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Race in the West was defined specifically by skin color as opposed to the Northeast but not like the South. While blacks migrated west they were not necessarily the focal point of race relations. The binary that defined race in the West was more about two different types of brown people and their relation to white people. Mexicans and Indians were the other to whites. Absent that other, whites would simply otherize different white ethnicities as they did in New York City. Linda Gordon, author of “The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction”, illustrates this ethnocentricity early on by remarking on the Protestants’ approach to “orphans” in New York, “They were mainly elite, prosperous white Protestants dealing with the children of poor immigrants-often Irish and later Slavic or Italian.” (Gordon Pg. 10) In the West though, the issues of race changed to include skin color and to a lesser extent culture. Gordon points this out as well, “They did not grasp that this trip was to offer them not only parents but also upward mobility. Even less did they know that that mobility took the form of a racial transformation unique to the American Southwest, that the same train ride had transformed them from Irish to white.” (Gordon Pg. 19) This transformation only affected those who were well and truly white. Anyone of mixed race was still considered lesser in the eyes of white society. The dichotomous view of race in the West by white people defined race relations and justified all manner of atrocities and injustices; one was white, Indian, Mexican or one was other, each viewing separate races as alien.

The binary view of race in the West was fluid depending on the adoption of culture or the appearance of mixed heritage. Even amongst the Comanche, it was less desirable, at least for a

time, to have white blood according to S. C. Gwynne, author of *Empire of the Summer Moon*. “I at last learned that I was more cruelly treated on account of my white blood.” (Gwynne Pg. 199)

While Quannah Parker grew to be a great chief he had to fight for it that much harder because his race was viewed as inferior by those around him, regardless of their race. He could not make the transition from Indian to white man. Margarita Chacon, however, was considered as Mexican by those around her even though she was white. Her decision to embrace Mexican culture and dress allowed her race to be more fluid. “Her choice of racial identity was remarkable, forswearing the advantages that an Anglo persona could have brought her, but her passionate faith made it not really a choice at all.” (Gordon Pg. 37) Whether conscious or not, she divested herself of whiteness and assumed the Mexican ethnicity and race without hindrance of others. One must wonder if she could have gone back to being white with as much ease from society.