

“SHE’S THE DREAMWORK INSIDE SOMEONE ELSE’S SKULL”: *La Malinche* and the Battles Waged for Her Autonomy

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The descriptions of Doña Marina/La Malinche by contemporary scholars involve two opposing philosophies: the patriarchal hegemony of premodern essentialist tradition led by Octavio Paz or the feminist approach privileging a constructionist form of identity development led by Adelaida Del Castillo, Norma Alarcón, and others. I suggest a third approach: a psychological view arising from an examination of her behavior. Marina displays behavior consistent with dominant society psychological theories as well as with the Mexican American interactive model created by Raymond T. Garza and Jack P. Lipton. Thus, through the application of discourse theory, I suggest that Doña Marina/La Malinche can be reconstructed using a literary naturalistic approach that reveals previously unexplored psychological aspects that possibly led to her behavior and that she can be read as the archetype of Gloria Anzaldúa’s new mestiza. [Keywords: essentialism, constructionist, literary Naturalism, Stockholm Syndrome, identity, behavior, new mestiza]

The question of one’s identity does not become problematic until it conflicts with the expectations of one’s culture. Yet the patriarchy in control of a culture recognizes that despite the desire to maintain its master narrative for its members, that narrative is inevitably in flux as it responds to what Rosaura Sánchez refers to as “specific historical conditions” (1997, 353) that require change. Unfortunately, since the patriarchy of the Mexican American culture has repeatedly refused to recognize that change occurs, the identity of *la Mexicana* has developed primarily from the European Church-led patriarchy. Its master narrative privileges male dominance and female submission and promotes the almost total erasure of *la mujer* except in terms of duty and procreation. Consequently, many contemporary Chicanas often become “malinches”

simply by choosing higher education over marriage or “white culture” and feminism over traditional beliefs and values (Pratt 1993, 862). Conversely, many *Mechicanas*¹ remain oppressed and are expected to follow the paradigm of *la Virgen* or *la Malinche/puta*, a dichotomy that appropriates the name of one of the most controversial women in Mexican history as a term meaning traitor and prostitute. Yet in the patriarchal attempt to manipulate the identity of someone as protean as Doña Marina/Malinalli/Malintzin/Marina/La Malinche, many aspects of her life are overlooked or ignored.² By incorporating interdisciplinary approaches from literature, psychology, and women’s studies, and by drawing upon the contemporary framework created by psychologists Raymond T. Garza and Jack T. Lipton (1977/1984), I argue that Doña Marina/La Malinche can be reconstructed using a literary naturalistic approach³ and previously unexplored psychological aspects of her behavior, one that disrupts the various cultural expectations of female identity⁴ and that positions her as the archetype of the “new *mestiza*” that Gloria Anzaldúa later creates. I further propose that although we have little evidence concerning Malintzin’s psychological or emotional state, her psychological trauma, beginning as a slave to the Xicalango Indians and ending as one to Cortés, evoked in her a survival mechanism that led to actions consistent with those experienced by victims/hostages who have been in life-threatening situations.

Because society is a force upon not only the identity development of an individual but also on that individual’s psychological development, I draw upon the work of Mexican American psychologist Raymond T. Garza and his colleague Jack T. Lipton and juxtapose it with literary Naturalism to demonstrate visually Émile Zola’s empirical assertion of the “reciprocal” effects of the individual and society and apply them to Malinalli and her multiple environments. Although the Naturalists created characters who were victims of their heredity and

environmental conditions, Marina was not a character. She was an individual who, as a slave, was not in control of her life despite the many privileges she was given by Cortés. However, she did have an influence on her Aztec and Spanish environments. Furthermore, because Malinalli has been re-visioned in the imagination of so many and exposed to the expectations of various cultures, her identity/face is unquestionably fluid and constructed by social, religious, psychological, family, and cultural influences that affected her, and she has become “the dreamwork inside someone else’s skull” (Anzaldúa 1987/1999, 65). Her ability to survive through all these antagonistic forces celebrates her fluidity and qualifies her as the archetype of Anzaldúa’s “new *mestiza*.”

This re-visioned naturalistic description, a revisionist project vis-à-vis Alicia Gaspar de Alba (1999) and others, portrays Malintzin’s behavior as psychologically dysfunctional and attempts to show how her actions became a coping mechanism for survival. Malintzin switched allegiances away from people of her own community who betrayed her, made her a second-class citizen, deprived her of her heritage, name, and freedom, and sold her into bondage. She became loyal to a man who, in his own way, apparently cared for her, recognized her linguistic abilities, and provided an officer to support her when he could not. This story then becomes less a tale of betrayal to one’s people and more a story of skill and a narrative of a woman who negotiates and succeeds in multiple borderlands. Doña Marina dismantles the slander Octavio Paz spread and redefines the patriarchal iconography. While these traits empower her and create a role model for Chicanas, they further damn her in the eyes of the patriarchal society, as she fails to reify the cultural expectations that require her to be the virtuous, submissive, silent woman who puts self-sacrifice, husband, and family before herself. She is the forerunner of the modern woman who can become self-actualized through sheer perseverance and adaptability.

Social and Philosophical Expectations of Mexica Females

The woman with whom most readers and historians are familiar is the Marina accused not only of being the consort to Cortés, the betrayer of her people, and the translator for the enemy, but also the captive who endured betrayal and abuse as a young girl⁵ even before she was given to Cortés.⁶ Even though we cannot fully determine the “true” identity of Malinalli/Marina because of time and distance, we should explore the social mores of the period that had an influence on her prior to Spanish colonization to establish the extent of the trauma she possibly suffered. Of importance to her development were the royalty or ruling indigenous class and the slaves. Based on the historical accounts of Fray Sahagún and the contemporary historian Miguel León-Portilla, as a child in an indigenous royal household, a daughter was brought up in strict observance of her gender role. In his complete discussion about the creation of and factors that influence Nahua identity, León-Portilla further explains that even though “the Nahuas believed man came into the world ‘faceless’ [and that] he [was] born without an identity” (1963, 104), a child’s gender bestows certain duties and responsibilities that initially identify him or her. The Nahuas also believed that multiple factors influenced their lives; however, individuals—primarily men—could overcome their “destiny” because of free will and “the possibility of modifying their personal destiny by means of their own personal control” (119). Furthermore, education played an important role in helping both boys and girls create their sense of self. According to Fray Sahagún, “[t]hey had organized education in conformity with the needs of the people. For the boys and girls were raised in a strict manner until they were adults....Rigorous and careful teachers taught them, boys and girls separately” (in León-Portilla 1963, 144). Strict discipline guided an educational system designed to reinforce religious and civil beliefs and practices. The rigorous education was constant, and boys and girls were assigned tasks “day and night” to train the body and mind against

temptation. “This manner of education was very much in conformity with natural and moral philosophy...which taught the Indians from experience that, in order to live morally and virtuously, it was necessary to have rigorous discipline, austerity, and continuous work in things beneficial to the state” (144). Through their education, children began to understand their places in society, and they also began their “quest for self-completeness and sincere social approbation [that] motivated the conduct of the Nahuas” (153).

Thus, a female child born into the ruling class was very likely aware of what the expectations of her position required. Even from childhood, daughters were taught “the need for being very discreet in speech and conduct, in appearance and bearing.” They were kept sheltered and away from unmarried men, even from their brothers who could speak to them only in the presence of others. And as they grew into “maidens,” they “could not go out to the gardens without guards,” or they would be “harshly punished, especially if they had reached the age of ten or twelve.” Of special importance in their socialization, young women were taught “how to speak to the ruler’s wives and to other persons, and were punished if they showed themselves negligent in this” (Zorita 1994, 136). Again, according to Sahagún, “The good maiden is yet a virgin, mature, clean, unblemished, pious, pure of heart, benign, chaste, candid, well disposed.” The Nahuas also accepted the “evil women” who had their place but were later given a bad name by historians identifying them as those who found “pleasure in” and “sold their bodies” (quoted in Anderson 1997, 84–85).

La Malinche—La Mujer

La Malinche is variously referred to as Cortés’s mistress, mother of the Mexican people, *la chingada*, traitor, and whore, all labels of denigration and humiliation. Losing her given Old World pagan names, the Mayan Malinal or “Malinalli, which corresponds to the twelfth day of the Aztec month, possibly

her birthday," or the Aztec Malintzin Tenépal, she became Doña Marina, a Spanish name that sounds similar to the name of "the Spanish *virgin* martyr, Santa Marina" (Díaz del Castillo 1963, 146 emphasis added).⁷ Today she is best known by the patriarchy as La Malinche, a corruption of her given Catholic name, Marina, and one that has come to be associated with traitor and whore.⁸ Thus, to some she reflects all that is possibly evil in woman, all that good, virtuous women should strive to avoid.

During an interview, Judith Ortiz Cofer echoed Hegel⁹ when she asserted, "I think that whoever views you affects your reality" (Ocasio 1994, 738). Norma Alarcón further argues in "Chicana's Feminist Literature: A Re-vision through Malintzin/or Malintzin Putting Flesh Back on the Object" that "if [la Chicana] is to be fully at home, this external reality must reflect back to her what she actually is or would want to be" (2002, 209). In fact, the reality of Malinalli varied according to the interpretation of each group: her parents, Indians from Xicalango, her Tabascan captors, Cortés, various other indigenous groups, and the Spaniards. Consequently, her male contemporaries, Cortés, Díaz del Castillo, Fray Sahagún, and other historians of her time were able to construct their version of her identities for us through direct contact with her. And because she did not leave writings, we can judge or imagine her only through the accuracy of the quotations left by others about her and through her contributions to the survival of the Spaniards by negotiating between Cortés and indigenous leaders as well as by delivering information that prevented their deaths while leading to that of the Aztecs and Cholulans. Later writers must depend on these archival records, artifacts, and the interpretations of men who held varying agendas. Whether personal, political, or religious, they contributed to her shame or glory only to be complicated later by the twentieth and twenty-first century writers whose agendas further distort her image. "She has been exploited without apology by writers of all disciplines and

ideologies—historians, sociologists, novelists, dramatists, imperialists and anti-imperialists, rightists and leftists, all of whom have thought of her as an empty vessel ready to be filled by their formulations” (Phillips 1983, 98–99). To Phillips’s list, I must add Chicana feminists who have attempted to wrest Doña Marina from the patriarchal view expressed by both male and female writers.

One twentieth-century patriarchal critic, Octavio Paz, ironically adds his distorted reductionist interpretation of Marina as only a used and discarded body, anonymous and vile, referring to her as *la Chingada* (the fucked one), and attributing her loss of identity to her “passivity...[which] causes her to lose her identity: she is the *Chingada*. She loses her name; she is no one; she disappears into nothingness; she *is* Nothingness” (1950/1961, 85–86). Although this is the popular reputation Doña Marina holds, it is diametrically opposed to that constructed by Paz’s grandfather, Ireneo Paz, in his novels *Amor y suplicio* and *Doña Marina*, where he romanticizes her as a noble being whose actions were dictated by destiny and the gods (Cypess 1991, 10). I contend that Malinalli did not lose her identity as the younger Paz asserts. Instead, she gained multiple identities from the multiple groups who observed her. And because Paz, in fact, does notice her and writes about her, his assertion that she “disappears into nothingness” is a direct contradiction to his distortion of the woman. His twentieth-century perspective of Malinalli is so fully entrenched in and reflective of the patriarchal lens that his agenda not only prevents him from seeing her multiple identities, but also distorts, hides, and attempts to erase facts about her life. Thus, he presents a hegemonic, misogynistic interpretation fully in keeping with the “traditional [Mexican] culture...where strict social norms forbid women, especially in rural settings the freedom to say no to men who want to force their will upon them.”¹⁰ From Paz’s perspective, Marina “is the product of a masculine order that has defined her only value as her virginity. With her virginity lost, [Marina] is useless” (M. Sánchez 1985, 207, 210). The

culture further reinforces the silence in women similar to that of "Guadalupe's transcendentalizing power, silence, and maternal self-sacrifice" and completely opposes Marina who as "translator is perceived as speaking for herself and not the community" nor "on behalf of her children. [Therefore,] she is a woman who has betrayed her primary cultural function—maternity" (Alarcón 2002, 62–63). That Marina is a slave makes her three times the victim—a female, an adolescent, and a slave—a voiceless subaltern.

However, Marina's abuse and psychological problems leading to her behavior with Cortés began well before the conquest. Bernal Díaz del Castillo,¹¹ historian of the conquest and author whose credibility has been alternately accepted and questioned, offers only one of several conflicting versions of Malintzin's life:

Doña Marina...from her childhood had been the mistress of towns and vassals.

Her father and mother were chiefs of a town called Paynala....Her father died while she was still a little child, and her mother married a young man, and bore him a son. It seems that the father and mother had a great affection for this son and it was agreed between them that he should succeed to their honours when their days were done. So that there should be no impediment to this, they gave the little girl, Doña Marina, to some Indians from Xicalango, and this they did by night so as to escape observation, and they then spread the report that she had died, and as it happened at this time a child of one of their Indian slaves died [and] they gave out that it was their daughter and the heiress who was dead.

The Indians of Xicalango gave the child to the people of Tabasco and the Tabasco people gave her to Cortés....(1963, 66–67)

Originating from an eyewitness of Malintzin Tenépal's relationship with Cortés and the indigenous people, del Castillo's account differs dramatically from the interpretation Paz provides in *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (1951/1960). Paz's denigration of her violates the authenticity she held among the Aztecs and other groups, including the Spanish. Although Paz's and Díaz del Castillo's patriarchal views distort women in general and Marina specifically (Alarcón 2002, 209), the latter recognized the respect Doña Marina received from both the Spanish and the indigenous people as an interpreter for Cortés. Today, that respect is extended by Chicanas who "believe her to be a woman who had and made choices...who deliberately chose to be a survivor...[who] cast her lot with the Spaniards in order to ensure survival of a race" (Rebolledo 1995, 64).

Rising from a position of servitude into which she was sold, by several accounts, at the age of eight, Malintzin became Cortés's mistress and translator at the age of approximately fourteen. Her reality became that of slave and concubine to all who saw her. As such, Malintzin had no right to refuse the advances of her thirty-four year old master, and initially she was reduced to the function of sex object (Del Castillo 1977, 127). To resist would mean death, a consequence Paz apparently would have preferred for Malintzin. Instead, she became not only *la chingada* to most Mexicans and readers of Paz's work, but also forgotten as a woman important in her own right as the only woman mentioned to play a part in the conquest. Interestingly, Alarcón notes "no trace of evidence that Malintzin suffered the violent fate of other indigenous women, strictly speaking...One may even argue that she performed as she did to avoid rape and violence upon her body..." (1989, 82). To acquiesce to penetration to avoid further physical abuse does not preclude a psychological and emotional resistance; and even though Adelaida Del Castillo argues against the patriarchal view that women by nature are always violated through penetration and give autonomy to "lovers [as] equals" (1977, 145), she fails to address that Marina at fourteen was raped and

violated by a thirty-four-year-old man whose position of authority in multiple ways created an unequal balance of power. She did not have the status of lover; she was concubine. She was not a free woman acting autonomously in pursuit of a male; she was a slave. Furthermore, she was acting within the expectations of her culture: slaves were used for sexual services. Finally, her status of slave deprives her of a personal, autonomous voice—despite the political voice she was allowed to use in public—to refuse. By blaming her for straying from a path of virtue and piety and rejecting the role of the silent, maternal woman, the patriarchy, led by the Catholic Church and later by Paz, has, as Andrea Tinnemeyer observes, “effectively extended the method and mindset of the conquest 500 years after [its] occurrence [and] the defeat and rape of the Mexica continue to echo in the national psyche of modern Mexico” (1995, 46). Ironically, Malintzin’s submission as a nonmaternal woman without sexuality to her captor’s will is seen as the initial betrayal. Her knowledge of languages and her intelligence further damn her as she chose to aid Cortés in his military conquest of the indigenous people.

Although the role of survivor is normally characterized as one that displays passive behavior, behavior conducive to simply surviving, I contend that Marina’s psychological and physical preservation was incumbent upon active participation in her own environment. To survive passively would suggest being treated as a slave with no freedom, voice, or autonomy. Doña Marina, on the other hand, moved beyond the submissiveness of a slave and displayed qualities that Cortés needed for the success of the conquest. Furthermore, she earned a level of relative freedom that possibly contributed to her mental and emotional survival as well as to escaping possible abuse. Even though she remained a victim, she was one who participated in a new cultural arena and who, through her own intelligence, ingenuity, and possibly through symptoms of the Stockholm Syndrome, discovered the qualities and activities required to survive among the Spaniards.

The Naturalistic Marina

Marina's inability to escape the restrictions, forces, and subjugation of the colonized society places her in an environment that makes her a victim and that many literary critics might characterize as Naturalistic. Furthermore, the preceding description of her behavior that results in an elevation of her public image further reinforces Zola's theory that "[i]ndeed our great study is just there, in the *reciprocal* effect of society on the individual and the individual on society" (1964, 20, emphasis added). Although Marina is not a character, she was an individual who, as a slave, was not in control of her life despite the many privileges she was given by Cortés; however, she did have an influence on her Aztec and Spanish environment. In the remainder of this paper, I will juxtapose literary Naturalism with twentieth-century psychological theories of behavior¹² to explain Marina's actions—as opposed to her identity—as recorded by her contemporary historians.

Despite her being renamed in Christian tradition as Marina during her baptism and the priests bestowing Spanish respectability on a woman originally of royal blood by giving her the honorific *Doña*, no one truly knows the conditions under which she lived. Did she, in fact, have autonomy and agency to resist Cortés's desires? Did she *betray* the Mexicas willingly or did she perform an act that would have cost her life otherwise? Or did she "substitute *devotion for obedience...*" (Alarcón 2002, 206, emphasis added)? Alarcón proceeds to develop and expand Simone Weil's theory about the master-slave relationship between Malintzin and Cortés and admits that Malintzin "had to seek accommodation" in her new situation as slave. She quotes and modifies Weil's pronouns, explaining that the thought of being in absolute subjection as somebody's plaything is a thought no human being can sustain:

so if a man (I add woman) is left with no means at all of escaping constraint he (she) has no alternative except to persuade himself

(herself) that he (she) is doing voluntarily the very things he (she) is forced to do; in other words, he (she) substitutes devotion for obedience...devotion of this kind rests upon self deception, because the reasons for it will not bear inspection. (206–07)

Ironically, a more contemporary possibility does, in fact, allow for the “inspection” of reasons for Malintzin to switch allegiances from her indigenous people to the Spaniards: psychological conditions identified in modern psychological studies. To judge her actions without suggesting further explanations is to betray her. Thus, Chicana feminists re-vision Doña Marina’s actions and recreate her as a woman with agency—consciously “substitut[ing] devotion for obedience”—instead of allowing her to remain a victim; however, as Zola suggests, the possibility exists that Doña Marina was responding as others have in her condition. Thus, I propose that to survive, Marina, consistent with those in similarly psychologically traumatic situations, manifested behavioral characteristics not fully examined, explained, and understood until approximately 500 years after her ordeal.

Although psychological studies were not available to the Mexicas and other indigenous groups in the sixteenth century, researchers in human behavior have theorized conditions based on observations of hundreds of patients and have identified three conditions characterized by remarkably similar symptoms, all resulting from the captivity of individuals in situations where they have been victimized: the Stockholm Syndrome, Traumatic Psychological Infantilism, and Traumatic Bonding Theory.

Psychological Conditions

The name “Stockholm Syndrome” is derived from a 1973 hostage situation that occurred during a failed bank robbery in Stockholm, Sweden. Six days

after it began, the hostages were released; but like Patty Hearst in 1974 in California,¹³ they displayed unaccountable behavior toward their captors. The actions and feelings they experienced are not unique: an individual displays characteristics of Stockholm Syndrome after being taken hostage in a life-threatening situation. Although not all hostages develop the condition, it tends to appear in “victims experiencing a threat to their survival while if kindness is perceived [they develop] hope that they will be permitted to live” (Graham et al. 2001, 78). The key here is kindness, and FBI agents or other law enforcement negotiators attempt to promote the development of the syndrome to help save lives. However, what sometimes results is a “positive emotional bond [that develops between the victims and the captors that] serves to unite its victims against the outsiders.” Thus, the victims identify with their captor out of fear, causing them to “radically alter their norms and values [and sometimes] adopt values and beliefs of a new government to avoid social retaliation and punishment” (Strentz 1980, 139). Although time is another important element in a victim’s development of the syndrome, no consistent pattern marks the development of the characteristics that may begin as early as the initial hostage-taking situation where the victims may experience denial of the event immediately and later move to a belief that their “fate is not fixed” (142). Because of these shifts in judgment and “coping with prolonged, severe threat to survival” in dangerous conditions, the victims can also experience a “loss of sense of self” in “interpersonal functioning” (Graham et al. 2001, 78).

The symptoms seen in Stockholm Syndrome victims are similar to the characteristics of Traumatic Psychological Infantilism (TPI) and Traumatic Bonding Theory (TBT). TPI results when an adult is “under conditions of terror,” and he or she reverts to the “early adaptive behavior of childhood” for survival (Symonds 1980, 150). The adult “clings to” the person creating the

fear and becomes "obedient, placid, compliant and submissive" (132). Behavior in Traumatic Bonding Theory resembles that of the other two conditions in that the captive develops "strong emotional attachments" to the more powerful captor as the captive becomes "subordinate" and develops an "emotional bonding" with the abuser after experiencing alternate periods of "reinforcement and punishment." However, in TBT, "both the subordinate and dominant partner become increasingly dependent upon each other" (Graham et al. 2001, 78, 79). These psychological conditions can result in unexpected behavior from individuals in non-life-threatening conditions. Thus, they learn quickly how to cope to survive even though they would not normally consider bonding with a "criminal" in daily life. What has become the norm for them is the *abnormal* in the community outside the conditions of terror.

The image of Patty Hearst (see <http://www.mistersf.com/notpattyindex.htm>) wielding a gun in the bank robbery held by the Symbionese Liberation Army shows a clear identification with her captors after months of captivity. She appears to act in a way that shows that her sense of self in her routine life has been replaced by a criminal persona considered psychologically dysfunctional in normal life but functional in a survival situation. This *behavior* rather than identity becomes the focus. Hearst was not a criminal, but under conditions that required it for her survival, she *behaved* as one. Outsiders observing her actions can only judge the individual by the criminal behavior she displayed. Without understanding or knowing the kind of psychological and physical conditions to which she was exposed, many observers came to one conclusion: Hearst had joined the enemy. I contend that by knowing the physical conditions to which Marina was exposed during war and as a slave and the effects that they can have on an individual's psychological stability, observers 500 years later can carefully apply twentieth-century psychology to her behavior.

La Malinche's Performance

Although neither Díaz del Castillo nor Fray Sahagún indicate through direct observation or through interpretation of the codices that Malintzin was in denial of her slave status, they do indicate her captive and slave condition upon being presented to Cortés. Already removed from her parents' house and held among strangers against her will, it is safe to say that Malintzin had probably begun to feel symptoms of the syndrome, for a captive can begin feeling the symptoms immediately after captivity regardless of how lengthy the stay extends. Considering that Malinalli was suspected of being a child of eight when she was separated from her home—presumably a place of safety and security but which became a place of betrayal, privileging her male sibling and denying her familial status—she immediately entered a border space, a condition Anzaldúa refers to as *nepantla* where one is uncertain, in between, unstable (1987/1999, 100). Moving from a relatively stable space of indigenous royalty and respect to one of servitude immediately reconfigured her psychological stability, making her a prime candidate for the syndrome. Because of her socioeconomic status as a child, Malinalli was probably treated in accordance with the conditions described by Zorita and Sahagún. As such, she learned the importance of discreet behavior, submissiveness to the will of others, and the ability to speak to adults of her ruling class. She had probably also been exposed to some education before she was sold. Her sudden transition into a new reality, one of laboring individuals and slaves, required immediate socialization into a new cultural milieu in which her social space was no longer defined in the same way as her ruling class environment. Here she gained new “knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes” (Boyer 1995, 35) that she would take with her into the world of Cortés and his *conquistadores*. Her resiliency and ability to adapt and change “face” enabled her to survive.

Thus, six years later when she was transferred to Cortés, an individual she, along with many of the other Mexicas, mistook as the legendary returning deity, Quetzacoatl, she was no doubt scared and intimidated by his power even though he was a “peace loving” deity as opposed to Huitzilopochtli, the god of war (Cypess 1991, 22). Malinalli’s education as a child had probably taught her about her religion and the stories of the gods. Assuming that Cortés was at least a demigod, Malintzin understood the futility of resistance to any wish he might have, and she had no choice but to “do voluntarily the very things he (she) [was] forced to do” (Alarcón 2002, 186). Furthermore, Del Castillo suggests that Marina’s actions were a “manifestation of her faith in a godly force—the prophecies of Quetzalcoatl” (1977, 141). From a social perspective, Marina’s status was elevated from a simple slave to that of a slave to a god or a concubine to a Spanish ruler, requiring a repetition of the transition phase she went through when she was eight: she had to adapt to survive. Given her new environment, she also had to remember her training as a member of the ruling class. In a “look backward to childhood,” she could recall “the formative processes” (Boyer 1995, 36) and rely on courtesies she was probably taught to use when addressing her elders and then rekindle those qualities so that they could come to her aid in her duties as translator.

When Malinalli was presented to the Spaniards, she was immediately instructed in Catholicism and baptized, a religious act that changed her face/identity again. This time she appeared to change from one who believed in a pantheon of gods to a young woman who professed belief in a single God, and who appeared to accept a religious system that had differences from her own, primarily in the apparent cruelty of Huitzilopochtli as opposed to the gentleness of Christ who preached love and forgiveness. She also behaved as of one who accepted a religion that represented the colonizer. We can see this behavior as either reflecting a belief in a necessary religious foundation

or as an act of “identify[ing with her captors] out of fear...and radically [altering her] norms and values.” In other words, she seems to “adopt values and beliefs of a new government [and religion] to avoid social retaliation and punishment” (Strentz 1980, 139). However, this would not have been difficult if she was already imbued with the Nahua belief that “true social approval was merited only by the well-developed ‘face and heart’ who practiced on earth what was ‘appropriate and upright’” (León-Portilla 1963, 153). On the other hand, if she was reverting to childhood behavior that taught her to be “respectful and obedient” (144), this could qualify as a symptom of Traumatic Psychological Infantilism where she behaved in a way that was “obedient, placid, compliant and submissive” (Symonds 1980, 132). The problem here is that this characterizes the *normal* expectations of the behavior of women at this time. She is, in fact, behaving exactly as her culture expected her to behave but reduced to what contemporary views might identify as infantile or at least childlike. To have acted otherwise with either her indigenous male captives or with the new ruling-class Spaniards would have invited the retaliation that she was taught to avoid.

Here we have two more contradictory beliefs about her identity. In fact, she had already lost her parents in their betrayal of her; thus, her identity as a member of a royal indigenous family and as a local princess was also lost or a distant memory. The reality of her existence became that of a captive, and she lived as one for six years before she had to relinquish her belief in gods and goddesses. Her apparent readiness to accept the Spanish God can easily be seen as a coping mechanism for survival or as a reliance on learned behavior and her willingness to submit to a new form of master: the Catholic priests and conquistadores. Here she further lost her “sense of self” (Graham et al. 2001, 78) and what little indigenous identity she had left as she became Marina, the construction of the Spanish priests, rather than Malinalli, the indigenous princess. But instead

of avoiding punishment, she was immediately given to Cortés who had no qualms about treating her as one of the many spoils of war. Was she a victim of the psychological conditions exhibited by those suffering from Stockholm Syndrome, Traumatic Psychological Infantilism, and Traumatic Bonding Theory, or was she displaying cultural characteristics that might ultimately result in her punishment/abuse regardless of how she behaved?

Once Marina discovered Cortés was mortal and leading an army of both Spaniards and indigenous people against Monctezuma, her captor’s power became clearly visible, and she established a symbiotic relationship with him: she relied on his good will to keep her alive, and he depended on her sexual availability, as women slaves were “used for...sexual service” (Cypess 1991, 22), and linguistic accomplishments to help him conquer the Mexica. In fact, based on cultural assumptions of the period, Marina’s behavior was consistent with indigenous expectations of slave women: concubine to her master, of whom Cortés was her second (25, 28).¹⁴ Thus, the two developed a “positive bond” (Strentz 1980, 139), and they became “increasingly more dependent upon each other” (Graham et al. 2001, 79), characteristics of the Stockholm Syndrome and Traumatic Bonding Theory. Consequently, when she learned about the Aztec’s plans to attack Cortés and had an opportunity to escape, she identified with and helped the Spanish whether it was to take up their cause or to save herself from retaliation by Cortés.¹⁵ By this time, Marina had repeatedly experienced alternating forms “of reinforcement and punishment [rape, which] produce a powerful emotional bonding of the victim and abuser” (79). If Marina was emotionally bound to Cortés, that would explain her failure to accept an indigenous male as a husband and her revelation of the ambush to Cortés.

Bernal Díaz del Castillo’s history relates that a Cholulan noblewoman approached Marina and told her about a plot to ambush and kill the Spaniards.

The woman promised her protection from the Spaniards and offered her son to Marina in marriage. Instead of accepting the woman's offer, Marina warned Cortés of the impending disaster, and Cortés and his army were able to move against the Cholulans, creating a massacre in their own city. However, while her behavior suggests betrayal of her culture, a twentieth-century lens suggests a possible motivation of psychological dysfunction rather than desire.

By this time, Marina appeared to have acculturated into Spanish society and become fully committed to the thirty-four year old Cortés, answering to her new name Doña Marina, accepting respect from those around her, and becoming pregnant with Cortés's son, approximately two years after she first became a victim of the Spaniards (Karttunen 1997, 307). As victims of sexual abuse, "women/men [either] repudiate the molester/perpetrator or they embrace him/her, most commonly him" (Pérez 1991, 173). Marina's behavior prefigures that of later women who are victims of sexual molestation and who display a "persistent pattern of addiction and dependency" (184). Furthermore, by warning Cortés about the ambush, she displayed a Stockholm Syndrome characteristic: she had possibly developed an "emotional bond [that]...serve[d] to unite the victim against the outsider" (Strentz 1980, 139), in this case the Aztecs. Cortés, in turn, unable to marry her because he was already married, gave her away yet again to a respected officer in his army, Juan Jaramillo. Although Marina was offered an indigenous male to marry so that she could save herself, she rejected him and moved back to a colonized space where she could live out her life as the woman who had been raped. She moved from being a Spaniard's mistress to a Spaniard's wife. This latter union, however, was not necessarily one of romance and bliss, the result of a Spaniard courting his beloved. López de Gómara suggests that Juan Jaramillo was not truly cognizant of the event, being drunk when he married her, a gift from Cortés who no longer needed her and had tired of her (Karttunen 1997, 308). Marina did not

progress socially from the moment she arrived in the Spanish camp: despite the respect she received from the Spanish and the Mexica, she continued to lack autonomy and was given away again.

Beyond his desire for power, dominance, and sexual fulfillment, Cortés needed a translator. Even though Father Jeronimo Aguilar had been his translator, he could neither speak to nor understand the Aztecs. When Cortés discovered Marina’s linguistic ability, he “took her aside with Aguilar and promised her more than liberty if she would establish a friendship between him and the men of her country, and he told her that he would like to have her as his interpreter and secretary” (quoted in Cypess 1991, 31). Suddenly, the discourse that identified Marina in the Hegelian view of slave to Cortés was no longer as closed as Hegel described, for Marina’s linguistic ability moved her into a central position of recognition, power, and knowledge. Although she did not acquire her freedom while useful to Cortés nor kill her master, she did acquire an identity of subject, and she was no longer a voiceless subaltern but a skillful negotiator in military matters with leaders of various indigenous groups. In the words of her Nahuatl culture, she had developed “face,” and even though she remained a slave, through her work as an interpreter, she was “free[d] from the terror that enslaved [her] to the Master [Cortés],” and she was able to transform her immediate world and herself, and realize Self Consciousness (Kojève 1969, 26). The major contradiction in Hegel’s paradigm, however, is that Cortés grants Marina her freedom—in the form of marriage to another Spaniard—when she is no longer of use to him and when he realizes that he must rejoin his wife.

How then can Mexicanos hold this fourteen-year-old responsible for her activities? Knowing “right” from “wrong” in a society where slavery is part of the accepted norm is different from being expected to behave in a way that displays cultural loyalty when one has been sold into slavery by her parents,

is powerless and threatened, and is under the command of a master from a different society. Marina's behavior clearly displays her inability to be personally efficacious in her private environment even though she can control the negotiations among military leaders. She is not only a slave; she is also a young woman suffering from psychological dysfunction created by her environment and her alternately abusive and rewarding treatment by Cortés. Hence, Zola's "great study" can be completed here, as Marina's behavior over 500 years ago displays his belief about the "reciprocal effect of society on the individual and the individual on society" (1964, 20). This reciprocity will be visually displayed on Garza and Lipton's model of interactive behavior, the second half of my argument that continues to study Marina's behavior rather than her identity. We cannot project what Marina might have been like had she not experienced these events in her life; however, based on historical records that describe her behavior and on twentieth-century psychological studies, we can make informed conjectures about her actions, all of which can be interpreted as symptoms of each of the conditions listed: the Stockholm Syndrome, Traumatic Psychological Infantilism, and Traumatic Bonding Theory.

On the other hand, the Mechicanos/as who read this might take exception to the objectification of Marina based on a dominant society paradigm established by social psychologists: "a study of 'how the thoughts, feeling, and behavior of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others'" (Garza and Lipton 1977/1984, 336). Garza and Lipton legitimately point out the postmodern view that "social psychology largely reflects the value judgments and the cultural perspectives of a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) society" and fails to take into account cultural differences in "nonmainstream minority group behavior" (337–38). However, current developments in psychology help us to understand human behavior at any moment in history. There are variations in the way behaviors and events are

perceived as social norms or not. While Garza and Lipton are proven correct in my application of the Traumatic Psychological Infantilism characteristics of reverting to “obedient, placid, compliant, and submissive behavior” (Symonds 1980, 132) not only learned as a child but also required of adult women in the Nahuatl culture, Paz and Carlos Fuentes make judgments about Marina with impunity and from a traditional essentialist patriarchal perspective.

Could it be that Marina was an opportunist whose performance identified her as a traitor, and that as such she adhered to the “meanings” the Spaniards created to establish “their own identity...and to mark out and maintain identity within and difference between groups” (Hall 1997, 3)? She did, in fact, *become* Catholic and translate for Cortés, an act that Alarcón tells the reader is a “‘corruption’ that takes place through linguistic mediation [that] make[s] the speaker a traitor in the view of others—not just simply a traitor, but a traitor to tradition which is represented and expressed in the ‘original’ event, utterance, text, or experience” (1989, 68). Just as Judith Butler explains that gender is an “action” that “requires a performance that is *repeated*” (1999, 178), I contend that cultural identity is also an action that requires repeated performances so that members of both the insider and outsider groups will recognize and identify the individual. That Marina *performs* Spanish culture damns her in the eyes of Paz and Fuentes; however, we must once again return to her psychological conditions.

Although we can look at her as an indigenous woman whose cultural indigenous traits regarding men were quite similar to those of the Spanish, the indigenous woman Marina apparently acted in accordance with her needs at the historical moment. She did not reach out for another indigenous being who was just as “other” as she was to the Spaniards. Instead, she bonded with a dominant male, Cortés, from another culture, one who abused her sexually

yet rewarded her for her linguistic abilities. Her act, unacceptable in both her own and Spanish culture, was inconsistent with the expectations of those around her. Even though the socialization practices for indigenous individuals stressed “that the purpose of individual human endeavor is for the welfare of the community,” Marina, who rejected traditional practices and behaved in a way that “divest[ed her] of such forms of loyalty...[became] free from traditional loyalties and obligations thought to impede self-fulfillment,” and incurred punishment (Castañeda 1977/1984, 38–39). Neither the historical moment nor Paz’s patriarchal ideology was prepared for behavior as divergent from the norm as this. This kind of me-before-community identification was not to appear for another 300 years in the United States, and many Mexican American women did not display it until after the 1960s and the Chicano Movement.¹⁶ Furthermore, in all of the conditions listed, a victim-captor relationship is involved. This is exactly Marina’s situation, and her behavior is consistent with behavior of victims who have been held captives by individuals who threaten their well being. Finally, from the beginning of her life away from her parents’ home, Marina had to adapt to conditions different from her own, culminating in adaptation to the Spanish culture. These continued changes in expectations as well as in her sense of safety could only have led to what Graham et al. identify as “a loss of self” (2001, 78) if we believe that she had established her sense of self as a princess in a royal indigenous home before she was sold. Her new identity becomes relatively stable over the next six years as a slave, but it, too, changes once again as she becomes a mistress and translator when she is transferred to yet another captor. At this point, however, she might have reached back into her ruling-class background and appropriated her training as one taught to speak appropriately to adults of her class and transfer this trait to her life with Cortés. This ability to reconstruct herself/her identity—to make a new face—to meet the needs of each new environment becomes the coping mechanism for her survival.

Since the social psychology I have used is based on North American standards—even though Marina fits the distinctive paradigms noted—I suggest that we move one step farther and use a social psychology interactive framework created for Chicanos and other multicultural individuals by Raymond T. Garza and Jack T. Lipton.¹⁷ Much like Zola’s interactive approach to human beings and his desire to see the “reciprocal effect of society on the individual and the individual on society” (1964, 20), Garza and Lipton place the individual in the center of a model receiving stimuli from and reacting to four components: socioecological influences, social behavior, multicultural influences, and family influences (1977/1984, 355). They acknowledge that although all components of the model need not be incorporated into a research design, some should be included. If we place Marina in the center of the model, we can surround her with the elements within which she lived:

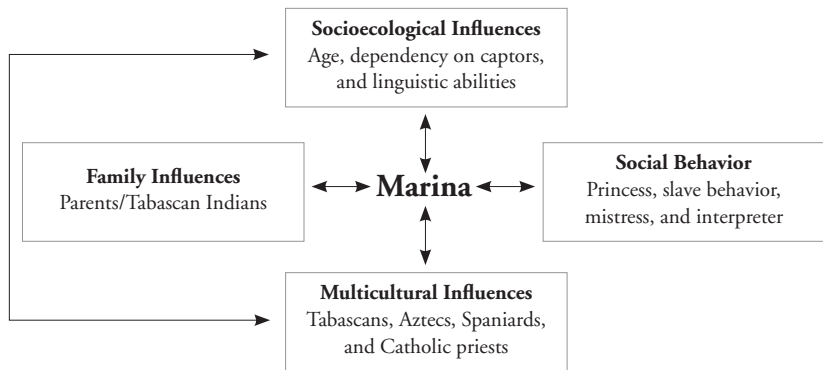


Fig. 1. Garza and Lipton’s Model of Interactive Behavior

Separating Marina’s environment into a visual model, we can see Garza and Lipton’s model as applied to her. The model works in a way that shows the socioecological, social behavior, multicultural, and familial influences in her environment that affected her social reality and shaped her behavior. In turn,

they elicit a response from her, resulting in a reciprocity model suggestive of Zola's Naturalism. The socioecological factors at the top are independent of cultural influences, and although important they need not be considered as the primary components in this discussion. Moving counterclockwise we see that, although Marina's parents disinherited her, they influenced her development through her education and training during years one through eight. Once she was sold at the age of eight, the Tabascans literally became her "parents" but still remained her captors, and from them she learned to behave as a slave. The component most important in her interaction is her multicultural environment. The Tabascans taught her the Mayan language and to be the submissive slave, the Catholic priests taught her about submissive Mary, and the Spaniards reinforced the submissive slave role; however, because of her innate linguistic abilities, she was recognized as a tool that could be implemented by Cortés in conquering the Aztecs. We now see her interaction with her socioecological environment as she takes what she has been taught and uses it to her advantage, and in the case of the Spaniards, to their advantage also. Since Father Aguilar could speak only Nahuatl and Spanish, he could not communicate with the Tabascans. Marina's first language was Nahuatl, but she learned Mayan. She could speak with Father Aguilar and translate to the Tabascans, but her triumph came in easily learning Spanish. She could then translate directly for Cortés without the need of Father Aguilar, thus changing the public status that she had from slave/concubine to translator and respected woman. Thus, based on her environment, her contact (brutal and rewarding) with multicultural individuals, her lack of parental nurturing and full cultural development, and her own interaction (controlled and independent) with strangers, her behavior should not be surprising. Thus, from a naturalistic explanation, the effect she had on society was a reflection of the effects society had on her.

Conclusion

Ultimately, I return to Gloria Anzaldúa for a final determination of Marina's identity and behavior. Anzaldúa calls for "a new *mestiza* consciousness...a consciousness of the Borderlands" (1987/1999, 99). Ironically, she describes the contemporary *Mechicana* as "[i]n a constant state of mental nepantilism," explaining that she is "*la mestiza*...a product of the transfer of the cultural and spiritual values of one group to another" (100) in today's society. To survive in a twenty-first century environment, Chicanas must recognize the necessity to "shift out of habitual formations" and to become the "new *mestiza* [who] copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity...She learns to be an Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view. She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mode, and she turns ambivalence into something else" (101). Although Anzaldúa does not use the description in terms of Marina, it is in fact Marina who is not just Anzaldúa's "new *mestiza*" but the archetype for the "new *mestiza*." Anzaldúa's "new *mestiza*" and Marina are the human subjects of Garza and Lipton's theoretical individual in the center of their interactive model who survives because of their knowledge that "[r]igidity means death" (Anzaldúa, 101). Thus, Marina becomes more than the mother of a bastard race; she becomes the archetype, the role model, the mother of the contemporary Chicana/new *mestiza*.

What begins as a manifestation of psychological dysfunction through the symptoms of the Stockholm Syndrome, Traumatic Psychological Infantilism, and Traumatic Bonding Theory evolves into a manipulation of the environment so that Marina, as Zola so rightfully theorizes, displays a reciprocal relationship with the various societies with which she interacts. Then, in accordance with Garza and Lipton, she becomes the linchpin in the interactive, socioecological framework that visually displays Zola's reciprocal

social relationship theory. Finally, and most important, regardless of whether readers believe that Marina's behavior is psychologically dysfunctional based on an American twentieth-century understanding of the mind, she projects the goal that Gloria Anzaldúa creates for today's Chicanas: Marina is the archetype of the "New *Mestiza*," not la virgin or la malinche, but la mujer who survived, made choices, and, above all, used her voice in conjunction with the men who surrounded her. She is the synthesis Hegel suggests when the master and slave confront one another and of the dichotomy that the Mexican patriarchal society superimposes upon its women. Marina's ability to reconstruct herself/her identity—to make a new face—to meet the needs of each new environment becomes the coping mechanism for her survival and the guidepost for Chicanas to follow today.

Notes

A version of this article was given at MELUS in San Antonio, Texas, in 2004. I want to thank Dr. Anne Perrin from the University of Houston for her tireless readings of this article in all its iterations.

¹ Mechicana is a conflation of the terms Mexican/Mexican American/Chicana, eliminating the awkwardness of using all three terms repeatedly. When I refer to any single group, I will use only that group's name.

² Fuss 1989 thoroughly discusses the difference between the theories of essentialist and constructed identity; Hall 1966, 1997; Kojève 1969; and Sayyid and Zac 1998 offer additional discussions of identity.

³ Émile Zola fully discusses literary Naturalism in his essay "The Experimental Novel" (1964), where he explains the criteria he uses to describe responses from human beings. I provide two that apply specifically to this study: "I consider that the question of heredity has a great influence in the intellectual and passionate manifestations of man. I also attach considerable importance to the *surroundings*...consequently,...this social condition unceasingly modifies the phenomena.... [The] study is just there, in the reciprocal effect of society on the individual and the individual on society" (19–20, emphasis added). Zola's study focuses on the animal nature of human beings and depicts them in their struggle against environmental and hereditary forces that they must overcome to survive. They are portrayed as victims and products of social and economic factors beyond their control and their understanding. Because Malinalli cannot control the forces that put her into a condition of slavery and shaped her world, she is in a situation where she must react and

respond in her own best interest, and from a naturalistic perspective, she consequently modifies the treatment that she receives by her responses to it.

While Naturalism was a prominent post-Darwinian style of writing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, contemporary Chicano novelists such as Tomás Rivera, Antonio Villarreal, Américo Paredes, Genaro González, Ramond Barrio, and others incorporate the Naturalist style into their works. Literary Naturalism, like an older social science deterministic model, claims that we are a product of our environments of poverty and discrimination; however, the literature also recognizes the struggle in which human beings engage so that they can survive and overcome the multiple forms of adversity in their environments. This movement away from the sense that the individuals are forever victims results in the optimism of Realism where characters gain efficacy of their lives through their struggle, similar to the protagonists in the slave narratives of Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs, works that displayed the sensibility of naturalism but that predated the style. Richard Wright, however, also uses it in his novel, *Native Son*.

⁴ For a discussion of cultural identity, see Stuart Hall 1997, Hilary N. Weaver 2001, and Eric R. Wolf 1958.

⁵ According to Karttunen, Francisco López de Gómera’s work, which has been discredited, claims that Malinalli came from Oluta instead of Paynala—the generally accepted location—and was “stolen by merchants” rather than sold by her parents (Karttunen 1997, 299). Because contemporary writers do not and cannot know the “true” accounts of Marina’s early life as accurately as we might want to know it, we, as Rita Cano Alcalá asserts, “each arrive at our own versions of the truth in consideration of what we know about the time and place in which she lived” (2001, 36).

⁶ For a discussion of preconquest life, see Burkhart 1997, Zorita 1994, Anderson 1997, and Boyer 1995.

⁷ Because of a series of linguistic misunderstandings, Malinalli’s name went through multiple evolutions. The indigenous language did not have an “r,” resulting in the pronunciation of her baptismal name, Marina, with an “l.” As she gained respect among the indigenous, a suffix, “tzin,” was added to her name, a suffix added to names of individuals of honor and position. The Spanish, in turn, misunderstood Malintzin and created Malinche, a term later used also to refer to Cortés because of his constant contact with her. He became known as “El Malinche,” translated as “Marina’s Captain” since Cortés and his interpreter were always together when negotiations were conducted” (Karttunen 1997, 293). Todorov observed that “for once it is not the woman who takes the man’s name” (1984, 101).

⁸ See abundant historical scholarship on Marina/La Malinche by her contemporaries such as Fray Sahagún, Bernal Díaz del Castillo, Hernan Cortés, and López de Gómera; and critical and creative works published since the 1800s such as Moraga 2000, Del Castillo 1977, Quiñones 2002, Corpi and de Hoyos 1994, Villanueva in Bierhorst 1993, Clendinnen 1995, Kruger 1948, León-Portilla 1992, Rogers 1966, Somonte 1969, and Weigle 1982.

⁹ Hegel is primarily concerned with what results from the synthesis of thesis and antithesis. Hegel looks at man in two conditions: master and slave. A man acquires Self Consciousness and expresses Human Desire, whereas a slave cannot achieve these and is dependent upon the master. It is through the work that the Slave produces “in terror” of the Master that the Slave “frees himself from the terror that enslaved him to the Master” (Kojève 1969, 26). Therefore, it will be the Slave who will transform the world as well as himself in the process and in the end will realize autonomous Self Consciousness.

¹⁰ These quotations are actually in reference to the character Guadalupe from Lucha Corpi’s poem “Romance Negro.” The analysis is offered by Marta Sánchez; however, the comments she makes about Guadalupe, the poem’s protagonist, are perfectly applicable to Marina in light of the comments made by Paz.

¹¹ Although I rely heavily on Bernal Díaz del Castillo for his descriptions of Marina, I also refer briefly to the letters of Cortés and to the work by López de Gómara. According to Frances Karttunen, Díaz’s “account of the conquest has come in for its share of debunking” (1997, 299). Yet, according to Rita Cano Alcalá, “Bernal’s ‘true history’ of the conquest is in part a response to Francisco López de Gómara’s account, in *Historia de la conquista de México*, of a super-heroic Hernán Cortés” (2001, 38). Alcalá states that Díaz del Castillo’s work gives credit to Marina and recognizes “her superior qualities, in stark contrast to other chronologists and Hernán Cortés who scarcely mentions her in his letters to the monarch” (38).

¹² Padilla 1984 provides a brief overview of how the indigenous cared for their mentally ill in pre-Conquest and colonial times.

¹³ On 15 April 1974, two months after heiress Patty Hearst was kidnapped from her home by members of the Symbionese Liberation Army, she was seen carrying a machine gun and participating in the robbery of Hibernia Bank in San Francisco. For more information, see <http://www.mistersf.com/notorious/notpattyindex.htm> or <http://history1990s.about.com/cs/pattyhearst/>.

¹⁴ According to Cypess, Marina “was first given to a prominent conquistador, Alonso Hernández Puerto Carrero; when he left for Castile, she was transferred to Cortés” (1991, 28). In another version, Karttunen explains that Cortés himself gave Marina to Puerto Carrero immediately after she was baptized, but when Cortés recognized her value as a translator, he took her back (1997, 302). Todorov, however, indicates that Cortés only “offered her to one of his lieutenants immediately after having ‘received her’” (1984, 100).

¹⁵ Variations of the descriptions of the massacre at Cholula appear in Cortés’s *Letters from Mexico* where he claims to have “slaughtered ‘more than three thousand’ of the inhabitants” but does not mention Marina’s part in the battle (Brooks 1995, 152). In the now discredited work *Historia de la conquista de México* translated as *Cortés: The Life of the Conqueror by His Secretary* (1964), Francisco López de Gómara describes the Cholulan massacre and mentions contributions made by other female Indian slaves and only briefly mentions Marina’s role. By contrast, Bernal Díaz del Castillo devotes a lengthy section of his text, *The Conquest of New Spain* (1963), to the description of Marina’s involvement. He describes the scene where she received the information, was offered

the opportunity to escape and save herself, and instead announces the planned ambush to Cortés. Karttunen (1997), however, provides a thorough analysis of aspects of this narrative and offers critical suggestions about its improbability.

¹⁶ I take an American, premodern approach in this assertion, relying on the literary sense that the me-before-community concept did not occur until the Industrial Revolution around the mid-1860s. Prior to that, the sense of an all-encompassing metanarrative was prevalent but not without its proto-feminist individuals who covertly made their voices heard or disrupted the patriarchy and feminized patriarchy to such an extent that male and female authors alike wrote didactic novels instructing women on proper behavior and cultural expectations. However, as Emma Pérez writes, this “colonial” approach is subversive to those voices being raised because the categories it builds upon, the “‘West’ or the ‘frontier’...themselves are exclusive in that they already deny and negate the voice of the other” (1999, 5). On the other hand, Anne Perrin reveals the work of outspoken frontier women, such as Harriet Strong, who worked in California with water conservation and management in the late 1800s and spoke before a congressional hearing (2004, 259). Furthermore, the recovery projects from the University of Houston, University of New Mexico, and Texas A & M University have published manuscripts or republished novels by María Amparo Ruiz de Burton (1885), Fabiola Cabeza de Baca (1954), and Jovita González (1830s–40s).

¹⁷ Urie Bronfenbrenner’s work (1972, 1979) on the ecological model is seminal and of particular interest for a study of how individual and environmental factors interact and lead to different behavioral outcomes.

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