

**Exploring the Colonization of Mexico by the Spaniards: Homophobia in the Mexican
Community through the Catholic Church**

Fatima Garcia

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Professor Kaiser

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Introduction

This research paper focuses on examining the colonization of what is now Mexico by the Spaniards. I am approaching it from a feminist perspective that highlights the influences of Catholicism on homosexuality and gender norms. According to Ovalekar (2010), in the sixteenth century, the Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empires was motivated by the Spaniards to seize control of land, gold, silver, and slaves. This conquest was justified as an effort to spread Catholicism. The Catholic church's influence on Indigenous individuals started in 1523 by Hernan Cortes. Cortes began this conversion with a friar, Bartolome de Olmedo, and a priest, Juan Diaz. Olmedo and Diaz were mandated by Cortes to convert the Mexica/Aztec people. In order to start this conversion, Cortes persuaded the Indigenous to remove themselves from their religious idols and raise crosses, praising the Virgin. Mexico was heavily influenced by Christianity during the Spanish conquest, which in turn led to the creation of gender hierarchies and gender roles that are ever more present in the Mexican culture (Ovalekar, 2010).

Many Mexican people that identify outside of the heterosexual norm have testified of the oppression and discrimination that they face within their communities. As a queer woman of color, I plan on tracing the history of my ancestry and researching how colonization has influenced this population and their attitudes towards the LGBTQIA+ community still today. In order to perform this, I will be obtaining information from the Bible, library books, internet databases, and interviews. There are both limitations and diverse findings on the ancient history of the Aztecs/Mexicas, but it will be included to show that it is a complicated topic to research. The research question that will guide this paper is: How has Catholicism, established through the Spanish Conquest, influenced the social attitudes of Mexicans towards same-sex relationships and gender roles?

Findings

Aztec/Mexica Sexuality

Before the Spaniards colonized what is now Mexico, the population of people residing in Tenochtitlan, what is now the center of Mexico City, referred to themselves as Mexicas or Aztecs. In Tenochtitlan, the Mexica/Aztecs held rituals and worshipped a god named Xochiquetzal who gave birth to all humankind. However, Xochiquetzal was abducted and raped by Tezcatlipoca, a war god, which transformed Xochiquetzal into a goddess of non-reproductive activities. Xochiquetzal was both male and female at the same time, but Xochiquetzal was worshiped as the goddess of male homosexuality and male prostitution in their male identity. However, in the female identity, Xochiquetzal was the creator of sexual destruction where they were known to incite lust and rape (Read, 1986).

During this time, the Mexica/Aztecs spoke a native language known as Nahuatl which provided words for gender identities and performativity which does not fall into the western and colonial categorization of gender, sex, and sexuality. In their language, the word “patlache” was used to describe a woman playing the role of a man. Also, when they wanted to describe someone as being homosexual, they would call them “cuilone, cilone” which translates to “queer, queer” (Hansen, 2011). Even though there was language to describe homosexual acts, they were not accepted in the Aztec culture. For example, there is one specific image from the Aztecs that has two male individuals interacting sexually with each other and after their interaction ends, one of the males is being burned (Tecpaocelotl, 2010). One can assume that this communicates that homosexuality was not accepted in their society, however, it was still being performed by the indigenous people.

On the other hand, there is evidence that shows that these homosexual interactions may have been accepted, under some circumstances. In the Aztec community, there were two-spirit people, which to them was “someone who is androgynous, bisexual, or homosexual, but it also refers to someone who fulfills a third gender role” in these indigenous communities (Estrada, 2003). This suggests that there were homosexual interactions during this period of time and people were accepting of these interactions. It seems to me as though these actions were accepted under particular cultural and/or spiritual circumstances. Today, in indigenous culture two-spirit people have highly honored roles as diplomats, interpreters, and family mediators because of their being "between" or having both genders (what we call "trans" people today). Two-spirited individuals are seen as being better able to mediate, due to having both masculine and feminine in their identities (Williams, 2010).

In other books such as, “The Flower and the Scorpion: Sexuality and Ritual in Early Nahua Culture” by Pete Sigal, the impact of Christianity on sexual labels in indigenous communities is extensively explored. Sigal is a Professor at Duke University in the Department of History with a passion for studying the relations between gender, sexuality, and colonialism in indigenous societies (History Department, 2019). He studied the sexuality of the Aztecs and states that it is a challenging and complex thing to study. Through clerical deductions and other Spanish language sources, he interpreted texts produced by Nahua. It described how the Mexica/Aztecs lacked a specific category for sexuality and gender (Sigal, 2011). Through the Spaniards’ colonization of the Mexica/Aztecs, there was a heavy influence of a Christian framework that relied on a binary spectrum of good and bad. Therefore, sexuality was not much of a concern for the Nahua people as long as it was practiced in moderation, then it wouldn’t be considered “bad.” This means that individuals were under the pressure of societal norms to not

expend their sexual activities (Wagner et. al, 1994). Also, there is no context what “in moderation” meant to Nahua people, so one can ask if this means that as long people were not open about their sexuality was okay, especially sexuality that was other than heterosexual.

Aztecs Conversion to Catholicism

How the Aztecs were converted into Christianity by the Spanish colonizers remains unclear. However, there are three theories created by Alexia Dovas claiming why they were successful. One states that the Aztecs suspected the conquistadores to be gods who were ruttig to claim their lands. The second theory states that the Aztecs were forced through physical violence to convert to Christianity. The third and last theorem is related to the process of osmosis, which is the belief that the Spanish missionaries blended the Native religion and the Christian religion together to convert the Aztecs (Dovas 2007, p.65)

In the first theory, there are many conclusions as to how Spaniards went about the conquest. One reason the Spaniards may have been successful in their conquest was because the Aztecs thought the Spaniards were better than them when they arrived. The Spaniards had enormous ships, different attire, and advanced technology. The Aztecs were not able to comprehend the arrival of these strangers except that the Spanish were deities. It has also been confirmed that both the Spanish and the Aztecs believe in the Quetzalcoatl myth, which was a god who was going to return for his land. Therefore, there was enough evidence for the Aztecs to conclude that Cortes was Quetzalcoatl, which led them to obey him, making it easier for him to convert them to Catholicism (Dovas, 2007, p.68).

The second theory is that Cortes defeated the Aztecs in a battle and forced them to convert. This meant that the Aztec idols, temples, the kidnapping of their children, the killings of nobility, and the practice of Christianity were forced on the Aztecs. In this situation, the

Spaniards were undermining the native religion and making Christianity triumphant. Cortes has the ability to put fear into the minds of the Aztecs to the point that they no longer practiced their own faith. Afterward, Cortes was able to destroy their religion and began the conversion of the Aztecs to Catholicism. The primary method, according to this theory, was force (Dovas, 2007, p.71).

The last theory, and most current, is the belief that the Aztecs converted into Christianity because it was not very different from their own religion. There were many similarities between the two religions. The Spaniards and the Aztecs both shared the cross as a religious symbol. The cross in Christianity was the symbol for redemption and in the Nahua religion, it was the symbol for the rain god (Braden, 1996). Also, both of their religions had a revered female religious figure. In Christianity, it is the Virgin Mary and in the Aztec faith it was Tonantzin; (“our mother”) a revered goddess of the fertility of life (human and agriculture) (Joseph & Henderson 2002). There were also other similarities such as baptisms, confessions, communions, feast days, and fasting (Braden, 1996). Therefore, both of their religions were combined and gave it the name of Nahua Christianity. However, there were some native people that adopted it and some that rejected it (Dovas, 2007, p. 72).

It is possible to argue that the combination of these three theories were the reason why the Spaniards converted the Aztecs into Catholicism. The myth of Quetzalcoatl, the use of force, and the combination/similarities of the two religions all played a factor in the effectiveness of the conversion. It is unlikely that one of these theories are responsible for the conversion of hundreds of thousands of Aztecs. Although it is still debated, each theory could have played a significant role in converting the Aztecs.

Bible

The Spaniards used the Bible as a tool to promote heterosexuality in the Aztecs/Mexica's community, which has been carried into Mexican communities, households, and beliefs.

Homosexuality carries a large stigma within Catholicism and members of the church internalize these beliefs, which places the LGBTQIA+ community on a lesser ground compared to their straight counterparts (McQueeney, 2009, p.156). There are multiple verses we can analyze throughout the Bible that reinforce the gender binary and heterosexual lifestyle. For instance, *Genesis 1:27* states, "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." These two lines only provide space for the binary spectrum of female and male. This means that there is no space for those that do not identify that way. There are different identities outside of those that the Bible reinforces throughout many of their verses.

Continuing with the conversation regarding the lack of space for homosexual folks, there is *Deuteronomy 22:5* that states, "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are an abomination unto the Lord thy God." In this verse, there is the prohibition that woman and man should not perform each other's duties. This is similar to many Mexican Catholic households that do not accept cross-dressing, referring to a female dressing in masculine clothing or a male dressing in feminine clothing. Similarly, the Catholic church reinforces that the man should be the boss of the household and should be the one in charge of the more intense labor work, while the women should do the motherly labor.

Another example that again reinforces the heterosexual relationship is *Corinthians 7:2*, which states, "But because sexual immorality is so common, each man should have sexual

relations with his own wife, and each woman should have sexual relations with her own husband.” This suggests that the only two sexual interactions that should be performed are those that are heterosexual. Heterosexual activities are the only proper sexual activities that should be performed is the belief that is frequently passed onto people that praise this religion, especially in Catholic household wanting a woman to be in a relationship with a man. It is rare for a religious Mexican household to promote and accept homosexuality and go beyond heterosexual norms.

These multiple verses are primarily promoting heterosexuality, however, there is one verse that specifically mentions homosexuality. *Timothy 1:9-10* states, “understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine.” It is important to note that the man is always the one being valued in these statements, and when homosexuality is being degraded, men are still at the front line. It only mentioned men who practice homosexuality, removing the women and other genders that are a part of the LGBTQIA+ community. However, the act of homosexuality is being compared to other acts of violence that cause harm as if homosexuality was an action that society agrees is unacceptable. All of these verses are an example of how Catholicism was used as a tool to enforce the heterosexual and patriarchal system.

Gender Roles

Today, one religious figure that reflects on the female gender roles is La Virgen de Guadalupe, also known as Tonatzin by the Nahua. Tonatzin is an indigenous figure who was reconfigured by colonization into Guadalupe. However, the beliefs and practices from Tonantzin were transferred to Guadalupe. Irene Lara explains that Guadalupe is the good mother figure.

This good mother figure is represented through Guadalupe's figure which is seen as this quiet, covered, religious, straight, and magical womxn (Lara, 2008). In a Mexican Catholic household, Guadalupe lays the foundation of female gender roles. Some examples of these roles include becoming a mother which follows the expectations of having to cook and wash for your family, care for them, be sensitive, and passive.

The traditional family in Catholicism involves a man and womxn. There is no space for same-sex couples raising children and building a family of their own. In Catholicism it is considered a sin to be in a same-sex relationship because they are not able to reproduce in the traditional form of a penis being inserted into the vagina. Womxn in a heterosexual relationship are envisioned to have children and this is celebrated through the Catholic church and Mexican culture. Womxn are constantly being asked, "Do you have a boyfriend or when are you having children?" These two simple questions reinforce the female roles such as becoming a mother and being straight, just like the Virgen de Guadalupe was.

This traditional family also holds male roles which trace back to the Azteca-Mexican culture (Lara, 2008). Male dominance was present then and continues to be reinforced in Mexican households today through Machismo. Machismo is a set of values, attitudes and beliefs about masculinity. Machismo has a large impact on womxn's identity development due to the male roles (Valenciano, 2014, p.70). Men have the role of "el hombre de la casa" which translates to "the man of the house." This means that they are expected to dominate, make decisions and have the final say, and not show emotions or be vulnerable, which leads to individualism, pride, hypermasculinity, aggression, and sexism. Also, the wives remain heavily dependent (in many cases totally dependent) for financial support and husbands expect their wives to do all their household tasks (Duran et. al, 2001, p.172). Machismo also affects the womxn because if they

are suffering, they have to suffer in silence. If they challenge these gender roles, they are held accountable by their husband. This shows that when men's power is threatened, men need to take action.

Interviews: Intergenerational Influence

In order to trace the influences of Catholicism and the bible onto the Mexican population, interview questions that were asked were: What has the church taught you about heterosexuality? Do you believe homosexuals are respected in your religion/household/church? Do you believe Catholicism has affected your sexuality? I interviewed five people, all of that identified as Mexican and Catholic. However, they were all of different ages, gender, and sexualities. The first interviewee is a 65-year-old female that identifies as straight. The second interviewee is a 49-year-old straight male. The third interviewee is 38 years old and identifies as male and straight. The fourth interviewee is 29 years old, is female, and lesbian. The last interviewee is a 22-year-old gay male. Despite their age, sexuality, and gender, there were common themes between the five interviewees in how religion has played a role in their sexuality or how sexuality is perceived in their household.

For instance, all five shared that their church is not accepting of homosexuals, and heterosexuality is reinforced in their households. They all stated similarly that their parents or guardians believed that a man and woman belong together, which led them to be involved in a heterosexual relationship. The two individuals that identified as homosexual had a very similar journey regarding their coming out process and sexuality. They shared that their ability to be open about their sexuality was highly restricted because Catholicism played a big role in their house values and beliefs. These individuals had similarities in how their parents and the church perceived homosexuality, which was not encouraged in their state. Therefore, both of their

coming-out journeys were rough, and religion was an influence on the ideologies that their household held. These ideologies were reinforced by their parents communicating that if they were female, they had to be paired with a male, become a mother, and have a man provided for them, which are very similar statements the Bible has documented. One described if they try to challenge these ideologies they are looked down upon or are referred to as “a disappointment to their families.”

Additionally, every interviewee expressed that their church was not accepting of same-sex couples and that the environment was not suitable for them to feel comfortable. The population of interviewees all attended church, either in California or Mexico, and had heterosexual parents. However, most of the parents were aware that homosexual acts were being acted upon but were not accepting of them in the church or their own households. If there was a slight appearance of homosexual acts, discrimination raised. Also, the mentality of these individuals upon homosexuality was parallel despite the age gap between each of them. Since religion is still being practiced in their households, then their beliefs are not subject to change. The youngest individual shared that they have removed themselves from Catholicism, but it still affected the way they expressed their sexuality growing up because they knew they would not be accepted.

It is shocking to me that there is a connection between all these individuals, despite the difference in their gender, sexuality, and age. There is a similarity between race, culture, and religion, which has influenced the way they perceive sexuality and gender roles themselves, in their household, and in families. There is a transgenerational effect of the Catholic conversion of the ancient Mexican population.

Autoethnography

The influence of gender and religion on families' identities are different, especially through generations. My mother was raised in a Catholic household, where they prayed every night to a God, went to church on Sundays, and celebrated and conducted religious ceremonies. Since this was taught in her household, my mother brought those customs into our household which influenced my identity while I was growing up. I was forced to believe in God, pray, practice these Catholic ideologies. One of the ideologies the Catholic church emphasized and the environment itself is marianism. Marianism was created to minimize the power womxn can hold within religious communities, like the church (Collier, 1986, p.102). Marianism is a gender-specific value that applies to females, through which womxn are encouraged to be spiritually strong, nurturing, and self-sacrificing. In order for a womxn to be validated by males, they must act and be seen as a virgin, docile, etc.

I recall this being indoctrinated in myself when I would go to church on Sunday. Females had to dress a certain way, typically in a nice skirt or dress. Also, as Bartky highlights, there is also a gender difference in "gestures, posture, and movement" (1987). In the church, I was taught not to be loud, cross my legs, have my hands on my lap, and sit up straight. Even though these are minor ways of enforcing a certain way a womxn has to act, there is a connection to colonization and the amount of "power" womxn are able to hold still today. Since men are viewed as the more powerful and controlling figure, womxn are set to these standards that are made to "protect us" or have us act "like a lady."

Also, the environment in these institutions and the Bible are heavily heteronormative. Similar to what my interviewees shared, I also do not recall seeing a same-sex couple in my church or taught that it was acceptable. For instance, the heteronormative aspect of the Catholic religion influenced my mother to believe that male and female relationships are the norm.

Throughout my childhood and growing up, I was encouraged to be interested in men and to believe they were the ones that will provide for me. However, my interests were outside of men and that created this conflict of interest between my mother and I. Once I expressed my interest in womxn, I remember being removed from the church because it was a system that would judge my family and me.

Creative Component

I consider myself a social justice feminist who is frequently calling out people and educating them regardless of who they are; my parents, siblings, partner, friends, or acquaintances. The main topic of my story is “change; change for the good.” I want to highlight that I am privileged to learn in higher education about homophobic and sexist systems (Machismo) in society and households. I am aiming to document these systems in my life and how I approach them so people can view the other side of the narrative. I want the audience to learn about the harm and effects these systems have on the LGBTQIA+ community and womxn, and how individuals should start supporting and advocating for this community.

In my story, I include language, culture, religion, and traditions because I want to incorporate how my world was growing up and it continues to be. These aspects contribute to how I navigate the world and what I decided to practice or challenge. For instance, Spanish is a large part of my identity that I continue to practice today. I wanted to use my native language because I am privileged enough to speak it, but also because I am fortunate enough that my parents did not assimilate to the dominant language in the United States and my language was not lost through colonialism. I also highlighted different parts of my culture including food and music because it is a way to bring the audience into my life and show that I am proud of the food and music I am surrounded by. Traditions such as beliefs and religion are much more

complicated because I am constantly challenging and removing myself from them. Traditional mindsets have harmed me since I was younger and to this day. My parents have these expectations I should follow, but I'm not and won't. Documenting the traditions, gender roles, expectations, and beliefs through a story is powerful and it is first-hand knowledge that I hold. It was also a time to reflect on my life and feelings towards the issues of gender and sexuality in my household and continue the resistance my community holds.

Roots, Traditions, & Lessons

Roots. You can be proud of your roots, share your roots, teach your roots. But you can also be ashamed of your roots, scared of your roots, and not agree with your roots.

Me llamo/ My name is Fatima and I am a queer womxn in a traditional Mexican household.

Sometimes I love to say, "Soy Mexicana"/"I am Mexican" but other times I like to hide away from that part of my identity. Being queer and Mexican is difficult especially when your family tells you that they accept you, but really don't. I can feel it in my heart. I could remember all the times I felt discomfort trying to express my true self. Also, you have to pretend like you are this passive womxn, when you really don't want to be. Witnessing the problematic situations going around in my household or family dynamic builds internal anger and trauma.

Every time I go back home "siempre es una cosa o otra"/ "It is always one thing or another."

There's my mom who is this young-looking lady with a traditional mindset. I love my mom. She taught me so much about life, especially that working hard is the only thing that will get you far

in life. She thinks being queer is “wrong”, but she doesn’t think my father treating her like she is his property is wrong. So sometimes I just do not get it.

It angers me

It’s unfair

She just won’t get it

Never will get it

It’s sad

It feels like I am in a constant battle

Around 7’oclock mi mama/my mom knows my papa/dad will be home soon. She looks at the clock and thinks to herself and even out loud occasionally “Es hora para preparar la comida”/ “It is time to prepare the food.” Every time I hear this line I think in my head, “I could never imagine someone programming me to be like this and getting up right away without hesitation.” So, she goes to the kitchen and starts the meal of the day, this can be Tortas, Tacos de Bisté/Steak Tacos, Caldo de Pollo/Chicken Soup, Enchiladas, Calabazas/Squash, and the list goes on. She sometimes even puts on music and starts to sing her lungs out.

While she is singing, I can feel the hurt in her heart. I can feel that she does not want this for herself. All the time the songs are about heartbreaks, so is she heartbroken? Yes. It saddens me that she is heartbroken because I love her. A person does not deserve to be treated the way she does. My father has caused her constant pain and always will. He says he will change but still continues to treat her like she is an objectlike she doesn't have feelings, like she is his property like she does not have control over her body.

But does she continue to stay with my papa/dad? Yes. And this is where I lose it. I lose it because I do not understand why someone would continue this unfair way of living. She has the strength to get out of it, but she does not use it.

Once my dad walks in the door, she turns her music off and starts serving him quickly. She puts the plate in front of him with a Bud Light and silence.... No thank you, no nothing. It is like it's her responsibility to do this.

It will never change because my papa/dad is considered the "man of the house" and he is always right. Sadly, I don't even dare to tell my papa/dad anything about his behavior, but I can educate my mother about how his behavior is wrong. I ask her, "Porque es que tienes que servirle y nunca te da las gracias?"/ "Why is it that you always have to serve him and he never tells you thank you?" I look at her face and she has this look that she knows that's wrong. I continue to tell her, "Tienes que preocuparte de ti misma. No deje que la trate así. Dile cuando algo está mal. Habla con él y hazlo entender"/ "You need to worry about yourself. Do not let him treat you like that. Tell him when something is wrong. Talk to him and make him understand." When I tell these words to my mom, I mean them from the bottom of my feminist heart, but I have to accept that this will never change. The traditions and customs are embedded deep down that there are too many layers to get through. Even when I think I get through a couple of those layers, it will go back to how it always will be.

However, other days I do not feel like being on my mom's side. I still remember the day I told her, "Tengo una novia"/ "I have a girlfriend." She looked at me and started balling. What you call balling.

Tears

More tears

And more tears

Day after day

I did not understand why she was crying... did I disappoint her? Is it because I am not doing what the Bible expects from me? Does she think she did something wrong? Did I hurt her feelings that much? I have noticed a pattern of parents crying when their child tells them they aren't straight. Unfortunately, that one's happiness is someone else's sadness.

One day I felt like my mom finally was able to accept that her oldest daughter esta con una mujer/ is with a womxn. That day I was the happiest person ever. I felt like I was not someone's pain, someone's disappointment, or something wrong. But come to find that it really isn't like that. It is more like a battle.

This battle is constant. I wish I didn't have to be in it. Why do I have to be in it in the first place? I feel and hear things that I know she has not fully accepted me or my community.

"Estas confundía"

"Yo pensé que ya no te gustaban las mujeres"

"Marimacha"

"No más es su amiga"

“Que es hombre o mujer?”

“Quien es la mujer y quien es el hombre en tu relación?” /

“You are confused”

“I thought you did not like womxn”

“Tomboy”

“She is just her friend”

“What are they, a man or a womxn?”

“Who is the role of the man and the role of the womxn in your relationship?”

There were nights when I couldn't sleep because I realized how horrible my mother is. There were back and forth conversations in my head trying to convince myself that it was okay when it really was not. My head did not have the capacity for this type of thinking, it would hurt. The pain was uncontrollable. My heart would race. I would get anxiety. I would not be able to sleep.

But I have tried to step back and think, it's not her fault. She doesn't know any better. She grew up in a different place, generation, mindset.

But sometimes I go back and think, “No everyone can grow and learn.”

Everyone should be able to

Create a safe space

Be called out

Change for the better

Stop being judgmental

Challenge the machismo
Stop being homophobic
Not reproduce toxic behavior
& fully love and accept their loved ones for who they are
& speak up for themselves

At this moment, this story is still in progress.

My mother is constantly being challenged and educated. This does not mean that she will change from one day to another, but it gives me hope that things will get better. This thought gives me a sense of calm and it is my process of healing. However, I do not think I will heal just now. It is going to take collective healing. I need my mother to join this healing process or at least not have me backtrack.

For my father, I think he will never change. Even typing this makes me angry. I feel all the tension that has been built and will continue to. He has been influenced by society to be the dominant figure in our household. He is a *machista*. Regardless, I am still challenging him and calling him out, even though that does not do any good for our relationship. I am hoping that he listens and thinks about the harm he is doing to his loved ones.

However, with time (which is what I hope for) the ending of this story will reflect on what I expect from my family, my community, and society.

Conclusion

Through this research paper, we were able to explore the complex history of what is now Mexico. It helped me explore more of the rich history behind my own culture that I was not aware of. It is unfortunate because here in the United States we usually only focus on the state that matters. This is a representation of how our education system is only delivering specific narratives. It brings awareness to the loss of language and culture that is done by the people in power. In this case, the Spaniards had a major influence on my people and have affected how we live today.

It was a challenging process because there were multiple options, articles, and discussions around the ancient history of the Aztecs/Mexica. There was a limited timeline that did not allow me to obtain all the resources that would allow me to continuously answer my research question. However, I thought it was very powerful to include insights of my interviewees in my paper because it gave them the opportunity to learn about the topic and for me to learn from them. I also did not enforce a hierarchy dynamic between us because I approached them in a casual tone in order for them to feel comfortable to share vulnerable stories that come with trauma and resistance. All of my interviewees chose to do their interviews through the phone because of the circumstances we are in. Throughout the process, I made sure I was present, even though a phone interview is different than an in-person one.

Colonization is a tool that contributes to the harm that is being done today to the LGBTQIA+ community. Catholicism is a religion that was brought by the Spaniards that is not accepting of homosexuality. Those that follow these ideologies, including my family, have caused pain that can be transformed into strength which leads the community to document these moments through creative writing. I recognize that I have the privilege to be in an institution and

exploring interdisciplinary courses that lead me to the conclusion that my culture was removed through acts of violence.

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