The Repeating Body: Slavery's Visual Resonance in the Contemporary*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2015, 2.

of representation" in Chicana/Latina memory. Her tales are representations of Latina womanhood that help unfold the Chicana/Latina imaginary. La Llorona defies standards of motherhood, sexuality, and femininity in their folklores. La Llorona becomes a ghostly being through "volition..as a process of becoming."¹¹⁹ To elaborate, even within the colonial psychic space, these women as ghostly beings disrupt white heteropatriarchy through their resistance and haunting. Her being is also "hyper-visible/invisible" in the colonial psyche.¹²⁰ For La Llorona, the hyper-visible is her weeping for her children are heard, and the invisible is the weeping against Spanish colonialism. Romero also exists within this binary as a "ghost of representation" her visibility is contingent on the deadly violence others see and not the "slow death" she lived.

Resistance against this "hyper-visible/invisible" frame comes through "re-memory." Like Emma Perez's "molestation of memory" that acknowledges the painful oppressive memories, "re-memory" aids in asserting and centering black women's subjectivity through memory.¹²¹ It comes in many forms throughout Brown's *The Repeating Body*, including movement, both physically and visually, such as photography. Re-memory allows ghosts to highlight their existence and meaning as being in-between several worlds and times. As a ghost, La Llorona's and Romero's haunting and affect travels through time with the aid of objects that help individuals in the present society remember and allows the possibility for re-memory in the future. American Studies scholar Anne Anlin Cheng states that objects, specifically relics, hold "the memory of violence"¹²² and give us the ability to remember the violence women of color endure. For Chicanas, re-memory involves dissecting memory and herstory for Spanish colonialism, machismo, homophobia, Catholicism,

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 66.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 28.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 5

¹²² Anne Anlin Cheng, *Second Skin: Josephine Baker & The Modern Surface*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, 21.

and U.S. imperialism's violence. Like black women, Chicanas "alive, dead and in-between, linger and loiter waiting to have their stories told."¹²³

Re-memory establishes how the object becomes part of the ghost's subjectivity and haunting. Chicanas' ghostly being is not only temporal, but also lies within the intersection of the material object and body, and the psychic affect and memory attached to the material. Newspapers are one of the primary sources found within the archive, and they are used to analyze my case study.¹²⁴ These objects have given me the ability to travel back in time to tell Romero's story alongside the mythical historical folkloric icon La Llorona. Newspapers like photography for Brown, have helped me establish a "re-memory" for Chicanas. Moreover, I have been able to insert the material and women of color into the colonization of psychic space. Although psychic space lies within the unconsciousness and conscious, evidence demonstrates how the psyche haunts the material world. Bodily actions may exist only for a moment in time, but the ghostly beings that enacted these drives have left their traces in the archive of feeling.

Physical & Digital Archival Materials

I began to learn about Romero's life through *The Stanford Daily's* Digital Archives Collection, housed at Stanforddailyarchives.com. These digital archives demonstrate Romero's involvement at Stanford and her post-death impact. After a Boolean search for the key terms "Lora Romero," the archival findings includes fifteen student newspapers spanning from 1978 to 2014 that reference Lora Romero. These newspapers include articles on Romero's suicide, memorial, and a Día de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) event with an altar for Romero. Additionally, these archives show newspaper articles and editorials written by and referencing Lora Romero that show her student activism and community involvement as a faculty member. *The Stanford Daily* digital

¹²³ Brown, *The Repeating Body*, 6

¹²⁴ Below I have attached the images of newspapers used throughout the reflection.

archives reveal advertisements for Chicana student organizations' events that honor Professor Romero. Alongside the student-run newspaper, I examine Stanford University's English department's correspondence that includes a memorial for Romero, department announcements, and emails.

In addition to these digital materials, the Stanford Library's University Archives "El Centro Chicano" collection also has Romero's archives. Although the folder named "Lora Romero Memorial" in Box 4 is the only material that explicitly names Romero, the "El Centro Chicano" has traces of Romero's academic life. The collection houses several records, reports, photographs, notes, event flyers, and correspondence that preserve the history of Stanford University's Chicano cultural center called "El Centro Chicano." Box 4 has textual and visual documents, including altar materials, student testimonies, personal correspondence including lectures and emails, and Lora Romero's obituary that denotes her experiences. Although Box 4 is the only box in the archives that explicitly name Romero in the online category, I also examined seven boxes in total in the "El Centro Chicano" archives that coincided with Romero's presence and involvements at Stanford University. These boxes included in the ARCH-2018-063 section Box 3, Box 5, Box 6, Box 8, in Series 1 Box 10, and ARCH-2019-099 Box 2. Each box contained several folders inside of it with handwritten labels based on events, themes, or prominent figures. The archives show her time as an assistant professor at Stanford University's English department and her influence on the Chicana student body. I examined each folder, highlighting any references to Lora Romero, prominent figures and dates, and gender, race, and queer issues at Stanford. Attached in the index is a table containing details on each box and folder that highlight Romero. The index also has several tables that detail my archival field notes.

Literary Primary and Secondary Sources

In addition to these archives, I also conduct a content textual analysis on Lora Romero's literature. These primary sources include her published peer-reviewed articles and book. Amongst these works is her posthumously printed book *Home Fronts: Domesticity and Its Critics in the Antebellum United States* (1997), as well as her Ethnic and LGBTQ Studies articles. The latter include the article "When Something Goes Queer: Familiarity, Formalism, and Minority Intellectuals in the 1980s" (1993), which is referenced several times in her archives, and the articles "Nationalism and Internationalism: Domestic Differences in a Postcolonial World" (1995) and "Vanishing Americans: Gender, Empire, and New Historicism" (1991).

La Llorona Comparative Cultural Artifacts

As demonstrated in the chapter "The Ghost," I also analyzed cultural archives on La Llorona folklore to develop a comparative analysis of Romero's narrative and the mythical woman. This cultural archive includes a collection of different Lloronas. Chicana retellings include Gloria Anzaldúa's children's book *Prietita and the Ghost Woman/Prietita y la Llorona*, Sandra Cisneros' short story collection *El arroyo de la Llorona y otros cuentos*, and Domino Perez's critical analysis *There Was A Woman: La Llorona From Folklore to Popular Culture*. I chose these works of literature because they convey the queer and feminist symbolic meaning La Llorona has for Chicana writers. Additionally, as noted in "The Ghost," they display how La Llorona functions as a metaphorical mother for her "Chicana daughters."

Categorization and Coding

Following my archival and literary research, I categorize the archival artifacts by content type. I differentiate and sort the physical and digital archives by (1) student testimonial, (2) departmental correspondence, (3) newspaper article and editorial, (4) advertisements and event

flyers, (5) altar materials, (6) academic literature, (7) multimedia and visual art, and (8) personal correspondence. Each category is marked and coded.

Among these categories, I code the primary and secondary sources for the following five themes: (1) haunting & trauma, (2) resistance, (3) gender and sexuality, (4) socioeconomic status, and (5) suicide and death. The first theme, haunting & trauma, indicates archival material that shows instances of unsolved violence and trauma; this includes examples of oppressive moments and cases of racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, etc. The second theme, resistance, includes moments in which Romero or other marginalized groups at Stanford resisted oppression; this could be explicit resistance such as protests or more subtle forms of resistance, such as telling their narratives. The third theme, gender, and sexuality mark when archival materials mention the concepts of gender and sexuality. This theme is broad to account for the array of ways gender and sexuality can make themselves known, such as with feminist issues. The fourth theme, socioeconomic status, notes moments when class and social status are present in the archives. In the archives, socioeconomic status is a note of contention, division, and resistance. For instance, archival artifacts, such as periodicals note Chicanas' student testimonies establish that their activism on campus was a response to microaggressions about their socioeconomic status. The last theme, suicide, and death is taken literally and shows the times that the archives make mention of Romero's suicide or instances of death. Death in the archives is present in many ways, including the death of scholars and conversation on death, such as in the Dia de Los Muertos event. Throughout both archives, these themes intersect with one another, although I distinguish them to reveal the different factors present in an epistemic haunting. Recognizing the themes also helps to understand Romero's narrative and the overarching institutional issues that led to her death.

Like the categorizations, I also marked and indexed the themes each time they appear in an artifact. These codes not only show the documents and physical objects in the archive but how the institutional archives preserve them. Coding also demonstrates how these archives construct memories and histories about Stanford University and Lora Romero's identity. The codes aided in distinguishing and marking what aspects of Romero's life and death continue to haunt the academy. Coding also displayed how the archival artifacts revealed traces of trauma and everyday feelings that can lead to epistemic unconfidence (not just for Romero, but women faculty of color). This trauma can continue on post-life and is present as forms of epistemic hauntings.

CHAPTER V

A Contemporary Chicana Haunting

The legend of La Llorona represents not only death but also the racist and sexist oppression many Chicanas face in the United States. While the connection may seem tenuous between her story and the lives of Chicana academics, as I noted in the section "The Ghost," La Llorona's narrative offers a critical view of how oppressive structures can lead to the degradation of Latinas' mental and physical health. For many Mexicana and Chicana cultural theorists, La Llorona folklore offers an archive of feeling¹²⁵ that represents and embodies the concepts of haunting, oppression, epistemology, and ghostly being. As a result, understanding this "ghost of representation" can aid in deconstructing a Chicana, specifically Lora Romero, whose life and death exemplify a similar epistemic haunting.

Lora Patricia Romero was born March 23rd, 1960, in Chico, California. After receiving her undergraduate degree from Stanford University, she gained her doctoral degree in Literature from UC Berkeley. After receiving her Ph.D. and completing a Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship, she returned to teach at her alumna mater, Stanford University's English Department. In 1997, while working as an assistant professor at Stanford University, Romero checked into a Pacifica, CA motel, and committed suicide.¹²⁶ The details of her suicide are unknown to the public,¹²⁷ but what I could trace, or in other words the historical pieces that are known, are Stanford University's controversial history with Latina staff, faculty, and the undergraduate and graduate student body.

The archives and Romero's literary work demonstrate that she was subjected to a more extensive web of oppression and resisted this oppression throughout her life. At Stanford University in the 1990s (and in the present day as one 2014 *The Stanford Daily* newspaper article

¹²⁵ As in Ann Cvetocich's archive of feeling discussed in Ann Cvetkovic, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2003, 7.

¹²⁶ Marcella Bernhard, "Former RF Romero Dies," *The Stanford Daily*, Vol. 212 no. 19, October 15, 1997.

¹²⁷ In California, police reports are only released to individuals with connections to the victim or victim themselves.

argues¹²⁸) this is seen through faculty layoffs and hiring processes, and the privileging of Anglo Eurocentric knowledge. As mentioned in the introduction, queer women of color's exclusion from the academy correspond to Eurocentric knowledge's canonization. This correspondence leads to people of color's literal and epistemic deaths; Romero is only one case.

Although El Centro Chicano's archives are still institutionally housed they offered the ability to glimpse into individuals who occupy the university's margins. The archives documented several racial and gendered issues students and faculty faced on and off-campus. Additionally, as an archive of feeling, it offered the ability to highlight the sentiments students, faculty, and staff had on campus. This affect included frustrations during student protests for a more diverse university and emotional and incredulous reactions to Romero's death. Moreover, it allowed me to see how Lora Romero influenced Stanford University, not just through her death, but through her continued engagement with the Chicana/o and Latina/o student body. The archives showed the overwhelming non-departmental responsibilities she had and her commitment to her students.

Epistemic Haunting: The Beginning of the End

Romero's death is more than just a suicide that is contingent on her individual actions or experiences. Instead, it is a consequence in part caused by academics who enacted white heteropatriarchy, consequences that perpetuated exclusive frames. This white heteropatriarchy was institutionalized by the English department at Stanford University and President Gerhard Caspar along with the Vice Provost Condoleezza Rice at the university. While Romero's death demonstrates a grave climactic consequence of this white heteropatriarchy, this oppression began long before Romero's arrival. Instances of racial and gendered tension on campus already haunted Stanford. Years before Romero's hiring, Latina and Chicana students asserted what Emma Perez

¹²⁸ Alex Zivkovic, "Lack of faculty diversity cause for concern," *The Stanford Daily*, Vol 245 Issue 51, May 5, 2014.

calls "sitio y lengua," when they noted racial tensions throughout the campus. One instance of Latina students asserting their voices were in the 1990 Jing Lyman lecture series, specifically, the panel "Personal reflections by Chicana women at Stanford." In this panel, they critically examined the gendered racism they experienced presently at the university. Chicana graduate students, Alicia Arrizon and Ana Juarez, noted that sexism and tokenism were serious issues on campus.¹²⁹ They explained that there was a need for more Chicana faculty at Stanford and more mentorship for Chicana students to begin to mitigate these issues.¹³⁰ One Chicana student senator, Roxanna Vanessa Alvarado, noted that being part of a marginalized group at Stanford caused her to feel like Chicanas were the "stepchild[ren] of this university."¹³¹

In 1994, one year after Stanford hired Lora Romero—and two years before Proposition 206 passed in California and removed affirmative action from the state—two Latina faculty and staff members, administrator Margarita Ibarra and Dean of Student Affairs Cecilia Burciaga, were let go after over two decades of service.¹³² While students had previously highlighted a need for more Chicana and Latina presence, the administration's actions ignored such calls for action. The administration cited budget cuts as the reason for their layoffs, but students of color highlighted the layoffs' racial and gendered implications for Stanford. Burciaga had been an advocate and mentor for many Latinx students on campus. Among her contributions to the campus was helping to establish El Centro Chicano (the Chicano and Latino student resource center) and

¹²⁹ Stanford University, "El Centro Chicano" Archives, Call Number SCO650 SERES 1 BOX 10, Folder 12, Jing Lyman lecture series, panel "Personal reflections by Chicana women at Stanford," Panelist Notes.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ Stanford University, "El Centro Chicano" Archives, Call Number SCO650 BOX 3 ARCH-2018-063, Folder 33, News Clippings 1993-94, "El Centro Chicano Staffer upset by potential center budget cuts" Jan. 10, 1994 Roxanna Vanessa Alvarado ASSU Senator.

¹³² Stanford University, "El Centro Chicano" Archives, Call Number SCO650 BOX 3 ARCH-2018-063, Folder 33 "News Clippings 1993-94," April 4-21, 1994 News clippings.

advocating for its preservation during budget cuts.¹³³ Burciaga also championing Stanford University's Afrikana and Chicana/o ethnic housing, Ujamaa, and Casa Zapata, and condemned policies that claimed ethnic housing was equivalent to racial "segregation."¹³⁴

Cecilia Burciaga's removal was indicative of a larger epistemic haunting. An epistemic haunting that encompassed a very real dismissal of the minor input and decision-making voice Chicanas had in the university. Several news clippings from April 1994 show the gravity of the layoffs, as students of color, particularly Latina graduate students, resisted and protested the layoffs, alongside other issues Latinas faced at Stanford. Chicana students had been quite aware of Stanford's Eurocentric hauntings, protesting, and was their response to it. A tactic that showed their ghostliness within Stanford, as beings living within the university's margins, but not yet welcomed. Students provided evidence that demonstrated that in the 1990s, Stanford had enrolled 30% fewer graduate students of color than in the 1970s.¹³⁵ As a response to Burciaga's layoff and persistent issues for Latinas, students published eight demands in *The Stanford Daily*, that offered solutions not only for marginalized students but graduate students in general. Among their demands were, "more minority faculty,"¹³⁶ that the Office of Graduate Studies apply a variety of methods for "minority [graduate student] recruitment,"¹³⁷ that the university should prioritize graduate student admissions and retention, and should "examine funding arrangements."¹³⁸ Meetings with Provost Condoleezza Rice and President Gerard Casper, months of protests, and a three-day hunger strike led to several agreements including, "the creation of committees... to

¹³³ Stanford University, "El Centro Chicano" Archives, Call Number SCO650 BOX 3 ARCH-2018-063, Folder 33, News Clippings 1993-94, "El Centro Chicano Staffer upset by potential center budget cuts" Jan. 10, 1994 Roxanna Vanessa Alvarado ASSU Senator.

¹³⁴ Stanford University, "El Centro Chicano" Archives, Call Number SCO650 BOX 2 ARCH-2019-099, Folder 30 Stanford Casa Zapata, Dean of Student Affairs Statement.

¹³⁵ Beth Berselli, "A long history of 'frustration' motivates students to strike," Vol 205 Issue 54, May 5, 1994

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

explore the feasibility of a Chicano Studies program and help students raise funds for a community center in East Palo Alto,"¹³⁹ as well as to "consider[ing] proposals for a program in Asian American Studies, [and] recognized the importance of Chicana administrator Cecilia Burciaga."¹⁴⁰ In addition to these agreements, Stanford established a new deanship, the Undergraduate Dean in

During the strike, Chicana graduate students pushed for the expansion of Stanford's episteme with Ethnic Studies Programs' integration and the inclusion of a non-Eurocentric curriculum, including Indigenous philosophies. Chicana graduate students sought alternative forms of knowledge to what Stanford had to offer. At Stanford, they endured an Anglo Eurocentric curriculum. This curriculum led to epistemic unconfidence and, consequently, their dehumanization. Taking action, they formed Aztlan University. Aztlan University was one instance of Ortega's hometactics, noted in the "Framing Home" chapter. At Stanford University where Eurocentric knowledge was centered, Aztlan University was a tactic for survival and an instance of carving home in an unhomely space. As well as a technique to mitigate instances of epistemic unconfidence. With the help of a few faculty of color, Aztlan University became an unofficial non-institutionalized space where faculty and students of color engaged in knowledge that Stanford's episteme excluded. Among these faculty was the recently hired English Assistant Professor Lora Romero.¹⁴² Aztlan university was only one of Romero's hometactics, as will be noted in the following sections, Lora Romero attempted hometactics throughout her time at Stanford, in large creating home for her students, when Stanford's frames excluded her at the same time. The following sections demonstrate the frames placed on Romero by her department.

Epistemic Unconfidence: Tenure & Humanity Denied

¹³⁹ Sara Kratz, "Strike Ends After Three Days, Agreement Reached," *The Stanford Daily*, Vol 205, Issue 56, May 9, 1994.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² Berselli, "A long history of 'frustration' motivates students to strike," May 5, 1994.

Stanford University's history is significant to understanding the frame that Lora Romero entered into in 1993. To be a Chicana at Stanford already signified certain boundaries or what Chicana theorist Alicia Gaspar de Alba calls "frames" that placed them in the margins. Chicana and Latina students, faculty, and staff at Stanford had attempted to "[un]frame" themselves and "rewrite their stories and deconstruct the structures of power"¹⁴³ at the institution long before 1993. The institution's negligence of the racism and sexism they endured had long haunted them. Although Romero's hiring alongside two more Chicana/o faculty (Rudy Busto, Religious Studies professor, and Yvonne Yarbo-Bejarano, Spanish and Portuguese professor) was the university's reaction to the ghosts that continued to haunt them, it did not vanish the specter. President Gerard Casper and Provost Condoleezza Rice praised the new Chicano hires and held a reception in their honor.¹⁴⁴ The invitation to the reception held at the Meyer-Buck Estate in Palo Alto is shown below in Figure 2. Nevertheless, this praise, dinner, and even the hiring did not resolve the racial and gendered issues that haunted the campus, as noted in the 1994 protests that occurred the following year.

¹⁴³ Gaspar de Alba, *[Un]Framing the Bad Woman*, 18-9.

¹⁴⁴ Stanford University, "El Centro Chicano" Archives, Call Number SCO650 BOX 3 ARCH-2018-063, Folder 39 "Chicana/o Faculty Series," " Announcement/Invitation from Dean of the School of Humanities & Sciences John Shoven for Reception for New Chicano Hires," October 23, 1993.

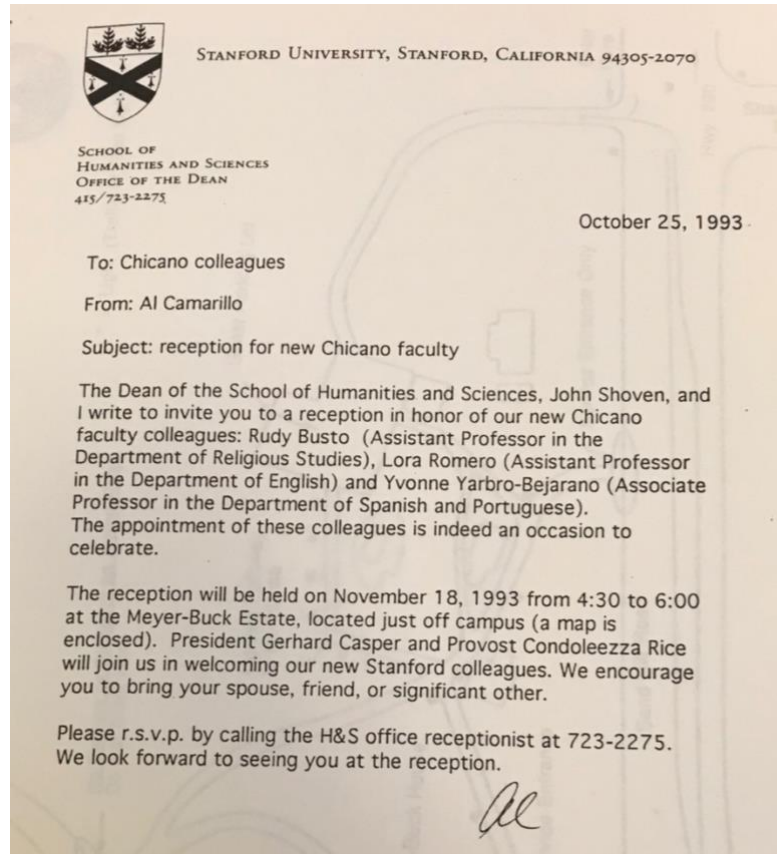


Figure 2 Invitation to Reception for Chicana Faculty Hires¹⁴⁵

During her time as an assistant professor at Stanford University, Lora Romero faced institutionalized racism, sexism, and homophobia in her department. Her repeated tenure denial exemplified this oppression.¹⁴⁶ After the Chicana/o student protests, faculty had noted "a loss of morale amongst female junior professors" that had been brought up to the administration but ignored.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, women faculty of color felt especially disregarded. Queer Black Literary scholar, Sharon Holland worked in the English department with Romero. She noted that "the English department was treating women and people of color unfairly (lesser qualified white men

¹⁴⁵ Stanford University, "El Centro Chicano" Archives, Call Number SCO650 BOX 3 ARCH-2018-063, Folder 39 "Chicana/o Faculty Series," " Announcement/Invitation from Dean of the School of Humanities & Sciences John Shoven for Reception for New Chicano Hires," October 25, 1993.

¹⁴⁶ Alex Zivkovic, "Lack of faculty diversity cause for concern," *The Stanford Daily*, Vol 245 Issue 51, May 5, 2014

¹⁴⁷ Mabry. Marcus, *Twice as Good: Condoleezza Rice and Her Path to Power*, Emmaus: Modern Times, 2007,133.

were being mentored and given more time to publish before a tenure decision was made)."¹⁴⁸ Tenure denial is a significant factor in understanding epistemic unconfidence in faculty and Romero. While the women of color faculty (WOCF) asserted their knowledge as significant, white faculty continued to disregard WOCF's knowledge. This denial demonstrates white faculty members' disregard for WOCF's intellect, but also shows that WOCF were not considered intellectual beings. So although these women of color are highly qualified and high achieving, the danger in epistemic unconfidence, lies in the belief that their humanity has no value. Romero's death demonstrates how the denial of knowledge leads to a denial in humanity and, consequently, epistemic unconfidence. Likewise, her suicide shows how her subjectivity connects to broader social subjectivities. Her oppression is part of a larger epistemic haunting that has tyrannized women of color at Stanford University and other institutions of high education. Her tenure denials function as proof that not only was her knowledge not validated in her department, but neither was that of others. A 2014 *Stanford Daily* article notes that Romero's tenure denial was not an individual event. Instead, it establishes that Romero was one of several women of color that Stanford University historically denied tenure in both "traditional disciplines" and interdisciplinary programs.¹⁴⁹ The knowledge about the delegitimizing of faculty of color's intelligence is a significant epistemic haunting that highlights the social violence against faculty of color, especially queer women. The people of color that were denied tenure at Stanford include "Stephan Sohn...Estelle Freedman, Akhil Gupta, Robert Warrior,"¹⁵⁰ many of whom were or became prominent scholars in their pertinent fields. Nonetheless, departments delegitimized their research

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 143. Although it is important to note here, that Holland speaks fondly of Rice's mentorship, stating the recommendations and support Rice offered her after Romero's death.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Alex Zivkovic, "Town hall discussion addresses concerns about faculty diversity," *The Stanford Daily*, Vol 245 Issue 51, May 5, 2014.

as too specific to women and ethnic issues,¹⁵¹ demonstrating that in academia, research on race and gender are not significant forms of knowledge.

"Now We Know": Hearing La Llorona's Screams

Although her department denied her tenure, after Romero's death, the English department's memorial statements suggest they believed they were ignorant of Romero's epistemic unconfidence. For instance, in the English department's memorial announcement, one faculty member stated that "the fact that we now know that she had so much sadness in her life, makes it all the harder for us to bear."¹⁵² Here, the white faculty assert their colonial logic by denying the oppression that Romero endured through the use of "now we know," stating that her death (much like La Llorona's death) is the marker to her situation. This memorial also positioned her oppression as an individual subject's affect and experience, not an epistemic haunting. The statement "so much sadness in *her* life" is used to deny the structural and psychological racialized and gendered oppression Romero faced at the hands of the agents that enacted white heteropatriarchy. The colonial institution articulates Romero's suicide as a silent event that had "shaken"¹⁵³ the English department, but her suicide was not a sudden event. Instead, it is what literary theorist Lauren Berlant calls a "slow death," analogous to a population's slow deterioration over time.¹⁵⁴ The memorial announcement functions as an artifact for "re-memory" inside Lora Romero's archive of feelings. "Ghost-watching" the memorial announcement through a queer Chicana feminist perspective alongside *The Stanford Daily* newspapers and the other publications situate her narrative alongside the white heteropatriarchal power structures that led to her death. The traces of knowledge Romero left behind in the archives act as an epistemic haunting. So while

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² Diane Manuel, Stanford University News Release: Memorial scheduled for English Professor, 10/20/1997.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ Lauren Berlant, "Slow Death (Sovereignty, Obesity, Lateral Agency)," *Critical Inquiry* 33 (Summer 2007): 754.

the English faculty assert a shock and ignorance of "sadness," knowledge of Romero's oppression lurks and highlights the social violence she lived.

As noted in her literary work Lora Romero's "sadness" was not unspoken in her lifetime. Like La Llorona, she expressed her disdain for colonialism, but her screams went unheard. In her literature, Romero articulates her alienation in academia, her confrontations with Eurocentric epistemes, and her hope for transformation. In her essay, "When Something Goes Queer: Familiarity, Formalism, and Minority Intellectuals in the 1990s," she critiques institutions' "categorical distinctions" of knowledge and denial of activist knowledge. In this essay, she speaks to factors that lead to epistemic unconfidence. As she asserts, "categorical distinction between the intellectual and the 'non-intellectual'— thereby categorically undermines the discourse of unauthorized speakers."¹⁵⁵ This disregard, demonstrates a similarity to La Llorona, as Romero's oppression is part of a larger colonial haunting. For Romero, this colonial haunting came in the form of challenging academia's colonial logic and heteropatriarchal oppression against queer women of color. A colonial logic that she voiced in her publications and, in a Llorona fashion, wailed about after her suicide. For instance, in her essay "Nationalism and Internationalism: Domestic Differences in a Postcolonial World," she makes the claim that when postcolonial theory's exclusion of United States' marginalized populations, including Chicana/o scholars, recreates colonial power dynamics.¹⁵⁶

In the essay, "When Something Goes Queer," Romero reiterated her position against Eurocentric hegemony in the academy and also asserted her *sitio y lengua*. In this article, she exposes her desire for inclusive institutions by stating,

¹⁵⁵ Lora Romero, "When Something Goes Queer: Familiarity, Formalism, and Minority Intellectuals in the 1990s," *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 6 no. 1 (1993): 127-8.

¹⁵⁶ Lora Romero, "Nationalism and Internationalism: Domestic Differences in a Postcolonial World," *American Literature*, 67 no. 4 (Dec. 1995): 795-800, 798-9.

I hope that in the 1990s, institutional circumstances will allow intellectuals writing on minority cultures to create an alternative rhetoric of accreditation, one which they can put use in transforming the educational system and making it more responsive to the needs of ethnic communities.¹⁵⁷

Like the Chicanas in the "Material & Embodied Chicana Epistemologies" section, she wanted to make academia home. A home where the educational system could embrace racialized queer intellectuals. Her articles and books mark her resistance and are a hometactic. In her life, Romero did not have had a safe academic home; her legacy transforms her into a ghostly being, a being-between-time. As her "re-memory" navigates current colonialized psychic spaces through her publications and the archive of feelings she left behind. The above quote holds additional significance because of its post-death circulation. After Romero's death, the quote was used in a majority of her memorials, including programs honoring her and in newspaper articles. Figure 5 below is one example of the quote's use. The quote depicts an instance of her epistemic haunting, as her desire for an inclusive academy also functions as knowledge that highlights the social violence caused by exclusivity, a knowledge that came to the spotlight after her death, and that became a memory for Chicano students and faculty. This knowledge situated Romero's hope alongside academic standards. Consequently, the exclusion from academia and her desire for a homely space contributed to her epistemic unconfidence.

Literature was not the only place she enacted hometactics and resisted the academy's Eurocentric frames. As an assistant professor at Stanford, she also served as a faculty in residence for Chicana/o student housing, Casa Zapata, mentioned earlier in this section, and as a mentor for Chicana/o students. As faculty in residence, she attempted to address the issues student protesters had brought up her first year as a professor at Stanford. She tried to create a home for her Chicana/o students by providing mentorship for them and establishing a space that would mitigate epistemic

¹⁵⁷ Romero, "When Something Goes Queer," 122.

unconfidence and enact non-Eurocentric knowledge. In a meeting with undergraduate and graduate students, Romero suggested actions needed to improve the Chicano writing program and Casa Zapata. These include establishing tutoring beneficial to graduate students, creating tutor profiles, working with faculty to enhance student tutoring, and participated in and scheduled the Chicano Advancement Program at Casa Zapata.¹⁵⁸ Her mentorship came in many forms, including participating in several panels in which she spoke about her research on Chicana feminist literature and her experiences as a Chicana faculty member. Figure 3 below shows the save the date, for one such event at El Centro Chicano. On Wednesdays, at noon the event, "The Chicano/Latino Faculty Speaker Series" would invite Chicana/o and Latina/o faculty to speak about their research, roles as faculty members, and social issues pertinent to the faculty's interests.¹⁵⁹

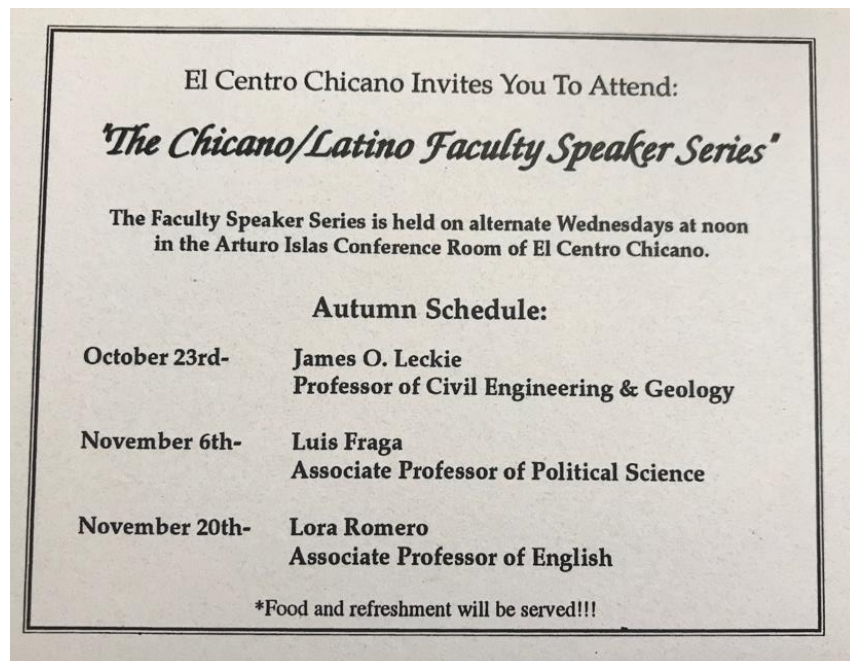


Figure 3 Save the Date for Chicano/Latino Faculty Speaker Series¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸Stanford University, "El Centro Chicano" Archives, Call Number SCO650 BOX 6 ARCH-2018-063, Folder 63, Meeting with Chicano/a Faculty, Meeting Notes, August 15, 1995.

¹⁵⁹ Stanford University, "El Centro Chicano" Archives, Call Number SCO650 BOX 5 ARCH-2018-063, Folder 51, "Faculty Speaker Series 1996-7," El Centro Chicano Autumn Faculty Series Schedule, Nov. 20th, 1996.

¹⁶⁰ Stanford University, "El Centro Chicano" Archives, Call Number SCO650 BOX 5 ARCH-2018-063, Folder 51, "Faculty Speaker Series 1996-7, Faculty Series Save the Date, Nov. 20th, 1996.

For Romero, her engagement in the speaker series was an opportunity to speak about her research on feminist theory and contemporary Latina writers.¹⁶¹ The knowledge did not fit the Eurocentric male-centered frame at Stanford's English Department, because of its connection to bodily and experiential knowledge was dismissed. The "Chicano/Latino Faculty Speaker Series" afforded faculty, like Romero, a space to mentor students, but also to be able to engage in these non-traditional forms of knowledge. As a result, it was a method to disrupt epistemic unconfidence, as this knowledge reasserting Romero's *sitio y lengua*.

The archival materials also demonstrate the efforts Professor Lora Romero made to encourage Casa Zapata Chicana/o student's nontraditional forms of knowledge production and create the affect comfort in an unhomey space. These include small acts like baking for the student residents and substantial actions such as programming events for the dorms. Among the larger events she organized at Casa Zapata was the "Los Mascarones" workshop that included a theatrical performance on Indigenous philosophy.¹⁶² Emails between Lora Romero, Los Mascarones theater group, and other administrators state that this workshop consisted of a couple of Indigenous themes and episteme such as an introduction to the Nahuatl culture and language, Mayan math, and the Aztec hieroglyphics and calendar.¹⁶³ Establishing that the theater company has a "style rooted in protest theater that was directed for the popular masses."¹⁶⁴ During Romero's term as faculty-in-residence, Casa Zapata became a space that encouraged non-Eurocentric, more specifically, Latin American Indigenous knowledge. In engaging with the arts and other forms of non-white, non-

¹⁶¹ Stanford University, "El Centro Chicano" Archives, Call Number SCO650 BOX 5 ARCH-2018-063, Folder 51, "Faculty Speaker Series 1996-7," El Centro Chicano Autumn Faculty Series Schedule, Nov. 20th, 1996.

¹⁶² Stanford University, "El Centro Chicano" Archives, Call Number SCO650 BOX 5 ARCH-2018-063, Folder 39 "Los Mascarones Workshop 4/8/97," Email correspondence Between El Centro Chicano, Alma Martinez, Lora Romero, 3/07/97.

¹⁶³ Stanford University, "El Centro Chicano" Archives, Call Number SCO650 BOX 5 ARCH-2018-063, Folder 39, "Los Mascarones Workshop 4/8/97," Email correspondence Between El Centro Chicano, Alma Martinez, Lora Romero, 3/11/97.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

traditional knowledge, Lora was participating in a similar *sitio y lengua* and resistance to epistemic unconfidence that she did during Aztlán University.

A memorial in *Noticias*, a Chicana student-run news magazine, also offers a more personal insight into the affect Romero contributed to the space. A significant contrast to the English Department's memorial, it states,

Whether through being there to give academic advice, or personal advice Lora made it a point to help everyone find their place in Zapata. Some of her staff members fondly remember the extra effort that Lora made to get to know each of them personally. She would do this through baking cookies for each staff meeting, taking them out to lunch, or even dropping off pan dulce for them at the hospital. These are just a few examples of some of the things that Lora did to create not only a strong staff, but a strong house.¹⁶⁵

The above quote shows the many ways Romero integrated *hometactics* and resisted academia's objectivity. By centering home and affect, Romero was creating *hometactics* at Casa Zapata for her students. More importantly, she was creating space for survival for the Chicana/o students in the predominantly white institution. In academia, creating a space of mentoring and affect has emotional, professional, and financial consequences. As one study notes, "mentoring is not valued by administration for tenure and promotion; and in his [the professor's] experience on tenure and promotion committees," mentorship is not discussed.¹⁶⁶ Despite these emotional and professional strains, Romero continuously acknowledged and humanized her students. By baking them cookies, visiting them at the hospital, and offering advice, she disrupted notions in the academy that did not value relationships with students. These small acts were a tactic against epistemic unconfidence. Whereas epistemic unconfidence is a denial of knowledge and humanity, *hometactics* offer instances of humanization. These human acts, as noted, are not valued to academia but are

¹⁶⁵ Stanford University, "El Centro Chicano" Archives, Call Number SCO650 BOX 4 ARCH-2018-063, Folder 59, "Noticias," "Lora Romero: In our hearts you shall remain forever," *Noticias X* no. 1, October 1997.

¹⁶⁶ Joni Schwartz, "Faculty as undergraduate research mentors for students of color: Taking into account the costs," *Science Education Policy* 96 no. 3, (April 2012): 527–542, 538.

significance to creating a space where students feel their being is valued and, consequently, value their humanity.

An Altar for Romero

Although the English Department's memorial frames Lora Romero's epistemic haunting and trauma as an individual experience, the memorials and events created by Chicana/o and Latina/o faculty and students honoring Romero demonstrate the collectivity of the epistemic haunting. The epistemic haunting's collective nature is shown in Lora Romero's suicide note and in the student and faculty events held to remember and tribute Lora's life.

As mentioned in the introduction "La Llorona at Stanford," after Romero's death, the Chicana/o student body mourned her death but also celebrated her life. Among the many ways that the Chicana/o student, faculty, and staff did so was through memorial events, including an annual Dia de Los Muertos event, a memorial service planned by El Centro Chicano, and many dedications at conferences and publications. Figure 5 below shows the program for the Dia de Los Muertos event dedicated to Lora Romero. The program shows the collectivity present amongst the Stanford University Latina/o community. For instance, Luis Fraga and Charlene Aguilar, two Latinx Political Science professors and spouses,¹⁶⁷ gave the memorial address. Fraga and Aguilar were both part of the Latina/o faculty that engaged in mentorship and hometactics through El Centro Chicano's events. As shown in the above sections, this community of faculty included Lora Romero. Fraga had worked with Romero during "The Chicana/o Latina/o Faculty Speaker Series" and understood the constraints, consequences, and benefits of engaging in hometactics at Stanford.

¹⁶⁷ Stanford University, "El Centro Chicano" Archives, Call Number SCO650 BOX 8 ARCH-2018-063, Folder 44, "Dia de los Muertos," "El Centro Chicano & Casa Zapata Presents El Dia de Los Muertos" Program, October 31, 1997.

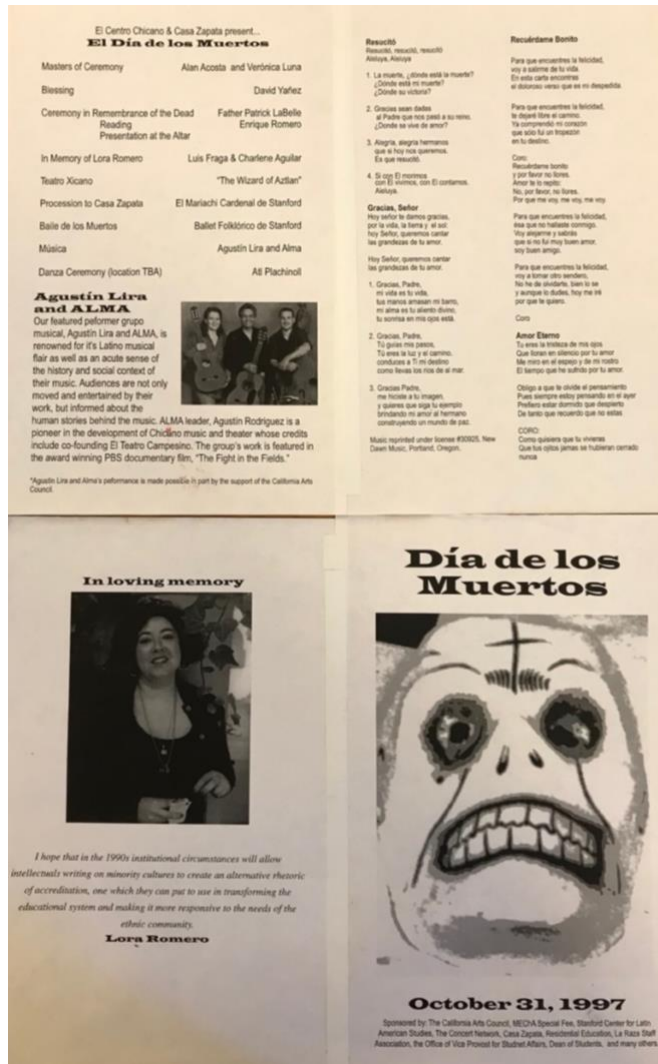


Figure 4 Flyer for the Dia de los Muertos Lora Romero Dedication¹⁶⁸

The October 31st, 1997 program also demonstrates the process and acknowledgment of an epistemic haunting. To elaborate, after her the words "In loving memory" and her photograph, the pamphlet cites Romero's "When Something Goes Queer," stating,

I hope that in the 1990s, institutional circumstances will allow intellectuals writing on minority cultures to create an alternative rhetoric of accreditation, one which they can put use in transforming the educational system and making it more responsive to the needs of the ethnic community.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ Stanford University, "El Centro Chicano" Archives, Call Number SCO650 BOX 8 ARCH-2018-063, Folder 44, "Dia de los Muertos," "El Centro Chicano & Casa Zapata Presents El Dia de Los Muertos" Program, October 31, 1997.

¹⁶⁹ Romero, "When Something Goes Queer," 122.

This quote is continuously cited and signals the haunting. And is a reminder of the trauma that Lora endured and her desire for a better academia. The Dia de Los Muertos is only one event that cites the quote. In *The Stanford Report*, Stanford University's faculty and staff newspaper, Professor Ramon Saldivar, a Latino colleague who had known Lora Romero since they were both teaching at the University of Texas-Austin, also cited the above quote.¹⁷⁰ Saldivar reiterated Romero's words to highlight her commitment to activism in the academy and her contributions to Casa Zapata.¹⁷¹ During her memorial at El Centro Chicano, she is also remembered as an activist scholar. Her existence is interconnected with the quote from "When Something Goes Queer." And the quote is used to place her identity as an academic in relation to the oppression she fought. As a result, her haunting marks her as a culturally specific ghost, who's haunting is marked "racially and sexually" as it was in life.¹⁷² Her epistemic haunting is also relegated to this marker. The knowledge she leaves behind is one based on her positionality as a queer Chicana who lived through an institution that was not "responsive to the needs of ethnic communities."¹⁷³

Romero's suicide note also shows the collectivity of Stanford University's epistemic haunting. As mentioned in the previous sections, Romero was not the only queer women faculty of color that experienced oppression in the English Department, Sharron Holland, a queer Black feminist, also endured alongside her. Holland is mentioned in Romero's suicide note. While the full contents of the note are unknown, Sharon Holland shares that in the note, Romero asked her to pick up and take care of her dog.¹⁷⁴ A small act that may seem unrelated to episteme and haunting, nevertheless that demonstrates comradery between the two women. Holland and Romero

¹⁷⁰ Stanford University, "El Centro Chicano" Archives, Call Number BOX 4 ARCH-2018-063, Folder 24 " News Clippings 1997-8," *The Stanford Report* XXX no. 5, October 22, 1997.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² Freccero, "Queer Spectralities: Haunting of the Past," 342.

¹⁷³ Romero, "When Something Goes Queer," 122.

¹⁷⁴ Marcus Mabry, *Twice as Good: Condoleezza Rice and Her Path to Power*, Emmaus: Modern Times, 2007,133.

were among the few queer women of color in the department. Both of whose work intersected gender and ethnic studies and who shared an intellectually fueled friendship, a friendship that is exemplified in the dedication of Holland's book *Raising The Dead: Readings of Death and (Black) Subjectivity* (2000). The dedication asserts in all caps, "TO ALL THOSE I HAVE KNOWN IN THE PLACE OF THE LIVING"¹⁷⁵ and names' Lora Romero as the last person in the acknowledgments. Although this is not the only place that Holland speaks about Lora Romero. Figure 5 shows an excerpt from *Raising The Dead* that offers a short, yet detailed account of their relationship together.

Much of the revision of the manuscript could not have been completed without the advice and support of my colleagues at Stanford. I will always remember Lora Romero for her wit, beauty, and brutally honest comments on the early drafts. A big thank you to Sandra Drake,

Figure 5 Acknowledgement in Professor Sharon Holland's book *Raising the Dead*

Like the memorial in *Noticias*, Holland notes Romero's personal acts and affect. What differentiates Hollands dedication from others, is Holland's ability to legitimize and detail Romero's sitio y lengua as a scholar and a complex human, without dichotomizing her with her oppression. Alternatively, Holland characterizes Romero in relation to "her wit, beauty, and brutally honest comments."¹⁷⁶ Three broad descriptions that show that humanize Lora Romero as someone with personality, looks, and a voice. Holland's statement is a contrast to the academic representations that did not hear her Llorona calls, and that relegated Romero's mind to one intellectual capacity, the ability to mix "canon" and ethnic studies. Instead,

¹⁷⁵ Sharon Holland, *Raising The Dead: Readings of Death and (Black) Subjectivity*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2000, np.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

Holland's dedication upholds the memory that Romero's voice was "brutally honest," a memory that positions Romero's voice as intellectually significant.

CONCLUSION

Epistemic Hauntings' Implications

In doing this type of research (in hauntology, trauma, and death studies) many times, scholars try to find closure. Still, as Lisa Marie Cacho notes, spaces of social death and abstract existences "do not necessarily give us happy-endings."¹⁷⁷ Haunting spaces and times often do not guarantee happy-endings. Yes, at times there may be no happy ending, but hauntology's goal is not a happy-ending or even an ending at all. Acknowledgment is the goal. Acknowledgment is significant here because, at times, it is the only thing we can offer as scholars. Sometimes the only acknowledgment present in the research is the scholar's acknowledgment of an individual's humanity when others in the world continue to neglect. This thesis is an acknowledgment of Lora Romero's humanity.

After her suicide, like La Llorona, Romero became a "ghost of representation" that haunts academia. While La Llorona represents the colonial haunting present in the borderlands, Romero represents the epistemic haunting still present in academia. The ghost exists as an embodiment of the time lag. It is outside the normalized boundaries of linear time as it travels from the past present, and so forth. It is a representation of the repressed violence, but also the violence that is currently occurring. Although she is a representation, it is essential to note that Romero is a real individual, that was denied knowledge but more so denied humanity. It is crucial to note that while her symbolism is meaningful, her life and the destruction of that life are much more meaningful. The physical implication of death is much more significant than the theoretical implications.

Although this was only a brief analysis, my examination of Lora Romero's life and death with epistemic haunting and epistemic unconfidence is crucial to understanding these phenomena's real-world implications. It is vital to deconstructing how Chicanas haunt in the academy, as both haunted by white heteropatriarchy and as ghostly beings. By doing so, I affirm that this thesis is

¹⁷⁷ Lisa Marie Cacho, *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected*, New York: New York University Press, 2012, 32.

one of many women of color's voices that has acknowledged historical oppression Chicana/Latina academics. I hope people finally hear those voices to combat current epistemic unconfidence for the living and to end the cycle of epistemic haunting Chicana scholars endure.

EPILOGUE

Una Carta Para Lora

Dear Professor Lora Romero,

After a week that included meeting with my committee member Professor Sherene Razack she suggested I write down my thoughts about significant events that would make me rethink my research. Shortly after this meeting, I attended a symposium called "You Imagine Me, and I Exist," where several scholars, including my advisor Professor Alicia Gaspar de Alba, read letters to the "proto-feminist" nun Sor Juana. She is the subject and muse in their research. In these letters, they spoke of their connection to Sor Juana; for some, it is the denial of knowledge, for others lesbian desires, and others the enthusiasm that comes with learning and research. Juana haunted all the scholars. I believe that writing you this letter might be the best way to end this thesis. It is the only way I can speak to you directly right now as the scholars spoke to Sor Juana.

Since, after all, this thesis is about you and for you. A woman whom I have never met and who has never met me. Yet, I heard your name once in a meeting, and I was haunted by it. Lora. In all honesty, I was haunted by your suicide first of all. As a bisexual Chicana feminist, I knew that knowing about your life, let alone researching it, would be too much sorrow for me at the time. It was too close to home. But your name haunted me. You pushed me into the uncanny. Like the literature review, more eloquently stated, your haunting reminded me of home and at the same time, reminded me of so-called homes that were truly unhomey. And after researching two other haunting women, Reyna Marroquin and La Llorona, I finally knew I was able to write down your story. I knew this is what I had to do. I needed to hear your voices. Something I had to write. And I hoped that writing your stories would help others hear your voices too. Although it was not easy. The words were agonizing, and if I am honest with myself and you, I do not think they do you full justice. Not yet, at least.

But my fear about you now longer lies in the closeness of home. It is as I told Professor Sherene Razack, that you will just become a chapter. That I will use you. I write this letter in hopes that I do not. That one day, I do your life justice with my words. That you are more than just this thesis and more than just a chapter. You continue to haunt me, Lora. And I believe that even after I press the submit button on this thesis, you will continue to haunt me. And that is a good thing. I will start to "ghost-watch" you. Like I said earlier, your epistemic haunting is necessary for others. It is needed so that others do not become ghosts and so others can have a home in the academy, where you did not. I hope one day you truly will, beyond this paper.

Warmly,

Another Chicana in Academia

Brenda

APPENDIX

Table 1: Archival References

Reference	Box #	Folder #	Folder Name
SCO650 ARCH-2018-063	3	12	Dia de los Muertos
		33	News Clippings 1993-94
		39	Chicano/a Faculty Series
SCO650 ARCH-2018-063	4	3	PAE Year End Evaluation 1997-1998
		24	News Clippings 1997-8
		25	Alumni Symposium
		30	Chicano/a Faculty Speaker Series
		35	Dia de los Muertos
		48	Lora Romero
		50	Raza in the News 1997-98
		57	Evento 1997-8
		59	Noticias
SCO650 ARCH-2018-063	5	1	Noticias, Vol. IX
		2	News Clippings '96-97
		3	Program Calendar 1996-7
		11	Dia De Los Muertos 1996 Nov. 1
		18	Casa Zapata
		29	Mujeres at Stanford (MAS)
		39	Los Mascarones Workshop 4/8/97
		48	FACULTY SERIES
		51	Faculty Speaker Series 1996-7

SCO650 ARCH-2018-063	6	2	Faculty Speaker Series
		34	Noticias Vol. VII (1994-95)
		45	Noticias 95-96
		47	La Conexion
		63	Meeting with Chicano/a Faculty
SCO650 ARCH-2018-063	8	44	Dia de los Muertos
SCO650 SERES 1	10	12	Jing Lyman lecture series, panel "Personal reflections by Chicana women at Stanford"
		17	Gloria Anzaldúa March 1990
SCO650 ARCH-2019-099	2	5	Stanford Graduacion Chicana 1979
		20	Stanford Chicanas
		28	Feminism
		30	Stanford Casa Zapata
		32	Stanford Casa Zapata
		123	Flyers 1998-1999

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